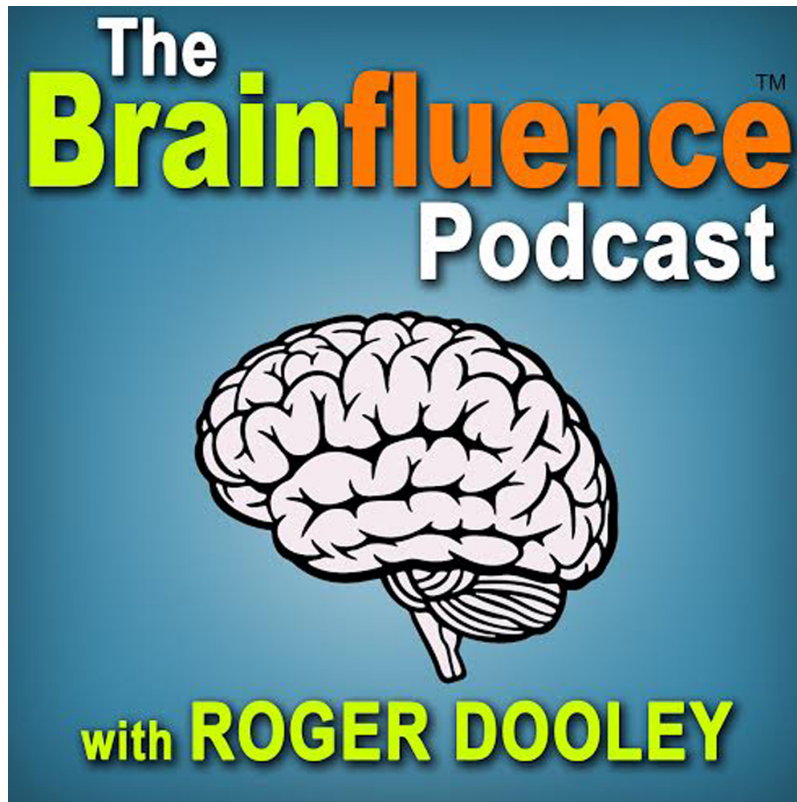


The Business of Expertise with David C. Baker

<https://www.rogerdooley.com/david-baker-expertise>



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host



Roger Dooley

The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley

<http://www.RogerDooley.com/podcast>

The Business of Expertise with David C. Baker

<https://www.rogerdooley.com/david-baker-expertise>

Welcome to the Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley, author, speaker and educator on neuromarketing and the psychology of persuasion. Every week, we talk with thought leaders that will help you improve your influence with factual evidence and concrete research. Introducing your host, Roger Dooley.

Roger Dooley: Welcome to The Brainfluence Podcast. I'm Roger Dooley. Our guest this week has an unconventional life story. He wasn't raised by wolves, but he did grow up in a remote Mayan village in Guatemala, where his parents were missionaries. David C. Baker is a helicopter and airplane pilot, an avid photographer, and taught high-performance motorcycle riding and racing. These days, he's the author of five books and a sought-after keynote speaker. He's also an expert on expertise. By that, I mean that David can tell you how to turn your unique knowledge into a profitable business. His newest book is *The Business of Expertise: How Entrepreneurial Experts Convert Insight into Impact and Wealth*. Welcome to the show, David.

David C. Baker: Thank you, Roger. It's really good to be here. I've been looking forward to the chance to chat with you. And I've listened to a bunch of the episodes of your podcast, and it made me even more excited about appearing with you to have a really intelligent conversation. Who knows where it'll go? But I'm sure it will be fun to have.

Roger Dooley: Well, you can supply the intelligent half of that conversation, David. So David, how long were you in that Guatemalan village?

David C. Baker: Well, I was born in the US, but when I was a baby, we went down there, first to Costa Rica for a year, and then Guatemala. I didn't come back to the US to live until I was 18, so all of my early life. And then, of course, I've gone

The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley

<http://www.RogerDooley.com/podcast>

The Business of Expertise with David C. Baker

<https://www.rogerdooley.com/david-baker-expertise>

back many, many times, just to see the country again. It feels like home to me, even though I'm a US citizen; so all of my early life, really.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Wow. Did you ... What language did they speak? Was it an indigenous language, or Spanish, or both?

