

How to Become Your Industry's Obvious Expert

Interview with Stuart Selbst

Tom: Before we get started with the interview portion, I'd like to give the listeners some quick background on how we met and the reason for today's recording.

We met about six years ago at the South Mountain/Laveen Chamber of Commerce and we got to know each other through networking events. You then started helping me with all the tech repair on my computer. And slowly but surely, you moved away from that. I've been watching you from afar and have seen you rise to a very high level in your current industry.

I thought it would be great to share with our listeners how you went from being a computer repair tech to an industry expert. Today you're a business coach, you're getting requests for interviews, and you're an in-demand executive that people look to for answers.

Why don't you give us a little insight into what you do, and then we'll start getting into how you got to where you are today.

Stuart: Well, first of all, thank you for this interview. I love telling my story, and it's great to catch up with you.

When I started my IT company in 2002, I didn't know where it was going to go. I started fixing computers and doing some networking through the Greater Phoenix Chamber and the South Mountain/Laveen Chamber, which is how we met.

At that time, I was making the transition to what is called a managed service provider. I was probably a year into that when we met, and things were rocking and rolling. A managed service provider is someone who does something for a flat rate and is more consultative. I would still do some time and material work (fixing computers for friends like you) but I was quickly transitioning into a consultative practice to other businesses.

After I sold my IT firm in 2007, I thought about how I could help others become successful. I had spent about a year-and-a-half consulting a couple of different vendors in the industry. So, I broke out on my own to offer coaching services to smaller IT companies.

Over the last three or four years I've been fortunate to become considered an industry expert. I speak at a number of events. I do blogging and other things that we'll talk about in this interview. I help people elevate their game. It's not really about what I've done, but how I help others. That's what I've been about during my twenty plus years in the IT industry. Now I get to do it for multiple businesses around the world.

Tom: I remember having conversations with you as you worked on my computers. Even back then, you were talking about consulting for different businesses. What were some of the things that helped you realize there was a need for companies to have an IT consultant? I think there's a lot of people in business (especially service-related businesses) who want to do more consulting. What are the things that you saw that made you realize there was a need for IT consulting?

Stuart: There's a lot of businesses out there that get started due to mishaps, especially in today's economy. People lose their jobs. Sometimes people start businesses because of things that happen. I see this a lot, especially in the IT industry.

I started seeing myself as a CIO through the small businesses I was working with. Because of my education and background in business, I've always been good at building companies. I would sit down with my clients and say, "Listen. We should do this, this way." Surprisingly, they'd never had that kind of experience.

So I will tell anybody who wants to be consultative in any line of work to look at your client's business rather than your own. What can you do to benefit them? And when I started doing that a few years back (especially when I had my IT company) I kept asking myself what my business could do to benefit another company. Then I started asking businesses that question. What can I do to help you?

When I do that, there's almost always ten seconds of silence. Here's a computer guy asking what he can do to help you; not just talking about how much money he can take or whether he can bill you \$200.00 an hour. And after that ten seconds of silence, I got to listen for a half hour to a business owner saying, "We want to do this. We want to do this. We don't want to do this. We don't really need this." I am not an expert in their business. I am an expert at providing technology solutions.

When I started making the transition towards being more of an IT consultant, a business consultant that provided technology solutions and advised on staffing, I realized that this was the way I was going to go, and if and when I ever sold my company, I would want to help people with their IT needs.

Tom: The theme of this interview focuses on the steps that you took to make yourself the industry authority. It looks like simply asking the question of "what can I do to help you" really helps establish you as an authority, because you are looking to help. It's not about you, like you said. Why do you believe it's so important to be perceived as an industry authority rather than just an IT repair person?

Stuart: Well, let me answer the question with a question. Would you rather be working with an expert, or would you rather be working with somebody who can just do the job? Would you rather pay somebody \$150 an hour if they're perceived as the expert, or would you like to save a little money to have someone just do the job? Which one is going to benefit your business more?

Tom: Oh, the expert. Everyone wants the best.

