



AN MX HOW-TO GUIDE

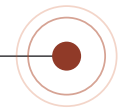
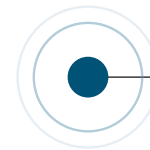
# EXPERT ELEVATION

Amplifying Personal Brands  
to Drive B2B Sales

# TURN YOUR THOUGHT LEADERS INTO SALES LEADERS

When you think lead generation and sales, your instinct is probably to look outward. Out toward your prospects and pipelines and the opportunities out on the horizon that you can't see clearly yet.

That outward perspective is certainly important to your business. But you might also benefit from looking within. You might find greater success than you ever imagined by mining your organizational chart for experts with personal brands that will attract attention (and sales) for your corporate brand.



# INTRODUCTION

The idea of the personal brand isn't new. But what is fairly new—and becoming more and more successful—is the idea that someone's personal brand can help the company they work for. In the B2B world, the most valuable personal brands represent expertise. And using that expertise to draw attention to your business might be your best way to increase sales. At The Mx Group, we call this process “expert elevation.”

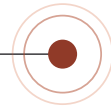
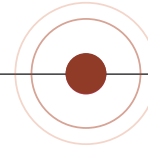
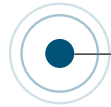
## **This guide will help you:**

- Understand why you need in-house experts.
- Identify experts within your organization.
- Learn how to elevate those experts.



INTRODUCTION

PERSONAL CONNECTION



## THE DIGITAL MODEL IS HERE TO STAY

Even after the pandemic ends, the expectations for digital buying will continue to grow. There will be fewer in-person events.

That means you'll need to continue providing access to the digital content buyers need for self-service—and your content needs to stand out from everyone else's.

**80%** *of B2B sales interactions between suppliers and buyers will occur in digital channels by 2025.<sup>1</sup>*



**89%** *of B2B decision-makers expect the remote and digital model to stick around for the long run.<sup>2</sup>*



<sup>1</sup> Gartner, "Future of Sales 2025: Why B2B Sales Needs a Digital-First Approach"

<sup>2</sup> McKinsey, "These eight charts show how COVID-19 has changed B2B sales forever"



THE  
DIGITAL MODEL

TODAY'S  
B2B BUYERS

## BUYERS WANT PERSONAL CONNECTION

These days, you probably aren't attending any trade shows or events where you can meet new prospects in person, but they're essentially wandering around the internet looking for you. They want expertise, and they want to know it came from a real person they can trust.

1. They'll pay more attention to the bylined article from your senior team member than a corporate-branded white paper.
2. They'll pay even more attention if that senior team member publishes content regularly.
3. Prospective clients will start to feel like they know your experts—and therefore, your company. This builds trust for all involved.

According to the 2021 Edelman Trust Barometer, only 44% of people trust CEOs as a source of information about a company, while 53% trust "a person like [themselves]."

Likewise, a recent article from Research World states that "a client will go to an individual in a company to discuss an opportunity, not necessarily the business first."

44%

*of people trust CEOs  
as a source of information.*

53%

*trust "a person like [themselves]."*



PERSONAL  
CONNECTION

IDENTIFY  
YOUR EXPERTS



## TODAY'S B2B BUYERS SELF-SERVE

Before you can start thinking about experts boosting sales, you have to understand who you're selling to. The average B2B buyer behaves differently today than just a few years ago. That's because more and more of today's B2B buyers are digital natives and/or have grown accustomed to working remotely, due to the pandemic.

These factors have influenced their buying behavior in one major way: **B2B buyers now follow a self-serve buying process, just like consumers.**

They evaluate the market, compare value propositions and determine how services and products fit their needs—all on their own. Their purchasing process has become self-serve, too, even for large dollar amounts.

"Notably, **70%** of B2B decision makers say they are open to making new, fully self-serve or remote purchases in excess of \$50,000, and **27%** would spend more than \$500,000."

McKinsey, "These eight charts show how COVID-19 has changed B2B sales forever"

TODAY'S  
B2B BUYERS

5 STEPS TO  
EXPERT ELEVATION



## HOW TO IDENTIFY YOUR EXPERTS

Experts are usually executives or subject matter experts (SMEs), but they can also be members of your organization who offer a unique perspective, such as former clients or even competitors. They might also just be hard workers with an engaging story. Remember, the expert isn't always the person with the most impressive title.

