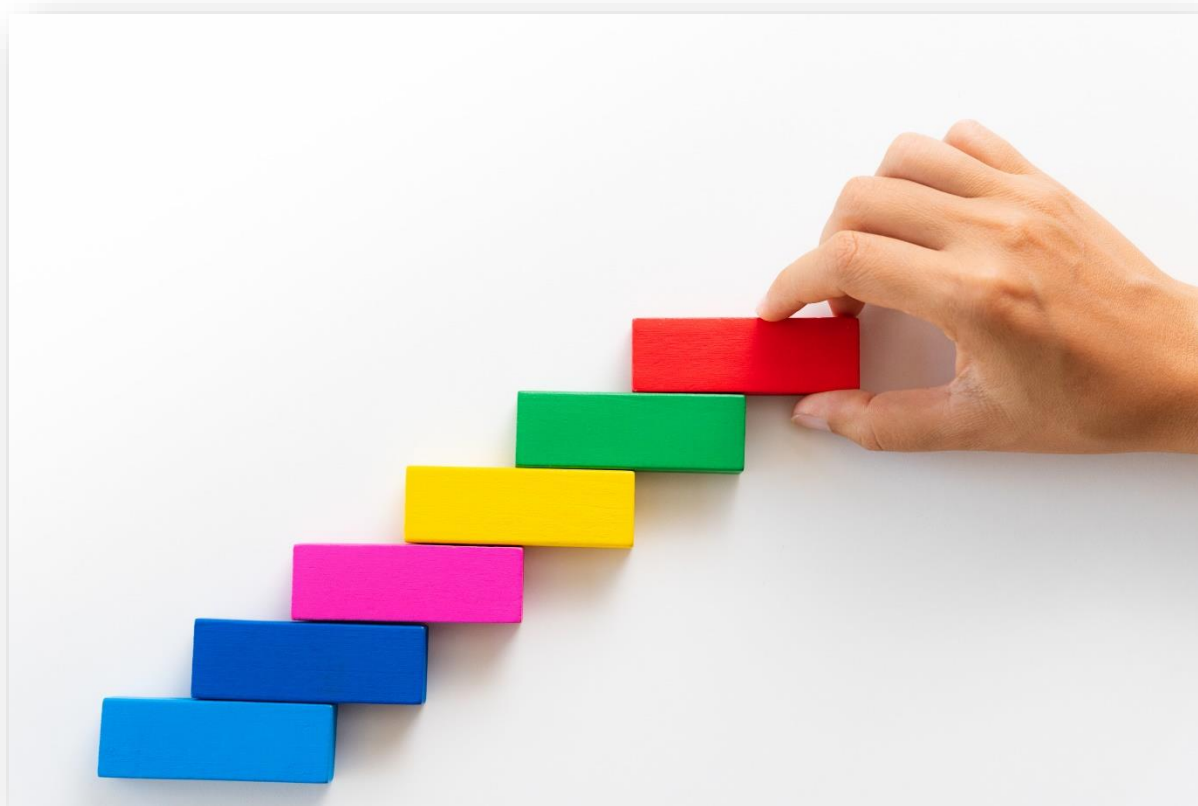


Build Your Platform for Success In 6 Easy Steps



By Cristina Smith

We have wisdom and great work to share.

How do people find you and find out about you? How do you actually get to your target audience? People need us. They need our wisdom, our experience, our products and our unique take on information. How do the people who need us most find us? With our help, of course. One concept of being visible and available to our potential customers is to have a business platform.

In construction, a platform is something that lifts you up and on which you and others can stand. The same is true in business. I believe the future of business and commitment building resides in the idea of viewing our businesses as a platform for our communities. Win/win for everyone.

What does a platform look like? An author is said to possess a platform when they have built a following. Consultants might work with a business owner to build a platform through speaking, writing, blogging and connecting in social media. By building a digital platform, other businesses can easily connect their business with yours, build products and services on top of it, and co-create value.

The cool thing about our platforms is that once we have built the foundation, we can add onto it any way we want to. In this book, we will dip into six ways to grow your platform.

Even if you don't think you have a platform right now, you do. It just needs to be looked at and defined that way. Find and refine your foundation. The platform includes the business basics of your mission and vision.

Mission- Your mission says what your business hopes to accomplish.

Vision- Your vision is aspirational. It communicates what you hope to achieve as a company and paints a picture of what company success will look like.

If you haven't already written these statements, please do so. The time is now. Don't worry, they can evolve and change as your business does.



1. Tighten Your Tribe

Many of us are entrepreneurs who provide services that are wonderful for almost everyone, like wellness practices or coaching. As caring, compassionate practitioners or product providers, we like to be available to this larger tribe or target audience.