Stuart: The answer is always going to be the person who can benefit your business more. Now I would like any small business owners listening to this to think about who you're dealing with. And the way I set myself as an industry expert was to have a successful company, be on panels at industry events (we'll talk about that in just a second) but more importantly to get people in my industry to see me as an expert. Even though I was just like everybody else looking for the same nuts to crack, I had my industry accepting me as an expert.

Then I started talking to clients and business owners and advising them of what they should be doing. By the time I had moved out of my first business, I had already set myself up as somebody who was the go-to person in my industry. I will use the hockey analogy that Wayne Gretzky always used to use. "Don't worry about where the puck is at. Where is the puck going?"

Where do you want to be down the road? You could be two steps down the road or five years down the road, but where do you want to be in the future? When I got out of my business, I was turning forty. That's not very old to be selling a business, but the last thing I wanted to be doing was crawling under somebody's desk.

Did I want to be pulling cables? Did I want to be managing these projects? No! As a business owner, as a CEO, I wanted to be the CEO. I wanted to be working on marketing strategy. Hiring the right people to do the job. Finding the right types of clientele or vendors to bring into the mix. I wanted to get out of that day-to-day stuff, and I no longer had a passion for the technical part anymore

We all use it all the time. I have two laptops that I use all day long. But the technology is not a passion for me anymore. Now it's just a hobby. What is a passion to me is an eNet expert who's teaching people. So I set myself up as an industry expert within the IT industry, what we call the "channel." And while I was still setting up my IT business, I was building out my network. And we all know how important networking is. I was networking within my own industry as well as businesses within my local community.

Tom: It sounds like you really had a vision of what you wanted for your future. You knew where you were going and it was just a matter of getting there.

Stuart: It was just a matter of getting there, Tom. But even now, with a successful consulting practice and clients around the globe, I need to be thinking about what I'm going to do next. What do I want to do when I turn forty-five? What do I want to do when I turn fifty? When do I want to retire? I always have some type of exit strategy.

That also makes me an industry authority, because I'm thinking about what's next: what's next for my clients and what's next for my industry. What am I going to talk about next? What do people want to hear from me? You always have to keep that vision going. Cut

on the bleeding edge of whatever you're doing and be able to talk about it with people in a way that they understand.

Tom: I want to talk about the specific marketing strategies that helped you get to the point where you wanted to be. Were there specific marketing strategies that you implemented? That you really tried to target for yourself?

Stuart: Are we talking currently, or are we talking in the past?

Tom: Well, probably both. How about starting off with the past and what you planned on doing? Did those things work? If they did, are you still using the same strategies today?

Stuart: When I had my IT company, I did zero marketing. I invested zero dollars into marketing. People will often look at me and say, "Wow, Stuart, I can't believe you did that. You've got to spend something on marketing." What I spent on marketing was about \$300 a year for the Chamber of Commerce and maybe a BNI membership.

I worked the system, so to speak. I put myself out there. I was out there shaking hands and kissing babies. I call it politicking. You've got to meet people. So many people are afraid to stick out their hand and say, "Hi, I'm Stu. It's nice to meet you." I have a friend and former client who I still stay in touch with, Dave Sherman would have his book out *306 Ways to Break the Ice*.

I like to call people in the IT industry wallflowers, because they'll go to the prom and stand against the wall. They'll go to a networking event and stand against a wall and wait for somebody to come to them. Most technical people will hide in the cupboard. I put myself out there. I was an extrovert even though I really wanted to be the introvert. People at times scare me, but I put myself out there. That probably did my marketing.

Today, I still do the same thing. I attend a lot of events and speak at some of them. I work with a number of key vendors within my industry. I write a blog. I have a website. I am out there on social media. I don't put any money into any kind of marketing, per se, because I am very picky about the clientele I take on now.

I let the industry promote. I let the things that I do within the industry, the places that I'm at within the industry promote me. The actual marketing for my business either now or then was really little to none. And today the way I market is through social media. Through Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and my blog. And I've used those tools to solidify my position as an expert within my industry.

Tom: Let's go into one of those aspects of social media. You mentioned you have a blog. You have a website. I'm a firm believer that writing and creating content that helps people is a great way to expand your reach and establish your position as an industry leader. How do you determine what topics to write about, whether it's on your blog or if you're writing for an industry publication? How do you determine where to distribute that material?

