

Becoming an Expert Media Commentator

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Hard times have hit the news business. Some of the most resilient, established newspapers such as “The Wall Street Journal” and “The New York Times” have cut 30 percent of their newsroom staffs. Digital-only outlets like “BuzzFeed” and “Vice” offer little in the way of comprehensive news coverage.

As newsrooms have lost bandwidth, they have also lost depth as often the first cuts in staff are the most experienced journalists — those who provide in-depth analysis and context about complicated subjects like financial markets, politics and health care.

Enter the chief executive — the potential trove of expertise for the new media landscape.

“The world’s media outlets need experts and we, as business leaders, have the knowledge and the context, and are perfectly positioned to offer it,” says **Dave Maney**, an 18-year member of YPO. “The media is crying out for experts who can provide that connect-the-dot content. We are all increasingly in knowledge-based industries, and almost regardless of your field, what you are really selling is the competency of your key people.”

Founder and CEO of Deke Digital, Maney is also a national economic and financial writer and commentator for “The Daily Beast” and “Forbes,” where his “Economic Revolution” column examines the future of our information-soaked, search-driven economy and world. He is also a regular economic commentator for Fox News and the Fox Business Network.

An advantage to becoming an expert resource for the media according to Maney is that when business leaders put the information out there by writing content or serving as a resource, they “can go deep and provide data and perspectives others can’t. You bring authenticity and voracity particularly today with the rise of fake news.”

While speaking with YPO’s Digital, Marketing and Media Network, Maney shared his insights on the future of news and how business leaders lend their perspective and become knowledge experts for news outlets. He offered four keys to develop a personal media strategy for creating content:

1. Decide why you’re doing this in the first place and what you are trying to make happen. If you want more customers for your business, then that’s what your content should be focused on.

2. Think about your potential audience and what you think they would want to learn from you that they could not learn from anyone else. When you begin to develop content, these are the nuggets you put on display.
3. Seek out media platforms that would most likely accept your content and that your prospective audience reads and pays attention to. This is where you want to be. Obviously, you want to put the most credible publications on top of your list, but don't discount trade publications and niche news sources.
4. Learn what content formats the media platforms you identified need. Some platforms prefer video, infographics or an index, but I find that written content is preferred. A 700-word article that connects the dots on something you are deeply knowledgeable about still fits the bill.

Executing the content

The next challenge is creating content whether you create it all on your own or you find help. "Fear of the blank page among many executives is common," explains Maney, "but cadence is important. Once you begin writing on a regular basis, the better you'll get and the more credibility you get in the media. You'll begin to feel the tangible benefits."

Once you create your content, it's time to determine how you get your foot in the door with the media platforms you've identified. "The answer is not uniform or easy," says Maney. As newsrooms shrink, it gets harder to get your foot in the door but once in, Maney explains that media channels know that they can rely on you and you can actually get "a blank check" to produce and distribute your content. "Use your relationships just as you do in business or when starting a company. Reach out to your connections or pay someone to do it."

Over time, Maney stresses the importance of knowing what you are getting in return for your effort. Make sure to track exposure to get the full picture. You can use this information for lead generation and there are marketing pros that can help you.

Once you gain authority as an expert and the link is made between you and the content you are providing, that is when you can begin to measure its effectiveness. "When that link is made and it gets under the nose of influencers and the prospects that look to these influencers, that's the ultimate payoff," explains Maney.