

Marketing, Media & Money

Magazine

Q1 2026

*Why Smart Money
Still Feels Scary
and How We Built
a Better Way*

**If I Had to
Start Over:**
*The Real
Framework
for Building an
Audience Through
Livestreaming*

*Why SEO in an
AI World Matters
More Than Ever*

**Why Conviction-Driven,
Impact-Oriented Leadership
Will Define 2026 and Beyond**

Meet Staci Wright

The CEO of HeartProfit, a visionary force rewriting the rules of business with heart. With 28 patents, decades of purpose-driven innovation, and a movement built on compassionate leadership, she's not just leading the future of business, she's building it.

**Marketing
2026:**

5 Trends That
Separate
Leaders
from Noise

**From Chaos
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Be Time to Write
a New Book)*

Presence to Pipeline™:
*The Search That
Decides the Sale*

A Special Message from the Publisher



Dear Readers,

Welcome to Q1 of **Marketing, Media & Money** where our focus for 2026 is clear: we're not just talking about marketing. We're spotlighting the marketing that matters—the kind that drives sustainable growth, builds recognizable authority, and positions you as the leader your audience is already looking for.

As we enter this new year, it's clear that the landscape of marketing and media is shifting—again. But this time, it's not just about keeping up with trends. It's about stepping into discernment as a strategic advantage and owning your leadership in a way that makes you unforgettable. That is where real leverage lives.

We've entered an era where volume no longer wins. The noise is louder, the trends flashier, and the AI tools are multiplying faster than we can demo them. But at the heart of it all, your voice, your message, your values aren't just about what you say... it's about how you're known, how you're felt, and how you serve with authority and alignment.

It's never just about tactics. It's about presence, positioning, and power — and that's what our contributors bring to the table.

This issue is a marketing and media masterclass for leaders who are done chasing and ready to own. We're especially proud to be sponsored this year by **Karen Stawicki & Samantha Irish**, Co-Founders of Compass Financial — who remind us that smart money isn't just about spreadsheets. It's about values, confidence, and designing your financial life like you would your business: on purpose.

So, whether you're reading this with coffee in hand, a big idea in mind, or simply scanning for your next bold move—know this:

Your voice matters. Your strategy matters. Your presence matters.

This is the year to market like a leader, monetize like a visionary, and make every move count. As Editor-in-Chief, my goal is to make this your favorite marketing magazine to read, share, and **implement**. It's my mission to ensure that every article, every insight, and every story featured in this magazine is built for real results—right now, in your business, not your bookmarks. You'll find mic-drop lines, money-making ideas, and more than a few "say-it-again" quotes. Share them, tag us, and let us know what resonates.

With deep appreciation,

patty farmer

Editor-in-Chief, Marketing, Media, & Money
Founder/CEO, M3 Creative Marketing
🎯 Relationship-First Marketing.
AI Insights. Human-Led Strategy.



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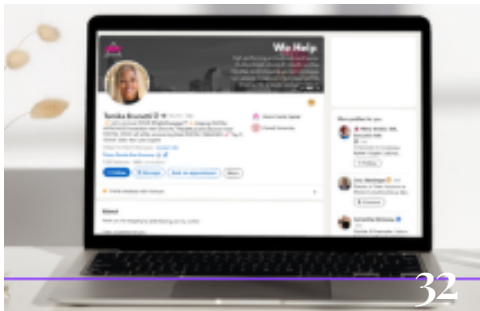
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You know your offer is compelling, so why isn't your *Marketing* attracting ready-to-buy clients?

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patty farmer

Marketing 2026: 5 Trends That Separate Leaders from Noise

**In a world of volume,
clarity becomes currency.**

The most defining shift in marketing for 2026 is the move away from volume and urgency and toward **clarity, authority, and intentional leadership.**

As platforms become more crowded and AI accelerates content production, audiences are no longer hungry for more — they're hungry for better. Attention isn't scarce, discernment is. People are scanning faster, tuning out sooner, and skipping anything that feels excessive, generic, or out of alignment.

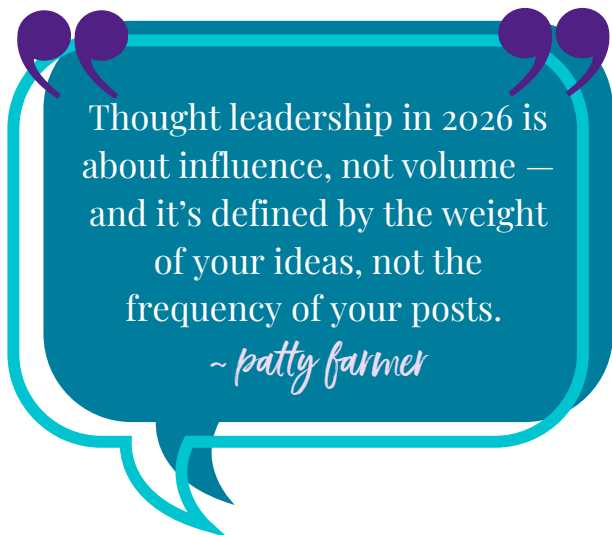
In this environment, the brands that rise to the top are not the loudest or most prolific. They are the ones that feel grounded, clear, and unmistakably owned.

Marketing is no longer about tactics. It's about positioning. Leaders are being called to slow down, clarify their message, and communicate from a place of confidence and alignment.

The following five trends reflect that deeper shift and offer a clear signal for how marketing will excel in 2026.



HOW THOUGHT LEADERSHIP IS CHANGING IN 2026



Thought leadership in 2026 is about influence, not volume — and it's defined by the weight of your ideas, not the frequency of your posts.

~ patty farmer

For years, marketing strategy prioritized visibility over depth, which diluted trust and authority. More posts, more platforms, and more consistency were treated as success metrics, even when the ideas themselves lacked distinction. As content multiplied, much of it became interchangeable, easy to scroll past and quick to forget.

But in 2026, audiences aren't craving more content — they're craving clarity, insight, and transformation. What stands out now are perspectives that feel earned, grounded, and shaped by lived experience — not based on algorithms or trend reports.

Thought leaders are recognizable not because they are everywhere, but because their thinking carries weight. Their work reflects principles, frameworks, and beliefs that feel considered, not rushed.

**Volume fills feeds.
Clarity builds authority.**

This shift favors depth over volume, meaning over metrics. A single powerful idea can build more authority than a month's worth of content calendar filler.

In 2026, the leaders who matter most will not be trying to say everything. They will be known for what they stand for.

Noise gets attention. Insight earns trust.

2 WHY REFINED BRANDS ARE GAINING TRUST FASTER

Clarity builds trust. Complexity breaks it. Buyers in 2026 will trust brands that feel calm, intentional, and emotionally grounded. After years of intensity-driven marketing (louder hooks, faster funnels, constant urgency), people are drawn to messaging that helps them feel oriented rather than pressured.

Refinement removes friction.

This shows up in clean, clear language that doesn't over-explain or over-promise. Fewer offers expressed more thoughtfully. A tone that assumes credibility rather than trying to prove it. A consistent presence that feels steady instead of reactive. A space for understanding, and that space is increasingly what builds trust.

Refinement is not a rebrand. It is a natural evolution.

As leaders grow, their work becomes more precise. Their messaging should reflect that maturity. Removing what no longer fits allows what does fit to land with more ease.

3 AUTHORITY PATHWAYS WILL REPLACE FUNNELS

Authority pathways are intentional touchpoints that allow people to experience a leader's depth and give people a taste of how they think, lead, and create results.

Today's high-level buyers don't want a funnel. They want a felt experience of your leadership.

These can take many forms: a private voice note, a short curated workshop, or a personal follow-up message that meets the moment. The magic isn't in the format — it's in the presence.

Funnels push. Authority pathways invite.

In 2026, authority will be built through how people experience leadership, not how often they encounter it.

When someone feels your leadership before they hire you, the "yes" becomes inevitable — not effortful.

~ patty farmer



4 HOW LEADERS USE AI WITHOUT LOSING HUMAN CONNECTION

The most effective marketing systems in 2026 combine technological efficiency with human presence.

AI and automation are standard marketing tools in 2026, but they do not replace human presence or judgment. While technology can draft, organize, analyze, and streamline, it cannot create meaning, discern nuance, or build trust on its own.

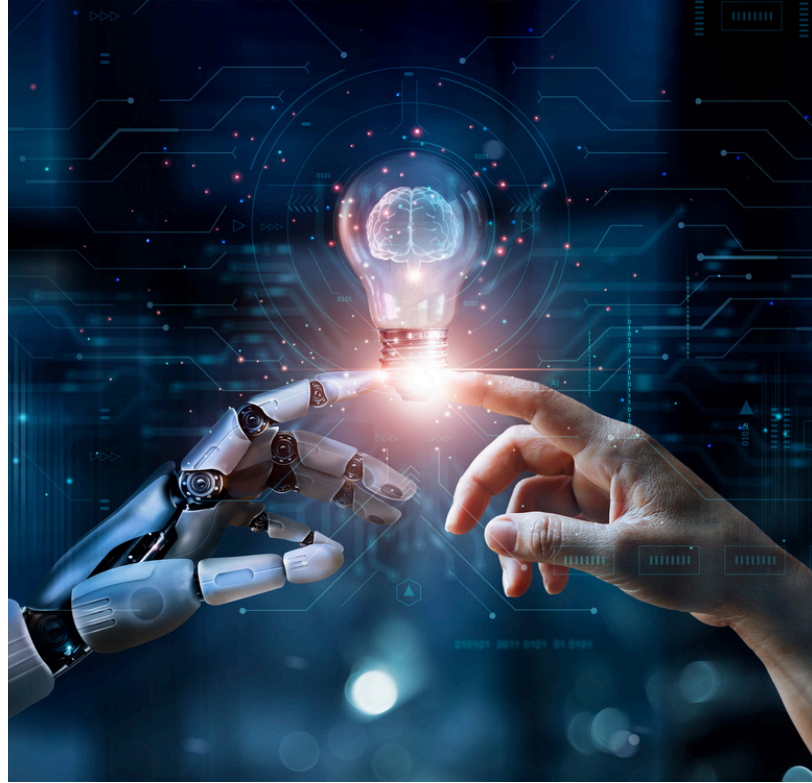
The gap appears when leaders lean too far in either direction. Fully automated systems remove personality and emotional intelligence. Fully manual systems create burnout and inconsistency. Hybrid marketing allows technology to support the work while preserving voice, story, and lived experience.