David C. Baker: It was actually both. So the trade language was Spanish. And everybody had to speak Spanish to, you know, conduct business, so to speak. And that was the native language of the country. But then there were, I think, 30 different indigenous languages. The one that we spoke was called Kanjobal, with a glottal stop after the K; Kanjobal. And there were only, I think, 20,000 people that spoke that. There were 5,000 people in the little village that we lived in. And they didn't sound at all alike. You know, you could walk five hours to the next village, and they would speak another language. They'd be on another calendar as well. It was a five-day week instead of a seven-day week, and so on. And you couldn't understand anything, so it was pretty odd. So we spoke three languages, essentially, and then learned some others down the road; but English, Kanjobal, and Spanish, yeah.

Roger Dooley: Well, it must be interesting, going back. You probably surprise some people by actually speaking their language.

David C. Baker: I do, although I've forgotten so much of it. You know, the pronunciation is still great, but I keep losing different vocabulary words. But you know what's weirder? You go back to these little villages, and not much has changed. The primary thing that's changed is, well, there are some

The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley

<http://www.RogerDooley.com/podcast>

The Business of Expertise with David C. Baker

<https://www.rogerdooley.com/david-baker-expertise>

more vehicles now. But the main thing is that there's a cell tower on the top of this little mountain, and all of these folks are running around with cellphones. They basically skipped the wire generation, so it's really interesting to see. Now, there's power in the village as well, and there wasn't growing up.

Roger Dooley: So I'm curious, was there anything in that experience that taught you something that has stuck with you, and still sticks with you today?

David C. Baker: Well, oh, there's so many things. Something came up, I was speaking in London, got back last night, and somebody was talking about our expectations and gratitude. And it immediately shot me back to my time growing up there, thinking about gratitude and the expectations we have about work, because I imagine you hear the same thing that I hear a lot, and that's that you should follow your heart, do what you love, and success will follow. I've not found that to be the case. I find that many people are following their heart, doing what they love, and success does not follow. Plus, I try to pressure test that advice, which sounds to me like bumper sticker advice. I try to pressure test that by saying, "Okay. How would that advice work in a Third-World country or a developing country?" And those folks don't have that, they don't have that luxury. They can't say, "You know what? I don't really want to go out and plow the fields today. That's not what I love doing." They didn't have those choices. It was, work was work, and they had to do it to survive.

While it's wonderful that we can do so many different things, and pursue our passions, and so on, I hope we never forget the fact that we should be immensely grateful

The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley

<http://www.RogerDooley.com/podcast>

The Business of Expertise with David C. Baker

<https://www.rogerdooley.com/david-baker-expertise>

for the fact that we live in a very, generally, a safe world, a world where we live a very long time, where we are surrounded by luxury; and yeah, pursue our loves where we can, but it's okay just to do really good, hard work as well, if that's what it takes to live.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). That's an important lesson, I think, perhaps, and especially, I think the issues with, say, the younger generation or millennials are over-exaggerated. But I think it's still a lesson that, you know, work isn't always fun. I mean, ideally, you do enjoy your work. But that doesn't mean that you're going to enjoy everything you do every single day. You know, that's from my own entrepreneurial experience. I mean, I love the businesses that I built and was involved in. But, man, sometimes you just had to get down and do something that was unpleasant.

David C. Baker: Yeah, that's right. Sometimes you just had to do the work. And expertise, which is where I've been doing more of my thinking the last few years, means a lot of hard work. It doesn't come easily. And the love comes from different things. The love doesn't come from every single, enjoying every single part of it. The love comes from discovering competence, and how that yields doing effective work for your client. So, yeah. It's a different world. I think we need to be open to those different experiences.

