

S2: E197: The Experts Who Will Lead the Next Era

Hey there, and welcome back to the Make Your Message a Movement podcast. This is your host, Tiffany Neuman. And if you've been following along, this is the first episode I'm recording as I start easing my way back into some of the conversations I had planned before I had my recent accident. If you are listening for the first time, welcome in and I am referencing the past few episodes.

I had a life-altering car accident about 3 weeks ago and shifted the last few episodes to talk specifically about that episode, what it's been making me think about, and how it can impact us as business owners. So it feels a little strange, to be honest, because the last couple of episodes were not on my content calendar. I like to typically plan in advance. I know what I'm gonna be talking about, and I did not plan to talk about what happens when life changes in a second or what becomes clear when everything else suddenly has to stop. I definitely did not plan to spend so much time thinking about what my business is actually for, deeper about the ripple effect that I want to create in the world and how that also pertains to you and why helping other people bring their ideas into the world feels way more important than it used to.

But that's where I've been. And so I don't want to come back from those conversations and simply say, okay, anyway, here's some more branding tips. That's always valuable, but I actually don't believe that I'm coming back to business in exactly the same way. And I also just want to take a moment before I go further to just say thank you so much. So many of you reached out.

To check in to how I was doing, to sometimes give me advice or say, hey, I've been through something similar, just thinking about you. And I just want to say how grateful I am for you to be part of this community, for your thoughts and prayers. Maybe even if you didn't reach out and you sent a prayer my way, I felt it. And I'm just so grateful for such an incredible community. And it's really just been fueling my heart to want to give back more and just uplevel everything I can in the business, not from a sense of doing more, but from a sense of being even more mindful about my approach.

And I've been thinking about how I support my clients that way. As well, and so the last few weeks have actually made the strategic work feel more important. For instance, last week I talked about the idea that our business is not really the point; the business is the vehicle, right? It allows our work to travel further, reach more people, to create wealth. To open doors, to fund causes, to build communities—all of those things.

But below that, if that's true, and our business is what gives us the opportunity to create massive change and impact in the world, how do we make sure the right ideas actually get heard. Because having meaningful work, which I know you do if you're listening, is not good enough if nobody can see or hear why it matters. And being brilliant at what you do is not enough if the market cannot distinguish your perspective from hundreds of other brilliant people.

What I've come to find in my experience of helping aspiring thought leaders, thought leaders, coaches, speakers, authors for years is that having 10, 20, even 30 years of your experience does not automatically mean you're going to be the person invited onto the big stage, referred to in the right rooms, or chosen by a client who would benefit from your work. And that actually brings me directly back into the conversation I had originally planned to share with you weeks ago before life interrupted everything. And, you know, we can always connect the dots looking backwards, and I, I'm still in it. I'm still learning lessons. I'm still seeing how this is happening for me, even though I could label it a terrible situation, and it wasn't what I was expected.

Now, I've had enough space to know, and I knew even just right when it happened. Things happen for us, not to us, right? And I think this conversation is more relevant now. Because I became really clear at my time the last few weeks. I've had so much extra time to think that I can see as a trend predictor that the expertise economy as we know it is completely changing right before our eyes.

And it has been, and I think we all feel and know this, and it has a lot of people scrambling. It has some people second-guessing. It's really, really interesting to watch. And the truth is, if we want our work to create the ripple effect we talked about last week, we need to understand what this shift requires from us.

So I want to start by having us all think about the last time you were trying to solve a meaningful problem in your business. Maybe you were trying to figure out like rethinking an offer, or maybe you're going to hire someone or make an investment, you know, or trying to understand AI or new technology. What did you do first? Chances are you probably researched it. Maybe you Googled it, you listened to a podcast, you asked AI, you asked smart friends.

Maybe you watched YouTube videos or read articles. Maybe you bought a book about it, right? So a lot of us too, if you're already using AI, maybe you asked and created a step-by-step plan for what to do next. But by the time you actually spoke with an expert, a human to help you, by the time you decided that you needed a human expert to guide you, because AI can give us a lot

of information, but it's not actually going to work and walk through us in a situation, right? You probably ended up with information overload.

