

THE VISIBLE AUTHORITY BLUEPRINT

*The proven Visible Authority steps that will grow
your consultancy business*



— THE —
VISIBLE AUTHORITY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4

Chapter 1 | Understanding the consulting market

7

Chapter 2 | My journey in the past years

15

Chapter 3 | Becoming a visible authority consultant

22

Chapter 4 | The 8 main mistakes that kill your authority

26

Chapter 5 | Here's what you can do tomorrow

35

Chapter 6 | The 2 most asked 'Big Questions'

44

Chapter 7 | Putting it all together

48

Chapter 8 | My training programs & workshops

51

Chapter 9 | Connect with me



DON'T WE ALL WANT A CONSISTENT AND RELIABLE PIPELINE OF PROJECTS AS CONSULTANTS?

(that's easier said than done)



1

**UNDERSTANDING
THE CONSULTING
MARKET**

The consulting market has shifted dramatically in the past years

- More (global) competition than ever before
- New consulting business models (on- & off-line) with dramatic rate/price erosion everywhere
- Unprecedented changes in technology, analytics and the use of data
- The rise of the specialist consultant (with his online marketing toolbox), only 1 click away
- Fast-growing business development dependence on smart use of marketing technology
- Reduced reliance on references and relationships, client loyalty at a low
- Increasing importance of content to build trust (and relevance for Google)
- Social media stress hitting all consultants in the face
- On top, the Corona pandemic has put the consultancy world upside down

“

The consulting world is hard and is getting harder. No one is coming to save you. There are very few big wins these days but a lot of little wins. To win new clients, you have to do a lot of work and there's no guarantee at all. You don't get rewarded for 'trying', 'failing' or 'working hard'. And if you hate marketing and sales as a consultant, you are in trouble.

DANIEL PRIESTLY

Understand the consulting growth challenges

In the fall of 2019, to validate my new TheVisibleAuthority.com business, I asked the team from ValuableContent.co.uk to interview a group of experienced consultants about their biggest challenges in growing their consulting business. Here is what these consultants had to say:

- 1** They were pretty much **fed up with attracting the wrong consulting clients** and having to reduce their fees in order to win projects
- 2** They felt **overwhelmed by online marketing** and social media and didn't know what to do to get connected to their ideal clients
- 3** They were **struggling to say NO** to clients who weren't a good fit, out of fear of missing opportunities. However, that left them with no time to work on developing their own business, which made them fall behind even more
- 4** They were **struggling to create a business model to support their envisioned lifestyle**, bring them more fulfillment, time, income and freedom



Sonja & Sharon from ValuableContent.co.uk, sorting out the research results

Read all the details of this research, including (anonymous) quotes from the consultants I interviewed

[Take me to the research report](#)



2

**MY JOURNEY IN
THE PAST YEARS**

Introducing Luk Smeyers

My name is Luk Smeyers and I have been in the consulting businesses for almost 20 years.

I was a European CHRO in a global consultancy (Nielsen), a founder of an analytics consultancy (iNostix) and a leader in a 'Big 4' consultancy (Deloitte), post-acquisition of iNostix.

In 2007, in the middle of the financial crisis, I left my well-paid and safe Nielsen CHRO role to start a consultancy from scratch. But consulting around the world was suffering big time! I started iNostix against the advice of my entire inner-circle.

“Luk is ignorant and naïve”, they said. They didn’t really understand why I gave up my CHRO job and took the bold risk to start a consultancy in crisis times.

Fortunately, my overly-skeptic inner-circle gave me superpowers! I’ve never been afraid of failure: I had a conscious plan & executed disciplined.

Only a few years later, with a laser-sharp focus and a lot of hard work, I’d already become globally known for my people analytics expertise. This visibility was the driving force of the growth of iNostix and inspired big consultancy firms to knock on the door. In 2016 iNostix was acquired by Deloitte, the starting point of an incredible scale-up phase.

As from the fall of 2019, I will be teaching how consultants can grow their revenue by transforming them into visible authorities, inspired by all my learnings in the past years.

“

The competitive advantage will go to those who invest in the serving of other human beings.

ANTHONY IANNARINO, [THESALESBLOG.COM](http://thesalesblog.com)

The 5 foundations of my global authority

- 1 NICHE:** I chose to focus on just one very specific expertise domain (people analytics) in the narrowest possible market niche (data-driven HR) with the smallest possible viable audience (people analytics professionals)
- 2 EDUCATIVE CONTENT:** I consistently developed high-quality educative content with a pain resolution focus to build trust and visibility
- 3 SHARING:** I openly shared all my experiences, learnings, successes, challenges, struggles and failures
- 4 LESSONS LEARNED:** I always used the same formula to develop valuable content: 'Here's what you can learn from what I learned'.
- 5 HELPING:** I rewired my brain from selling to helping. I chose to focus on empathy with my clients/prospects and on being very generous in my working relationships, at conferences, etc.