Roger Dooley: Yeah. So that kind of brings us to your book, which is really kind of interesting. I wish I could show the audience, but this being audio-only, I'll have to describe it. It's quite a bit smaller than a typical business book, but it's got really great production values, two-color printing, a lot of glossy, red pages. And you've got kind of a unique

The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley

<http://www.RogerDooley.com/podcast>

The Business of Expertise with David C. Baker

<https://www.rogerdooley.com/david-baker-expertise>

forward. It's a letter from Derek Sivers, politely declining to write the forward-

David C. Baker: That's right.

Roger Dooley: ... which is a first for me. I haven't seen one of those. And you turned his note into a lesson for experts and would-be experts. So what would that lesson be?

David C. Baker: Yeah. I have loved Derek's work for so many years, and I just wrote him a note. He was, I think, living in Thailand at the time. And I said, "Hey, Derek, would you write the forward for my book? I love how you think," and so on. And he immediately wrote me back and said, "No, I can't." But he didn't just say, "No, I can't." He then wrote, I don't know, three or four paragraphs explaining why he couldn't. And I remember getting that note, thinking, "Derek, you know, it would have been quicker just to write the forward than to tell me all the reasons you couldn't write the forward."

Now, one of the things he said was, "Well, I've kind of lost my entrepreneurial license. I haven't started a business in the last five years." And so your license expires, was his perspective, and so on. But the main reason that really struck me is, he said this. "I've decided to say no to many, many more things, so that I can say yes to just a few things. And this is one of the things I need to say no to, even though it would be a lot of fun." So I was sad about it.

And then just the very next day, I said to myself, just thinking, "Oh, I wonder if Derek would let me just publish that as like the world's first un-forward, written as basically a denial letter, but just publishing that as a lesson to the

The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley

<http://www.RogerDooley.com/podcast>

The Business of Expertise with David C. Baker

<https://www.rogerdooley.com/david-baker-expertise>

readers about how we need to focus." And we're so easily taken off mission by all of the shiny objects that come in our paths. And Derek viewed this as like one of those shiny objects. "Oh, it'd be great to write a forward to a book that presumably is going to do well, but I can't take the time." And I just thought that was a great example.

And I wrote him back and said, "Hey, can I just publish it like this?" And he said, "Oh, yeah. Great idea. Glad to do it." So that's how it came about.

Roger Dooley: That's great. And that is such an important lesson. I notice you've got an endorsement on the cover from Dan Pink. And in a conversation I had with him, he said that he had taped a little sign somewhere in front of his desk; that it said, "No," or, "Learn to say no," or something like that, because he was in the final phase of finishing a book, and basically, had to keep from getting sucked into things that he would normally do. You know, somebody asks you to help out, and most nice people do want to help other people out. But sometimes, getting the work done is more important.

David C. Baker: Yeah, right.

Roger Dooley: And so it's an important lesson, I think, for everybody, including even those who aren't entrepreneurs, they could even be in a large corporation, but learning to decline that meeting invite, or you know, not responding to every email unless it's essential.

David C. Baker: Right, exactly. We don't seem to know how to stop email exchanges, do we? It's like, "Oh, thank you." "No, thank you." "Well, you're welcome." You know, it just keeps going on and on. And I think some folks are motivated,

The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley

<http://www.RogerDooley.com/podcast>

The Business of Expertise with David C. Baker

<https://www.rogerdooley.com/david-baker-expertise>

also, just by social fear. They don't want to appear difficult to work with or not friendly enough. And so they get sucked into going to this party, or whatever it is, instead of being on a mission.

I'm sorry for interrupting you, too, Roger. I was just thinking that, you know, you get to the end of your life, and you think back over how you could have been more effective. And very few of us are going to look back and say, "Oh, if I had just had more opportunity." I mean, that just doesn't happen. It's more, "No. If I had taken, or made better or more careful choices about the many opportunities that I had," and that's a huge life lesson for me that I'm constantly learning every week.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). So your book is about the intersection of expertise and entrepreneurship. And there are a lot of experts and a lot of entrepreneurs, but I guess you make the case that the intersection between those two isn't necessarily all that huge. Looking at the expert side of things, David, is anybody a potential expert? Or is there really sort of a relatively small number of people who are potentially good experts?