Stuart: That's a great question. Every now and then (and I'm sure you've experienced this) you get a little writer's block. Then something will click, and you'll want to write about everything. Right now I probably have fifteen articles that I've been working on over the last couple of months for my blog. I usually write about things that get under my skin or get on my nerves about the industry; people, vendors, whatever it happens to be.

Every one of my articles, everything that I write about, whether it's on my blog or in an industry publication or on Facebook has a story behind it. Everything is a story about something I've heard, something I've read, something's that's happened to one of my clients. That's how I get my creative juices flowing to write.

I tell my clients to write a blog and put themselves out there. Write a newsletter. Use relevant information. If it's relevant to me, and it's relevant to one of my clients; I would say there's a 95 percent chance it's relevant to the rest of the industry. They want to hear somebody say it. They want to see somebody put it out there. And maybe it's just relevant to business in general.

I try to talk or write in overall business terminology; not just technical terminology. Where I get my information is from things that happen, things that I've seen. Maybe bad customer service (I can talk about that all day long). Selling approaches. Business approaches.

Today I was on a conference call with five of my clients that are in a peer group that I run, and we were talking about the psychology of running a business successfully. And they were all quiet. So what's something I'm going to run about in the next couple of weeks? What's the psychology about running a business successfully? It's not about just selling or marketing or providing services. It's all of it together.

I'll think these things up while I'm driving in the car. I'll open up my iPhone voice recorder and start making notes as I'm driving. Getting that subject matter is pretty much whatever pops in my head or is relevant to my audience. That's one thing I do understand. I do understand who my audience is, who is reading my blog, who is reading what I say and who is attending the conferences that I'm speaking at.

Tom: If you're recommending to our clients that they should also do writing to help span their reach and establish their position as industry leaders, you probably run into a similar problem that I do. A lot of clients will say, "I'm not a writer. I don't really know how to write." What's your recommendation for that?

Stuart: Well, that's part of the same thing that I hear from my key people. "Oh, I'm not a salesperson. I can't sell." Well, you can put your mind to whatever you want to do. If you have a message, put it out there. And I then tell them to run it past me and I'll correct it.

See, my clients aren't alone. As a business coach, it's my job to make sure they're putting their best foot forward, and a big part of that is to verify what they're putting out to the world—what they're putting out on a blog, what they're putting out in social media—and just make sure it's working for them.

If it seems like you're rambling, outline it. Write down whatever you want. Just run-on sentences, bad paragraphs, bad punctuation, I don't care. Just send it to me and I'll proof it. We'll make it pretty. And usually I'll run that stuff past my top writer (my wife) and allow her to fix it up. We'll talk about it and then we'll get it back to you and you can throw it out on you blog or on you newsletter, whatever it happens to be. But we'll clean it up for you. I don't care if you're not a writer.

Or find somebody that can help you. I would recommend your listeners run their stuff past you, Tom. I've known you for a long time. You're very talented, and you're very good at what you do.

Tom: That is something that I offer clients.

Stuart: But if you're not a writer, you've got to write stuff out. Don't sell yourself short. You are a writer. You remember back in school you used to have to write book reports and essays? Think back. What do you want to talk about? And if you have the ability to work with someone like Tom, run it by him. Have him proof it. Have him get it ready for publication.

Tom: I appreciate that plug, Stuart. You brought up a point right at the beginning of that. When you come up with ideas, you'll plug your phone in and you'll just record some thoughts. That's something I recommend to people a lot. If they feel like they're not a writer, they're probably more comfortable just speaking ideas. Just start recording your ideas. It's amazing how you can turn that into an article very easily. Just get your thoughts transcribed or transcribe them yourself, and then you're 75 percent of the way there. You've got an article. You've got a topic.

Because if you're just talking, it's something that you're passionate about, and sometimes it's hard to turn your speech into good writing. When you're really passionate about something, your fingers don't move as fast as your mind does. That's one of my recommendations for people who believe they can't write well. Just start recording stuff.