Of course, not everything went smoothly. See my blog '10 mistakes'

[Take me to the article](#)



My biggest struggles in the early consulting years

- 1 Attracting the right clients in a very narrow (and new) niche
- 2 Saying NO to the wrong clients to continue to deepen my expertise
- 3 Protecting my rates, even when they were challenged
- 4 Developing an attractive revenue stream to keep investing in my visibility
- 5 Learning everything about marketing and social media to build traffic and to boost growth

Openly sharing all my learnings has enabled me to create consulting opportunities that I would not have had otherwise. Even in a deep crisis, there's always opportunity. As long as you can get into a helping/sharing instead of a selling mindset.

My visibility at a glance

Becoming visible is something most consultants really battle with. The truth though is that visibility is the only thing that is going to make you stand out in a crowded and very competitive consulting world.

The biggest blunder consultants can make is to imagine that somehow potential clients will find them e.g. by sharing a few posts on LinkedIn. Nothing could be further from reality.

“

If you want to stand out, you need to show your expertise.

JAMES ALTUCHER

With hard and disciplined work and with always openly sharing all my learnings, **I started standing out in my market and finally became a Visible Authority in my industry.** And this has not done me any harm.

This visibility was one of the driving forces of:

- the success of iNostix
- the acquisition by global analytics leader Deloitte
- the amazing scale-up growth within Deloitte, post-integration
- my rapid go-to-market with my new business
thevisibleauthority.com

Consulting IS marketing: marketing is not separate from you, as a consultant. A good consultant is a good marketer of his/her expertise.



HRN | LUK SMEYERS

CEO and Co-Founder at iNostix



Luk Smeyers
iNostix by Deloitte



Wouldn't it be great if you could...

- Get a reliable, steady flow of new clients? Get special expert invitations to RFP's (instead of begging/applying)?
- Speak and teach around the world, achieve incredible market visibility and become a go-to person in your industry?
- Enjoy the magnetic retention of existing clients?
- Succeed with zero marketing costs?
- Prequalify your new clients organically through your content (they knew what to expect from you)?
- Dare to ask better/higher rates (without getting into persuasion, discussion or negotiation)?
- Do 'upstream work' most of the time (strategic guidance, teaching and diagnostic-like advice)?
- Having the ability to protect 10-15% of your time to re-invest in deepening your expertise, improving your visibility and growing your business?

This happened to me in the past years!

Marketing a consultancy is NOT about sales. Marketing isn't about pushing a product or service. Instead, marketing is about sharing your knowledge and providing something of authentic value to your clients.

I never had to explain, persuade, sell, or negotiate...

The intriguing story of meeting with an HR Director at an international conference...

I had been giving the opening keynote speech at the conference, as always, with a 'lessons learned' angle. Apparently, the learnings I'd presented had intrigued her. She asked me for my contact information and promised to call me to discuss a collaboration.

Months went by, without a single call from her. However, in the background, she kept receiving my new case studies as she was subscribed to our email list. About six months later, her assistant called for a meeting in her office.

It was one of those many meetings where I sat in front of the 'buyer' with a printed stack of my case studies and articles on the desk. She apologized for the delay in getting back to me. She had to study and research to be able to present a business case for consultancy investment to her boss, and that took her a while.

"Your case studies and articles had been my single source of information to prepare the business case for your support," she admitted to me with a big smile.

The HR Director finally got the approval from her boss (just before we met), and at the end of our meeting, she gave me the go-ahead for one of the most rewarding projects I've ever done. Amazing!



The collaboration 'pitch' (the meeting in her office) was nothing more than a friendly handshake to get started right away. No need to explain, persuade, sell, or negotiate. That's the reward of openly (and massively) sharing valuable content!



3

**BECOMING A
VISIBLE AUTHORITY
CONSULTANT**

The evidence that thought leaders (read: Visible Authorities) grow faster

This is what decision-makers say about thought leadership:

89%

say it can be effective in enhancing their perception of a vendor (consultant, consultancy, etc.)

