

EPISODE 26

How Transformation Professionals Can Take Their Own Medicine

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Hi, it's Rob Llewellyn here and welcome to episode twenty-six of transformation management. Thank you so much for joining me today. As always, I'm going to do my best to help you get better equipped to manage and lead transformation.

I hear from people almost on a daily basis, telling me they're a digital transformation professional, and that they're either having difficulty finding a rewarding and meaningful transformation role, or - in the case of freelance consultants - finding companies that can afford to hire them.

A lot of us have struggled at some time during our careers to convince people that what we offer is worth paying for, and that we're the right person for the job. To an extent, this struggle is associated with the old traditional way of finding work, which is submitting a CV or resume with dozens or hundreds of others, hoping to be among the shortlist that gets interviewed, and then get hired.

The truth is, the odds for many people to get hired in this old and antiquated system are low. Typically, they find themselves working for much lower salaries or rates because and they're commoditised among the herd of other transformation experts and don't stand out.

The irony is that while all digital transformation professionals expect the organisations they work with to take advantage of digital to thrive in the digital economy, many of these transformation professionals haven't yet recognised that they need to do exactly the same themselves. Which if you think about it, is a little ironic. It's like the out of shape fitness instructor or the marriage counselor who files for divorce, or the business development coach with no customers.

If transformation professionals rely outdated ways of finding new opportunities, they'll struggle, and they'll subject themselves to the same painful ordeal that others now avoid, because they've learned to use digital tools and systems to attract and win the best opportunities.

In the way that company leaders need to first change their mindsets and adopt new ways of working, individual professionals also need to do the same when it comes to their search for new opportunities. They need to let go of limiting beliefs that are holding them back and keeping them stuck with old and ineffective ways of finding work.

The reality is that a lot of people don't know what they don't know about using digital to attract new opportunities. After a while, they learn that the common ways of using LinkedIn and other social media channels along with the ability to upload their CV to hundreds of job portals, and even making a web site of their own, isn't effective.

And for many people, it's not that they're not prepared to work hard at it. It's just that they're stuck using antiquated techniques to find work. Ways that have been replaced by far more effective models that are being used by younger generations, and also by older people who have embraced new ways of generating opportunities for themselves.

For most transformation professionals with good experience and credentials, all they're missing is the right approach, techniques and the right set of digital tools.

So, I want to share with you a simple solution that can move people away from old ways of working. One that requires them to embrace new ways of thinking and working, and a handful of affordable and easy to use digital tools.

A lot of people believe that if they can learn more about their area of expertise that companies will come knocking at their door. And while we all need to keep learning, we need to avoid the trap of spending all our time becoming a better expert. Because being an expert isn't enough these days.

You see while traditional experts have knowledge and use traditional ways to find new opportunities, digital economy experts have re-positioned themselves and built an automatic job or customer acquisition system of their own.

This is exactly what I did many years ago and what countless others now do to enjoy a far more lucrative, convenient and fulfilling professional life.

So, let me tell you about a framework that can transform the way you find new opportunities. And listen, while you and others listening to this podcast have an interest in transformation, the approach will work for almost every profession.

You first need a good foundation to build this framework on, and this foundation is the core area of expertise you already possess. Basically, it's the expertise that you want people to pay you for.

The foundation is your core area of expertise, and then sitting on top of that is a framework, which has six pillars. Those pillars are Platform, Audience, Authority, Marketing, Physical Profit, and Digital Profit.

What enables you to build these pillars is a set of digital tools. You can also refer to them as your digital tactics, which help you achieve your objectives.

Let's look at the first pillar which is Platform.

Your web platform is the foundation of your digital presence in the world. Whether your target audience is in your home town or on the other side of the planet, as customers, almost all of us research potential suppliers online before we do any business with them.

Your web presence is one of the most fundamental things you need to establish as a professional. This will be your shop front. The place where passers-by can come in and look around. And you need to build it on your own web space. Don't think that your profile or even posts on LinkedIn, Facebook or Twitter or even someone else's web site is a good alternative for your own web space because it's not. If I'm honest, that's just being lazy. And laziness doesn't get us anywhere in life.

You need to give people a central place to come when they want to explore what you have to offer, without having to get in touch with you.

Building your platform isn't something to be afraid of at all, because you're unlikely to be the one that actually builds the platform. These platforms are already built. All you do is tweak them in a control panel so that they look and function the way you want them to. I know people in their 90's who are doing this, so there's no excuse!

