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**6 Steps To Get "Slightly" Famous**

**By Steven Van Yoder**

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A few years ago, Bruce Smith experienced a slowdown in his Salt Lake City-based travel agency. Airlines had eliminated his sales commissions. The recession and recent terrorist attacks also took a toll. And because the travel industry was ultra-competitive, he knew he had to find ways to distinguish his company from thousands of other travel agencies.

Then, he had a fortunate accident. His wife asked him where they would celebrate their first wedding anniversary. When he gave her a blank look, she set about planning a trip—but wouldn't tell him what she was planning. Because he enjoyed the mystery leading up to the trip, and the hints his wife gave him, he repackaged his travel service as The Veiled Voyage, selling 'destination unknown' vacations to couples and others.

Smith's clever branding strategy was a hit. It not only helped him create a unique and memorable brand, but also made him 'slightly' famous.

Now, most of Smith's business comes through referrals from happy clients who eagerly tell their friends about The Veiled Voyage. He's regularly featured in newspapers, magazines and radio programs and was even invited to speak at a national travel conference. Moreover, he's been able to extend his brand with a major grocery store chain through a lucrative co-branding relationship that has further expanded his company.

**The 'Slightly' Famous You**

Some business owners attract clients and customers like magic. They do not cold call or rely on advertising. Yet they're regularly featured in newspapers and magazines and get invited to speak at conferences. Everyone knows their name, and they get all the business they can handle.

It's almost as though they were famous.

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In fact, they are, but not in the way movie stars and athletes are famous—they're just slightly famous. Just famous enough to make their names come to mind when people are looking for a particular product or service. They get more business – not only more, but the right kind of business – and they don't have to work so hard to get it.

Want to join them and enjoy this ideal state of affairs, where customers come to you? You can, but it may require a new way of thinking and a new marketing strategy. Although their efforts take different forms, underlying them all are six basic principles.

### 1. Targeting the best prospects

Slightly famous entrepreneurs focus their marketing to target the best prospects.

Alex Fisenko is known in the world of coffee as 'the Dean of Beans.' The 60-something coffee expert started his first espresso shop in the 1960s. Since then, he's focused his energies and now sells his expertise on launching a successful coffee business to aspiring entrepreneurs. Alex conducts coffee shop seminars and sells a training course called 'Espresso Business Success.'

His Web site, [www.espressobusiness.com](http://www.espressobusiness.com), generates thousands of dollars a month in products sales and consulting engagements in the United States, Thailand, South Korea, Belgium, Saudi Arabia, and Barbados. 'By targeting the best prospects, I now make more money through book sales and consultations than when I ran coffee shops,' says Fisenko.

### 2. Developing a unique market niche

Small businesses with a 'slightly famous' strategy establish themselves within a carefully selected market niche that they can realistically hope to dominate.

Dan Poynter, for example, is a successful self-publisher who started writing books about parachuting and hang-gliding over thirty years ago. Though it might sound as if his audience would be too small to generate significant sales, he knew his market and where to find them. Best of all, he has the market all to himself!

Rather than try to fight for attention in general bookstores, he sold books to skydiving clubs, parachute dealers, and the U.S. Parachute Association. He developed a reputation in skydiving circles, and has enjoyed steady sales of his books for more than three decades.

### 3. Positioning your business as the best solution

Positioning is about identifying a key attribute of your company not offered by competitors and that is clearly valuable to your target market.

When Harry Shepherd started his bookkeeping service a few years ago, he realized that he was in competition with dozens of other bookkeepers selling essentially the same thing. To stand out, he mastered a popular accounting program and marketed himself as a 'QuickBooks Software Training

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Consultant.'

Shepherd went from blending into a sea of look-alike competitors to occupying a compelling market position. He charged higher fees, and he did not have to work as hard to get new clients. Word spread fast among accountants as they referred him to their clients. He even trained other bookkeepers to use accounting software.

### 4. Maintaining your visibility

When was the last time your name appeared in print? Yesterday? Last week? A month ago? Just because you remember doesn't mean a potential customer will. To become 'slightly' famous, you need to have your message out there, if not continuously, then often enough to keep your name alive in customers' minds.

When Bart Baggett decided to make handwriting analysis his career, he embraced the media, and studied newspapers, magazines, and radio and television programs to find out what types of guests were in demand, and then looked for ways to tie his professional abilities to specific media. His

strategy paid off.

