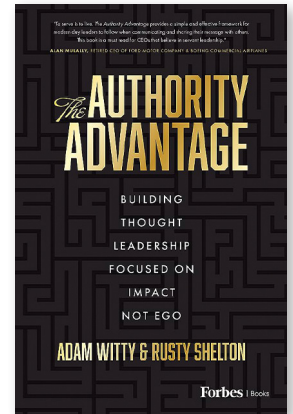


# The Authority Advantage

Building Thought Leadership Focused on Impact, Not Ego

by **Adam Witty and Rusty Shelton**



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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Thought leadership is critical when it comes to establishing a following and strengthening trust within your brand – both on a personal and business level.

The book, *The Authority Advantage: Building Thought Leadership Focused on Impact, Not Ego* lays out a comprehensive roadmap to help you leverage yourself as a true Authority. It also helps you create (and execute) your own Master Authority Plan (MAP) and establish valuable connections through personal branding.

Authors Adam Witty and Rusty Shelton distill the insights that they had been discussing with their clients for years about how business leaders can build their thought leadership to effective ends. They also help you create compelling content and leverage books, speaking engagements, and publicity tools for impact, recognition, and profitability.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- About Authority Advantage and The Authority Matrix.
- How to build your Master Authority Plan (MAP).
- What falls under the new media landscape and how you can tap into it.
- How to create the ultimate Authority Advantage.

## Introduction

Do you have any idea what kind of impression you are making right now? In our experience, most leaders don't.

That's why we wrote this book. We want you to understand that the cornerstone for building trust and creating a connection isn't your business brand- it's you, particularly once you create your authority advantage.

As you continue through these pages, we are going to share a step-by-step roadmap for creating an Authority Advantage for your business, your legacy, and your life. First, however, we're going to start by understanding the big shifts that are driving this new climate and why an authority advantage is more an urgent essential than a nice-to-have for today's leaders.

## Part 1: Why Make This Journey?

### Chapter 1: What Is the Authority Advantage?

Many leaders have the mistaken impression that building their brand in a more public-facing way runs counter to the servant leadership model they have been successful with and take pride in. Sadly, this is a flawed belief.

Good leaders who are winning today understand that their best and highest service isn't limited to those who are already a part of the business. It includes building trust and rapport with potential customers, partners, and team members at scale. If a leader isn't providing value in a public-facing way, they limit the impact they have on the business they lead. As a result, they do their existing team a disservice.

Building Mission Driven Authority is an important foundation of modern servant leadership because you extend your impact at scale. When you have the Authority Advantage you position yourself to build your business by creating influence and leverage at a scale you can't imagine.

### Chapter 2: The Big Shifts

There is a remarkable difference between businesses that have a well-known, authentic, public-facing leader and those who don't. The former creates a seismic advantage in today's landscape where the leader focuses their energy on connecting with stakeholders in an authentic, valuable, and visible way. So, the question now remains: are you giving your business a similar advantage?

The three seismic shifts driving much of the urgency in this book include:

Shift 1: From Corporate Branding to Authority Branding. Building your own personal credibility with the public can be much more important than leading with your company brand. We are dramatically quicker to trust individuals than we are corporations, and the quicker you can put that reality at the forefront of your strategy, the quicker you will win in this new environment.

Shift 2: From Corporate Media to Micromedia. The opportunity that smart content creation provides to leaders today is best understood by looking at two most important contributing factors to its effectiveness: trust, and personalized value. Your audience increasingly wants to push major media that is giving them fractional value out and instead turn their attention to learning directly from you. This is what micro media helps achieve.

Shift 3: From Selling to Buying. People don't want to be sold something. They want to buy something. The best way to get someone to seek out the opportunity to buy from you is to position yourself as the unquestionable authority in your space.

### Chapter 3: The Authority Matrix

There are four archetypes included in the authority matrix.

Archetype One: The Top-Down Leader. This is the leader who is the "boss" who's always right in his mind and expects others to agree with that assessment. This kind of leader risks alienating not only their own people but also potential clients and customers because their egos often make them blind to their lack of communication skills.

Archetype 2: The Behind-the-Scenes Servant Leader. These types of leaders become successful in their careers by serving those around them. Yet despite all the great things they do, they constantly hear their company is "the best kept secret" in their industry.

Archetype 3: The Ego Driven Leader. This type of leader has plenty of visibility but approaches it in the wrong way by proclaiming constantly how great they are. They build a brand that reflects poorly on them and their business.

Archetype 4: The Mission Driven Thought Leader (The Authority). The Mission Driven Thought Leader archetype is, we believe, the ideal one for a modern business leader. This leader has all the traits of a behind-the-scenes servant leader but also makes it a point to expand the reach of the impact they make beyond those who meet them directly. They command outsized influence in their space based

on the value they provide, the size of their reach, and the third-party credibility they get from writing books, creating media, speaking, and authoring content. People trust them and follow their lead.

If you aren't already a Mission Driven thought leader, we're about to help you become one and if you are one already, we're going to help you get even bigger.

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## Part 2: Building Your Master Authority Plan (MAP)

### Chapter 4: The Urgency of Building Your Authority Brand

Your reputation is your lifeblood as a leader. In today's media environment, the first place most people will interact with you and your brand won't be in person or even over the phone. It will be online.

If your potential hires, customers, and partners are getting their first impression of you from their online searches far before they connect directly with you, don't you want to control that first impression and be intentional about that image so you can build trust instead of squandering that opportunity?