David C. Baker: I think almost anybody is a potential expert. Now, whether that expertise can be turned into money and impact is a very different question. There are very few people that I think could effectively do that. But I love just talking with people anywhere I meet them and discovering what their expertise is. It could have something to do with how they earn a living. It could be what hobby they pursue. I'm fascinated by expertise, and I love learning from experts, and I see experts everywhere.

The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley

<http://www.RogerDooley.com/podcast>

The Business of Expertise with David C. Baker

<https://www.rogerdooley.com/david-baker-expertise>

I wanted to write a book for folks who are making very risky decisions with their expertise, and they are selling their thinking for a living. So like, a finish carpenter is an amazing expert, but maybe not selling their thinking so much. But if they turn that into a class, where they're teaching other finish carpenters how to do it, then that would be an entrepreneurial expert. So I just wanted to narrow down the focus of my book to those experts who are also entrepreneurs.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative), right. And I'd add, also, people who are thinking about that path in life would also find it interesting, even if maybe their expertise is embedded in a large company right now, where many people do get their initial expertise, by working for some place and then deciding that they actually know enough about something to go off on their own.

David C. Baker: Right, exactly. And they become sufficiently annoying to their current boss, that they decide they're kind of unemployable. I think I have that discussion with a lot of entrepreneurs, because I get the chance to work with many of them. And most of them will tell me, in a moment of transparency, it's like, "I'm largely unemployable. I developed expertise with somebody else," exactly what you just said. And I think almost all of us did that, right? It seems like the better approach, rather than starting out from nothing.

And then you think you have a better way of doing it, and so you start your own thing. Whether you have a better way of doing it or not, you know, that sort of remains to be seen. But we go out there, and many of us fail, and many of us succeed, building on the expertise we've learned

The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley

<http://www.RogerDooley.com/podcast>

The Business of Expertise with David C. Baker

<https://www.rogerdooley.com/david-baker-expertise>

from other people. And it all starts with that pattern matching, which I talk quite about in the book.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative), yeah. And I think the unemployable thing is not so much about the inability to work on a team or work with others, but that so many large organizations have bureaucratic procedures, and rules, and specific ways of doing things. Once a person is a successful entrepreneur, they just won't put up with that. And in a corporation, you can buck the system up to a point, but ultimately, the antibodies attack and you get rejected.

David C. Baker: Yeah, exactly. Right, yeah. Or you can't stand the thought of going to one more meeting. Or the meetings you do go to, you sit in them, and within the first three minutes, you're thinking to yourself, even if you don't say it out loud, "I could run this meeting better or more efficiently," or, "Why are we even having this meeting?"

I've worked in 42 countries now. And when I'm working with a large company in the US. I'll walk out in the parking lot afterwards, and I'll just scratch my head. And I'll say, "Here we are, one of the more powerful economic entities in the world. And this level of incompetence at these large companies is pretty staggering." It gives all of us hope, I think, because it sets the bar fairly low. The fact that there can be so much wasted time, and yet so much productivity in spite of that ... I don't even know why I'm saying all this. But it's interesting to me to see how entrepreneurs who start smaller leave, in part, out of disgust with the way things are, even though the way things are has yielded a very economically prosperous country.

The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley

<http://www.RogerDooley.com/podcast>

The Business of Expertise with David C. Baker

<https://www.rogerdooley.com/david-baker-expertise>

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). And while you're out in the parking lot, looking at those cars, a little tidbit I picked up from Tom Peters' book, The Excellence Dividend, it wasn't his observation, but he reported, and I forget who he attributed it to; but watch to see if the cars are backed into the parking places pointing out, because that means that the workplace is so annoying that people are going to come storming out of the office at 5:00, and they want to be ready for quick getaway.