It's great to want to help everyone. It is, however, hard to be all things to all people, as the old saying goes. If you seek to do so, you can easily end up exhausted physically, mentally, emotionally and financially from being over extended.

Here's a good solution. Pick an ideal client that you can easily connect with. Defining *your* ideal client is key to finding success. Who are they? What age group do they fall under? Where do they live? By asking yourself these questions, you will be able to narrow down your tribe based on various characteristics. Knowing your tribe will also help you to create relevant and high-impact content. Of course, you can't talk to everyone. By attempting to do so, you may end up talking to no one. Once you have identified your tribe, focus on answering their most important questions.

After listing the main characteristics of your tribe, you will be in the perfect position to know the main social media platforms that they use. This knowledge is critical as it will determine your next course of action. It will be meaningless to work on gaining followers on Facebook when a big percentage of your target tribe is on Twitter or Instagram. This helps you work smarter, not harder.

Building a tribe can take you months and even years. You won't achieve everything overnight. Keep putting effort in even if things seem to go slowly. It takes time and patience.

Bottom line: A tribe is one of the most valuable resources that you and your business can have. Like minded individuals help each other out in innumerable ways, and enjoy the opportunity to do so. And the personal connection, as well as the business one.



2. Claim Your Expert Status

Now that you have identified your tribe, show and tell them why they would benefit from checking out your platform. What are your services, products or offerings? What's your niche, and how do you fit in it? Your niche is what demonstrates and quantifies your uniqueness. Spend some real in-depth time exploring this. As in problem solving, the more time and consciousness you spend honing your niche, the easier everything else will be.

Why should I listen to you? What's in it for me? These are the two questions a successful entrepreneur answers in every communication with their tribe. Become an expert in the subjects your tribe most wants to know about.

How do you pick the right expertise to share? Find what your tribe is actively looking for. Do they need help with solving a specific set of problems? Express your ability to deliver what they want and need. How do you know which topic to pick? Look out for money flows within the niche.

If you are not already an expert in that specific aspect of your business, become one. Take the trainings. Get the certificates. Start posting, writing and speaking about your niche. Apply for awards. Become the go to person on that subject. Even though we get tired of saying our message over and over and over again, resist the temptation to give up.

Stay focused on the two important questions your tribe wants you to answer: *Why should I listen to you?* and *What's in it for me?*

It can help you become a money magnet.



3. Volunteer

As a known expert in your field, there are likely many organizations that help the kind of people you serve and would love for you to help. Studies have shown that the old truism is true; it is in giving that we receive.

Find one of them and offer to volunteer, even if it isn't exactly something directly associated with your business. Maybe it's taking tickets at a fundraiser or serving on a bylaws committee.

What matters is that you are there with people who care about and may even be a part of your tribe.

This will offer you many opportunities to connect and potentially collaborate and grow your business. It will also brighten many lives, most of all, your own.



4. Create Community

As wonderful as it is to step into existing organizations based on your tribe, there is great value in creating community around you and your expertise. Expand outward, based on your particular set of skills and offerings.

Consider starting a Meet-Up or other type of regular gathering that you organize based on your expertise. Remember to focus on what your tribe is most interested in. Bring in speakers or pick a topic and have discussions or a blend. A variety of formats seems to work best for ongoing groups.

It doesn't have to be hard, complex or fancy. Once a month is fine. Lunch time or happy hour seems to work best for many people, depending on the niche. Hairdressers would find it easier to meet on a different day and time than office workers. You can make it easy and meet at a restaurant or bring a sack lunch to your office. Make it work for you. This will help bring the people who need you directly to you. It will also put you in contact with prospective allies in your circle.



5. Become a Confident, Polished Speaker

In order for you to best serve your tribe, you need to communicate well. That means becoming a good public speaker. Communicating your ideas clearly and presenting them openly in a public forum is an essential component of success across several domains of life.

Being a good public speaker can help you advance your career, grow your business, and form strong collaborations. It can help you promote ideas and move people to action on issues that affect them directly and society at large. To do any of these things well requires a fair amount of standing in front of an audience and delivering a pitch, an idea, or a body of work.

Sometimes the only thing that stands between you and your audience is fear. And that fear is called *Glossophobia* - a really cool and geeky name for the fear of public speaking.

Fortunately, we can tame that fear through practice and mentoring. There is a wonderful organization called Toastmasters International that has chapters most everywhere. It is a non-profit educational organization that has been teaching public speaking and leadership skills since 1924. Their programs have helped people from diverse backgrounds become more confident speakers, communicators, and leaders. It is reasonably priced, highly supportive and very effective. Even if you are already comfortable speaking to groups, see what you can do to hone and polish your skills. The practice will make everything so much easier.