59%

say it is a more trustworthy basis for assessing future collaboration

49%

admit that it can be effective in influencing their purchasing decisions

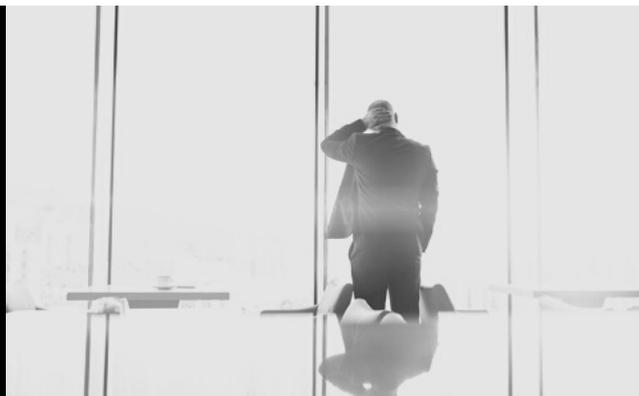
42%

are willing to pay a premium for support from a thought leader

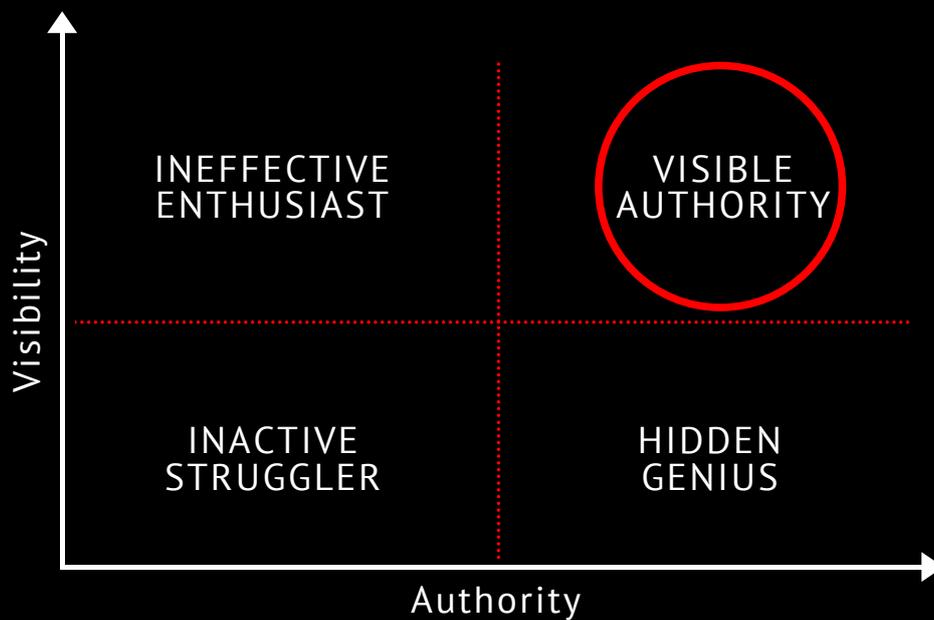
Source: 2020 B2B Thought Leadership Impact Study by Edelman

Read my blog: The Hard Evidence That Visible Authorities Get More Clients

[Take me to the article](#)



The Visible Authority Quadrant



THE INACTIVE STRUGGLER Low visibility in the market and low authority due to (most of the time) covering multiple expertise domains and being totally unfocused. Saying YES to everything to protect income.

THE INEFFECTIVE ENTHUSIAST Very active (sometimes hectic & chaotic) on social media, leading to trivial, Instagram-like, and ineffective visibility, which doesn't translate into systematic pipeline growth.

THE HIDDEN GENIUS Very strong expertise level developed over the years by focusing on one specific expertise domain. Saying NO to almost everything outside the focus area to protect authority. Often too busy 'in the lab' to articulate thought leadership.

The characteristics of the visible authority

A thought leader consultant and trusted advisor who is well-known for his/her deep subject matter expertise in his/her market/industry.

Here are the **12 main characteristics** I was able to collect from my research the past 12 months:

1 VISIBLE

strong visibility as an expert and thought leader in his/her market or industry

2 FOCUS

expertise flows from a narrow focus and repeatability of work (to deeply understand all the problem patterns of clients)

3 PROTECTING TIME

always stays in his/her narrow expertise lane and says NO to non-ideal projects/clients to protect the time to build visible thought leadership in the market

4 NEW ARCHETYPE

openly shares all his/her expertise in a systematic and uninterrupted way. Always empathic, supportive, generous, educative, authentic

5 TRUST

when you Google his/her name, an abundance of trust is immediately visible

**6
MARKET
TRENDS**

understands all the latest market trends and their impact and reports about it

**7
SOCIAL
PROOF**

powerful reputation, references and social proof. Known for long-lasting client retention

**8
NEW
CLIENTS**

systematic, consistent and reliable organic new client generation

**9
ELUSIVE**

difficult 'to get', mostly fully booked, premium rates/pricing, little to zero persuasion or negotiation needed

**10
UPSTREAM
CLIENT WORK**

strategic/diagnostic advice instead of downstream execution

**11
SINGULAR**

high degree of irreplaceability with the client

**12
T-SHAPED**

deep skills and expertise in a single field with ability to collaborate across disciplines and to apply knowledge across the entire client organisation



“

Make YOU part of your product or service. Inject what's unique about the way YOU think into what YOU sell. Pour YOURSELF into your product and everything around your product too: how YOU sell it, how YOU support it, how YOU explain it, and how YOU deliver it. Competitors can never copy the YOU.

ALI MESE

The YOU in your story

The plain truth is that your consulting expertise is not unique. Many competitors are doing exactly the same thing and, who knows, they may be more successful than you. However there is one vital distinction:

there is only one YOU !

Your consulting expertise is probably not truly exceptional but YOU certainly are. Be yourself. It's really that simple!

That's why I always showed my clients and prospects who I am, what I do, and how I solve their problems.

Through your marketing, you can show what you've learned and therefore what clients can learn from your experiences as well. If you haven't experienced something and learned it for yourself, you won't be able to offer the highest value to your clients.

“

Being your true self is the most effective formula for success.