David C. Baker: I never thought about that.

Roger Dooley: And so I don't know that there's been a formal study of that, but it makes sense.

David C. Baker: Yeah.

Roger Dooley: So David, I think our listeners are somewhat familiar with the idea of positioning. Ries and Trout wrote a bestselling book about it a while back. But you use it in a little bit different context. In your book and in your thinking, what does positioning mean?

David C. Baker: Mm-hmm (affirmative). In today's world, I think, in the context of entrepreneurial expertise, I think positioning relates almost exclusively to the degree to which a client or prospect can find a suitable substitute for you. So in the process of moving from being a totally undifferentiated, generalist expert, to one with a very, very narrow expertise, you're walking this path. And along the way, you are not saying yes, so much as you're saying no, sort of back to the Derek discussion at the beginning.

And as you walk down this path, you are ... It's really the experience of becoming less relatable, or less hireable, by all these other companies. And in the process of doing

The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley

<http://www.RogerDooley.com/podcast>

The Business of Expertise with David C. Baker

<https://www.rogerdooley.com/david-baker-expertise>

that, you are becoming more hireable by companies that feel like your expertise fits very perfectly. So there's some real science behind that. We need to narrow our positioning so that there are a certain number of competitors and a certain number of prospects. And if we have too many competitors, we need to keep going. If we have too few competitors, we've gone too far; and the same thing with clients.

So it's essentially making yourself properly interchangeable, not easily interchangeable, but not so not-interchangeable ... I know I'm making up lots of words here ... that people don't have, they don't understand exactly how you're relative to their need. That's the process of positioning.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative), right. So really, it's a balancing act. You want to be focused enough that you can have a high level of expertise, but not so ultra-focused that there simply aren't enough clients, or there's not enough business out there to support you.

David C. Baker: Exactly, right. Yeah. So I work with entrepreneurial experts, and there are probably 20 to 30, what I would consider great competitors. They know what they're doing. They're a great fit for a lot of people. And there are anywhere from ... There are probably 2,000 to 5,000 prospects for me, and that's right in the sweet spot. And when you're talking about how to position an expert appropriately, those are sort of those numbers you're aiming for.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). And, yeah, I guess it seems very logical, but I think a lot of companies don't do that. They really think that, "Well, we can do everything for

The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley

<http://www.RogerDooley.com/podcast>

The Business of Expertise with David C. Baker

<https://www.rogerdooley.com/david-baker-expertise>

everybody." And so you see these digital marketing agencies that'll design a website, they'll do your social media, they'll do content marketing, you know, SCO. And at that point, in particular, assuming it's a small organization and not like a giant agency that can actually have specialized experts in these areas, that they probably aren't very good at any one of them; that if you really want to get more Google traffic for free, that you should probably go hire an SCO expert, rather than sort of a Swiss Army knife type company.

David C. Baker: Right. Yeah, exactly. And what's changed all that, it's really Google, what you just mentioned, because in the past, almost all of your competition and your client base, your prospect base, was local. It was geographic. That's all changed because of Google. Google has made it possible for me to work anywhere in the world as an expert. It's also made it possible for every other expert to invade my geographic market.

And so when Google's deciding who to send your way, they're going to make ... They're not going to send anybody to a generalist. They're going to send them to a specific ... When you think about building trades, there's a plumber, and there's an electrician, and then not just any plumber, but specific kinds of plumbers. So it's really ... I'm rebuilding. We just bought 61 acres of property. And so I'm rebuilding the road that leads up to our home. It's about a half-mile-long road. So I got this equipment. And I'm sitting in bed thinking, "Okay. Now I've got to really do the hard work. I've already got the fun part."

Roger Dooley: That sounds like a really good excuse to buy some cool, new toys and play with them, like a giant sandbox to play with, with real earth-moving equipment and whatnot.