AI + Human-Led Strategy Is the New 2026 Power Move.

5 SIGNATURE METHODS MATTER MORE THAN YOUR OFFER STACK

Signature methodology creates clarity because it shifts the focus from deliverables to **transformation**.

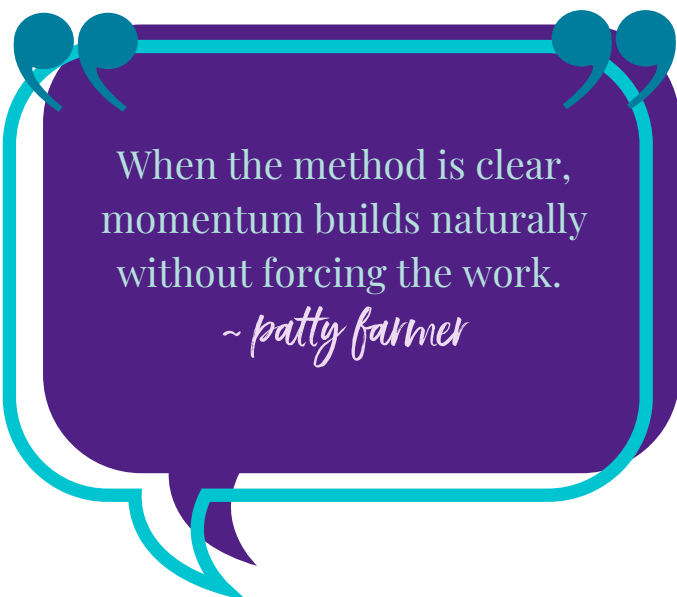
As leaders gain experience, consistent patterns form that naturally become a signature method. Certain principles repeat. Certain steps consistently produce results. Certain beliefs anchor every engagement. Over time, this coherence becomes recognizable even if it has never been formally named.



Most offers still focus on deliverables — sessions, access, and features. But experienced buyers aren't buying time. They're investing in transformation.

A clearly articulated method becomes intellectual property. It allows people to understand not just what you do, but how change happens through your work. It also creates continuity across content, messaging, and offers, making authority easier to recognize and trust.

Strong frameworks do not need to be complex. Often, three to five core pillars are enough. What matters is coherence.



When the method is clear, momentum builds naturally without forcing the work.

~ patty farmer

THE BIGGER PICTURE: MARKETING IS NOW AN EXTENSION OF LEADERSHIP

Each of these 5 trends reflect the same underlying truth and point to a single shift: marketing is becoming an extension of leadership rather than a separate function.

Each trend moves away from performance and toward presence. Away from volume and toward discernment. Away from persuasion and toward recognition. This reflects a market that is more experienced, more cautious, and more attuned to leadership posture than ever before.

Strategy simplifies when leadership deepens. Messaging sharpens when ideas mature. And trust flows more naturally when presence leads the way.

This is the year to stop chasing attention and start creating recognition.

WHAT SHOULD LEADERS FOCUS ON FIRST IN 2026



The most effective marketing shift in 2026 is choosing **alignment** over acceleration.

Start by noticing where your current marketing no longer reflects how you lead today. Then look at your messaging, your offers, and your client journey. Where does it feel noisy? Where does it feel sharp? What would you say differently if you trusted your voice more deeply?

Small, intentional shifts create momentum. Not the kind that burns bright and fades — the kind that lasts because it's aligned.

When leaders stop reacting and start directing, the right people recognize themselves. Authority compounds quietly — but unmistakably. Momentum follows naturally because it is rooted in decision, not effort. Even small, intentional shifts at this level rarely feel dramatic in the moment, but over time they create authority that is steady, recognizable, and trusted without the need to push or perform.

That is the work that endures, and that is the work that defines 2026.

💡 **If your marketing feels outdated... it probably is.**

Your leadership has evolved — your strategy should too.

Let's explore how your positioning, messaging, or authority pathways can reflect the clarity you've earned.

This is your moment to lead smarter — not just louder. Let's make 2026 the year your marketing reflects the leader you've become.

Want to Stop Chasing Clients & Start Converting Them Instead?

I can fix that!

12
Month
Marketing
Planner

**YES! I want to start
converting NOW!**

Why Smart Money Still Feels Scary and How We Built a Better Way



Samantha (Sam) Irish & Karen Stawicki

I grew up listening to conversations most kids never hear.

While my friends' parents talked about school, sports, and weekend plans, my dinner table was filled with discussions about my parents' clients. Their fears. Their wins. Their regrets. Their relief. I didn't always understand the numbers, but I understood the emotion behind them. I saw what it felt like when a family realized they were safe. And what it felt like when someone realized they weren't.

At eleven years old, I walked into my mom's office and announced I was going to be her business partner one day. At the time, I think I was more motivated by the reward trips to Paris and Switzerland than the spreadsheets. My mom was always the top of her firm. That lifestyle was alluring. But as I got older, what really pulled me in was the impact.

I saw people come to her not just for money, **but for peace.**

Years later, when I officially entered the financial industry, I expected to learn how to serve clients better. What I didn't expect was how quickly I would realize the industry itself was a problem.

The financial world loves to talk about being a fiduciary. About "doing better when you do better." About aligning interests. But here is the uncomfortable truth most people never hear: the dominant system is built for accumulation, not for living. It is designed to grow assets, not to protect people.

And that distinction changes **everything.**



The Moment That Changed How I See Retirement

One of the first clients I worked with will stay with me forever.

He had done everything right. Built a successful career. Invested consistently. Followed the rules. By every industry standard, he was a model client. But as retirement got closer, his confidence didn't rise. It fell.

He kept asking one question, repeatedly. **"What happens next?"**

He wasn't afraid of not having money. He was afraid of not knowing how that money would behave once paychecks stopped.

That is when I learned something most advisors never talk about.

There are two phases of wealth. Accumulation and distribution.

Accumulation is simple. You save. You invest. You let time and markets do the work. The rate of return does not matter nearly as much as people think when you are still contributing.

Distribution is different.

Once you begin withdrawing, everything changes. Timing matters. Sequence matters. Risk multiplies. And the wrong structure can quietly drain a lifetime of work.

The riskiest time to invest is not when you are young. It is the five years before and after retirement. Lose money in that window, and even a large portfolio can be permanently damaged.

This client didn't need more growth. He needed certainty.

So, we restructured his wealth around something the industry rarely prioritizes: guarantees.

Instead of hoping the market would behave, we created income streams he could never outlive. Instead of wondering if he could spend more, he knew exactly what was safe. And instead of worrying about the next downturn, he slept.

Now, every time his portfolio grows, he converts part of that growth into new streams of guaranteed income.

This gives him what he really wanted.

Permission.

Permission to take the extra trip.

Permission to run the next marathon.

Permission to spoil the grandchildren.

Permission to live.

That is when I realized this work was never about returns.

It was about **control**.

Why We Created the Power of Three



After hundreds of conversations with families approaching retirement, something became impossible to ignore.

People were not failing because they hadn't saved enough. They were failing because their money had been built for the wrong phase of life.

For decades, everything is about accumulation. You are told to grow, invest, maximize returns, and let the market do its thing. And for a long time, that worked. Your account balances rise. Statements look impressive. On paper, everything feels solid.

But retirement changes the rules.

What worked to grow money does not work to spend it. What felt safe in accumulation becomes fragile in distribution.

And the longer you live, the more dangerous that mismatch becomes.

There is one risk that quietly multiplies every other risk in retirement, and yet almost no one plans for it properly.

Longevity.

Living a long life is a gift. But financially, it changes everything.

If someone retires at 65 and passes away at 68, most planning mistakes never have time to surface. Market swings, inflation, tax inefficiencies, withdrawal mistakes, even poor structure do not have enough time to compound into real damage.

If someone retires at 65 and passes away at 68, most planning mistakes never have time to surface. Market swings, inflation, tax inefficiencies, withdrawal mistakes, even poor structure do not have enough time to compound into real damage.

But if that same person lives to 85, 90, or 95, all those risks stack on top of each other.

Market volatility matters more.

Inflation erodes purchasing power.

Healthcare costs rise.

Taxes eat away at income.

And every bad decision has decades to do its damage.

Longevity does not create risk by itself.

It magnifies every risk already embedded in the plan.

My mom spent more than three decades helping families accumulate wealth. She was exceptional at it. But over time, she started seeing something the industry did not want to acknowledge. The people who struggled most in retirement were not the ones who failed to save. They were the ones who were never shown how to transition.

They had money, but no plan.

Every dollar sat in the same place, exposed to the same risks, taxed the same way, and expected to do everything at once.

We stopped asking, "How much do you have?" and started asking, "What is each dollar supposed to do?"

Because most retirement plans quietly ask one pile of money to do everything. Grow. Provide income. Stay liquid. Protect against market crashes. Keep up with inflation. Be tax efficient. Last a lifetime.

That is not a strategy. That is financial wish list.

It is the equivalent of asking one muscle to run a marathon, lift heavy weights, and hold perfect balance at the same time. Eventually, something breaks.

The **Power of Three** was born out of hundreds of those conversations.

We realized that the anxiety people felt had nothing to do with the size of their accounts. It came from the fact that their money had no clear job.

Imagine hiring a team where every employee is expected to be the CEO, the accountant, and the customer service rep. No one would perform well. Yet that is exactly how most retirement strategies treat money.

So, we simplified it.

Every dollar must have one job.

Income exists to create your paycheck.

Liquidity exists to give you access and flexibility.

Growth exists to build the future.

Money can only do one job well at a time. When you ask it to do all three, it fails.

The Power of Three is not a product strategy. **It is a leverage framework.** It allows wealth to behave the way people need it to when life changes.

When **income is guaranteed**, market volatility becomes opportunity instead of fear.

When **liquidity** is tax favored, choices expand.

When **growth** is protected from withdrawals, compounding accelerates.

This is how people stop reacting to their money and start using it.

This is how longevity stops being a threat and becomes a gift.

This is how people stop reacting and start living.



Why the Industry Keeps Getting This Wrong

Most advisors are trained to manage assets, not outcomes.

They talk about diversification, but not income.

They talk about returns, but not taxes.

They talk about growth, but not longevity.

And because they are paid based on assets under management, they are rewarded when your money stays exposed to the market.

That is why “**we do better when you do better**” sounds comforting but quietly ignores the real risks of retirement.

Our responsibility is different.

We are not here to maximize portfolios.

We are here to maximize life.