DANIELLE LAPORTE



4

**THE 8 MAIN
MISTAKES THAT
KILL YOUR
AUTHORITY**

Since I've started TheVisibleAuthority.com in 2019, I've talked to more than 100 consultants. Here are some of the **most frequent challenges and/or mistakes** I see them making all the time:

- 1** No focus, no specialization, no narrow niche, being the generalist consultant, the jack of all trades → Being a small fish in a big pond, saying yes to everything to protect income/revenue, at risk to disappear
- 2** Poor and foggy social media profile → Dramatically diluting their pitch
- 3** Ineffective social media usage → No TLC-strategy at all, from traffic to leads to clients
- 4** Poor quality content with inconsistent distribution → Poor visibility and trust-building
- 5** Offering focused positioning instead of outcome-positioning ('this is what I do' instead of 'this is the outcome I will achieve') → Confusing positioning, not showing the client transformation outcomes you can achieve
- 6** Too much belief in references and relationships (important though) → An unreliable, dangerous long-term strategy
- 7** Accepting lower rates to get contracts → Getting stuck in the vicious FOMO, the ultimate erosion of authority
- 8** No (good) use of (inbound) marketing systems → No systematic new client generation

“

I think having a unique expertise is the most important thing, meaning other people are convinced that you bring something to the table that other consultants can't. It makes you crucial to adding value to the client which makes it easier to get the deal or convert the lead into a project.

CONSULTANT, INTERVIEWED DURING MY 2019 RESEARCH

Read about all the results I was able to achieve as a Visible Authority

[Take me to the article](#)





The new consultant archetype is transparent, helpful, caring, empathic, supportive, generous, educative, authentic, vulnerable, real, genuine. If your personality cannot get in sync with this new archetype, you will struggle to become an authority!

Ordinary consultants sell. Authorities share. Ordinary consultants tend to have big ego's. Authorities tend to be modestly brilliant.



5

**HERE'S WHAT YOU
CAN DO TOMORROW**

In my early corporate career, I grew up with management guru Peter Drucker. One of my previous managers kept repeating a Drucker quote all the time, I will never forget: "If you want something new, you have to stop doing something old."

So, what is it you can start doing differently tomorrow?

- 1** Narrow your focus
- 2** Understand your sweet spot
- 3** Get rid of your FOMO
- 4** Understand the pains and gains of your clients
- 5** Develop a pain-resolution approach and mindset
- 6** Start loving the 'boredom' of project repetition
- 7** Improve your visibility and build trust in your expertise
- 8** Move to a 'packaged' consulting approach to protect time
- 9** Systematically generate new clients

1. Narrow your focus

You will need to understand saying ‘No’ is the biggest force for building your business. Focus on building the deep, narrow and unique competence that clients are looking (googling) for and are prepared to pay a premium for.

You cannot be successful if you keep focusing on multiple domains as a consultant. There’s too much saturation in the crowded market, too many competitors doing the same thing. It’s a losing battle in both visibility (search engines/online traffic) and trust-building with prospects.

Consulting is based on trust, and you must make potential clients fully trust you’re the #1 person for the job. Never forget, your (focused) competitor is only 1 click away.

“

Everytime when you say Yes to something, you are saying No to everything else.