The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley

<http://www.RogerDooley.com/podcast>

The Business of Expertise with David C. Baker

<https://www.rogerdooley.com/david-baker-expertise>

David C. Baker: Yeah, doing manly things. I'm presuming that I'm going to be doing these things, right? But now, I have to figure out how to build the road, otherwise it's like I've just wasted all this money buying this equipment. So I'm lying in bed thinking, "How am I going to do this?" And I think, "Ah. Tomorrow morning, I'm going to go to YouTube. There'll be hundreds of videos showing me exactly how to do this. I will be able to find that information immediately, and it will be free, and it will be excellent information; those three things, immediate, free, and excellent." And that's what Google has done to the world.

So here we are, as experts, trying to sell our expertise in a world where there is defined, very defined, narrow expertise that's immediately available for free; and that everything around us has changed, right? And so the idea of being a generalist expert is laughable, really, in this world. It really is.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Is technology changing the way that these expert services are even delivered?

David C. Baker: It is. You know, obviously, the whole telecommuting thing, and being able to do things remotely has changed a lot of this. I would say there ... Boy, that would be a really interesting conversation. I could imagine us talking for hours about that. I think it's even fought against some notions of expertise, because nowadays, experts can be far more accessible than they were in the past because of technology, which tends to fight against the notion of expertise.

In undeveloped cultures, or developing cultures, experts are the most accessible people. They're the village elders, sitting in the middle of the town square. Anybody can

The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley

<http://www.RogerDooley.com/podcast>

The Business of Expertise with David C. Baker

<https://www.rogerdooley.com/david-baker-expertise>

come talk to them, even kids. In developed cultures, experts are the least accessible people. And if they have to mix with the unwashed masses, then we put them in uniforms, or we put, you know, guards around them, and so on. So in a world where we can be so accessible, like, should your clients have your cell number? Should they be able to text you? It's a really interesting question that probably takes a lot of thought.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). You have a little anecdote about when you snagged your first client. You threw out a price that was really kind of a bizarre thing. It was like \$12,427, or some strange number, which, actually, there's some good science there. That precision makes that number more believable, although I probably would have made it slightly less precise; but for that kind of business, rather than 10,000, you know, 12,250, or something, would be a little bit more believable. Like, okay. Some thought went into this process.

Anyway, at that point, you came down with a case of imposter syndrome, more or less, right?

David C. Baker: Right, right. Yeah. And all of us do, to some degree, right? I think there's a fine balance there. We can feel a little bit inadequate, because we know that we don't know what we'll know a year from now. But we still need to be delivering value. And I was very nervous. It was unexpected, frankly, because I took this trip to Chicago to talk with this agency that wanted to, presumably, just talk about working together. And on the spot, they said, "No. Let's do it."

And so I had to name the program, and give them the price, and describe what was included off the top of my

The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley

<http://www.RogerDooley.com/podcast>

The Business of Expertise with David C. Baker

<https://www.rogerdooley.com/david-baker-expertise>

head. Now, I ended up delivering value for them. But all of us are, you know, we always have to be slightly scared. I don't know what that percentage is, but 95%, maybe, of what we do should be well-trod, and we should know exactly what we're doing. And then the 5%, maybe we're exploring, and we shouldn't necessarily tell the client which it is, a 5% or not. But we're always learning. We're always exploring.

Now, I was like drinking from a fire hose at that point. And everybody's done that, right? You know, everybody's said, on the way home from a client meeting, they call the office and said, "The good news, we just landed this big job. The bad news, you'll never believe what I just said we could do for them," right? And now you're off and running to the races, trying to figure out how to fulfill that promise you just crazily made, right?

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). So how should somebody develop their expertise? How can they make it deeper so that they can take on tasks without that risk factor of saying, "Well, I have no idea how I'm going to do this, but I'll figure it out along the way?"

David C. Baker: Right, yeah. And I think it should be based on delivering real value for clients. But in the process of doing that, you can pay attention in different ways, and learn much quicker without reinventing the wheel or stealing from your clients. And that comes down to pattern matching. So even after, you could do this after you've completed the engagement. You could go back through the last, say, 10 projects that you've done. And remember that your positioning is delivering to you similar opportunities, which makes it ... It fosters this pattern matching, because you're seeing similar opportunities next to each other.