What This Means for You

If you are a business owner, a high-earning professional, or a family with growing assets, **here is the real test.**

- If the market falls tomorrow, could you still pay yourself?
- If taxes rose, could you adjust?
- If opportunity appeared, could you say yes?
- If you do not know, you are not broken.

You are just still playing the accumulation game. At **Compass Financial**, we believe wealth should give you options, not anxiety.

And that is why we built something different.

What's Next?

If you want to continue this journey, learn more about the Power of Three, or explore how your own assets are positioned, you can find us at [NavigateYourWealth.com](https://www.NavigateYourWealth.com) or watch our masterclasses on YouTube.

Next quarter I will take you deeper into the first leg of the Power of Three: guaranteed income, and why it is the missing foundation for so many powerful women and families.

Freedom does not come from making more money (although we're good at that too).

It comes from finally feeling secure enough to enjoy it.

~ Samantha (Sam) Irish

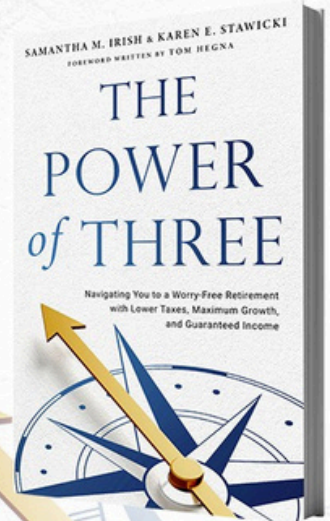
About the Authors



Samantha Irish is the co-founder of Compass Financial and co-host of Navigate Your Wealth. A Generational Wealth Specialist, she brings fresh perspective, empathy, and clarity to retirement strategy. With a background in communications and consulting, Sam helps clients reimagine retirement as a chapter of purpose and freedom — offering guidance that honors both legacy and life's most personal transitions.



Karen Stawicki is the co-founder of Compass Financial and co-host of Navigate Your Wealth. With over 40 years of experience, she helps high-net-worth families reduce taxes, protect legacy, and retire with confidence. Known for her warmth, loyalty, and precision, Karen blends deep strategy with human connection walking clients through life's biggest transitions with clarity, care, and purpose.





Compass Financial
NAVIGATE YOUR WEALTH

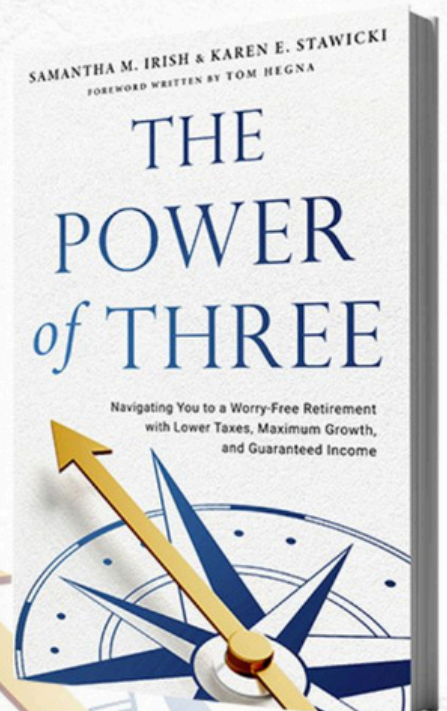
THE POWER OF THREE

A SMARTER WAY TO RETIRE

The Power of Three is a practical, easy-to-understand approach, built on decades of experience, helping you make smarter financial decisions.

The Power of Three provides three clear benefits:

- ① Lower Taxes
- ② Maximum Growth
- ③ Guaranteed Income



Start your journey to a worry-free retirement TODAY!



#MarketingTip

Thinking of marketing as an expense rather than an investment in your business can cause a fundamental gap in growing your business and bank account.

~ patty farmer

A few words from our Sponsor

Dear Readers,

When my daughter was eleven, she walked into my office with the kind of confidence only a child can have and announced, **"I'm going to be your business partner someday."**

I remember smiling and thinking, Perfect. A few more years of school, a little training, and I'll have my exit strategy all lined up.

What I did not know then is that both she and the world had very different plans.

I imagined three to five years of working side by side before I handed her the reins and headed into a quiet, well-earned retirement. Instead, here we are more than a decade later, still working together, still growing, still learning, and still loving every minute of it.

And the truth is, I wouldn't have it any other way.

After more than four decades in this industry, I had seen just about every market cycle, every financial trend, and every version of retirement planning there is. I had also seen the same thing repeatedly. Smart, successful people would reach the finish line with impressive portfolios and still feel uncertain about what **came next**.

They had done everything right. But something still felt missing.

When Sam joined me, she brought not just energy and fresh eyes, but a deep desire to question what everyone else accepted as "the way it's done." Together, we started having different conversations. Not about products, not about rates of return, but about **peace of mind, longevity, taxes, and what it really means to feel financially secure**.

Compass Financial was born out of everything I had learned over those 30 years, and everything Sam was brave enough to question. That combination is what made something new **possible**.

It was the decision to stop measuring success by account balances and start measuring it by **confidence, clarity, and quality of life**. It was the choice to build a firm that puts structure before sales, strategy before transactions, and people before portfolios.

Today, I work because I want to, not because I have to. I get to golf when I want, travel when I want, and spend my days doing work that genuinely changes lives. That is not an accident. It is the result of intentional planning and the right structure behind the money.

And that is what I want for every woman reading this.

Being part of this magazine and this community is one of the ways we continue that mission. **The women who read Marketing, Media & Money are builders, leaders, and visionaries**. You are creating businesses, wealth, and impact, and you deserve **financial strategies** that are just as thoughtful and intentional.

Thank you for being here. Thank you for letting us be part of your journey. And thank you for continuing to ask bigger questions about what is possible, not just in business, but in life.

Warmly,

Karen Stawicki

Co-Founder, Compass Financial



NavigateYourWealth.com

Meet our Sponsors

Karen Stawicki & Samantha (Sam) Irish

Q: What does success mean to you?

A: For us, success isn't about numbers in an account. It's about clarity and peace of mind. When a client tells us, "I finally feel in control of my money instead of the other way around," that's success. It's knowing that you've built a plan that gives you confidence today and options tomorrow.

Q: What would your advice be to a new business owner and/or entrepreneur?

A: Sam: Pay yourself first. It's so tempting to pour everything back into your business, but the truth is, your business is not your retirement plan. Build wealth outside of it. Even if it's small to start, consistency is key. That way, when you exit, you're not depending on one "maybe" to fund your future.

Karen: Learn everything you can about Cash Value Life Insurance, because it solves all problems. That's why we love this vehicle.

It's not just a safety net. It's your:
Liquidity bucket (accessible funds when you need them)

Protection bucket (security for your family and business)

Exit strategy bucket (a way to create tax-free income in retirement)

Q: What was your "aha" moment that inspired you to become an entrepreneur/biz owner?

A: Sam: My "aha" wasn't one moment; it was watching families lose options because they waited too long to plan. We started Compass Financial to change that. I realized I could give people more than financial strategies. I could give them confidence, control, and the ability to live and leave a meaningful legacy.

Karen: I realized that I had a unique ability to make the intangible, tangible. My love of story telling, and picture drawing (just ask my clients) helped to make these overwhelming and complicated financial options simple to understand. The "big box" financial firms all use complex financial jargon that keeps them in control. When I built a boutique wealth firm, it was about putting the control back in the clients hands.



Q: What are some of the changes business owners/entrepreneurs, in your opinion, need to make to be successful in today's business environment?

A: Sam: Adaptability is everything. The world changes fast. Tax laws shift, markets move, and technology disrupts entire industries. Successful business owners don't just react; they plan ahead. In finances, that means stress-testing your strategy so you're ready no matter what comes.

Karen: Everyone has a plan, most of them are based on hope. You hope the market cooperates, you hope you don't die too soon, you hope you don't become sick, you hope no one sues you, you hope your business thrives... but at the end of the day, destiny controls the actual outcomes. Business owners need to put a safety net in place, so that the plan works in all situations, not just the one you hoped for. This applies to your business, but also your finances.



Q: What is your big 'WHY' that prevents you from giving up when times get tough?

A: Our "why" is legacy. Not just the wealth people leave behind, but the impact they make while they're living. We think about families we serve. When a spouse passes, or a business is sold, or a child inherits wealth, we know our work gives them clarity instead of chaos. That's what keeps me going.

Our "why" is also about our own legacy. Karen continues to work the business because she is leaving a legacy for Sam, initially, growing it and working it together, but ultimately for her to take over. Sam's reason is to continue the legacy for her girls. Not that they have to join the financial business, but so they can continue to watch their mom and Babci (grandma) work so hard in a business that she loves, transforming people's lives.

Q: If you could have lunch with any CEO who would it be and why?

A: Sam: I'd love to sit down with Sara Blakely, the founder of Spanx. Not just because she built a billion-dollar company from scratch, but because she did it by staying true to her values and thinking differently. She didn't let conventional wisdom stop her, and that's the same mindset I want for every client we work with.

Q: What keeps you awake at night?

A: Sam: Honestly? Knowing there are strategies out there that allow people to pay far less taxes than the government leads them to believe they must pay. The amount of money that will be kept from their families is criminal. The thought of families who don't even know they're at risk of paying "optional taxes" which are taxes they don't have to pay, but will, if they follow the government's default rules. It bothers me because I know with the right strategy, they could keep more of what they've worked for and pass on more to the people and causes they care about.

Q: What is the lesson that took you the longest to learn?

A: Karen: That busyness doesn't equal progress. I used to think if I was working harder, I was moving forward. But in both life and finances, it's not about doing more; it's about doing what matters most, consistently.

A perfect example of this is asking your dollar to do too many jobs. Think about it, if your money is invested in the market, you are asking it to grow, but when you retire, you think you can leave the money there and now ask it to give you the income you need monthly. Then, if there is an emergency (or an opportunity) you are also hoping that it is liquid, and the market isn't down. This strategy puts a strain on your dollar, and actually prevents it from performing. Sadly, this is the advice that most financial advisors continue to advocate.

Instead, we give our client's money job descriptions. Each dollar is tasked with one job: To provide income, to be liquid and to grow. When every dollar is only asked to perform one job, and it does it consistently, it allows that dollar to perform at its optimum. That specialization of function is the key to **The Power of Three**. It is crucial to the success of your money, but the strategy applies to business too - don't work harder, work smarter.

Q: When it comes to wealth and retirement planning, how important is timing—and what happens when business owners delay taking action?