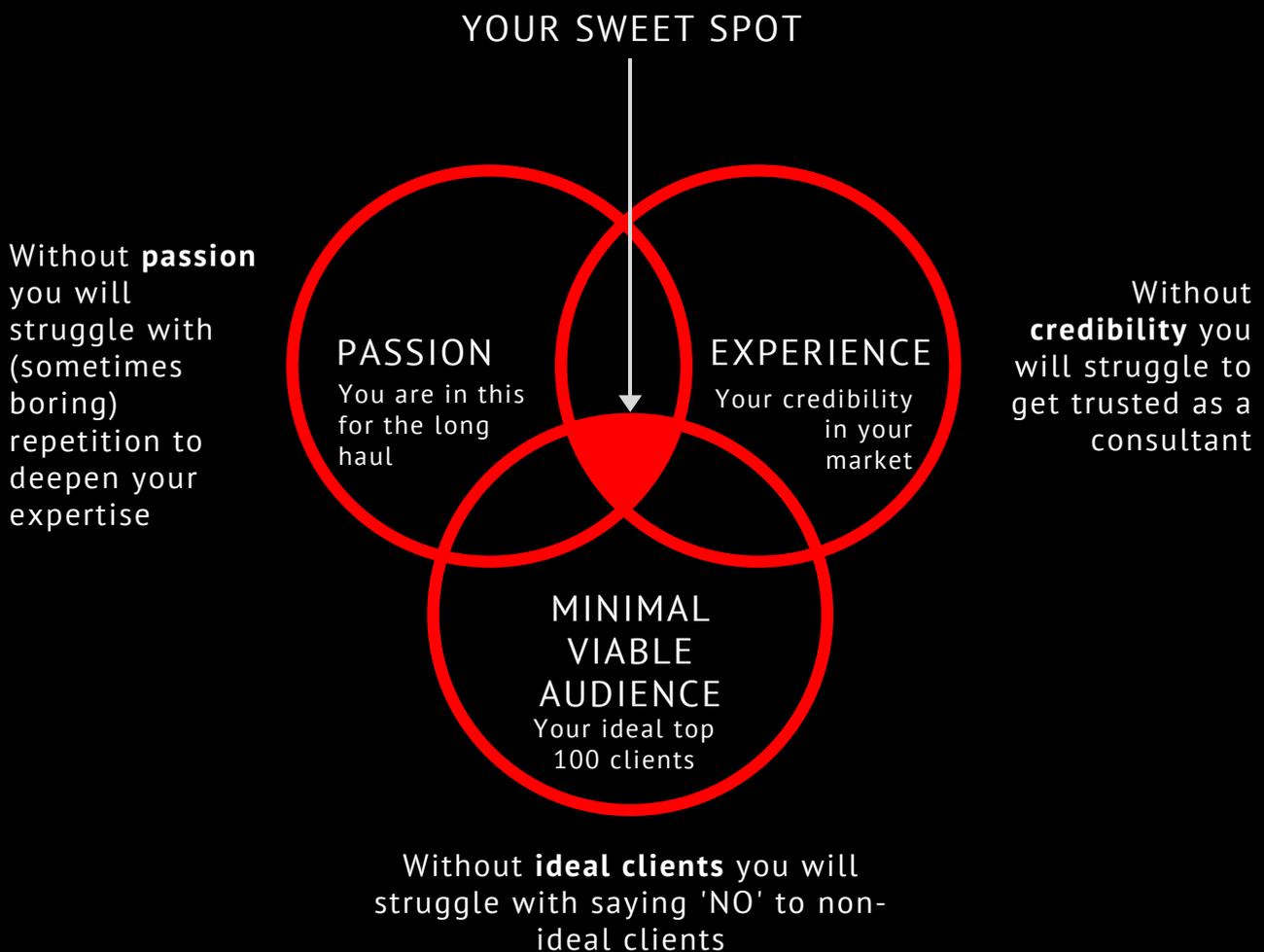
STEVE GLAVESKI

2. Understand your sweet spot

The intersection of the following 3 circles is your Sweet Spot:

- Passion (to reap the benefits of repeated observation and application);
- Experience (your credibility in the marketplace) and
- Your minimal viable audience (your ideal Top 100 clients)

Outside of your Sweet Spot, you will get stuck in a vicious loop to nowhere and suffer from an infinite unproductive expertise puzzle.



3. Get rid of your FOMO

Your fear of narrowing your consulting positioning is the fastest way to becoming commoditized as a consultant. Narrowing your consultancy is a scary exercise though, it requires gut and courage. You can do it step by step though, bring your sweet spot in the foreground, let the other areas fade out progressively.

Watch out! The size of your ego is detrimental to narrowing your positioning and refusing all other inadequate work.

Why? Consultants are more in love with opportunity instead of deepening their focus and expertise. Every new opportunity is a target that you are eager to crush, that's at least what your crook ego is making you believe.

“
The difference between successful people and very successful people is that very successful people say no to almost everything.

WARREN BUFFET

4. Understand the pains and gains of your clients

Ask your clients what pains they suffer from, what keeps them awake at night. Ask them again. And every 6 months again. Validate. Revalidate. Go deep.

The core work of every consultant: identifying what problem transformation your potential clients value and exploring how best to deliver it in a way that meets their expectations.

5. Develop a pain-resolution approach and mindset

As soon as you understand the pains and the gains of your clients, start focusing your consulting offering on problem-resolution (which typical client problems do I solve/transform?) instead of skill-based (I am an expert in X, Y or Z).

Be obsessively detailed about the output of the transformation you are delivering for the client. What is your 'unique vehicle' to help them shift from A (problem situation) to B (problem solved/improved), to convert them from pain to gain?

6. Start loving the 'boredom' of project repetition

Start loving the boredom of consistency and repeatability. It's the backbone of your authority and your consulting business. The repeatability of your work will transform you into an unquestionable expert and visible authority.

Authorities are not made by doing many things decently, but by consistently doing one thing expertly. This is where true revenue really starts to flow.

Through repetition, you will learn the deeper patterns, challenges, risks, and solutions that 99% of your competition will never know because they weren't willing to put in the focus and the deep work.

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.

ARISTOTLE

7. Improve your visibility and build trust in your expertise

Our job as consultants is to ensure we are top of mind - the first specialist that a client calls when they need help. If you don't invest a substantial amount of time in positioning yourself as a visible authority NOW, then in 3-5 years, nobody will ever come across your expertise on the internet. You will have to raise your game to become more relevant for our new boss: Google!

Educate your buyers/clients, share best practices with them, tell them what to look out for, give them valuable tips on how to solve their pains, and how to achieve success. Demonstrate how you've helped others in their shoes. Share your (pain-resolution) expertise. Share. And share again.

Prospects need to trust you before they buy. Consulting is a credence business. Do your buyers get an abundance of 'trust stuff' when they google your name?



You don't lose what you know when you share your knowledge. Unlike physical goods, knowledge is non-rival, meaning its value doesn't decrease when it's shared.

**FROM THE BOOK 'PEAK' BY ANDERS
ERICSSON AND ROBERT POOL**

8. Move to a 'packaged' consulting approach to protect your time (to enable authority growth)

Translate a big chunk of your pain-resolution expertise into easy-to-understand, easy-to-sell, fixed-price, value-based consulting services with a pre-defined, diagnostic-like process. If you don't, you'll end up engaging in far too many customized activities.

Wrapping your services up into clever packages makes it easier for your client to understand what you're offering. As a result, your expertise and authority become much more visible.

