Technical Professionals: A New Breed of Marketers

Presented by Sylvia Montgomery, CPSM
Commoditization = Evil
Why are you different?

› On time?
› On budget?
› Good customer service?
› Cheaper price?
That’s just not enough!
Differentiators are:

› True
› Provable
› Relevant
Differentiators are not

- Pre-Construction
- Construction
- Design-Build
- Engineering
- Planning
Brand Perception Research

› Ask your clients:
  › Why did you select us?
  › What tipped the scale?

› Ask your get-aways:
  › What made the winning company stand out?
  › What tipped the scale?
  › What could we have done better?
Communicate It
Be the resource,

not a commodity
Leads to Referrals
Today’s Buyer
Buyer Expectations

Who do I know? Who do they know?

Transparent conversations — education and not selling.

Confirmation of “right decision”
Professional Services Client Experience Journey

**Awareness**
- Email
- Premium Content
- Website
- Blog Posts
- Social Media
- Public Relations
- Word of Mouth

**Consideration**
- PPC
- One-on-Ones
- Case Studies
- Pitch Meetings
- RFQ

**Selection**
- Proposal

**Retention**
- Ongoing Value Selling
- Delivery
- Project Kickoff

**Advocacy**
- Partnerships
- References
- Referrals

**PRE-SALE** (Marketing / Business Development)
**SALE**
**POST SALE**
80.8% of buyers check out your website.

Source: Visible Experts®: How High Visibility Expertise Helps Professionals, Their Firms, and Their Clients
29.6% of professional services buyers have ruled out a firm because of an unimpressive website.

Source: Referral Marketing for Professional Services Firms Research Report
51.9\% have ruled out a firm before speaking with them.

Source: Referral Marketing for Professional Services Firms Research Report
23.5% rule out firms because of poor quality content.

Source: Referral Marketing for Professional Services Firms Research Report
Think Brand

Brand = Reputation x Visibility
WHAT DOES HIGH-VISIBILITY MEAN?

A firm or individual that has attained high visibility and a reputation for expertise in their industry niche.
The Benefits of a High-Visibility Technical Professional

› More opportunities come to your firm

› More opportunities come to you

› Creates halo-effect for team

› Greater utilization

› Higher billing rates
Groundswell
## What Buyers Value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specialized skills &amp; expertise</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their connections &amp; network</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help impact my bottom line/financial impact</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They have become a trusted team member</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The quality of work they produce</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Be Visible at Each Stage of the Buyer’s Journey

**Attract**

**Purpose**
- Establish Marketplace Expertise
- Grow Database

**Tactics**
- Blog, Video
- Social media
- Speaking engagements
- Networking

**Engage**

**Purpose**
- Nurture and educate prospects and contacts
- Stay top of mind through email and offers

**Tactics**
- Email marketing campaigns
- Webinars
- White papers, research, reports, case studies
- Lunch & Learns

**Convert**

**Purpose**
- Convert prospects to meeting.

**Tactics**
- Consultations
- Demos
- Walk-throughs
Reputations speaks to Expertise — It’s Invisible
Some form of expertise tipped the scale for the buyer.

Source: Visible Experts®: How High Visibility Expertise Helps Professionals, Their Firms, and Their Clients
So what’s the problem?
Why Buyers Seek Visible Experts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To solve a critical problem</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To build the brand and win new business</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence conferred by an expert</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For a legal proceeding</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## How Buyers Find Visible Experts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade association/conference</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Already know the expert</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of top experts</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
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</table>
2017 AEC Research: Marketing & Growth

- Speaking Engagements: 29.9%
- Conferences/Tradeshows: 21.9%
- Public Relations: 17.1%
- Downloadable, Educational Content: 15.2%
- Partnership Marketing: 14.8%
- Marketing Video: 13.8%
- Professional Association Memberships: 13.3%
- Website: 12.2%
- Email Marketing: 12.1%
- Blogging: 11.8%
Going Beyond Traditional Client Referrals

81.5% of firms have received a referral from people they have not worked with.

Source: Visible Experts®: How High Visibility Expertise Helps Professionals, Their Firms, and Their Clients
Two Types of Referrals

Experience-Based

Reputation-Based
Which factors increase the probability of referrals?

- 27.4% Visible Expertise
- 24.1% Professional Relationship
- 21.8% Social Relationship
- 17.5% Reciprocity
- 5.5% Attending Networking Events
- 2.2% Asking for Referrals
- 1.1% Social Responsibility
- 0.4% Sponsorships
30.0% of non-client referrals are made because the referrer has heard them speak.

Source: Referral Marketing for Professional Services Firms
Factors that Increase Probability of Referrals

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Visible Expertise</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Relationship</td>
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<td>Social Relationship</td>
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<td>Reciprocity</td>
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<td>Attending Networking Events</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking for Referrals</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorships</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Biggest Referral Killers

- Absence of Visible Expertise: 51.6%
- No Social Relationship: 18.0%
- No Professional Relationship: 15.2%
- Not Leveraging Traditional Networking: 5.3%
- Not Reciprocating Referrals: 3.7%
- Not Attending Networking Events: 3.0%
- No Social Responsibility: 2.5%
- Not Asking for Referrals: 0.8%
59.9% of buyers check you out on social media.

Source: Referral Marketing for Professional Services Firms
17.0% of non-client referrals are made because of social media.

Source: Referral Marketing for Professional Services Firms
Millennials’ Revenge

18.2% of referral makers 25-34 years old won’t refer a provider who is not on social media.

Source: Referral Marketing for Professional Services Firms
Where Do Non-Client Referrals Come From?

94.5%

Comes from your reputation, expertise, and visibility

5.5%

Comes from someone you’ve met before

Source: Referral Marketing for Professional Services Firms
What **Aspect of Your Reputation** Generates More Referrals?

- **Visible Expertise**
  - Average of Referrals Made (within 6 months): 8.57

- **General Reputation**
  - Average of Referrals Made (within 6 months): 5.30
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Your Marketing Toolkit
Digital Brand Strategies

- social media
- webinar
- phone/video
- blogs/online publications
- email
- search
- online advertising
- groups/online conferences

Traditional Brand Strategies

- networking
- speaking
- meetings
- print publications
- direct mail
- cold calls
- print advertising
- associations/trade shows
10 Strategies for Converting Technical Professionals into Willing Marketers

1. Secure speaking engagements
2. Publish content in pubs relevant to your industry
3. Be active in social media
4. Keep your first online impression clear and on message
5. Showcase clients & projects
6. Practice reciprocity
7. Develop marketing partnerships
8. Attend networking events
9. Ask for referrals
10. Practice social responsibility
The Visible Expert®:
Find out how you and your colleagues can become Visible Experts, driving new growth and profits for your firm.

Download for free at:
https://hingemarketing.com/library/article/the-visible-expert

Check out Navigating Change:
A Primer on How AEC Firms are Winning New Business in 2017

Download for free at:
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Thank you! Questions?

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