A: Sam: You've heard the phrase: "The best time to start was yesterday, the next best time is today." That's especially true when it comes to planning for retirement.

Here's how life often looks:

20s: You just got the job — retirement feels forever away.

30s: Get the house, get the spouse, get the kids.

40s: Keep the house, keep the spouse, keep up with the kids.

50s: Wait... retirement is just around the corner?!

It's not negligence... it's life. But when you delay planning, you shorten your window of opportunity, and the cost is massive.

Think of how money doubles: 2→4, 4→8, 8→16. Now imagine that with a few zeroes. \$800,000 becomes \$1.6 million. \$1.6M doubles to \$3.2M. Waiting doesn't just cost you the small jumps — it costs you the big leaps.

The longer you wait, the fewer choices you have. And you didn't become successful by letting someone else control your choices, right?

Q: What was the biggest obstacle, blind spot or roadblock you had to overcome?

A: Karen: Thinking I had to have all the answers myself. The truth is, collaboration is where the magic happens. That's why our Power of Three framework resonates. It's not about one product or one person, it's about balance. Once I embraced that, both my business and my clients' results grew stronger.

Q: Generational wealth is often reduced to just dollars and inheritance. At Compass Financial, you take a different approach. How do you define it, and why does it matter for the families you serve?

A: Karen: You've probably heard the saying: "If I only knew then, what I know now..." Well... I do, and I can.

At Compass Financial, with 45+ years of experience, that's exactly the gift we get to give our clients — the wisdom of experience. When most people ask, "Where should I put my money?" they're thinking stocks, real estate, maybe even cryptocurrency. But that's not the right question. It's not what you buy, it's where you position it.

Sam: My passion as a Generational Wealth Specialist is to help the next generation ask better questions now, so they don't arrive at retirement saying, "What the heck have I done?"



Because when you transition from the accumulation phase (where you are now) to the distribution phase (where you want to be), the way you've positioned your dollars will determine whether you have clarity, control, and options... or stress, risk, and regret.

My job is to prepare you so your Power of Three is fully funded, giving you clarity, confidence, and control.

Q: What are a few books you recommend every business owner read?

A: First, I have to mention **The Power of Three** (yes, our book). It's the framework we use at Compass Financial to help families balance income, liquidity, and growth so they can enjoy today, prepare for tomorrow, and protect their legacy. It takes something overwhelming like retirement planning, and makes it simple, actionable, and clear. Beyond that, a few books I recommend again and again are:

- **Atomic Habits** by James Clear
Small, consistent changes compound into extraordinary results.
- **Tax-Free Retirement** by Patrick Kelly
Business owners need to understand how to minimize lifetime taxes and keep more of what they earn.
- **Halftime: Moving from Success to Significance** by Bob Buford
At some point, success shifts from achievement to significance and this book helps you navigate that transition.

Q: • **The Go-Giver** by Bob Burg & John David Mann

Real success is built on generosity, relationships, and creating value for others.

Each one will shift how you think about purpose, money, habits & the impact you can leave.

Q: What do you love most about your business TODAY?

A: **Sam:** The relationships. I love that we don't just manage numbers on a page; we know our clients, their kids, their goals, and their fears. I love being part of their story, not just their spreadsheet.

Karen: After four and a half decades, I feel like I've found the cure to "cancer"... Our Power of Three methodology allows people to create a worry free retirement; that works in all situations. Knowing this, I can't keep it to myself, I'm too excited, and I want to shout it from every rooftop, on every platform, and to anyone that is willing to listen.

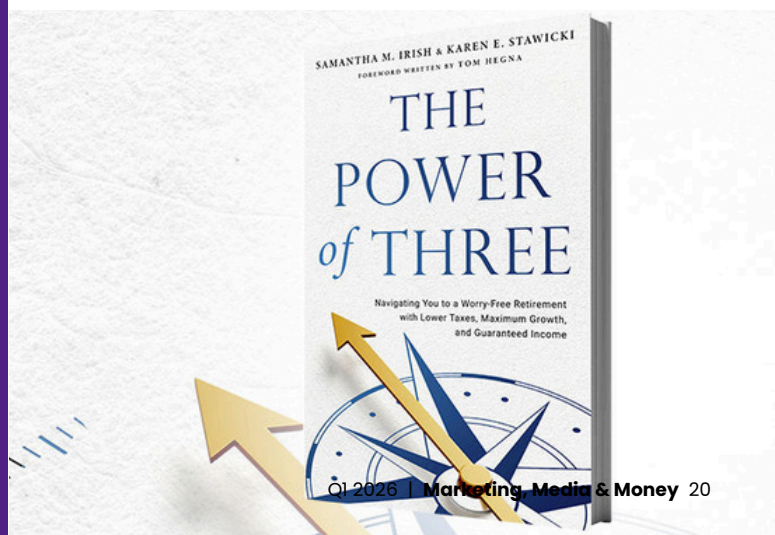
Q: What is the best piece of advice you have ever received?

A: **Sam:** "Don't just build wealth, build options." Options are what give you freedom: to retire earlier, to travel, to give generously, or to leave a legacy that matters.

Karen: Also, you can never save too much. No one ever laid in their death bed saying, "I wish I hadn't saved this much."

Q: What's next for you?

A: Continuing the mission... and building on the momentum we've created. It feels like we've lit a spark that's only growing brighter, and with every step forward we're creating even greater impact. For us, "what's next" means helping more families realize they don't have to settle for stress, risk, or "a hoped for" retirement plans. Instead, they can step into clarity, confidence, and control, and live out a legacy that matters.



From Chaos to Creation: *Why & How the Future of Leadership is Shifting*



Staci Wright

Naming the Moment We're In

There is a collective unraveling happening right now— and it's impossible to ignore.

We are witnessing breakdowns across nearly every structure that once governed and stabilized society: politics and government, education systems, religious institutions, economic frameworks, and business itself. The models that once worked—systems built for predictability, control, and uniformity—are no longer holding.

What we're living through isn't isolated chaos.

It's systemic.

For many leaders—especially high-achieving women—this moment feels uniquely heavy. Not just because we see the cracks, but because we are often the ones holding space for others as those cracks widen.

We're being asked to lead while the rules are changing, the old playbooks are failing, and certainty is no longer available. There is fear in the air. Overwhelm. A sense that something fundamental is ending—without a clear picture yet of what's replacing it.

And while that can feel destabilizing, it's also meaningful.

Because widespread breakdown is rarely random. It is often the signal that an **evolution is underway.**

This article focuses on business and leadership—but business does not exist in a vacuum. It reflects the same pressures, fractures, and possibilities unfolding across society at large. What looks like chaos is not failure. It is transition.

This Is Not a Phase — It's a Revolution

What we are experiencing is not a temporary disruption or a cycle that will correct itself.

It is the unraveling of an outdated operating system.

Across industries, we are watching the collapse of hustle-at-all-costs thinking, command-and-control leadership, and hierarchical models built on fear, compliance, and extraction. These systems were designed for an era of factories and predictability—not for today's speed, complexity, and demand for humanity.



There is no “going back to normal.”
Normal was built for a different time.

This moment isn't asking leaders to try harder.
It's asking us to lead **differently.**

The Old Model: The Pyramid (and Why It's Breaking)



For over a century, business has been built on the pyramid.

It made sense in the industrial era:

- **Clear hierarchy**
- **Top-down authority**
- **Control as a management tool**
- **Efficiency prioritized over humanity**

In that environment, loud, confident, and often ruthless leaders were rewarded. Results mattered more than people. Profit mattered more than process.

And for a time—it worked.

But today, that same structure struggles under the weight of rapid innovation, burnout, disengagement, erosion of trust, and a rising generation unwilling to sacrifice their humanity for productivity.

For many women leaders, the pyramid has carried an additional cost: the pressure to succeed inside a system never designed to support relational leadership, emotional intelligence, or collaborative strength.

If you've ever felt torn between being a *good boss* and a *good human*, you're not imagining it. That tension isn't personal—it's structural.

The New Model Emerging: The Tree

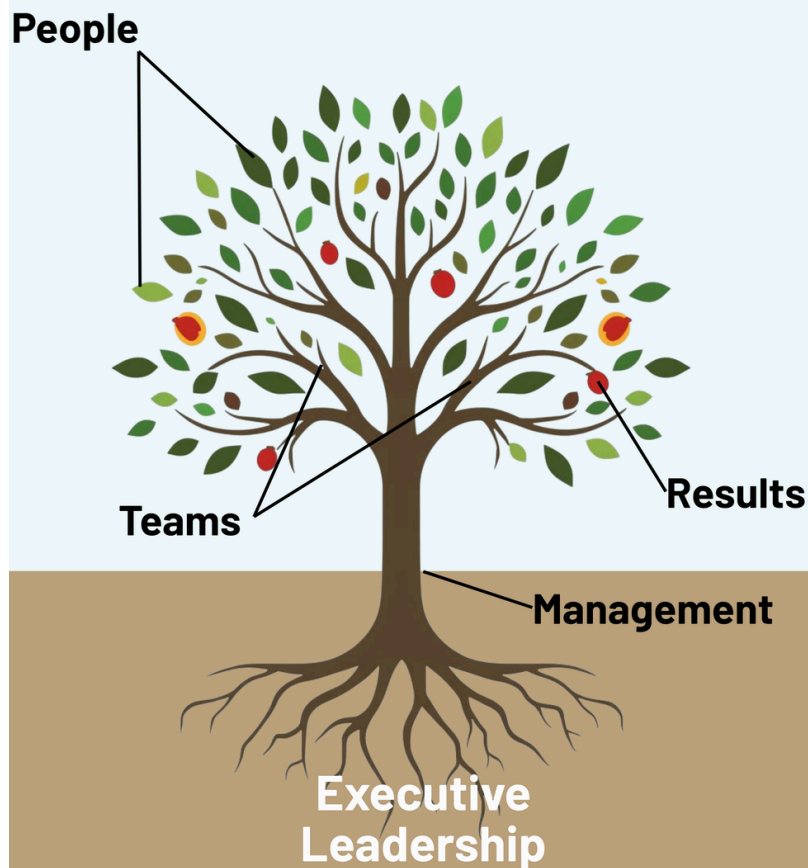
A new leadership model is quietly taking root—and it looks less like a pyramid and more like a tree.

A tree is alive. Adaptive. Regenerative.