I think so many of us do, right? Like 17 tabs open, 3 competing opinions, you know, a podcast host telling you this thing, someone else somewhere else saying the exact opposite, and then an AI tool confidently giving you 12 more possibilities you hadn't even considered. So this is a space where you don't actually need more information. You needed an expert, someone who could look at all of it, understand your specific situation, and say, here is what actually matters. These are the actual steps you need to take.

This is the piece I would ignore. This is the risk no one is talking about. And say, based on everything I've seen after doing this work as an expert for XYZ years, this is the decision, or this is the move I would suggest, or let's talk this through. And that, my friend, is a very different type of value. And I believe That's the shift that is changing the expertise economy.

Because I'm not declaring that expertise is irrelevant, right? It does matter. Experience matters. Training matters. Results matter.

Those are things you cannot shortcut, right? And you can't ask an AI tool to manufacture all this credibility and tons of testimonials and judgment that comes from sitting across from hundreds of clients.

So expertise still matters, but what I'm saying here is expertise is becoming the entry requirement instead of the differentiator. For a very long time, specialized knowledge itself created tons of value because knowledge was difficult to access. So if you knew how to do something or you had become very confident and competent, you know, maybe there was other people doing it, but you were immediately seen as an expert And it was easy to have people look at you that way. But think about how dramatically that has changed just in the past 10 years. We now all carry access to more information in our pockets than most people could have imagined even a generation ago.

And that's why courses aren't working the way that they used to, because there's courses that teach almost any topic, millions of hours of video, podcasts, books, communities, and now generative AI can synthesize enormous amounts of all of that information in seconds, right? So you know this, I'm not repeating anything new, but I'm just setting the stage for why I think we need to think about this shift now and take action now as thought leaders, aspiring thought leaders, and those of us who really want to help create the change we want to see in the world. And so because information is abundant, what's going to become more valuable? My prediction

is discernment. Because discernment, true human discernment that's guided by expertise plus knowledge plus intuition plus your own magical sauce that you bring to the table, discernment is scarce.

And that's really what I want to explore today because The market, the online business space especially, is not running out of experts. It's running out of the reasons to choose between them. And I'm seeing this more and more in my work. So when someone comes to work with myself and my team, oftentimes their resume is extraordinary. They might have, you know, years and years of experience.

Tons of certifications, maybe a book or a master's degree or hundreds of clients or an impressive list of companies they've worked with. Maybe they've built and sold businesses or taught inside universities or spoken on stages. And sometimes I get people who have not done all of these things, but they've had years of expertise in corporate and they're ready to take that knowledge and bring it to a wider audience. So all of my clients, there is never a question that they know what they're doing. But when I ask them one simple question, what do you want to be known for?

Oftentimes there's a pause because they can tell me everything they know. They can explain how they work with clients, Oftentimes kind of explain the results that they get, the history of how they arrived here, but translating all of that expertise into one clear idea that their ideal audience can associate with them is where they often get stuck. And this is where moving from an expertise economy becomes Moving into what I'm going to dub as the authority economy. And if you've been listening to me for the past few years, I've been talking about why authority is so important. Now, a few years into AI, I'm really realizing the depth of you can no longer just be an expert.

You absolutely have to step into being an authority. Because expertise is what you know, but authority is what the market knows you for. And of course, those two things overlap, but they're not at all the same. Because again, you can possess a ton of expertise and remain pretty much invisible, or you could be the smartest person in the room and still not be the person who's invited to lead the room. And that can be very frustrating when you see people who don't have nearly as much expertise as you do actually leading the conversations, right?

And so authority is what we need to be focusing on, and that does not mean becoming famous. It doesn't mean having the largest following necessarily, or those vanity metrics. It doesn't mean positioning yourself as a guru. What I want us to think about is actually simple. It means that

the market can clearly understand what you see, how you think, what you believe, and why your judgment matters.

