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# Introduction

*Many times, we use the word 'expert' quite casually. We refer to someone who knows a lot about something as an expert.*

*But what is true expertise really?*

*And, if you are looking at becoming an expert, what do you need to do?*

*This eBook turns your normal perspective of expertise on its head and tells you what real expertise is all about. More importantly, it tells you about when you can call yourself as an expert within your niche.*

*Get ready for this journey of self-discovery.*

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# **Chapter 1:**

Becoming an Expert – What Does It Actually Mean?

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# Summary

*Stop throwing about the word 'expert' so casually. If you call someone an expert when they know they aren't, it sounds sarcastic and insulting.*

## **Becoming an Expert – What Does It Actually Mean?**

Wikipedia, the world's largest free online dictionary, has this to say about who an expert is...

*“An expert is someone that is widely recognized as a reliable source of technique or skill whose faculty for judging or deciding rightly, justly, or wisely is accorded authority and status by their peers or the public in a specific well-distinguished domain.”*

Judging by this definition, we could say that an expert is someone who has an extensive amount of knowledge in their own niche. Because of their knowledge of the subject, people who have any queries relating to the subject go to them for clarifications. For example, your friend might know a lot about cars. When you plan to get a new car, you might want his opinion on which car to buy and might even take him along for the purchase. Why are you doing that? It is not just because you want his company. It is because you trust his opinion and sense of judgment when it comes to cars. He may not be an expert in something else, but when it comes to cars, he is the expert.

This shows us the most important aspect of experts. They must have a great deal of knowledge on a particular subject, and their knowledge should be so much accurate and essential that people ask them for their opinion on various aspects under that domain. The trust factor is important here; a person becomes an expert not through his or her knowledge alone, but through the application of that knowledge. In the above example, if your friend's choice of car for you has been quite appropriate, his position as an expert in your view has been consolidated.

So, if you just know something about something, you are not an expert at it. You might have even pursued that subject in your academic education, but that doesn't make you an expert at it, despite the mortarboard and the university degree that proclaims that fact. What really makes you an expert is if you are able to analyze something in that niche using your knowledge and if you can use that knowledge to help other people make suitable decisions.

Also, it is important that you are very convinced about what you say. You should have a strong – even headstrong sometimes – opinion. You must very convincingly say, “No, this is the right car for you; I am telling you. Get something else and you will repent later.” And you must say that with the right knowledge and the right confidence.

Experience keeps reinforcing expertise. You start with nothing but knowledge in your mind, but slowly as you use that knowledge, you gain experience. This makes your knowledge more powerful. And you become able to see beyond that knowledge. You are able to apply it. That's an important feature of an expert – they are able to apply their knowledge in the right way.

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## **Chapter 2:**

The Prerequisite to Being an Expert – Having the Knowledge

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# Summary

*There is no expertise without the right knowledge. But the right knowledge does not guarantee expertise.*

## **The Prerequisite to Being an Expert – Having the Knowledge**

The first thing that you need when you try to become an expert at something is knowledge. You cannot become an expert at something that you know nothing about. Well, even if you know a lot of things about something, you cannot be an expert at it. That is the reason why you have to constantly keep learning. Keep on adding to your knowledge all through your life – there is no end to that.

But, what improves things a lot is that you have to only learn about your chosen niche. For example, if your niche is baking cakes, you have to learn only about that. When you stamp your credentials as an expert at baking cakes, no one is going to ask you about barbecuing. However, if there is something they ask you about your subject of expertise, i.e. baking cakes, and you don't know the answer, then you come across looking like a non-expert and that too, big-time!

Don't think that the Internet is the fount of all knowledge. Information, yes, but knowledge, no. To get more and more knowledge on your subject, you have to use both online and offline sources. Online sources are good for clearing your concepts about something, but that's not enough for an expert. For that, you will need to go into the depth of things. That is where you will need to visit places like bookstores and get books and CDs on the subject. Probably, you may also have to join a course. In fact, that's a very good idea. Even if you think you are an expert at something, attending a course on it could help you update your existing knowledge and show you a very interesting thing – how another expert tackles the subject.

You have to remember that an expert should not be proud or closeted about their knowledge. In fact, they must always be open to gaining more and more information on their subject and try things out. They must observe how others are going about the thing that interests them. You can become an expert at something only if you absolutely love it. And if you love it, you will want to see how others are dealing with it.