- **Roots** represent leadership and values
- **Trunk** reflects systems, culture, & management
- **Branches** are collaborative teams
- **Leaves** are individual contributors
- **Fruit** is results, revenue, impact, and sustainability

When roots are strong and the environment is healthy, growth doesn't have to be forced. Productivity becomes a natural outcome.

This model allows organizations to scale without collapse—because strength is distributed, not hoarded.



What This Shift Means for Marketing and Media

Pyramid thinking shows up everywhere:

- **Scarcity-based marketing**
- **Performative branding**
- **Transactional relationships**
- **Urgency without integrity**

Tree-based leadership changes the game.

Messaging becomes relational instead of manipulative. Brands build trust instead of chasing attention. Audience relationships deepen. Long-term brand equity replaces short-term spikes.

The future favors:

- **Depth over noise**
- **Integrity over urgency**
- **Connection over control**

And this is where women are uniquely positioned to lead—not because of gender, but because relational intelligence, intuition, and collaboration are no longer “soft skills.” They are **essential skills** for sustainable business.



The Inner Shift Required to Lead the New Model

Here's the part few people say out loud:

You can't lead tree-based organizations with pyramid nervous systems.

Many leaders feel the pull toward compassion and empathy—only to hit frustration:

“When I lead with heart, people take advantage.”
“When I'm generous, performance drops.”
“Compassion seems to create entitlement.”

I lived this.

When I first introduced more care and empathy into my businesses, my teams felt supported—but performance declined. Not because compassion doesn't work, but because compassion **without structure** isn't leadership.

We were never taught how to hold **both**:

- **Humanity and accountability**
- **Trust and standards**
- **Care and performance**

The solution isn't less heart. It's a better framework.

Calm, regulated leaders who lead from clarity instead of fear—consistently outperform reactive ones in times of uncertainty.

Quiet Leadership in Loud Times

Strength is being redefined.

The most powerful leaders right now are not the loudest voices in the room. They are steady. Grounded. Building beneath the surface while others react.

Quiet leadership doesn't dominate—it stabilizes. It doesn't demand attention, it earns trust.

For many women, this isn't a new skill to learn. It's permission to lead as they already are.

From Collapse to Conscious Creation

This moment is not asking leaders to rescue broken systems or carry the weight of the world.

That pressure—the belief that we must fix everything—is part of the old model.

What this era calls for instead is **conscious participation.**

We are being invited to stop propping up structures that are no longer sustainable and begin building what comes next with intention, integrity, and courage.

In business, that means:

- **Releasing leadership models rooted in control and fear**
- **Designing organizations that are resilient, human, and trust-based**
- **Building from values and vision—not urgency or ego**



Creation doesn't happen through force. It happens through alignment.

When leaders stop trying to dominate outcomes and start cultivating environments where people can thrive, performance doesn't disappear, it strengthens. Results don't diminish—they mature. Impact doesn't shrink—it multiplies.

This isn't about doing more. It's about doing what matters—**from the roots up.**

The future of leadership will not be built by those who react the fastest or shout the loudest.

It will be built by leaders who are steady enough to see clearly, brave enough to evolve, and grounded enough to create structures that honor both humanity and performance.

That future isn't coming someday.

It's being built now—by those willing to lead differently.



About the Author

Staci Wright is a visionary entrepreneur and movement leader with over 20 years of experience, and 28 patents secured throughout her career. Her work weaves innovation, humanity, and purpose, driven by a belief that business can—and must—serve people, strengthen communities, and support both inner and collective transformation.



Up Close & Personal with our Cover Girl...

Staci Wright

Q: What does success mean to you?

A: Success, to me, means building a business where I get to be fully human—aligned, authentic, and real as a leader—while still leading high-performing teams. It's about creating meaningful impact through business that is both powerful and sustainable.

True success isn't just financial; it's social, emotional, and collective. When a business creates prosperity not only for the founder, but for the people inside it and the communities it touches, that's success.

Q: What would your advice be to a new business owner and/or entrepreneur?

A: Having started six businesses over the last 20 years, my best advice is this: make sure what you're building is deeply aligned with who you truly are and what your purpose is.

When you have clarity around those two things, it becomes rocket fuel. Alignment gives you resilience. Purpose gives you stamina. Without them, even the most profitable business can feel exhausting.

Q: What was your “aha” moment that inspired you to become an entrepreneur or business owner?

A: As far back as I can remember, I always knew I would be a business owner. The harder question for me wasn't *if*—it was *how*.

For years, I searched for the kind of business that would allow me to lead in a way that felt true to who I am. That journey ultimately led me to both for-profit ventures and nonprofit work, and eventually to **HeartProfit**—where leadership, humanity, and impact finally converged.

Q: What changes do business owners and entrepreneurs need to make to be successful today?

A: The biggest shift required right now is moving from **command-and-control** leadership to **cultivate-and-collaborate** leadership.

The future of business doesn't rely on bosses—it relies on trust, teams, and shared ownership. Leaders who master trust-based, collaborative environments will not only survive what's coming—they'll thrive.

Q: If you could have lunch with any CEO, who would it be and why?

A: Brené Brown.

Her approach to leadership—grounded in vulnerability, courage, and authenticity—speaks directly to my soul. I admire how she embraces imperfection as strength and humanity as a leadership advantage. I'd love to experience that leadership style firsthand in conversation.



Q: What is your big “why” that keeps you going when times get tough?

A: I have two daughters—ages 20 and 23—who are incredible, talented young adults.

If it weren't for my commitment to modeling resilience, tenacity, and grit for them, I would have given up a long time ago. I couldn't imagine showing them an example of quitting when things get hard.

Q: What keeps you awake at night?

A: At this point in my life, nothing.

I've been at the pinnacle of success and I've lost it all. I've walked through significant hardship and come out the other side with perspective and peace. There's nothing left that steals my sleep.

Q: What lesson took you the longest to learn?

A: To stop trying to prove myself.

For years, I believed I had to work harder, do more, and hide my insecurities to be worthy. That mindset led to burnout, lost partnerships, missed collaborations, and turning away help I deeply needed.

What I've learned is that my strengths are sufficient—and that acknowledging my weaknesses actually creates stronger teams and better outcomes. Vulnerability didn't weaken my leadership; it expanded it.

Q: What are you doing right now that scares you, but you're doing it anyway?

A: Public speaking. Using my voice on video. Saying yes to bigger stages.

It's uncomfortable—but growth rarely comes without fear.

Q: What was the biggest obstacle or blind spot you had to overcome?

A: Self-doubt.

Learning to move forward without waiting for certainty changed everything.

Q: If you could go back and talk to your 25-year-old self, what would you tell her to do first?

A: Embrace your humanness—the good, the bad, and the messy.

Release perfectionism. Fail fast. Fail often. Learn quickly. Keep moving. Mistakes aren't the problem—avoiding them is.

Q: What books do you recommend every business owner read?

A: Any leadership book by **Brené Brown**. Her work consistently bridges courage, vulnerability, and real-world leadership in a way every business owner can benefit from.

Q: What do you love most about your business or nonprofit today?

A: HeartProfit allows me to lead and facilitate a global movement that's transforming business from the inside out.

Through the **Evo|Lead by HeartProfit** program, I've learned how to build aligned, trust-based teams instead of trying to do everything myself. As a result, I now create teams around a shared vision and watch that vision come to life with grace, power, and ease.

Even more meaningful is being part of an ecosystem that teaches other business owners and leaders how to lead this way too. Going through the transformation myself while simultaneously guiding others through it is incredibly fulfilling.

Q: What is the best piece of advice you've ever received?

A: When you learn to love yourself deeply, every other problem you face begins to diminish.

Q: What's next for you and for HeartProfit?

A: We are building a new world of business—one rooted in humanity, trust, power, and impact.

HeartProfit is becoming the global leader in compassionate, trust-based leadership. We are defining what this new model looks like, teaching it, and helping leaders embody it.

This isn't a trend. It's a transformation.

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Mistakes First-Time Authors Make About Visibility

(and Why It Might Be Time to Write a New Book)

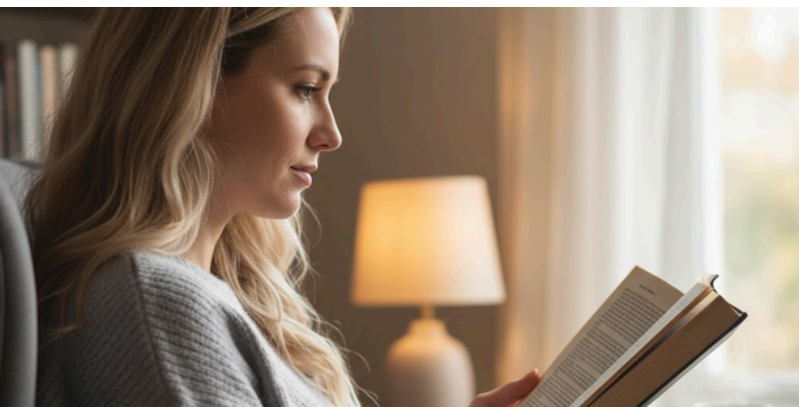


Janet Bernstein

For years, entrepreneurs and leaders have been told that writing a book is the ultimate credibility milestone. Publish your story, share your expertise, and visibility will follow. The promise sounds compelling, and many first-time authors step into the process believing their book will finally position them as a recognized authority.

For many authors, very little changes after the book is released.

They launch it, promote it enthusiastically for a season, schedule podcast appearances, and celebrate early momentum. Then the buzz fades. The conversations slow. The book still matters, but the visibility they expected never fully arrives.



The issue is not the quality of the book.

The issue is the belief that a book creates visibility, when in reality, visibility is what determines the impact of a book. **It is grounded in identity, message clarity, resonance, presence, confidence, and connection.** And most first-time authors misunderstand that relationship.

They expect the book to do work their voice was never given the space to do.

After reviewing countless manuscripts and walking authors through both the creative and strategic sides of publishing, I've seen the same visibility mistakes appear again and again.

Here are the five most common.

Mistake 1:

Waiting Until the Book Launch to Become Visible

Many first-time authors treat the book launch as the beginning of visibility. They think, "Once the book is published, then I'll step forward," or "When I have the book, then I'll start speaking more boldly."

In practice, the opposite is true.

A launch does not create visibility. A launch **amplifies** whatever visibility already exists. Readers do not instantly trust a new voice. **Trust forms over time, through consistency.**

When I work with women who are preparing to write their next book, we start with identity, message, audience alignment, and where their future visibility is taking them. Because when visibility does not exist before publication, the launch simply places a spotlight on an empty stage.