Because an expert can give you information, AI can give you information, But the authority helps you make meaning from it. And so earlier in my career, as I've mentioned multiple times over the years, one of the things I was paid to do was trend forecasting as a creative director. And when people hear trend forecasting, sometimes they imagine it was about spotting cool colors or predicting what everyone would suddenly want next year. And that was certainly some of it. But the real value was never simply collecting everything happening in culture, because anyone could do that over time.

The valuable part of my role at that time was interpretation, right? So what behaviors represented like a temporary reaction, which suggested a deeper cultural shift, and specifically what would actually influence the customer. And then most importantly, what should the brand do about it? And so my job wasn't walk into the room carrying this big pile of information. It was to walk into these meetings with a point of view about what the information meant.

And that is how I want you to think about your business and what your clients need from you now. I see so many people out here putting on their website, putting their content online, just sharing everything they know because they think, oh, if I share everything I know, people are gonna see me as this expert and they'll know that I can help them.

But what people really need is your ability to know what matters, not just what you know, because there's a lot of other people that know what you know, and there's a lot of other ways to get that information.

And so this isn't only what matters in the market, but what matters enough to spend your time and energy to help other people understand. Because again, if our work is really capable of creating a ripple effect, then our job is not simply to accumulate more expertise. At some point, we have to turn that expertise into something people can actually use and come to us for. And this is one of the most important shifts that established experts can make I would say in the next 6 months to a year, if we want to continue and grow and actually create a ripple effect, because the momentum that we're feeling now is only going to pick up faster over the next few years. And I've been hearing people say they kind of feel behind, or they feel kind of ignored.

And It's not your fault if that's the case. Or maybe you've started to get more traction than normal. This is the time to double down on that. Not more time accumulating, right? We've

spent so much of our careers accumulating more training, more experience, certifications, techniques, tools, proof.

All valuable.

But it's really interpreting that knowledge that you already have that's going to take you to this next level in the next year or two.

So what have 20 years inside your industry taught you that a person with 2 years of experience can simply not see yet? Or what advice is technically correct but frequently wrong for the people you actually serve?

Or maybe what are people focusing on that you believe matters far less than they think? Where do you disagree with conventional wisdom? All of those types of questions turn your expertise into a specific perspective. And perspective is where authority starts becoming visible.

So sometimes credentials and things are absolutely worthwhile, but I've seen too many people chasing shiny objects over the past 5 years. And there's a point of diminishing returns that are happening at some level. Another certification may make you a more knowledgeable expert, but it does not automatically make you a more recognizable authority, right? So eventually, you absolutely have to take everything you've learned and actually do something. New with it.

You have to form an opinion, you have to create your own language, you have to connect ideas, you have to name the patterns, you have to develop the framework, and you have to be willing to say, this is what I believe. And maybe you're already doing that, but even myself, who's been doing this work with clients for years, found myself not necessarily getting deep into my own perspective. I was relying on my wisdom and knowledge part of the time, not all the time. And as soon as I dove back into my own authority, everything shifted. I've had one of the highest revenue months that I've had in some time, directly after having the accident, before I even announced it.

It was some weird moment in time where I saw the convergence of everything I've been doing unfolding at the same time I had this quote-unquote negative experience. And it's so interesting how this happens in our lives sometimes because it's Oftentimes the wake-up call from God that we need, and so why I'm so passionate about this and why I'm bringing this up today is because it can feel surprisingly vulnerable to move into this shift or to fully own it. A lot of my clients are kind of tiptoeing in their authority. They've, you know, claimed their expertise.

They're really getting out there, but they haven't stepped fully into it because of this vulnerability, right?

Because learning is safe. There's always another book to read, another training to take.

And what we really want to do is go from consuming to creating. On a deeper level. And that's really what I see changing right now, because experts for years could build very successful businesses primarily by being excellent translators of existing information, right? You learn a methodology, you become good at delivering it, you help clients apply it. It was kind of this straightforward approach.