At the height of the O.J. Simpson trial, he sent out a news release about Simpson's handwriting that resulted in several timely media interviews. He later appeared on Court TV to discuss Timothy McVey's handwriting, and was recommended by the director of that program to CNN. A feature in Biography Magazine led to stories in the London Times, the Dallas Morning News, and others.

### 5. Enhancing your credibility

The surest way to earn credibility is by establishing yourself as a 'recognized' expert with intimate knowledge of your clients, customers and industry. Experts out-position their competitors because they are recognized as knowing more than their competitors.

Fred Tibbitts, Jr. founded Fred Tibbitts & Associates to help food and beverage companies reach global markets. He strategically cultivated a reputation in his industry as a well-connected and knowledgeable global beverage-marketing expert who is fluent in all the details of his business.

Tibbitts monitors global beverage trends on a daily basis while staying in contact with account managers at hotels and restaurants. He hosts a series of special events, 'Fred Tibbitts Spring & Autumn Dinners with Special Friends,' in key markets, including Hong Kong, Singapore, and New York. Tibbitts also contributes a column to Hospitality International Magazine and numerous industry publications.

### 6. Establishing your brand and reputation

Slightly famous entrepreneurs use their smallness and specialty in ways that corporate giants can't touch. They make sure their brands strike an emotional chord by bringing their business 'soul' to the

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forefront of their marketing.

When you meet Dave Hirschkop at a trade show, don't expect to shake his hand. That's because he'll be wearing a straitjacket while standing before a simulated insane asylum to promote his popular line of 'Insanity' hot sauces.

Dave established his brand by making the hottest sauce possible. Instead of sensual pleasure, he promised pain, even danger. Now, Dave's Gourmet, Inc. steps to the front of the crowded hot sauce category because he embraced a humorous branding strategy that resulted in fiercely loyal customers and great media exposure.

When Dave introduced his Insanity Sauce at the National Fiery Foods Show in New Mexico, he made attendees sign a release form before tasting from a bottle that came in a coffin-like box wrapped with yellow police tape. His best, if unintended, publicity coup happened when a show promoter had a minor respiratory problem after tasting his sauce, and banned him from the show.

To enjoy 'slightly' famous status, you don't have to be insane. But, you must cultivate a brand identity that will become the guiding star of your entire business. It will ensure that all your marketing efforts pull in the same direction. You'll waste less time, make fewer marketing mistakes, and stand out in an increasing cluttered world.

Steven Van Yoder is author of *Get Slightly FamousT: Become a Celebrity in Your Field and Attract More Business with Less Effort*. Visit

to read the book and learn

about 'slightly' famous teleclasses, workshops, and marketing materials to help small businesses and solo professionals attract more business.

### **Birkenstock Boots – Durable Footwear With Sole To Boot**

**By Helen Walters**

When you think about birkenstock footwear, most likely sandals, and perhaps clogs come to mind. Certainly that is what they are most famous for. Very comfortable, durable sandals that are great for both casual daily wear, and even casual summer parties. Those who have used 'Birks' know that they will last for ages and gently form to the shape of your feet to provide an excellent fit that is just right for you. If you have any doubt, simply slip on another person's pair and you'll understand.

However, Birkenstock has recently added boots to their line of footwear products expanding out from sandals and clogs to include both shoes and Birkenstock boots. Time will tell if they are as successful as the sandal line, but if their sandals are any proof, the boots should be a success as well.

There are 3 basic types – approach/day trip boots in the Birkenstock Alpine series, regular aggressive

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hiking boots in their Rockford line, and a several trendy boot styles like the Segovia Calf–boot for women.

When you go out to look for a new pair of Birkenstocks, you may find that they fit a little differently than what you are used to. Don't let this bother you. Simply try on a slightly different size and you should be able to find a pair that is comfortable for your feet.

No question boots are not what made Birkenstock famous. However they their experience producing top end casual footwear gave them a great base for developing a quality line of boots from the start. They were able to do it all without loosing sight of their core principle of simplicity and durability.

So, the next time your go shopping for a quality pair of boots or shoes be sure to check out what Birkenstock has to offer. They may be slightly more costly than other sandals, but they will last much longer, and will be more comfortable on your feet and back as well.

provides in depth information and reviews on

Birkenstock Sandals and most other Birkenstock footwear including boots at:

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