Your platform will host the content that will build your authority in the market and it'll be where you build much of your audience.

But having a platform without an audience is like having a great store that no one visits. You know the store that's stuck right at the end of a dark corridor where hardly any people can be seen. You don't want your platform to be like that,

because you can fill it with the all kinds of terrific content where you demonstrate your expertise but if no one sees it, then it's a lost cause.

Let's look at pillar number two, which is audience.

Unless you have the right audience, you'll just be another transformation expert out there. Basically, lost in a crowd of other transformation experts. You, your expertise and your platform will all go largely unnoticed by the people that are ready to become your audience. If only they knew you existed and how you can help solve their problems.

As I keep saying, experts have knowledge, while authorities have knowledge plus an audience. And your platform will be your digital stage from which you grow your audience and present to that audience, which in turn grows your authority.

The audience pillar is absolutely vital to your success.

Your employers or customers will be hidden away in your audience until they're ready to approach you and buy from you. From my personal experience, you simply can't tell where the next opportunity will come from. But you know they'll come.

So first you need to build your audience and then you need to establish your authority with that audience. But think about it, if you never build that audience, you should never expect to have people approach you to pay a premium for your expertise.

Keep in mind that on their own, each of the pillars of the framework won't be very effective. They need to integrate together in order to have your digital business strategy come to life and start working for you. In the same way that functions and processes in a company need to be integrated.

If you launch your platform but have little if any audience, you'll have a platform that very few people care about, know about or come back to.

It's clear to most transformation professionals that the companies they want to help need new leads and opportunities to grow, and the same applies to any professional. What's less clear is exactly how they can acquire those new leads and opportunities, particularly in the digital age, when digital tools and innovative approaches are a vital part of doing that.

It starts with strategy, because there must be a strategy in place for you to turn people into leads and then into employers or paying customers. And that process is called lead generation.

Lead generation builds a database of people that have expressed an interest in your expertise. That database is built through contact information your audience gives you in exchange for some valuable content you give them. After all, if you're a transformation expert, you should be able to create something of value that you can give for free to your potential employers or customers.

So first you create what's known as a lead magnet. Which could be anything from a one-page PDF to something more substantial. But avoid overwhelming your reader. They want information they can absorb quickly. Not something that confuses them. Instead of trying to impress people with your in-depth transformation knowledge, focus on helping them in a practical way.

Hundreds of thousands of successful people and companies use this and similar techniques to acquire the email addresses of potential employers and customers. Don't for one minute fall into the trap of thinking that email is dead.

Audience growth is made up of a number of components, which I'll run through here just briefly.

Firstly, if someone isn't getting value from you, they're not going to pay attention to you. So, value must be present in order for your audience to grow.

Next is what do you stand for and communicate? Your audience needs to react with, "Yes! I Get this!" - they need to be thrilled that what you communicate online resonates with them, so much so that they begin to tell other people about you.

You need to demonstrate consistency. Show your audience that you care and that you don't simply show up when you have some free time. Show up for them regularly. That's why most authorities set schedules for creating and sharing content, because if it's not in a schedule somewhere, there's a good chance that you'll find a legitimate excuse for not following through. A lot of people make the mistake of only getting proactive when they have no work and then wonder why they struggle to find their next opportunity.

And finally, be generous. Trust is built when you do something nice for someone else, with no strings attached. Do enough genuinely good and helpful things for people, and they'll start talking. Go out of your way to do good things for your

audience. Don't be someone who is clearly only out to get something for themselves.

If you struggle with this concept, read a book called *The Go-Giver*. It's a little story about the power of giving written by Bob Burg and John Mann. There's also the companion book called *Go Givers* sell more.

The more you grow your audience in an authentic way, the more you'll be laying the foundations for people to come knocking at your door.

You've heard me say it a number of times already, which is that while experts have knowledge, authorities have knowledge plus an audience. And Without an audience, you'll struggle to get people coming to you for help.

What happens to transformation professionals that don't make the shift to becoming an authority is that they allow themselves to remain just another one of the transformation experts that are all fighting for the same opportunities because they don't give potential employers or customers a strong enough reason to simply want them.

Now there are hundreds of thousands of people across social channels such as LinkedIn, all promising to do the same as you can do. Let's face it, it's not difficult to sprinkle some key words and phrases into a LinkedIn profile, CV or resume to look good on paper.

So, to be noticed in a crowded market you need to become an authority in front of your own audience. And you'll struggle to do that without using effective digital tools and systems.