And there's still absolutely nothing wrong with that model, but as the market has become more crowded, that competence alone does not create enough separation. Again, there's 2 coaches might have similar certifications, or consultants might have comparable experience. Speakers—so many speakers address the same broad topic. 2 authors are writing the same book, in a sense.

And so now the question I think every expert needs to become keenly aware of is not, am I good enough? Because we assume you are good. You are here listening to this podcast. I already know you're amazing at what you do, but I want you to ask, why would the right person specifically want my brain in the room? Not just your service, not just your credentials— can't say that word, credentials— but your way of seeing. Because talk is cheap and expertise at this point is cheap.

Anyone can make the appearance, appearance of competence, right? Especially with AI, you can make a proposal look sophisticated, an article professional, all of the things. But the bar has moved.

Right? We want to really think about authorship and authority. Because AI cannot replace the years of lived experience that caused you to see the problem differently in the first place. It cannot create your personal history. It cannot have, like, say, a difficult client conversation that taught you the nuances.

It cannot take responsibility for the judgment you make when you're supporting a client. That is the human part, and that human part becomes more value— more valuable, much more valuable than competent information.

So imagine you're standing in an enormous library and every book you could possibly want is already there until you actually need to make a decision quickly. Because if you don't know which shelf matters, which author to trust, which offer information is outdated, which advice actually applies to you, what you should do first. Access to that library does absolutely nothing to create clarity. It's actually going to create overwhelm. So think about this as your authority not being the person who simply owns the knowledge and the books, the library, but you're the person who can walk into that enormous library Listen to what needs to be solved.

Pull three books from the shelves and say, "Start here. This is what you need to do to move through this." And that's the discernment we were talking about, and that is the value that clients are increasingly paying for right now. And when you start to understand this, the way you build your brand. Will start to change. You're going to finally stop trying to prove what you know and start instead making it clear how you think.

We want you to stop filling your content calendar with information anyone else could find any, you know, online with AI, and start developing category of one ideas that people associate only with you. And the biggest thing I want you to think about today is to stop treating your intellectual property as little observations floating around in different social posts. We need to start codifying them into language, frameworks, models, and beliefs that position you as the authority.

And stop building your brand around a collection of services, and instead start building your brand around a body of work. And that's the transition that I want you to think about taking from expert to authority.

So once expertise exists, which we're assuming. If you're listening, you already have. The questions I want you to think about becomes, can the market see my expertise? Can they make sense of my work? Can they remember me and my work?

Can they repeat it to other people? Hmm. And can they understand why your particular judgment is worth paying to work with you? That's where an authority brand becomes so important, and it's more critical than ever in this new authority economy because your brand is literally the translation layer between everything you know internally And what the outside world is able to perceive about you.

So this is thinking about your message, your ideas, your story, your point of view, your IP, your website, your content, your speaking, your reputation, your visual presence.

Your audience only has access to what you make visible. And so all of these things, everything you put out in your cohesive authority ecosystem, needs to present them with why this person.

And it's not just visibility. Authority requires something for the visibility to amplify, right? So there's 4 pieces that I want you to think about today. That have become increasingly important to building your authority brand, which is a point of view that's unique, your own intellectual property that you and you alone can own, a brand visual messaging that codifies and makes your authority visible And ultimately, you need trust, right? The point of view tells people how you see the world.

Your IP turns that perspective into ideas, frameworks, and language that people can understand. Your brand makes those ideas recognizable and coherent. And then the trust gives someone the confidence to choose your judgment when it matters. And those 4 pieces sit on top of your expertise. And this is what the next era of authority brands will be built around.

And I want to make it clear that none of this is about becoming artificially different and trying to make yourself into something you're not.

Your differentiation already exists in the way perhaps you combine ideas, your lived experience, might be the audience that you understand more deeply, your way of solving the problem, the beliefs underneath your work, maybe the question you ask that everyone else skips, or the future you are helping your clients see. So we're not manufacturing novelty here. The goal is to uncover what is already distinct about your expertise and make it easier for the market to recognize. And that is central to how my team and I approach our work with clients. When someone comes to us, I'm simply not asking, how do we make this person look more like an authority?