The consequence if you don't package? You won't have the time you need to deepen your expertise in your niche and build authority in your market. It's one of the most dangerous vicious circles in consulting.

Re-engineer your offering to achieve at least a 10-15% time cut to re-invest in your visibility in your market and your subject matter authority.

Creating standard packages for consulting services has helped me to hop off the deadly time-for-money cycle and regain valuable hours to work on growing my business.

9. Systematically generate new clients

If you want to be serious about growing your consulting business and starting to attract your ideal clients in a more consistent and reliable way, you will have to get comfortable with online marketing. You cannot solely rely on references and relationships anymore, that's a risky strategy in the long run. On top, client loyalty is at an all time low.

If you are unable to leverage efficient, repeatable, and consistent marketing systems, you'll get swept away by the many other consultants/consultancies who are starting to excel in it.

Marketing is not separate from you, as a consultant. A good consultant is a good marketer of his/her expertise.

10. Start nurturing your existing clients

Don't spend all of your time focusing on recruiting new clients. Strengthen the existing relationships with your current and past clients by consistently providing them with value. This can be in the form of reports, updates on the latest trends, new learnings, insightful commentary, and so on.

This will not only increase your chances of getting hired again in the future, but getting valuable referral work.

A woman with voluminous curly hair is shown from the chest up, looking thoughtfully at the camera. Her hand is resting on her chin. In front of her is a laptop. The background is a simple, light-colored wall. The image is mostly in grayscale, with a red rectangular overlay on the left side containing the number 6.

6

**THE 2 MOST ASKED
'BIG QUESTIONS'**

Big question #1: Why do I need to narrow my focus?

1 The GENERALIST consultant - the Jack of all trades - has a dark future!

Whether you like it or not, we live in the age of the specialist. Consulting buyers are searching for subject matter experts and trusted advisors to help solve their problems.

Clients have more options today than ever before - there are more consultants and experts and advisors than there ever have been in the past and buyers can find anything in seconds.

And in this digital world, the advantages of being an expert are more powerful than ever. In a way, Google is encouraging us to become more and more specialized in order to become and remain relevant. Don't forget, your competitor is just one click away.

How the heck can you ever be a credible expert if you are piggy-backing on all sorts of expertise domains or target groups? When a consultant covers multiple domains for multiple prospect profiles (persona), it's impossible to establish himself as an expert in any of those domains or target groups.

“

Stick to your segment. Focus is your friend. You want to be known as a dominant and consistent voice in your industry.

TIM MCKIN

2 It's tempting to cover multiple domains as a consultant

I know it's very tempting to cover multiple domains as a consultant, especially in difficult times. You are trying to keep all the options open, I get that (I've been there, got the T-shirt). Moving to a narrow focus is a scary exercise and requires guts and courage (and a certain financial buffer is helpful).

However, it's almost impossible these days to be successful if you keep focusing on multiple domains as a consultant. There's too much saturation in the very crowded consulting market, too many competitors doing the same thing. It's a losing battle in both visibility (search engines/online traffic) and trust-building with prospects. Your (focused) competitor is only 1 click away.

I am a big fan of uber-successful author-entrepreneur Tim Ferriss. He once wrote:

“

It's lonely at the top, 99% of people are convinced they are incapable of achieving great things, so they aim for mediocre. The level of competition is thus fiercest for 'realistic' goals, paradoxically making those people the most vulnerable.

TIM FERRISS

3 Narrow your focus step-by-step

My short advice if you are covering multiple expertise domains: move to a more narrow focus step-by-step. It's less scary and you don't have to abandon everything at once. You can create special focus (e.g. cases, content, visibility, social proof, website, social profile) on your strongest expertise domain (your sweet spot) in small doses/steps.

I am helping a few consultants as we speak with their migration to a narrow niche and they are leaving 'the old domains' behind in a careful, well outlined fade-out approach, gradually growing their single-domain visible authority.

You can easily copy such a progressive, iterative approach. I am working with a few other consultants and they are merging some of their key expertise areas in a smart and unique (narrow) 'blend'.

Every problem has a solution. There are no rules here, just clever approaches. But I am 100% sure: you will never regret having narrowed your consulting focus!

“

Don't let the fear of losing be greater than the excitement of winning!

ROBERT KIYOSAKI

4 Generalist consultants will always struggle

When I audit a GENERALIST consultant (covering multiple expertise areas) as part of a collaboration start, I'm almost sure in advance he/she has (even without doing any profile deep dive):

- ✓ poor market visibility
- ✓ low traffic to website (if at all) or profile page
- ✓ no systematic lead generation (no T-L-C approach, Traffic to Leads to Clients)
- ✓ inefficient social media use
- ✓ no/low trust-building content
- ✓ probably saying yes to everything to make money (Jack of all trades)

Why? Generalist consultants will always struggle to explain why a prospect should hire them and this immediately gets translated in low visibility, weak market credibility and soft revenue.

If you can't immediately introduce your specific problem-resolution expertise, you will always lose against your (only 1 click away) competitor who owns the space and has a clear problem solution and can demonstrate that in similar cases, testimonials, process descriptions, project roadmaps, research, data, possible legal barriers, industry trends, benchmarks, technology-related challenges/issues.