The Internet may not have direct knowledge for you, but there is vast material in its annals that you can acquire. For example, you can order books and CDs that can help you. Keep constantly searching for these things and don't hesitate to download something that seems interesting, even if it means that you will have to spend money at it. Most of us are experts at only one thing, and that's an asset no one takes away from us. It is up to us to keep enriching what we have so painstakingly acquired.

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# **Chapter 3:**

Education through Observation

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# Summary

*Expertise does not come through vanity. You have to be responsive and reactive to what other people think about the subject. Your experience needs to reek of variety.*

## Education through Observation

A real expert will always keep enriching his or her experience about the niche that he or she is an expert in. They will always try to improve upon what they know. In the initial stages, knowledge comes from books and similar educational material. But once that stage is past, knowledge comes from experience. It is just like learning something at college and then taking it up as a career. While you are learning something at school, your knowledge is from books. But when you take up a job in that field later on, your knowledge comes from what you learn on the job, i.e. what you learn through observation and inference.

If you are looking at positioning yourself as an expert in any niche, this is an important aspect – you have to see how the other knowledgeable people in the field are doing it.

Think about it – A person who has come to you for an expert opinion may also have gone to someone else. Now, if they said something more current, or something more substantive than what you say, then you don't appear to be so much of an expert. However, if you keep watching out for what's happening in your chosen niche, you can always make your knowledge more updated.

Observation can be done anywhere. Watch a television program that pertains to the subject or attend a seminar or even a course. It will give you a chance to see another live expert in action. Nowadays, there is no dearth of videos on [YouTube](#) on almost any subject under the sun. One of your favorite hobbies should be to check these videos out and see what other people are opinionating about your chosen niche of expertise.

Remember that this is all a precursor to positioning yourself as an expert. You have to go a long way. But if you don't enrich your knowledge and your experience, branding yourself as an expert would be a very tall order.

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# **Chapter 4:**

Practice Makes Perfect – Deliberate and Non-Deliberate Practice

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# Summary

*Practice is essential if you want to do something like you have been doing something since ever. If you want to label yourself as an expert, you will absolutely need to do things like that.*

## **Practice Makes Perfect – Deliberate and Non-Deliberate Practice**

One of the most important essentials for becoming an expert is practice. Think about playing a piano or learning to cook or something like that. You need practice to become an expert in them. When you practice, you understand where things are going wrong and you improve. You realize some things are not quite right and you learn how to do things in a better way.

When we speak about practice, there are actually two types of practice that you must consider.

### ***Deliberate Practice***

Deliberate practice is that which you do deliberately, over and over again, probably without any obvious intention for improvement from one time to the next. A child learning how to write cursive is an example. He will probably be made to write the same thing over and over again. Now, while there are people who are monitoring the child's progress, the child is not making any earnest efforts at improvement himself.

This is what you do when you practice deliberately. You merely do something over and over again. Like play tennis, for example. You aren't really looking at improving your game but you are playing just because you love to play. Down the line, you might incorporate some strategies and tricks, but they are all of your own evaluation.

### ***Non-Deliberate Practice***

Non-deliberate practice occurs when there is someone helping you practice. Like, when you join a course to learn something, it is non-deliberate practice. Here, you aren't doing something on mere iteration, but you are doing things under the supervision of someone who knows how to train you. Reading is also an example of non-deliberate practice because again here you are not doing things mechanically. You are, instead, following the instructions that are mentioned in the book.

To be an expert, you need to use both deliberate and non-deliberate practice. Most people begin the non-deliberate way so that they know how to go about rehearsing something and then switch over to deliberate practice. It is more like how you workout in a gym. Your first few weeks are under the supervision of an instructor but then you are left free. When you are working out under the instructor, it is non-deliberate practice, but later you go on with this activity yourself. At that time, it becomes an example for deliberate practice.



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# **Chapter 5:**

A Great Way to Become an Expert at Something – Teach It to Someone

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# Summary

*What's the greatest way to establish your expertise in some area? You have to teach it to someone. That's what.*

## **A Great Way to Become an Expert at Something – Teach It to Someone**

The best and the most emphatic way of becoming an expert at something is to train someone else to do it. You want to become perfect at fishing? Train someone else to do it. Actually, take them along on your fishing trips. When you are teaching them, you will find that your own practice becomes much better.

When you are teaching someone, you are revising all the information and knowledge you have about the subject, right from the scratch. When you are teaching someone how to drive, for example, you will have to start from the very basics – the gears, the clutch, the accelerator and even the mirrors. You never do that normally. But such a revival of basic knowledge works quite well to establish your expertise.