Right? My clients, you listening, are already brilliant. You already have experience. So the real question is, what exists inside this person's expertise that the market cannot see yet? And more importantly, that they cannot see yet?

Because as I always say, you can't see the label inside the bottle. So as I ask these questions, Maybe some of the answers immediately come to you, but this is how I guide people through the process of thinking and taking everything out of your brain and noticing, finding the golden thread, finding out what you should become known for. What category or conversation are you uniquely positioned to lead? So our job is not to manufacture authority. It's to make existing authority coherent, cohesive, and unmistakable.

And if you think back to what I shared over the last couple of episodes, this is where all of the pieces start to connect. So again, if the business is the vehicle for impact, Then the brand is what helps the right people recognize the vehicle, trust where it's going, and decide if they want to come with you on the journey. We are not building this authority for ego. We are building it so meaningful work, your work, has a better chance of reaching the people it's capable of helping. And that's why my work matters so much more to me right now than ever.

Because invisible authority has no commercial or cultural power. You can be extraordinary, still be overlooked, like we talked about earlier. And so— I don't know if you can hear that. My, my buddy Little Ziggy is barking in the background. He's healing too, just so you know.

And if you heard him barking, he just wants to make his voice heard, I suppose, today. He never barks when I'm recording. That's so funny. Anyways, back to what I was saying.

What I want you to think about is authority-creating opportunity that expertise alone cannot take you there for, right? So this means maybe colleagues referring you without stumbling through a vague explanation of what you do because you're so clear that they can be clear, or being invited into a partnership because your ideas bring so much value to someone else's audience, or a media outlet reaching out because your name has become associated with a particular conversation.

This is a different business model than constantly chasing attention. And that's where a lot of experienced experts want to go next. They don't necessarily want to become influencers. I have no yearning to become an influencer, and most of my clients don't. They don't want to spend every waking hour producing content just to stay visible.

What they do want is their body of work to carry weight, the right people to know why they matter, for their ideas to open doors, their reputation to precede them. And they want the brand to make it easier for those opportunities to find them. So that's the authority that we're talking here today. So if you're listening as we wrap up and you're thinking, okay, but what do I actually do with this? I want you to start with a very simple exercise.

This is the first question that I kick off with all of my clients. Which is, if someone could remember only one idea from me, what would that idea be? Not your entire methodology, not your complete list of services, not 7 things in your bio. One idea.

Then ask, what do people currently know me for? Those answers might be aligned. Or there might be a large gap. Maybe people know you for the service you started offering 10 years ago,

but the work you most want to lead now is much more sophisticated, or it's evolved. Or maybe people know you as a great coach, but they don't necessarily know you for the framework you've developed.

Maybe you want to exit your business eventually. And you are the only face of the brand. Or maybe they know you and your name, but they really have no idea what you do.

If there's a gap, that tells you something. And we're not doing this so you're judging yourself and like, oh no, I'm so off course here. This is to realign. And let you know how you can step further into that authority.

So, with those questions, I want you to think about today the fact that we want to turn your expertise into perspective, perspective into ideas. Ideas into IP, and that IP into an authority brand the market can recognize, trust, remember, and choose. So you can reach out to me on LinkedIn, tell me what you want to become known for, or feel free to book a call in the link in the show notes. I'm going to start coming back and getting on Zoom and in front of people again here in the next week or two. So I'd love to meet with you and explore what it would look like to make the authority you have much more visible, to bring in those opportunities that you've been waiting for.

And make sure you come back next week because I'm going to be challenging more assumptions we've been taught in this online business world that is ready to be completely disrupted. All right, thank you as always for being here. I can't wait to help keeping you up to date and supporting you as you really start to translate your expertise in authority and really step into being part of this new wave of thought leadership that I truly believe is going to start unfolding over the next 6 to 12 months. And if you want to be part of this new wave of thought leaders, these new authority drivers, stay tuned because I have so much to share with you. I'm so grateful to be on this journey with you, and we'll see you next week.