Stuart: Of course, a lot of people aren't professional writers. That's fine because you can get someone to edit it. But just get your words out there. The cool thing is that when you start putting your words out there, you tend to understand better what you're talking about. You're educating yourself.

I'm an avid reader of other business coaches, and I'm a big of Jeffrey Gitomer. He always says that you have to be enthusiastic about your business, but you also need to believe in it. And if you believe what you're writing, what you're putting out there, you'll be more enthusiastic about offering the service.

Tom: That is such a great tip, Stuart, and it's so true. When you start writing about something, it helps you learn it better and you just become more passionate about it. That's a phenomenal tip.

Next I want to talk about public speaking. Public speaking is another great way to position yourself as an industry expert. Stuart, you speak at quite a few events. What's your strategy for making yourself available as a speaker, and then how do you secure speaking opportunities?

Stuart: It's kind of strange. A lot of event managers will simply ask me. I'll get an email saying, "Hey, will you come up with some stuff that you want to speak about?" Sure. Because I set myself up as an industry expert, I'm asked to speak a lot. I've turned a few down. I typically get paid for speaking at events because I am an industry expert.

But you've got to put yourself out there. You've got to ask, especially when you're getting started. If you need to start putting yourself up as industry expert, ask to be on panels. If you're going to be at an event, ask to be on a panel. If you're a dentist, ask to be on a panel at a dental conference. If you're an IT guy and you specialize in servicing dentists, get on a panel at a dental conference. If you have a couple of clients who are dentists at that point, get testimonials from them. You'll make yourself the expert and you'll speak to them. What can the technology do for you, Mr. Dentist? What can the technology do for you, Mr. Doctor? Make yourself the expert. Make yourself available to speak. Just ask.

Here's the thing, folks. It's just like selling, except now you're selling yourself. The worst thing they can say is no, next time. Fine. Move on. Have some lunch and learns. Join Toastmasters and learn to become a good speaker. Get educated. Practice. Record yourself in front of a video camera and submit it on YouTube. People are going to find you and they're going to want you to speak at their events.

Do whatever you can do to position yourself as the expert whether it's speaking at events or writing about events. If you write enough, people within your industry are going to notice that and they're going to ask you to speak. I wrote a blog about two years ago about hiring the right people to get your clients engaged.

One of our leading industry magazines asked me to write an article for them from the CEO's perspective of bringing in the right people. It was published in *ChannelPro* magazine last July. I've got it framed up on my wall. A leading industry publication asked me to write that. They also said, "Anytime you want to write for us, feel free." Again, you put stuff out there, and now your industry will take notice of you and they'll ask you to speak.

It just takes time. You've got to keep working "the system." But if there's an event you want to speak at, and there's a call for speakers, apply for it. If somebody asks, tell them,

"I'd really like to talk about this subject matter." It may not be on the agenda, but if they like the subject matter and they know you're an expert, they'll put it on there.

Tom: Do you notice that whether it's getting published in an industry publication or speaking at an event, once you do it a couple of times, there is a snowball effect? People will notice that, and then you'll just start getting more opportunities because once you've gotten over that first hurdle, then more opportunities come?

Stuart: Absolutely. A couple of years ago I had my first real speaking event. I did a presentation called "Selling IT Services: How Not to Suck At It." There was about 150 people in the room. One of the things I asked my audience is, "Why did you show up for this? Was it because of the title or because of the subject matter?" Three-quarters of the room said it was because of the title.

So I marketed myself based on that topic. And once I did that, they asked me to come back to their next event and do the same presentation. And time and time again, people ask me to talk about selling and growing their business and things like that. There is a snowball effect. You do it once, and you'll be asked time and time again.

Tom: Speaking of events, I know you put on your own annual event, "Spring Training for Business." Could you go into a little detail on how that came about and what has your event done as far as establishing you as an industry authority?

Stuart: My event "Spring Training for Business" was held here in Arizona in March, during spring training. And just like spring training for baseball (I'm a huge baseball fan) we've got to train for the upcoming year. This time of year is often slow for people. I try to figure that into the whole training for the season. The event is a two-and-a-half day event based on building profit, sales, marketing, CEO level hiring and firing, communications, customer service; a number of topics based around our industry.