There are plenty of experts that have exceptional knowledge, but if they don't have an audience, if they don't become an authority, they'll miss out on so much opportunity. And have to settle for mediocre financial rewards All because they fail to grasp the difference between being an expert and being an authority.

It's not the best experts that win the best opportunities, and I'm a perfect example of that. Yes, I'm good at what I do, but I know many people that are more qualified than me. They're incredible experts. But what they've not done is to elevate themselves from being an expert to an authority. And so, they stay stuck in low paid boring jobs.

While the best opportunities are seized by authorities, the rest scramble for the opportunities that are put out to market for them to fight over. They fight over the scraps. This is because a lot of expertise has become commoditised.

So, separate yourself from the herd of experts in your field and become that authority. And to do that, you need to leverage digital.

I made the shift some time ago and it completely changed not just my career, but also my life.

The fourth pillar in the digital business framework is the marketing pillar.

I often refer to marketing as the missing capability, that most experts suffer from. They've often spent years learning to become an expert at something, but they've spent little if any time in learning how to market themselves.

Fortunately, the face of marketing has changed a lot thanks to digital. And none of this is rocket science. While there are hundreds of variations of marketing, the concept of moving customers through a series of steps is the same.

Your marketing approach will capitalise on your audience and your authority. And your platform will also play a key role in your marketing.

With a few basic digital tools and an automated marketing process, you can move people through a funnel where they first become part of your audience, all the way through to becoming an employer or customer.

The next pillar is physical profit, and this is how most people make money at the moment. They physically go somewhere and offer their expertise in some way. That could be by meeting a customer and speaking with them, or doing a certain activity, etc. For most people, their physical time gets rewarded with payment, and without their physical involvement, they won't get any money.

This is the way most people have traditionally earned a living. They exchange time for money. It's a very traditional model.

And if you don't have the right companies approaching you for your expertise, you'll have a problem. You'll either be forced to work for low pay, to suffer financially from lack of work or even remain unemployed long-term.

But it needn't be that way. You simply need to focus on the Audience, Authority and Marketing pillars in the digital business framework and the physical profit pillar will build itself.

The idea of being an expert and expecting customers to line up on your doorstep has all but disappeared. Because experts are now in abundance. A quick search on LinkedIn will turn up all the experts you could every want.

And social media has made it very easy for anyone to present themselves as an expert. So, markets seem flooded. The problem is that many of these so-called experts are very low quality. Which means it's down to you to demonstrate to people through your online content, why you're different from the rest and separate yourself from the mediocre masses.

Last but not least we've got the digital profit pillar. Which is the biggest transformation you could bring about for yourself if you really wanted to take full advantage of the digital economy. This is the transformation I brought about for myself and now the CXO Transform platform generates the large majority of my income.

I'll just say that I know plenty of people in many different industries that are generating significant income for themselves in digital revenue. But the reality is that 99% of the world is still only spending their money through digital channels, while less than 1% are generating income for themselves through digital channels. But this is changing, as more people become accustomed to the fact that digital income is a means to replacing the old traditional way of making a living.

After the six pillars we have digital tactics, which are all the different ways that you can use digital tools to build the digital framework pillars I've talked about. They are the very cool digital tools you'll use to achieve your goals.

The key is to automate as much as you possibly can, so you don't get bogged down with things. Digital tools will enable you to implement simple but effective processes, so that your digital solutions are running an incredibly effective business development machine for you 24 hrs a day, 365 days a year.

While digital tools are critical to your success, in the way they are critical to the success of the companies you want to help, both will come down to how digital is used.

Remember the carpenter analogy? You can give me the finest set of carpentry tools, but because I haven't taken the time to learn how to use them, I won't be

producing anything impressive. Similarly, while half a billion people have a LinkedIn account, most of them have no repeatable system that helps them generate new opportunities for themselves using LinkedIn. They have the tool, but they don't know how to use it well.

So now I've shared the digital business framework with you, are you ready to make it part of your career or business development process? To build the pillars on top of your existing expertise.

I appreciate you listening, and here's a quote to finish off the day from John Chambers, the former executive chairman and CEO of Cisco.

“At least 40% of all businesses will die in the next 10 years... if they don't figure out how to change their entire company to accommodate new technologies.”

How will you accommodate new technologies to change the way you find new opportunities for yourself?

I hope you enjoyed this episode. Thanks for listening - Take care and I'll catch you in the next episode of transformation management. Bye.