This is where the importance of branding lies. Branding is about creating an image in the mind of your audience. Building your authority brand helps you create an image that can cause your customers to trust you. It helps you build a connection with your audience and ultimately serve them with a Mission Driven mindset.

### Chapter 5: Defining Your Brand

Building an international authentic brand as a leader involves 2 phases: Phase One = Preengagement. This image is created before an individual has direct interaction with you, your company, or your message. Phase Two = Post Engagement. This image is created when the individual has had direct interaction with you as a customer, team member, prospect, partner, or even neighbor.

Post-engagement begins when someone engages with you in some meaningful way. Evidence of solid a post-engagement brand includes customer referrals, positive customer reviews, team member retention, and more. Brands that rely primarily on post-engagement have no direct control over the lead flow.

To build solid visibility and create your Authority Advan-

tage it's equally important to tap into the power of the preengagement phase. Preengagement offers a high level of discoverability which, as a result, increases trust.

### Chapter 6: Building Your Brand

Once you've established your discoverability, the next step is to build authority by association, which accelerates the speed of trust.

Until your name is a brand that means something to a large audience – Gordon Ramsay, for example – it's important to differentiate yourself by associating yourself with brands that do mean something to your audience. This is the single most important step to take when it comes to building trust with your target audience before you have a chance to interact directly with them.

It's also important to establish a visual authority by association. As you grow your visibility as an authority, more and more people are going to land on your website, seeking to learn from you instead of immediately being ready to buy. The visuals within your website must give them a reason to pay attention to your message. The message you advance must clearly communicate why you are the absolute best fit for your target audience.

### Chapter 7: Showcasing Your Brand

The art of referral marketing can be an important component of your Authority Advantage. Typically, the referral you are most proud to make is one where there is an air of scarcity or authority involved.

Take, for instance, this referral, "The new five-star restaurant downtown is booked a month out, but I know the owner. I'll work on getting you a table."

The person who makes this kind of referral enjoys what we call the "Authority Halo." In the end, good authority-driven referral marketing creates a win-win-win for you, your customer, and your new lead in several ways. You generate leads more consistently, your customer refers you because of the authority Halo, and your new lead gets the benefit of having the chance to consume your product or service.

### Chapter 8: The Three Categories of Content to Create an Authority Advantage

When you set out to establish your brand, it's important to remember that content is king. The three categories of content you must focus on include:

**You-Driven Content.** This is your stuff. It connects back to your experiences, your personal journey, your perspective, your intellectual property, and your own resources. This kind of content is in great demand once you have a large audience in place.

**News-Driven Content.** This type of content is timely content that connects to a topic your target audience is paying attention to. The two subcategories here include calendar-driven content and newsjacking.

**Relationship-Driven Content.** The content type helps create an authority advantage not only as an opportunity to build your brand but also as a bridge to build and strengthen relationships with others. By doing so, you give yourself a clear road map to creating and growing relationships at a scale and speed you may not realize is possible.

Aside from understanding how to distribute your content across the three categories, it's also important to do an audit of your current content streams across each of your channels.

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## Part 3: The New Media Landscape

### Chapter 9: The Key to Understanding Media Today

The key to understanding the new media landscape is to develop a keen understanding of virtual real estate and, more specifically, a clear grasp of who “owns” the connection to the audience you’re communicating with. In your past, the biggest landowner in terms of audience size was traditional media. Today, the power has shifted towards the largest rented media brands in the world such as Google, Facebook, TikTok, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and other large social media platforms. The new media landscape of today includes three media types: rented earned and owned.

### Chapter 10: Rented Media

Rented media includes all media where you fully control the content, but you don’t own the real estate. This media includes advertising, social media channels, bio pages on corporate sites, and 3rd party listings on sites like Crunchbase, health grade, etc. Build your rented media strategy by understanding the nuances and etiquette of each media channel.

### Chapter 11: Earned Media

Earned media includes all content that goes out on real estate others own where the impression of the audience is that you earned that message. It includes publicity, speak-

ing engagements, online business or book reviews, referrals, word of mouth, and awards. Publicity, speaking, and publishing a book are three of the most important categories of “earned media.”

The most effective way to get PR today is to have a push/pull approach, where you pitch ideas directly to the media while also pulling them to you via smart content marketing. Tap into the power of public speaking by focusing on branding, delivering on stage, and capitalizing on each engagement. Finally, write and publish a book to establish instant respect and credibility with whomever you meet, and position yourself as an expert on whatever topic your book is about.

### Chapter 12: Owned Media

With media you own, you get to make all the rules. You control what it looks like, what message is communicated, what style you embody, and, most importantly, the way a relationship with your audience is started, nurtured, and converted into action. Owned media outlets such as websites or podcasts are focused on attention and, more specifically, on doing everything they can to earn and then own the attention of their audience on an ongoing basis.

The starting point for an owned media strategy is having a clear understanding of the three audiences that every business always has in place. These include:

**Audience 1: Paid Ticket Holders.** This group includes your existing clients, strategic partners, and team members.

**Audience 2: Tailgaters.** These include an audience group who has not yet decided to spend money with you, take that job offer, book you for a speech, or move forward with whatever conversion you may be trying to drive.

**Audience 3: Future Fans.** This is the group that could benefit tremendously from working with you or hearing your message, but they currently have no idea who you are.

Create a content strategy that caters to the needs of these three audience types.

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## Conclusion

Success looks different to everyone, which is why the authority advantage works so well. It’s customizable, adaptable, and authentic to who you are and what you do. Whatever means success for you, we hope the road map we have provided here can help support you on the way.



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