The book should not introduce the author to her audience. It should deepen a connection that already exists.

Mistake 2:

Treating the Book Like a Marketing Tool Instead of a Leadership Platform

A frequent pattern I see among first-time authors is approaching the book primarily as a business asset. They frame it as a funnel, a list-building tool, or an extension of their offers. The writing becomes strategic, but often loses depth.

Readers do not connect to a perfectly constructed professional narrative.

They connect to conviction, lived wisdom, and insight expressed through a fully embodied voice.

It is the moment an author says, "This is who I am now. This is what I know after the experiences that shaped me. This is the truth I am no longer willing to dilute."

Across the publishing work I do, the books that create lasting visibility are not the ones written to support a marketing plan. They are the ones written from clarity of voice and maturity of perspective.

When a book is created as a promotional instrument, it blends into the noise. When it is written as a leadership platform, it becomes unforgettable.

And visibility grows from what people cannot forget.



Mistake 3:

Trying to Be Seen Everywhere Instead of Becoming Memorably Known

Many first-time authors equate visibility with volume. They increase posting frequency, follow what others in their space are doing, and try to maintain presence through endless output.

But visibility is not about being everywhere.

Visibility is about being unmistakable.



The authors who stand out are not always the ones speaking the most. They are the ones whose **perspective is distinct, grounded, and fully aligned with who they have become.** Their voice carries clarity because it is no longer trying to fit inside anyone else's expectations.

In my experience working with authors who are stepping into their next level of leadership, the turning point is about shedding language that was borrowed, performative, or inherited from earlier versions of their career.

Authority is not created through saturation. It is created through identity.

A voice becomes memorable when it sounds like no one else's.

Mistake 4:

Leaving Their Real Story Out of the Message

This is the visibility barrier I encounter most often among women leaders.

Their expertise is strong. Their insights are meaningful. But somewhere in the process, their real story disappears from the narrative. Not because they are unwilling to share it, but because many have spent years in environments where vulnerability felt unsafe.

They talk about resilience without revealing what tested it. They present the transformation without acknowledging the cost. They share the wisdom, but hold back the humanity.



Across the authors I support, the moment everything shifts is when they reclaim the story they once minimized to avoid controversy. Readers do not connect to strength alone.

They connect to truth.

When the story is absent, the message loses gravity. A book may sound polished, but it will never feel alive. Your story is not the risk in your message. **It is the anchor.**

Mistake 5:

Expecting the Book to Define Who They Become

Many first-time authors believe that publishing a book will change how they are perceived. But the real transformation does not happen when the book is released. It happens when the author steps into the identity required to carry the message.

Visibility is not an external achievement. It is an internal evolution rooted in **clarity, self-trust, integration, and alignment.**

Again and again, I witness authors realize that their first book reflected an earlier version of themselves, a chapter of their life where they were still negotiating their voice. Over time, they outgrow the perspective that book represents.

And they recognize that the next book must be written from who they are now.

When that shift occurs, the book no longer leads the author.

The author leads the book.



What Successful Authors Do Differently

The most impactful authors do not rush to publish the fastest book or follow rigid formulas. They do not write simply to check a credibility box. **They build a visibility ecosystem first.**

In my work guiding women through the publishing journey, we begin with **identity, message, and positioning.** We clarify the voice they are stepping into, the audience they want to influence, and the future they are building. Then we design the book concept and structure.

The manuscript becomes aligned with the woman they are becoming, not just the business they are running today.



If You Recognize Yourself in This, You Are Not Behind — You Are Ready



If your first book reflected who you were at the time, but no longer represents who you are now, that is not a failure.

It is evolution.

You are allowed to write the next book — the truer book, the wiser book, the one that aligns with your voice. Because the next level of visibility is not about producing more. It is about becoming more fully yourself...and creating a body of work that finally matches the woman you have become.

When that happens, the book does not make you visible.

You do.



About the Author

Janet C. Bernstein is an author, speaker, and founder of Let Her Glow Publishing House, where she helps women leaders build visibility while creating books that reflect who they've become. She guides authors through an intentional publishing and author development process that aligns identity, message, and strategic visibility to elevate authority and expand impact.



#MediaTips



Create content for both a global audience as well as your local community and post with appropriate hashtags and time zones that make the biggest impact and get the best reach.

~ patty farmer

Presence to Pipeline™ The Search That Decides the Sale



Tamika Brunetti

There is a moment that decides whether your reputation becomes revenue, and it usually happens when you are not in the room. You can deliver the presentation, lead the meeting, and be the person everyone trusts, then still lose the opportunity in the quietest place possible. It is the search.

Someone hears your name and does what capable people do. They look you up. In a few seconds, they decide whether you are clear, credible, and easy to engage. If your digital presence makes them work for the answer, they do not work harder. They move on.

That is the engine behind Presence to Pipeline™, my newly released podcast. It is a practical conversation about using LinkedIn and Sales Navigator to turn interest into real business outcomes. Not by posting nonstop. Not by chasing trends. By building a presence that converts, then using the right tools to follow through with consistency. Visibility is not the finish line. Conversion is.

Most professionals are not underexposed. They are under positioned. They show up in real life. They deliver results. They get introductions. They earn trust. But when someone goes looking for proof, the story gets fuzzy. And when the story gets fuzzy, the pipeline gets fragile.

The best part is you do not need a reinvention. You need alignment. Small edits, smarter targeting, and stronger follow up can change how quickly opportunities find you today and to stop leaking opportunities.

The first leak is when your profile reads like a resume instead of a decision page.

A resume is written for internal context, where everyone already understands the environment. A decision page is written for an external stranger with zero patience and a hundred options. If your headline is only a title and your About section is only a biography, you are forcing your audience to guess your value.

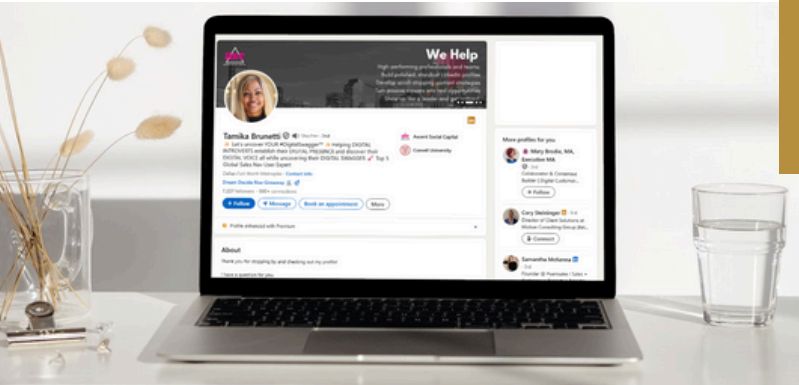
The second leak is when your visibility has no destination.

You can publish content, comment thoughtfully, speak on stages, and still wonder why the right people are not reaching out. Attention without direction becomes applause. People like, people agree, and then they disappear into their day. If your presence does not guide someone from curiosity to a next step, you are creating admiration, not momentum.

The third leak is follow up that depends on memory.

You meet someone, connect, intend to circle back, and then life moves fast. Weeks pass. The moment cools. The introduction goes stale. Pipeline loves relationships, but relationships need a rhythm. This is where Sales Navigator matters, not as a pressure tool, but as infrastructure that keeps you organized and relevant.

Here is the part most people miss: none of these leaks are fixed by "posting more." You do not need to become a full-time content creator. **You need a digital experience that does three jobs well.**



1

1 stranger should understand your lane quickly. Who do you serve? What problems do you solve? What outcomes do you drive? The answers should be obvious without corporate fog or clever wording that could apply to anyone. Clarity is kindness, and clarity converts.

2

Credibility should be easy to see. Proof is not bragging. Proof is risk reduction. Results, outcomes, examples, and specifics help someone trust you faster. When your most relevant wins are buried, outdated, or scattered, you are relying on someone's imagination to connect the dots. Do not make your buyer do mental gymnastics. Make your impact easy to spot.

3

The next step should feel natural. People hesitate when they are unsure what you want, what you offer, or whether reaching out will be awkward. The best profiles feel like a well hosted room: clear context, confident tone, and an obvious doorway into conversation. If someone wants to work with you and cannot figure out how, that is a leak.

This is also where LinkedIn can be fun. Strategy does not have to feel heavy to be effective. The goal is not to contort yourself into a persona. The goal is to translate the best version of you into a digital presence that matches your real-world caliber. Think of it like setting the table before guests arrive. You are not performing. You are hosting.

Sales Navigator supports that same mindset and adds precision. You can build focused lists that reflect the rooms you want access to. You can track job changes and growth signals so your outreach is timely instead of random. You can stay present with the accounts that matter without drowning in the feed. Used correctly, Sales Navigator is relationship infrastructure that protects your time.

When your positioning is clear and your follow-through is consistent, the pipeline stops feeling like luck. You stop chasing. You start attracting. The right people arrive warmer, ask better questions, and move faster because you removed uncertainty.

That is also how premium rates become easy to say out loud. When your presence looks generic, the market assumes your offer is generic. When your digital presence communicates precision, outcomes, and a clear lane, your pricing feels logical. You did not become expensive overnight. You became easier to trust. The fastest way to make your rates feel obvious is to make your value unmistakable.

If you want a quick reality check, open your LinkedIn profile in an incognito window and give yourself ten seconds. Can you tell what you do, who it is for, and why it matters? Can you see evidence that you deliver? Can you tell what to do next? If any answer is "not really," you just found the leak that is costing you conversations.

On Presence to Pipeline™, we go deeper into the decisions and habits that turn LinkedIn and Sales Navigator into a repeatable system, including what to tighten, what to ignore, and what to automate so you stay consistent without becoming consumed.

If you are ready to tighten your presence quickly, The Digital Swagger™ Spotlight is a focused 7-day sprint designed to stop the leaks fast. We sharpen how you show up so that when someone searches you, they immediately understand your value, trust your credibility, and know exactly what to do next. It is private, high-touch, and built for people who do not want a drawn-out "someday" project. They want it handled.

If you want to start here, listen to
Presence to Pipeline™.
If you want to move faster,
The **Digital Swagger™** Spotlight
is your next step.



About the Author

Tamika Brunetti leads ASCENT SOCIAL CAPITAL which helps revenue-generating leaders define their digital voice, strengthen LinkedIn presence, and uncover Digital Swagger. A LinkedIn Sales Navigator educator and Top 5 Sales Navigator Community Expert in LinkedIn's 30,000+ member community, she has trained thousands worldwide. She holds an MBA, a PMP and is obsessed with analog planning.