### **UNCOVER STRONG PERSONAL BRANDS.**

Check social media to discover employees who have already worked to build a personal brand and following. If your organization is especially large or if you don't know your co-workers well, ask mid- and senior-level managers to make recommendations from their teams.

### **MATCH EXPERTS TO OFFERINGS.**

Try to identify one expert per service offering, primary product family or sub-brand. Start by comparing your website navigation to your organizational chart.

### **PRIORITIZE DIVERSITY.**

Be sure to highlight multiple experts as a way to elevate a range of voices for prospects and customers to learn from. Consider experts of all ages, all backgrounds, all genders and ethnicities.

### **CHOOSE THE RIGHT NUMBER.**

The number of experts you should strive for depends on the size of your organization. Unless you're a one-person operation, you need more than one expert so you don't lose your entire following if that person leaves the company. But don't select so many that it's hard to keep track.

IDENTIFY  
YOUR EXPERTS

STEP 3

## 5 STEPS TO EXPERT ELEVATION

### STEP 1: GET EXPERT BUY-IN

After you've selected your experts, meet with them individually and as a group to get their buy-in on your expert elevation plan. Explain how showcasing their expertise can benefit them and the business, and get their commitment to work with you.



### STEP 2: DEVELOP CONTENT

Once you've identified your experts, brainstorm content types and messaging with them. Always be sure to use their time wisely! [Our how-to guide](#) goes into detail on how to hold effective sessions with your experts.

Here are a few tips for content development:

- ☐ Use your experts' lexicon.
- ☐ Feature experts in corporate marketing materials.
- ☐ Put corporate info in experts' personal bios and experts' bios on your corporate website.

All of these efforts work together to build trust for the experts as well as your organization.



STEP 2

STEP 5



## 5 STEPS TO EXPERT ELEVATION

### STEP 3: PROMOTE YOUR EXPERTS IN YOUR INDUSTRY

Always look for opportunities to build industry recognition for your experts. Here are some ways to get started:

- ☐ Help your experts publish bylined articles in trade journals.
- ☐ Sign your experts up for panel discussions and webinars.
- ☐ Consider hosting your own online event series featuring your experts.

### STEP 4: USE SOCIAL MEDIA

Encourage your experts to build and capitalize on their network by getting more active on social media, particularly, LinkedIn. Remind them that it's best practice to leverage social media interactively, not a broadcast mechanism.

Here are a few more tips:

- ☐ Ask your experts to collaborate with colleagues to amplify each other's personal brands by commenting, liking, and sharing posts.
- ☐ Create social posts, short videos, and other unique content for your experts they can easily share and expound on.
- ☐ Use social listening tools to pull engagement data to learn what kinds of content and posting styles are making the biggest impact.

STEP 4

CONCLUSION

## 5 STEPS TO EXPERT ELEVATION

### STEP 5: START SELLING

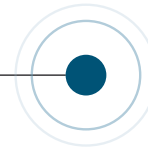
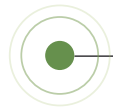
Remember, today's B2B buyer is willing to make fully self-serve purchases. But in some cases, a meeting (in-person or virtual) or demo might help.

Here are some tips:

- ☐ Include your experts in sales meetings.
- ☐ Provide coaching on presentation skills and video conferencing etiquette.
- ☐ Defer to client preferences for virtual meetings (Zoom fatigue is real).



## STEP 4



## CONCLUSION

Today's B2B buyers self-serve throughout the buying process, relying on digital content to help them make their purchasing decisions. In order to stand out, your content has to make a personal connection. It should come from your in-house experts.

Now is the time to elevate those experts to help them build affinity and preference for your organization.

Their voice is the company's voice. Their personal brand benefits the corporate brand. It's the key to building trust—and sales—going forward.





## The Mx Group

The Mx Group is a B2B marketing agency with a 30-year history of solving complex marketing challenges. We impact our clients' revenue and growth by connecting the customer experience through strategy, creative, demand generation and digital development. We're aligned around one goal: creating solutions that propel buyers and businesses forward.

[TheMxGroup.com](https://TheMxGroup.com)



@MxGroup



/company/TheMxGroup



/TheMxGroup



@TheMxGroup