Can you sense how much time and effort consultants have to invest to understand all the patterns of typical client pains?

Now imagine doing that for multiple expertise domains. Totally impossible!

4 The 90/80 Syndrom

As a generalist consultant, your most likely destiny is to get 'body-shopped': selling (a few) hours for money. And you already know pretty much in advance what your rate will be: (way too) low!

Generalist consultants heavily suffer from the 90/80 syndrome! (data from Hinge Research Institute).

90% of professional service buyers **CHECK OUT A CONSULTANT'S EXPERTISE ONLINE** before making a decision

80% of potential consultants **PUT THEMSELVES OUT OF THE PICTURE** straight away because of the lack of visible expertise

“

Your narrow positioning is an exercise in irrelevance. The more irrelevant you become to non-ideal prospects by turning your positioning away from them, the more relevant you become to your chosen target clients. But that requires courage and discipline.

DAVID C. BAKER

Big question #2: Do I really need to share my expertise?

I shared ALL my expertise. All the time. Years and years. And no, you aren't giving away your secrets. Clients still need you. Why?

1 Expertise tops content. Clients are looking for the bigger picture - your qualifications and years of experience that you bring to the table. Content can never replace that! Our clients pay us to help them to apply our expertise to their specific situation.

2 Implementation is complex. Even with profound reading about experiences and learnings from other projects, most non-experts will always feel challenged with executing (complex) implementations, even with a step-by-step instruction 'the IKEA-way'.

3 Content builds trust. Sharing content is by far the #1 way to build up a strong and credible reputation as a consultant. Without trust in your expertise, you won't get that call to meet. And if they don't call you, you will never know, unfortunately. When a prospective client is looking for a problem-solving solution, your content will either be a qualifier or a disqualifier. When the prospect googles your name, does he/she get an abundance of trust in your expertise straight away?

“

They gave away everything they knew because you have to give away everything you know because if you think your 'secret' is what people are paying for, you are crazy!

**SETH GODIN, TALKING ABOUT
AUTHORITIES HE MET IN THE PAST**

- 4 Content builds visibility.** If you are reluctant to embrace content-driven marketing, nobody will ever find you on the internet. In a world where professional services buyers act like consumers and can find anything in seconds, how on earth will you be found?
- 5 Content builds a mental connection.** The more you write about how YOU have solved the problems of your clients, the more clients will relate to you and build a mental connection with you over time. Important though: your writing should be 'pain-resolution content'. Clients should immediately recognize their pains in your stories (that's what I did/do: storytelling from the problem-solving project trenches).
- 6 Writing and sharing content deepens your expertise.** Last but not least, there's no better way to deepen your expertise than writing about it and sharing it. In the spirit of one of my great 'masters', Nobel Prize winner Feynman (known for his ability to clearly explain difficult topics such as quantum physics for virtually everybody): 'The ultimate test of your knowledge is your capacity to transfer it to another'.

“

If you win the game to be the most generous, then you earn the privilege of being an authority.

SETH GODIN

7 **Sharing content provides you with data.** I am obsessed with studying and researching what my prospects and existing clients are reading from me, how much time they invest in reading my stuff, what exactly they focus on when reading, how often they come back to read, how long they stay on my blog, what their click-thru behaviors are, etc. It's the most important research database to understand the interests & behaviors of your prospects and clients. I couldn't have been successful in the past without these data, you bet.

8 **Content sharing is a pre-qualification tool.** In the early years of my consulting work, I received quite a big volume of inquiry calls from 'non-ideal' clients. However, the more I wrote about the work I was doing, the more 'ideal clients' calls I got. Step by step, my writing (and speaking) became my most important client pre-qualification tool. The prospects who contacted me knew exactly what I was doing, which problems I was solving, what kind of projects I was involved in. In fact, once my content-driven visibility got established, I almost never got non-ideal inquiries anymore.

9 **Content sharing propels conversion.** Like it or not but your content is the key driver of the TLC process: from Traffic to Leads to Clients. About 80% of my traffic gets built from the content that I am sharing. My content has always been like 'my assets': the more I wrote, the more traffic and ultimately the more clients I got. Your content should be organized in such a way it drives leads to your consulting business. Sounds like a no-brainer, or?

10 **Writing and sharing content deepens your expertise.** Last but not least, there's no better way to deepen your expertise than writing about it and sharing it. In the spirit of one of my great 'masters', Nobel Price winner Feynman (known for his ability to clearly explain difficult topics such as quantum physics for virtually everybody): 'The ultimate test of your knowledge is your capacity to transfer it to another'.



7

**PUTTING IT ALL
TOGETHER**

In a world full of opportunity, we need to overcome our deep-rooted need to respond to everything as consultants. We need to be ruthless in discerning what is important and what is just noise.

I've seen many consultants fear to say 'No' to ill-suited opportunities in order to please a client or earn an income, compromising their market credibility and ultimately seriously compromising their future consulting growth.

If you are always saying 'Yes' to your clients, you'll end up engaging in far too many activities, and you won't have the time you need to dedicate to your top priorities, deepen your expertise in your niche, and build authority.

It's a scary exercise though, it requires a lot of self-confidence. Narrow down microscopically to grow your authority (and your business)!