#MoneyTip



Invest in customer satisfaction to boost revenue, and encourage repeat business. It costs more to acquire a new customer than it does to retain an existing one.

~ patty farmer

Why Conviction-Driven, Impact-Oriented Leadership Will Define 2026 and Beyond



We are standing at a threshold moment in business.

The systems and models that many women were taught to succeed within – relentless growth, constant optimization, and profit at all costs – are no longer sustainable. They're eroding under pressure from economic volatility, political uncertainty, cultural shifts, and a growing refusal to keep building things that extract more than they give.

The women feeling this most acutely are not early-stage or inexperienced leaders. They are seasoned founders, executives, and subject-matter experts with strong revenue, capable teams, and credible reputations. On paper, their businesses are working. In fact, many of the women I've worked with have said, "Nothing is technically broken, but I can't keep building this way."

They're naming the fatigue, friction, and quiet erosion of purpose they're experiencing, and that's not a failure of leadership. It's the cost of outgrowing an outdated model.

As we look toward 2026 and beyond, we aren't being asked to scale faster or optimize harder. We're being asked to lead with clarity, conviction, and impact in a world that is demanding more from those with power.

What Women Really Need To Hear

I was recently asked on a panel about the most important truth women leaders need to hear right now.

We are living through a fundamental shift in what success in business looks like, and the old playbooks are expiring.

I meant this on every level, but especially with respect to the profit-at-all-costs model.

Profit matters... but profit **without purpose** is no longer viable. Trust in institutions at every level is at an all-time low. Employees are becoming more selective about where they invest their energy and how they show up at work. Consumers are paying attention to how companies behave, not just what they sell, and as a result, they're voting with their dollars.

Research across industries consistently shows that organizations anchored in clear values **outperform their peers in trust, retention, and long-term resilience**, especially in volatile markets. What was once dismissed as "soft" or "nice to have" has become a measurable strategic advantage.

The women I work with aren't confused by this moment. They're clear. They can feel that the systems they mastered are no longer the systems worth preserving.

What 2026 requires is not more productivity, more programs, or more pressure but **deeper alignment between conviction, values, impact, and strategy.**

Conviction-driven leadership is no longer optional. It's your competitive advantage.



From Conditioning to Conviction

Women have been extraordinarily good at mastering existing systems. We learned how to be adaptable, polished, strategic, and palatable. We learned how to lead without disrupting too much. That conditioning shows up in subtle but consequential ways.

I see it when a founder green-lights an initiative she doesn't believe in because "it's what the market expects."

From Conditioning to Conviction

Women have been extraordinarily good at mastering existing systems. We learned how to be adaptable, polished, strategic, and palatable. We learned how to lead without disrupting too much. That conditioning shows up in subtle but consequential ways.

I see it when a founder green-lights an initiative she doesn't believe in because "it's what the market expects."

When an executive stays neutral on an issue that directly affects her people because speaking clearly feels risky.

When a woman with deep expertise edits her words and posture to avoid being labeled "difficult" or "too much."

Conditioning teaches us to smooth edges. Conviction asks us to sharpen them.

The next era of leadership requires a shift from conditioning-driven leadership to conviction-driven leadership, and that requires:

- **clarity about what you believe**
- **the courage to name it publicly**
- **and the conviction to lead from it, even when it disrupts expectations**

2026 will not be led by the most optimized leaders. It will be led by women who trust their instincts as much as their expertise, and are willing to stand firmly in both.

Why Growth Without Self-Abandonment Is the Only Growth That Lasts

One of the most damaging beliefs women must leave behind is the idea that growth requires self-abandonment.

Too many women have been conditioned to believe that scaling means sacrificing themselves – their time, intuition, values, or joy – in the name of success. That belief doesn't just burn out leaders; it creates businesses that are brittle, fragile, and unsustainable.

Aligned, sustainable growth comes from precision, discernment, and strategic removal.

I've seen this play out repeatedly. Many of my clients didn't grow by launching something new. They grew by shutting down entire revenue streams that no longer aligned with their values or capacity. Within months, their margins improved, their teams stabilized, and their work regained momentum. The growth didn't come from expansion or doing more things. It came from conviction-driven leadership and a strategy that matched.

When women stop building from obligation, we evolve with precision, unlocking revenue, impact, and ease at the same time.

Impact Is Not a Brand Layer. It's Your Foundation

Neutrality is business is no longer safe.

People want to work with companies that stand for something. Employees want their labor to matter, clients want alignment, not just transactions, and investors are paying closer attention to long-term sustainability, not just short-term wins.

Impact is no longer a side project or a nice marketing story. It's the foundation.

Think of it like this:

Vision is the anchor, conviction is the fuel, and strategy is the map.

Early in my career, facilitating strategic planning for the Air Force and Navy, I quickly learned that in complex, high-stakes environments, vision is never optional. Leaders are responsible not just for performance, but for the future they are actively shaping.

The same is true now.

A conviction-driven, impact-oriented vision clarifies decision-making, attracts aligned people, filters out noise, and creates resilience when markets shift.

What Will Actually Endure

The next era of leadership will reward women who are willing to say what they stand for, build with conviction, and take responsibility for the impact they're creating.

The beautiful thing about this moment is that it doesn't require us to become someone new. It requires that we lead from *who we already are*.

And that may be the most strategic decision of all. Source Notes: This article is informed by ongoing research from organizations like [Edelman](#), [Deloitte](#), [McKinsey](#), and [Harvard Business Review](#), alongside my direct work with senior leaders navigating inflection points.

About the Author



Jessica Sato is a strategic advisor and decision architect who works with executives, founders, and impact-driven leaders navigating high-stakes moments of growth and responsibility. With a background in strategic planning and leadership development at Boeing and more than a decade advising leaders across industries, she brings enterprise-level rigor to mission-driven work and leads cross-cultural initiatives working alongside women leaders navigating growth, leadership, and legacy.



Why SEO in an AI World Matters More Than Ever



Lissa Duty

SEO and AI are topics that people hear about yet may feel they really don't understand. The good news is you don't need a technical background to understand why they matter, or how they affect your visibility online.

The term "SEO" is common, cropping up in ads, blogs posts and news articles, but what does it mean in practice? We can define SEO as a series of technical and creative strategies that help businesses, brands, and individuals stand out online, and show up when people use Google, Bing, and so on.

Thanks to the development of large language models (LLMs) like ChatGPT, you've also probably heard that SEO is now a bit different. And while artificial intelligence (AI) has changed how people search online, it has not replaced SEO. In fact, AI has only strengthened the need for an informed SEO strategy.

AI hasn't removed the need for information; it's only altered the methods for gathering it. Let's start with exploring why SEO still matters in a world where AI seems to be taking over.

How Does Search Look Now in an AI-Focused World?

As you probably can attest to from your own experience, people still use search engines to find information online every day.

- 1 ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Microsoft CoPilot, Claude, Grok and other generative AI answer engines (AEs) have not changed that, but they have added new ways for people to discover information.
- 2 Traditional search engines used keyword-driven content to rank and return lists of businesses and organizations that the engines deemed relevant to the user's search.
- 3 AI provides summaries and next-step recommendations. You've probably seen Google's AI Overviews—understand that the AI doesn't create its own new data, but rather synthesizes what it sees in a brief, useful summary from trusted sources that exist on the web.

For any of this to happen there must be trustworthy, organized content available. If information is not visible to search engines and AI tools, it is unlikely to be visible to potential clients or customers either.



How Not to Do SEO in the AI Age

Again, there's a lot of confusion around SEO, especially as AI becomes more visible in everyday search. Some approaches promise fast results by cutting corners, but rather than lasting visibility, those tactics often create long-term problems.

SEO is not about stuffing keywords, manipulating systems, or writing content for machines. It focuses on clarity, accuracy and usefulness for real people. When information is easy to understand and consistent across platforms, both people and AI systems can trust it.

SEO Is Not Dead, AI Search Makes It More Valuable

SEO is no longer simply about optimizing for a top-ranked link or position on the first page of the search engine results pages (SERPs).

Generative AI depends on quality content, accurate data and context. AI attempts to translate requests for information based on user intention.

- 🕒 Is the user looking for how-to information?
- 🕒 Is the user ready to make an immediate purchase?
- 🕒 Is the user researching to gain understanding?

SEO helps search engines and AI systems utilize available information about businesses online in ways that ultimately provide the end-user with what they need.



Visibility Looks Different in the AI Age

You may have celebrated a top ranking in Google or Bing or showing up on the first page of results in the past. While this remains important, there are more ways to measure success in the AI age.

In today's search environment, visibility can show up in many different ways.

- 🕒 Information from your website or social media used in AI summaries.
- 🕒 Your products suggested or included in an image carousel.
- 🕒 Your services mentioned by Google's Assistant, Siri or Alexa.
- 🕒 Your location listed in the top suggestions on map applications.

When any of these show you or your website as a viable answer to the searcher's query, you are winning. Success is about more than rank, it's about establishing you and your website as useful and trustworthy.



It then feeds the user videos, step-by-step instructions, location(s) or articles and blogs to satisfy the query. This leads interested parties to goods or services offered by the businesses.

This is why SEO still matters. It helps search engines and AI systems understand what information exists, who it's for, and when it should be shown.

SEO is not a passing trend or a marketing trick. It helps search engines and AI tools understand which information should be shown in response to a question.

What Does Trust Have to Do with AI and SEO?

You may have celebrated a top ranking in Google or Bing or showing up on the first page of results in There's a plethora of information available online, but it's not all trustworthy or equal in value. Google rates content value based on Experience, Expertise, Authority and Trust (E-EAT).

According to Pew Research, 58% of American adults under 30 have used ChatGPT. This means you want to make sure information about you online meets these trust requirements, as trust is valuable to people and systems.

AI chatbots select clear, consistent data and content they can easily verify. When you provide concise information with real, helpful content on a consistent basis, it's easy for AI to determine legitimacy and relevance to a particular query.



Quality Sets You Apart in the AI World

As SEO continues to evolve, businesses that focus on human-centered content and clear communication are better positioned to meet people where they are.

This includes but is not limited to the following.

- 🕒 Blogging
- 🕒 Podcasts
- 🕒 Videos
- 🕒 Social media posts
- 🕒 Getting and giving reviews

There are many long-term advantages of doing the above.