And the reason it is spring training for business is because I want to train people to communicate better within their own communities and their own internal staff. And most of the people that come to it are business owners. Most of them have been my clients or people that have heard about the event. Now, I don't think the event establishes me as an industry authority, but it solidifies my position in the industry.

The first one I did was three weeks after starting my company. The second one I did was this past year. It is a lot of fun, and putting on events and going to events is really important. One of the things I tell my clients is you don't have to have big events. You can do small events to educate people about what you do and why you're the best at it.

And what we call these is lunch and learns. So you bring ten or twenty people to lunch, and you give them a sales pitch or a presentation about what you do and why it's important for them. You get an hour to do an elevator pitch, so to speak. But you educate people and you can do smaller events. And again, you establish yourself as an

authority, as an expert in whatever: in janitorial services, in IT services, in copywriting. Whatever it happens to be, you set yourself up as the expert.

I always recommend to my clients that I work with to do a lunch and learn once a quarter. Do four or five of them a year. Do it on different subject matters. Even bring in some of your vendors to help sponsor it based on whatever they do. But be that expert in your market. Be that expert in your community.

If you get ten to fifteen people to a lunch and learn, how deep is their Rolodex? People are going to say, "Hey, I went to this great lunch and learn that was sponsored by XYZ Computer Company. They were talking about cloud computing and stuff online and security. They're awesome. I need them to come to my office. Maybe you should come and listen to ABC Computer Company, as well." Again, people will listen.

Most people want to be led, and if you set yourself up as that industry authority or that expert, people will listen to what you have to say whether they agree with you or they don't agree with you. Everyone is entitled to their opinion, and they don't have to agree with you. There are people that don't like what I have to say, but they still listen because it's relevant. And if you're going to be talking about something or putting on an event or blogging, use what's relevant to your audience.

Tom: That ties into the next question. As an industry leader, you're seen as somebody who is a thought leader, as well. I guess people turn to you for ideas as to where the industry is going and what to expect in the future. Whether you're speaking at an event or writing articles, even if it's for your own event, how do you come up with fresh ideas that people can latch onto? I'm sure you've come up with ideas unsure whether people are going to latch onto those ideas. Do you have any strategy that you use for just coming up with fresh ideas?

Stuart: In my opinion, I think it's hit and miss. I throw at lot of things at the wall and not everything sticks. It goes back to relevance. When I think of something for the industry, is it going to be relevant to the people listening to me? And if it's not, maybe I'll just put it aside for right now. But if I'm on a panel talking about cloud computing; well, cloud computing is all hot and new. Microsoft has their commercials "To the Cloud." It's basically what you're doing now on your computer, but it's all on the Internet. So how do we get that exciting?

There's got to be some relevance on how it helps businesses. And as an industry business expert, when I help one of my clients with ideas to do events like this, you've got to think of things that are going to be exciting. And like I mentioned earlier, you've got to think leading edge, but maybe talk cutting edge, because a good percentage of the business owners out there do not understand bleeding edge technology.

But they understand, "Hey, we need to do this." They've heard it on TV. They've read about it in the *Wall Street Journal* or the business section of the *Arizona Republic* or seen it on 12News or ABC 15. They've heard about something, and they're looking for

somebody to lead them down that road. And maybe the person that's fixing their computers doesn't know anything about cloud computing or data centers or virtualizations or any of the stuff that I just rattled off. They may be just a business owner, but they've heard of it.

My fresh ideas come from when my client is talking to their clients and their customers about what's hot, and how it's going to help them. When I'm reading stuff, whether it's from Apple.com or from Microsoft or any of the industry blogs that are out there (MSPMentor.com, thevarguy.com, CRN, Channelnomics)—any of the industry blogs or magazines that I read—I'll sometimes have a debate with other industry experts like myself. I like this. I didn't like this. What do you think about this? Do you think it's too much? And then I'll run it by my clients, and I'll put my personal spin on it, and I'll get their take on it.

