

The KNOW-LIKE-TRUST-REFER Pyramid

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of them will move up to the next (and smaller still) level of the pyramid, TRUST. For you to graduate to someone else's TRUST level, you need to accrue some positives. Examples: receiving flattering testimonials, being highly responsive to requests for help, exuding professionalism, going the extra mile.

Over time, and amidst such positives, a level of comfort and confidence emerges. LIKE grows into TRUST, and the stage is set for the pinnacle of the pyramid.

REFER Once there's TRUST, only one thing separates you from REFER: opportunity. You can't force opportunities. But you can be clear with your TRUSTs as to the triggers for your business. In other words, your TRUSTs need to know what situations they might come across in which your expertise would save the day—and make yours.



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Turn Your Opinion into Revenue (for Free)

By Tim Gallagher

Your daydream about the perfect way to use the news media for free (as opposed to buying an ad) might go something like this:

A 500-word article written by you about your area of expertise published on a page of a newspaper or magazine that your customers and potential customers read. If you've got one, add a great photo that makes you look 10 years younger. Did I already mention it would be free?

Keep dreaming? No. You can make it a reality by using the opinion pages of your local newspaper or trade publication.

I worked in the news media for nearly 30 years and know this truth: Op-ed editors are always hungry for fresh ideas from fresh writers who live in the area or possess expertise in the subject matter.

The trouble is, most people (and this probably includes you) do not think of themselves as great writers.

Here's a news flash: You don't have to be George Will or Thomas Friedman to get published.

There are three key elements to getting an op-ed published:

It must be topical: Something that's in the news or will soon be in the news. When the GM bankruptcy hit in June, the pages were filled with viewpoints on the bankruptcy after the bailout. Consider writing an op-ed about a news story that you know something about.

It must take a strong point of view. No one likes an editorial that says "on the other hand." Be bold. Be logical. State your case.

It can take an unusual point of view. I once wrote an op-ed defending the woman who was awarded \$1.7 million after spilling McDonald's coffee in her lap. It ran in 80 newspapers because I sought "the other side" of this outrageous case. (Did you know McDonald's had more than 700 similar complaints before this lawsuit?)

What's the value in an op-ed? Why bother? Well, one of my clients runs a disaster training company. He is working with the government of Vietnam to develop a search-and-rescue operation. Yet, he was filled with angst because his brother was killed in Vietnam 40 years ago and now he was "helping the enemy." We talked at length and I helped him through several drafts and eventually we published a fine piece that talked about his business and his personal feelings.

Someone who read it liked it so much he asked my client to come to Europe this summer and speak to 60 international government figures who are interested in the type of maritime training my client offers.

Op-eds can and should be a part of your overall marketing and public relations strategies. They establish you as a knowledgeable expert in a field that is important to your clients or potential clients.



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