- 🕒 Builds trust in your brand, products or services.
- 🕒 Establishes you as an authority in your field.
- 🕒 Provides helpful information that brings in potential clients, customers, etc.
- 🕒 Sets you apart from competitors.

AI is transforming how people search and process information, it does not eliminate the need for high-quality information.

As it develops, businesses with a solid marketing strategy and SEO approach will be ready to pivot alongside it. This makes SEO more than a tactic; it's a long-term strategic asset for online visibility.



In the AI Age, Info-Packed Content Is the Competitive Edge

It cannot be emphasized enough how important it is to be in control of your data and content online. You should be the one establishing who you are and how your products and services help others – from your website, local directories, social media, review sites and more.

The internet gives anyone the ability to create data, but with an effective SEO strategy in the AI Age, you maintain the power of your narrative. Providing truthful, helpful, easy-to-understand information makes it easier for the people you're looking for to find you. SEO is the vehicle to get you there for the AI Age and beyond.

Now that you know SEO is not going away, are you going to be a passenger along for the ride at the mercy of the algorithms and LLMs, or are you going to hop in the driver's seat?

When you're ready, here's a downloadable resource – [Win the Click with Content Optimized for Answer Engines](#) – to help you get started.

About the Author



Lissa Duty is a branding and digital marketing strategist. When you speak with Lissa, you'll know immediately that she is passionate about all things digital.

Lissa serves as the Managing Partner at Rocks Digital Marketing, LLC. She works with the Rocks Digital team, overseeing day-to-day operations and ensuring client websites look great, perform well and attract search engines and consumers.

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If I Had to Start Over:

The Real Framework for Building an Audience Through Livestreaming



Tanya Smith

There's a specific kind of stuck that happens to smart people when they decide to grow an audience online.

They research endlessly. They watch tutorials. They upgrade their equipment. They build the perfect content calendar. And then they... don't start.

Not because they're scared, exactly. But because they've convinced themselves that one more course, one more ring light, one more strategy will finally make them ready.

I've coached professionals for two decades, and I've watched brilliant people—consultants, educators, strategists with real expertise—disappear into this preparation loop. They confuse thinking about content with actually creating it.

Start With Three Things (And Only Three Things)

Most new creators scatter their energy across too many topics. But here's the truth: if people can't tell what you're about in five seconds, they won't stick around long enough to find out.

Pick three core topics you want to be known for. These should:

- ① Align with what you actually know
- ② Serve a specific audience
- ③ Give you room to teach, demonstrate, and share results

These three pillars become your filter for every content decision. They tell you what to post, what to skip, and how to position yourself in a noisy space.

The power isn't in covering more ground. It's in repeating your core themes until people associate YOU with those specific ideas. That's not boring—that's how memory actually works.

If I were starting over today with zero followers and no momentum, I wouldn't begin with better gear or a more complex strategy. I'd follow a simple framework designed for one outcome: **showing up consistently in a way that builds trust over time.**

This is how I grew my audience by over 1,000 engaged followers on select platforms—not through viral tricks, but through strategic consistency built on three things: clarity, real conversation, and genuine value.

What follows isn't a list of quick tips. It's an actual system for turning expertise into influence without burning out or selling your soul.



Key insight: Your audience doesn't need constant novelty. They need to know what you stand for.

Use the 70/20/10 Content Mix

Once you know your three pillars, structure your content like this:

70% Educational

Teach something useful. Break down frameworks. Share what actually works. This builds authority—it answers "Why should I trust you?"

20% Personal

Share behind-the-scenes thinking. Talk about what you're learning or what went wrong. This builds connection—it answers "Why should I care about you?"

10% Timely or Platform-Specific

Comment on trends. Share quick takes. Participate in current conversations. This builds reach—it shows you're still relevant.

The ratio matters because too much education without personality feels cold. Too much personality without substance feels empty. Too much trend-chasing without depth feels desperate.

Viral moments are tempting, but they rarely convert to business. Value delivery does. And real value requires a bias toward teaching, grounded in who you actually are.

Simple test: If you wouldn't say this to someone sitting across from you, why broadcast it to strangers online?

This isn't about manufactured vulnerability or trying to be relatable. It's about intellectual honesty. Every piece of content should pass these questions:

- 🕒 Is this actually useful?
- 🕒 Is this true to how I think?
- 🕒 Does this add clarity or just more noise?

Content isn't a slot machine where more pulls equal more wins. You win by making each piece meaningful—by ensuring that when someone gives you their attention, they walk away with something they didn't have before.



Make Everything Immediately Usable

There's a trap experts fall into: we talk in concepts instead of concrete steps.

You've spent years building frameworks and seeing patterns. But your audience doesn't have that context yet. When you stay too theoretical, you sound smart but remain unhelpful.

The fix is ruthless practicality.

For every piece of content, ask:

- Can someone use this today?
- 🕒 Does it solve a real, specific problem?
- 🕒 Have I given them enough to actually
- 🕒 implement this?

Livestreaming isn't about proving how smart you are. It's about making your audience smarter, faster. It's about turning insight into action.



Only Post What You'd Actually Say

Here's something uncomfortable: most content fails not because it lacks polish, but because it lacks conviction.

Forced content is obvious. It reads like homework. It sounds like performance. And your audience—especially if they're experienced professionals—can spot the difference immediately.

Stop Obsessing Over Your Setup

Your lighting doesn't matter if your ideas don't land.

I've watched creators spend months perfecting their tech stack and never actually go live because conditions were never quite right.

That's not professionalism. That's procrastination in a better outfit.

Here's the truth: content quality comes from clear thinking, not expensive equipment. Yes, production matters—but only after you've proven you have something worth saying and the discipline to say it consistently.

Start with what you have. A smartphone. A quiet room. Natural light. These constraints don't limit you—they force you to focus on substance.

Consistency beats complexity every single time.

Upgrade when your equipment becomes the actual barrier to showing up, not before.



Use Formats That Create Conversation

The real advantage of livestreaming isn't reach—it's reciprocity. Live video builds relationships in real time. But only if you design for interaction.

The formats that work best:

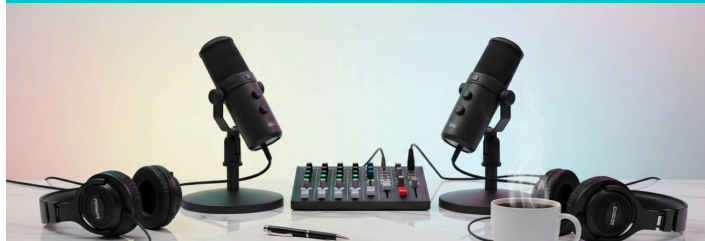
Q&A Sessions

Let your audience drive the content. This shows you're responsive, surfaces the actual questions they're asking, and creates collaborative content people feel invested in.



Behind-the-Scenes Thinking

Share your process, your tools, your decision-making. Transparency builds trust faster than any amount of polished final products.



Quick Tutorials

Teach one specific thing in under ten minutes. Tight scope forces clarity and creates content you can repurpose endlessly.



These formats serve double duty: immediate engagement during the live stream, and long-term value through the replay.

Build Your Network Intentionally

Algorithms don't build audiences. Relationships do.

Most creators focus on volume—posting more, hoping more sticks. But volume without distribution is just shouting into the void.

The leverage point isn't creating more. It's connecting more strategically.

Daily practice: Find five people in your space whose work aligns with yours. Not competitors. Not influencers. Peers and potential collaborators.

Then:

- 🕒 Leave substantive comments (not emoji reactions)
- 🕒 Send messages that reference specific ideas from their work
- 🕒 Ask questions that show genuine curiosity

This isn't transactional networking. It's building professional community at scale.

Do the math: Five connections daily = 150 monthly = 1,800 annually. If even 10% turn into real relationships, you've dramatically expanded your reach and opportunities.

Treat Every Comment as Content

Every comment you leave is a piece of content working for you.

Most people waste comments on quick reactions—emojis, generic praise, "love this!" That's throwing away free distribution.

Strategic commenting means:

- 🕒 Adding your perspective to extend the original idea
- 🕒 Asking sharp follow-up questions
- 🕒 Offering complementary insights that bridge your expertise with theirs

And comment early—within the first hour when algorithmic distribution is most active.

Done right, this positions you as someone who adds value in high-visibility conversations. You're not interrupting—you're contributing.

Follow Where Your Clients Actually Are

Don't just follow people in your niche. Follow people in your target audience's industries.

Why? Because it gives you direct insight into:

- 🕒 How they describe their problems
- 🕒 What keeps them stuck
- 🕒 Where you can uniquely help

When you engage authentically on their content, you're demonstrating expertise exactly where your future clients are already paying attention.



Optimize Your Profile Like a Storefront

When someone clicks on your name, they should immediately understand:

- 🕒 Who you help (be specific)
- 🕒 What you provide (the outcome, not just the topic)
- 🕒 What to expect from your content

Make sure these are clear:

- 🕒 Your bio (one focused sentence)
- 🕒 Your banner image (consistent with your brand)
- 🕒 Your pinned content (your best work front and center)

This isn't decoration. It's a conversion tool.

Share Freely and Support Generously

No one builds lasting influence by hoarding value.

Every time you teach, support, or collaborate openly, you're building trust— which is the real currency of influence.

In livestreaming specifically, trust isn't optional. People don't buy from experts anymore. They buy from trusted advisors who've proven their competence and character repeatedly.

If you want people to show up for you, show up for them first—consistently and genuinely.



Commit to 90 Days Minimum

Most people quit before they hit the inflection point—not because it doesn't work, but because they didn't give it enough time to compound.

Results lag effort. But if you commit to 90 days of consistent execution—even just weekly—you'll start seeing patterns:

- 🕒 Which topics connect
- 🕒 Which formats drive engagement
- 🕒 Which channels bring qualified attention

Track it simply:

- 🕒 Follower growth
- 🕒 Engagement rate (comments per view)
- 🕒 Business outcomes (emails, calls, clients)

Patterns show up fast when you measure deliberately.



Final Thought: You Win By Showing Up

You don't win by being the best.

You win by being present—human, consistent, and helpful—when your audience needs what you know.

Livestreaming isn't a shortcut. It's a strategic channel for earning attention through trust instead of tactics.

If you're starting from scratch, this is your roadmap. No fluff. No hacks. Just a proven system that works—if you actually work it.

Let's build something worth tuning into.

About the Authors



Tanya Smith is the founder of Stream Like a Boss® and helps service-based entrepreneurs use strategic livestreaming to build authority and grow their businesses.



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