The entire feeling of someone depending on you to do something is quite out of the world. You have to experience it to understand what it is. That is the reason why parents take such joy in teaching things to their children. Your “students” already begin looking upon you as an expert, whether you really think yourself to be one or not. For them, you are the authority on the subject and they rely on you in great measure. That feeling really helps in boosting your confidence. Just because someone is depending on you for information, you might read more on the subject, even the very small things that you usually overlook.

As you teach again and again, you are going over that same knowledge in your mind till the time you can recite it backwards. You get a great way to do some non-deliberate practice on your system.

Then there’s another point. When you teach someone to do something, you are more likely to teach them the safest, best and the most optimal way to do that. This will come out of your experience. Your “student” now realizes that there are various things you have been doing your own way and that helps significantly in establishing your confidence.

Also, you start going by the book as far as possible. You don’t make mistakes anymore, because now you are teaching someone to do the stuff the right way.

If you are really looking at becoming an expert in something, probably training yourself how to do it the right way is the best way to go about it.

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# **Chapter 6:**

Improving – The Hallmark of an Expert

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# Summary

*Romance blossoms in solitude; friendship blossoms in company.*

## **Improving – The Hallmark of an Expert**

An expert is always a student. They always endeavor to improve upon what they know. If you have knowledge about something, you aren't an expert on it till you actually begin learning its intricacies and understand everything you can about its practical applications. This is how you improve. Here we mention some of the avenues you must take a look at when you are trying to improve.

### ***Continuing Education***

Maybe you could take up a course to refresh your knowledge on the subject. It might not be a full-fledged course too. You might attend a seminar or workshop that's being conducted in your area. You may even go back to college if it's so important for you to get billed as an expert. The advantage of that is you get certification which you can use to establish your credentials.

### ***Experience***

Whoever said that experience is the biggest teacher, said it well. It indeed is the best teacher and we must learn from what we do. Expertise comes from your application of something and then understanding where you are going wrong and improving upon the mistakes that you do. You don't learn everything from books; experience goes a long way in helping to improve at things.

### ***Observation***

Look at what the others do. If you think you are an expert at fly fishing, look at how others do it too. It helps you to understand various techniques of doing something, and you might probably learn something simpler. You might learn some how-to tricks that can help you.

### ***The Internet***

The Internet is not a great teacher, probably, but it has endless resources of information. If you are looking at becoming an expert at something, you could use these resources and improve upon your knowledge. We already mentioned the video clips on YouTube that can help you learn a lot of things, especially from perspectives of other people, but you could also read various articles on the subject. Directories like [Buzzle](#), [WiseGEEK](#), [EzineArticles](#), [eHow](#), [WikiHow](#), [About](#), [Bukisa](#), [FireHow](#), etc. are some places where you can get tons of preliminary information about doing something, and even see videos and photos of those people doing it.

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# **Chapter 7:**

Building People's Trust

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# Summary

*You aren't an expert till people begin trust you for doing things well within your niche.*



## **Building People's Trust**

You cannot be an expert if you confine yourself to the four walls of your home. Expertise is like fragrance; it has to spread in the air for it to be felt. You have to make sure that you go out and make other people understand that you are an expert. And you have to work at building people's trust.

One of the best ways to do that is through teaching other people what you are an expert in. This teaching can come through a host of avenues, through various online and offline methods, but eventually this is what brings you higher into people's trust books. If you are able to put your own spin on things and teach them in a way that others haven't experienced before, you will be working much better at establishing your credentials as an expert on the subject.

Do not let any opportunity pass you by. If there is a social event regarding your niche, such as a workshop or a seminar or even a training course, make sure you make your presence felt in such an area. These places give you a chance to mingle with other people in the field and they understand that you are truly interested in the field because you are taking the time out for it. Gradually, they will begin treating you like an expert.

The Internet is the best way to establish your credentials. The article directories that we have mentioned before are also places where you can submit your own written stuff. Do that. Write some articles and post them on the Internet. This would be a very good way of showing the world at large that you know your subject well.

Write a blog. Blogs give you wonderful visibility on the Internet, and hence help in building people's trust. You could build a free blog on [Blogger](#) or a paid one on [Wordpress](#). When you have a great blog, there are chances that this blog will turn up when people all over the world search for specific information. It gives you the chance to respond to them as well. It is a great way of interacting with people who are interested in the particular subject and show them that you know your stuff.