6. Get Published...and Read

Getting published has become a holy grail of business success. The good news is that it is easier than ever to get published. The trick is getting people to read what you've written. Some of that has to do with where you publish, the other part is how you write.

You want to develop your *brand voice* in everything you write, from an email, to a post, to an article.

Here are a few tips:

Your brand voice IS: real, approachable, friendly, fun, passionate, empathetic, understanding, genuine, authoritative, reliable, intelligent, confident, sincere etc.

Your brand voice IS NOT: arrogant, superior, insensitive, pretentious, snooty, diminutive, cold, unresponsive, brash, irritable, careless, crude, etc.

Your articles are not all about how great you are.

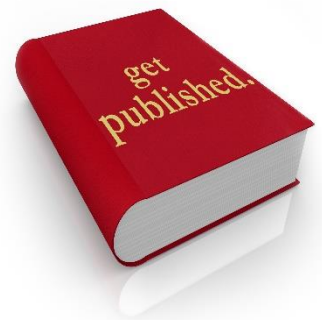
Spell check is your friend. Your writing has as few typos as possible.

Reading what you write out loud can help catch some of these mistakes. Work with an editor and/or proofreader. Another set of eyes can help immensely, and see things we original writers miss. Ask your friends or family members to read your work.

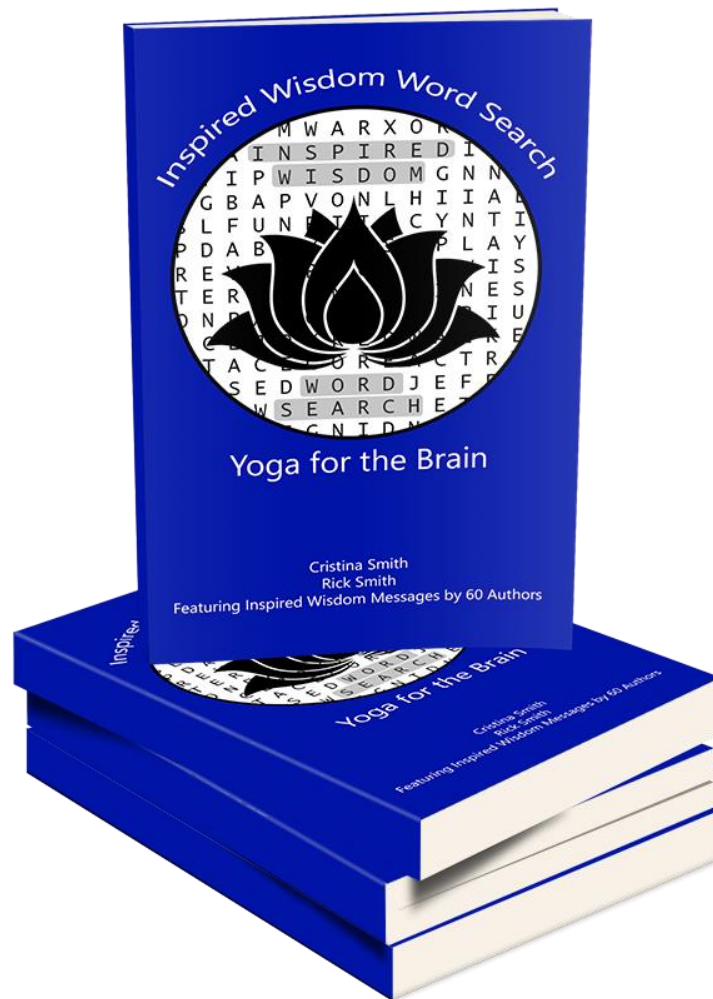
Some different places to get published in addition to social media and your blog are:

- Your community newspaper as a columnist.
- An online journal related to your expertise.
- Medium.com
- A newsletter for a non-profit organization related to your expertise.

If you want to be published in a book and want to try it out, consider being included in an anthology. It can introduce you to the publishing process with a small investment that can lead to big results, including the possibility of becoming a best-selling, award-winning author.



If you feel called to being published in an anthology, I would love to offer you an opportunity. I would love for you to consider becoming a contributing author in my next book, Inspired Wisdom Word Search: Yoga for the Brain. I started off in an anthology and now I want to play it forward. If you're interested, please check out the website. www.InspiredWisdomWordSearch.com



I wish you success, health and happiness in your great
work of making the world a better place.

I appreciate you sharing your unique wisdom and gifts.
Together, with kindness and compassion, we live our
highest visions of ourselves.

Namaste,
Cristina



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