**You will need to move from
'The Consulting Vicious Loop To Hell'
to 'The Consulting Glorious Loop To
Heaven'!**

In 'The Consulting Loop To Hell'...

...you are unfocused and cover multiple expertise domains to keep your opportunities/options open

...your scattered focus stops you from having/making time to develop your visibility and deepen your expertise (most consultants are in love with opportunity instead of taking the time to focus and deepen their expertise)

...you get in business development hibernation, your pipeline becomes inconsistent and unreliable

...you lose your self-confidence and courage to brutally narrow down to stand out as an expert

In 'The Consulting Loop To Heaven'...

...you narrowed down your consulting focus to one single area of expertise

...you 'packaged' your consulting offering to save 10-15% of your time to further invest in developing your visibility and deepening your expertise

...you say NO to every non-ideal client/project to protect your time and to stay in your lane...your narrow focus propels project repeatability, the driver of pattern detection and the backbone of authority progress

...you grow your authority and market visibility which creates organic business development opportunities and a more consistent, reliable and maybe even oversubscribed pipeline.

...you have no other choice to say 'YES' to every new opportunity due to the growing fear of income or target achievement

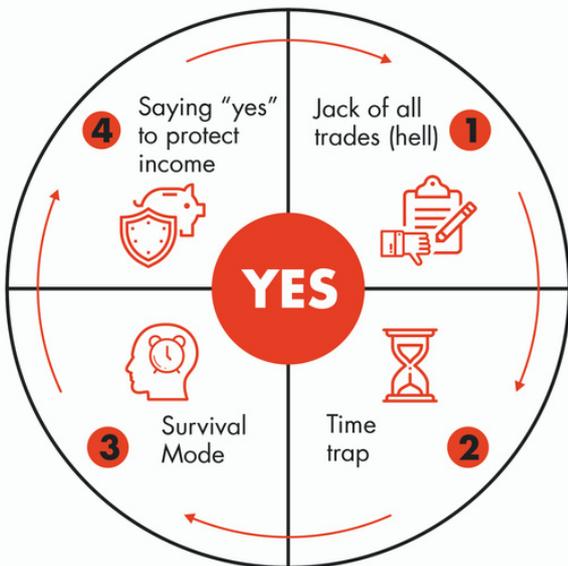
...your healthy pipeline builds strong self-confidence as an expert and clients are prepared to pay a premium for your trusted advice

...you get 'under water' by saying 'YES', get non-ideal projects with high customization that can't be leveraged to build your authority

...your healthy income empowers you to keep saying NO to protect your narrow focus

...you are in the 'loop to hell' 😞

...you are in the 'loop to heaven' 😊





8

**MY TRAINING
PROGRAMS &
WORKSHOPS**

My Training Programs

1 A Solo Consultants Learning Weekend With Luk

2 The Consultancy Positioning Assessment

3 The Solo Consultant Clinic

1 A Solo Consultants Learning Weekend With Luk
EU-based

[Learn more](#)

During the weekend, I will take participants through all my experiences, both as a consultant and as a guide and trainer for other consultants. The ultimate goal is to improve the way you do business as a solo consultant.

During the weekend, I will be searching for the 'unexplainable income plateau' that many of you have reached, and I will offer you candid, straightforward breakthrough feedback.

Being a solo consultant, especially in Covid times, can be isolating. That's why I will make it easy for like-minded solo consultants to support each other's goals and dreams.

2 The Consultancy Positioning Assessment

[Learn more](#)

Do you really understand the perception of your consultancy through the lens of your ideal client?

Your consultancy positioning is your strategy!

Owners/partners should avoid figuring out their consultancy positioning strengths and weaknesses by trial and error. It takes way too much time.

I can help small or medium-sized consultancies to fully grasp the perception of their consultancy, swiftly. No trial and error.

My assessment takes you through a rigorous process of diagnosing, researching, assessing, and comparing the touchpoints that connect your consultancy with your ideal audience for the years to come.

3 The Solo Consultant Clinic

[Learn more](#)

Does your online presence as a solo consultant support or stifle your business development?

As a consultant, your website and social media profiles are what your potential clients are basing their judgment of your services on:

- What does your online presence say about you?
- Are you just one of the many or does your profile stand out?
- Do your prospects understand precisely what you do and how you do it or do they come across the same generic stuff that makes them forget about you in 5 seconds?

If you don't stand out as a consultant in the digital space, your business development will constantly be a struggle.

My feedback will allow you to take your online presence from 'yet another unmemorable consulting service' to 'I have to get in touch with this consultant'.



9

CONNECT WITH ME

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about my services, email me at info@thevisibleauthority.com.

You can also [Visit my website](#) to learn more about how I can help you expand your consulting business.

[Visit my blog](#) for tips, inspirations, the do's and don'ts, research, and more AND [Subscribe to my newsletter](#), 'The Authority', to receive my insights in your mailbox directly.

I'd be happy to discuss with you my services over a phone call, so feel free to [Book a call](#).

Let's connect on [LinkedIn](#), where I also post my content on a regular basis. Last but not least, you can also follow my account on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#) or both.



— THE —
VISIBLE AUTHORITY