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# **Chapter 8:**

Becoming Visible – Selling Yourself through High Visibility

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# Summary

*What is seen more, sells more. That's the rule of advertising.*

## **Becoming Visible – Selling Yourself through High Visibility**

It is all quite well that you become an expert at something, but a time will come when you will want to use your expertise to make money. For many people, becoming an expert is a route for making a good amount of money. You have actually already embarked on this journey – you have begun building people's trust, which means you are gaining high visibility too and people aren't minding buying what you intend to sell later on.

The role of the Internet cannot be downplayed here. This is the age of the Internet; people are using the Internet and its resources for just about everything. If you want to make money from your expertise, you can use the Internet too.

Build a website. That is the best way to stamp your credentials. It is just as well that you have a lot of articles live, and probably a blog even, but having a website sort of clinches the deal. You make people know that you are in here for the big game. Your website will have various components, but one of the most important components would be the landing page. This is where you kind of "sell" yourself. You tell people what products you have in your oeuvre and how they can go about buying it. These products could be anything – it could be an e-course or an eBook or a CD. Basically, it will be something that shows people you know your stuff and you are now capable of training others to learn it too.

There are several ways in which you can promote your website on the Internet, and search engine optimization (SEO) is one that online marketers use most often. This is the application of various tactics that help boost the rankings of your website on search engines so that if anyone is looking for information using them, your website appears in the search results page.

Invest some time in learning about SEO. Whatever it is you are an expert at, if you want to highlight your expertise on the Internet and make a great amount of money from it, you will need to harness all these search engines to do your bidding, literally!

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# **Chapter 9:**

Expertise Lies in What You Want to Achieve

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# Summary

*Expertise is not about what you know; it is more about how much you need to know and how much you want to achieve.*

## **Expertise Lies in What You Want to Achieve**

To a large degree, being an expert is relative to what you want. Think about it. If you want to be an expert at just fixing the engine of a car, you will try to specialize in just that. You won't bother yourself with other things. But if someone wants to be an expert at fixing up anything that goes wrong with the car, mere expertise with engines won't matter to them. Just so, if you want to be an expert at something, you may become that, but you must remember that there is always a larger domain for everything.

So, you can be an expert at something, but in the larger picture, your expertise won't stand its ground.

*Expertise is relative. It isn't absolute.*

That is why, when you start out thinking, "I want to be an expert at this," define the "this" part properly. You have to be very sure in your mind what it is that you want to be an expert in and you must work so that you achieve that.

It is also about what you want to do. Some people want to be an expert just so that they can do some DIY stuff on their own steam. Some people want to become an expert just because they are fascinated by the subject. Some would want to be an expert because they want to teach that stuff to others. Yet others want to become experts so that they can mint money out of it.

You will agree that all of these things require different levels of knowledge and practice. You might be an "expert" for one of the above purposes, but that may not help you with the other.

When you make your initial strategies about how you will go about becoming an expert, one of the things uppermost in your mind should be, "Why do I want to become an expert at this? What am I trying to achieve?"

When you have these answers in mind, you will be able to focus your energies in the right direction and make the most of what you are planning to do.

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# **Chapter 10:**

When Do You Become an Expert?

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# Summary

*How do you know that your efforts at becoming an expert have borne fruit?*

## **When Do You Become an Expert?**

You have started learning about something that truly fascinates you. You have started adding to your knowledge. You have started practicing that stuff too. Now, how do you know that you have indeed become an expert?

Which is the line of demarcation here that separates the experts from people who just have the knowledge?

Now, there are various ways to establish your expertise, but one of the best and the most profound ways is to ask yourself this question, “Will I be able to teach someone else to do this and do it well?” Yes, being able to teach something to someone else – a rank amateur even – is the best judging factor of your expertise. If you are very confident that you know everything about a particular subject and can help someone with your knowledge to a very significant degree, then you are an expert.

However, the acid test of expertise comes from being able to make money from your knowledge. This is a broader application of teaching and hence it establishes you in the arena more firmly. That is the reason why experts need to sell themselves – on the Internet or otherwise – because only when they are dabbling with their subject in a commercial way do they understand whether their expertise can productively stand on its own two feet or not.

Everything goes hand in hand. You promote yourself to become known as an expert and then you use this visibility to make money or to gain acclaim. When you do that, you become established more as an expert. This is a perfect balance system – like a stone archway – remove the main arch stone and you will find that everything collapses.

## **Conclusion**

*Whether or not you become an expert is highly subjective to a lot of things. There are several things you need to do to establish yourself as one and when you have done that, there are several more things you have to do to keep reinforcing that impression.*

*You now know what it takes.*

***All the best to you!!!***