As far as ideas that I have, when we talk about the cloud and I say, "Well, maybe it's just a bunch of haze," or talk about disaster recovery; some of the ideas I come up with are based on world events. I just keep my ear to the ground, I keep my eyes open and my mouth shut a lot. But when I do open my mouth, or I do take the cap off my pen and start writing stuff down, it's relevant. The ideas I come up with need to be relevant, and I'm very careful about what I put out there. And when I do put something out there, people just seem to gravitate to it or latch onto it.

Tom: I know one of the ways that you put ideas and your thoughts out there is through social media. I follow you on Facebook and Twitter. I think social media is still something a little confusing for a lot of businesses. They don't really know how to use it. What are some of your tips for using social media effectively?

Stuart: It depends if it's personal or for business. I personally have an overlap. I have a couple of Twitter accounts. I have a Facebook account. I have a business Facebook page. I have a blog which I still consider social media. LinkedIn account.

The most important thing that is easy to do is have a central location to manage it all. I use TweetDeck to manage my Facebook and Twitter, and I have everything linked back and forth. Twitter to LinkedIn, LinkedIn to Twitter, Twitter to Facebook, Facebook to Twitter, Facebook to my blog. Network blog. I manage it all from one central location. I'm not logging into five different websites all the time. Also, you can use your mobile device to manage a lot of your social media.

But again, put relevant information out there. To use social media effectively, have a separate account for business. You can humanize yourself on the business sites. My Facebook page for my business is Facebook.com/StuartSelbstConsulting. And my personal Facebook page is Facebook.com/StuartSelbst. And I do sometimes tweet or put stuff out there that's business on my personal page, but I never put anything personal on my business page. I want people to know that I'm human. I'm real. I'm going to make mistakes.

But as a business consulting firm, I'm going to put stuff out there that I want people to think about. About a thousand people follow me on Twitter. About a thousand or so people follow me on LinkedIn. But it's who they know. Sometimes I won't post anything for a day or two on Facebook because I don't have anything relevant to say businesswise. I might say some stuff personally.

Like today on my Stuart Selbst Consulting Facebook page, I put a couple of posts up there about things that are relevant. One of them was, "What does your perfect client look like? Are you finding new ones like that? If not, maybe that should be your focus." And also, I wrote something that applies to what we're talking about. "Is your newsletter providing relevant information to your clients and prospects? It's our opinion that relevant articles get read and forwarded more often."

Again, if you're writing about something relevant to your market, people are going to read it. People are going to forward it to people they know. So you can use social media to push stuff out. That's what I do. I make sure everything works together. Make sure that you're putting a good message out there. Put your best foot forward.

It's kind of like dating. When you're dating someone, you're always on your best behavior until it becomes a better relationship and you're comfortable with each other. So be on your best behavior when you're doing social media until you're comfortable with it; until you have enough followers and people who really know you and can deal with your idiosyncrasies and the mistakes that we make as human beings.

But always put your best foot forward. Be safe about what you're doing on social media, especially on a personal level. On a business level, represent your company enthusiastically. Represent your company to the best of your ability in a public forum. Because that's what it is: it is a public forum. And honestly, if Facebook got shut down tomorrow, it would still be out there, folks. Everything you say is still out there. So make sure what you put out there is relevant, is representing you, your family, and your clients to the best of your ability. That's the way I try to use social media effectively.

Tom: What about the interactivity component to social media? Are people commenting on your posts? I imagine most of it is positive, but how do you deal with the interactivity, when people are asking you questions or commenting on stuff? Do you have a set of rules for your responses?

Stuart: Well, if it's my post, I have full control over it. If it does go negative, I'll delete the flag. I try not to post anything that's negative. I've done that in the past. I've made my mistakes. And if somebody posts something that I don't like, I'll delete that post, especially if it's mine. I'm one of those people that's always trying to improve myself. I try to think before I speak or think before I write something. If it's not going to benefit me, benefit my clients, benefit the industry or represent my family correctly, then I'm not going to post it.

If there are negative threads on my page or on my wall, I'll delete them. I don't want to be associated with that, because people judge you by who you associate with, and that's the last thing that I ever want to be affiliated with. When the negative posting comes up, I try to stay out of that. I try to pick my battles, and if it's on my stuff, I'll just delete it and move on. I'll take the higher road.

Tom: Good point. The final question is related to a component of most businesses that is extremely important in addition to social media, and it carries over to business websites. What tips do you have for creating a website that helps portray you as an industry authority? And if it's not you, your business as a leader in your industry?

Stuart: That's a great question and really relevant today. I don't know if you're aware of this, but YouTube is the number one search engine for the demographic of people just coming out of college to about thirty-five years old. (I don't know if that's an exact statistic, but it's pretty close). They'll use YouTube before they'll use Google or Bing to search for something.

If you're going to have a website that portrays you as an industry authority, put video testimonials from your clients, but also put a video message up on your website, something that you're about. When you and I were talking, you came up with this idea to have this policy based on a video that you saw that I did a couple of weeks ago, setting yourself up as an industry expert. I taped that video, and it's on the front page of my website.

Video and YouTube is very important if you're going to set yourself up as an industry authority. If your client loves you enough to not only write a testimonial but to record a video testimonial and allow you to put it on YouTube and on your website, you know what? You are the expert, then. If you can get four or five video testimonials and put them together on a nice YouTube video, people are going to start looking for your company or looking for what you do on YouTube versus on Google.

Then you also have that on your website and you can put content with it. Your content needs to match what you're saying. You need to have the right keywords. I'm sure you'd probably agree with me. When you're writing content for someone's website, you use the correct keywords that will help them appear higher in Google searches or in the search engine optimization (SEO) to portray you as an industry expert or an industry authority.

You can just say, "We are the expert in that," and that will give you some relevance. But if you don't have people saying, "Joe Shmoe is the expert. We used him because..." then you don't have a leg to stand on.

This goes back eight or nine years when I first met Dave Sherman who said, "I like you, but why are you the best at what you do?" And I turned around and said, "Let me prove it to you." No one had ever said that to him. "Hire me and let me prove to you why I'm the best at what I do." Right away, he hired me and he wrote testimonials for me. He

spoke about me. "IT people say, 'We give great service' all the time, but how do I know? And the one guy, Stuart Selbst said, 'Let me prove it to you.' What a sales pitch," he said.

As you're creating your website, come up with content that's relevant; relevant about who you are. The best thing I can tell you is get a YouTube channel. Get a YouTube account and get video testimonials from your clients. Put them on YouTube. Get good content on the scripts for the video. Get it on your website.

Get that video out there, because you want to be on the first page of Google and Bing, of course; but when people are searching for what you do on YouTube, you want to be in the top three. They're only going to watch between one and three videos. That's ten minutes of time, and you want your video to be a minute-and-a-half to two minutes max so they can understand what you're doing while you do it.

Go invest in a small video camera, a small HD video camera and shoot some video, folks. Put it up on your website and make yourself an industry expert and an industry authority.

Tom: I couldn't agree with you more. The videos are extremely powerful. It's a great point there.

Stuart, I want to thank you for your time here. You gave some great information on how to become your industry's obvious expert. In case people have questions or want to get in contact with you, what's the best way to reach you?

Stuart: I'm always open to take questions from people. No matter how dumb you might think it is, there's no such thing as a dumb question. I'm always open to email, and my email address is stuart@stuartselbst.com. My blog address is MSPCoaching.com. You can always call me. My telephone number is (480) 389-5481. That's my office number and you can always get ahold of me.

What we do here at Stuart Selbst Consulting is executive level coaching for businesses. We mostly focus on technology, but we do understand all businesses need a little help. Anybody who contacts me that wants some help, some focus on their business, regardless of what business you're in, mention Tom's name or mention Write Way Solutions and I will give you a free hour of time. We'll review your company from a 30,000 foot view and give you some pointers, and then we'll see where we go.

Tom: Excellent. I appreciate you making that offer, Stuart. I appreciate all this information. There's definitely some great tips that people can go back and they can listen to. And even more important than the tips, actionable ideas that people can take right now to help elevate their position in their industry. So, again Stuart, thank you very much. I appreciate the time.

Stuart: Anytime, Tom. I'm always happy to catch up with you. It needs to be more often than every three or four years that we catch up and have a conversation.

[End of interview]