The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley

<http://www.RogerDooley.com/podcast>

The Business of Expertise with David C. Baker

<https://www.rogerdooley.com/david-baker-expertise>

And so you could go back, even after you've done all the work for the client, and say, "What did I really learn?" And put it up on the board and say, "Okay. How big was this company? How quickly were they growing? What was the culture like? What was the financial performance like?" And think of 60 or 70 categories, and put them up on a whiteboard. And then complete all the blanks on this massive chart, and step back, sort of like John Nash did in A Beautiful Mind, step back and say, "Do I see any patterns here?"

I'll give you an example. So I was doing that with agencies, and I noticed that when agencies were adding to their headcount by more than 30% a year, they had significant growing pains. And it resulted in five or six things. And so I could just turn that into a bit of IP for myself, and start writing about it and consulting about it. And then, you know, I've tried to do that over 350 times over the years. That's what pattern matching does to build our expertise deeper. We're still delivering value at every turn, but we're learning more every time we ... Here's another thing that's really important. It's like, every time a client asks a question that's new to you, you don't try to answer just that question. You use it as an opportunity to answer that question with the assumption that a lot of clients that you have are struggling with the exact, same thing. So every time you get a chance to learn something, think about how it's going to apply to all of your clients. That's systematic thinking, essentially.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). David, a few of the past guests we've had on have been Dorie Clark and Mark Schaefer, and they've both written books about personal branding. How important do you think personal branding is? Is that

The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley

<http://www.RogerDooley.com/podcast>

The Business of Expertise with David C. Baker

<https://www.rogerdooley.com/david-baker-expertise>

sort of a key part of your expert strategy, or not necessarily?

David C. Baker: It absolutely is. And I know Mark and Dorie. I know both of them. And I think very highly of their expertise. Dorie, especially, has done an amazing job at Harvard. And I think personal branding is more important than it ever has been. I even think it's important for executives who are not working on their own, who are working at, say, a publicly traded company, to have a personal brand; because in today's world, we want to know and understand the people behind a particular public presence. KPMG invented this, actually, a few years back. It's called executive eminence. It's the idea of visible leaders, which is a term that Hinge Marketing also developed.

So I think it's critically important. In fact, books are not written by committees. They're written by people. Speakers are individual people. Frequently, they're ones who have written books, just like you've written books that have been very well-received. I was looking at them again on Amazon, reading the reviews of your books. They're really remarkably well-received. And all of that-

Roger Dooley: Well, yours have done well, too, David.

David C. Baker: Well, yes, but not quite as well as yours. All of this tends to get people to listen to you more carefully, so that you can have more of an impact on their personal and business lives. So it's this virtuous circle that, I think it's not about being self-serving. It's about creating this sense that you're worth listening to. That's why I really believe it's important.

The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley

<http://www.RogerDooley.com/podcast>

The Business of Expertise with David C. Baker

<https://www.rogerdooley.com/david-baker-expertise>

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). And since you brought up the topic of books, I guess you would agree that, if possible, a book is probably a very good vehicle for establishing your expertise. It's a little bit different today. You know, a few years back, if a Wiley, or McGraw-Hill, or somebody published your book, that was sort of a third-party vetting process. You know, you may not be a genius, but somebody at least thought your ideas were worth risking an advance on, and then printing up 10,000 or 20,000 copies, and taking that risk. So somebody else checked you out in more detail, perhaps, than that client would.

But today, of course, between self-publishing and all the various sort of pay-for-play publishers out there, anybody can have a book. And that's a good thing in certain ways, because there are undoubtedly many good books that never got through the gatekeepers at the major publishers.

David C. Baker: Right.

Roger Dooley: So, but at the same time, it means that even mediocre thinking can get published just about as easily.

David C. Baker: Yeah. Oh, there's so much noise out there, and to try to pick the signal out of it ... I like what you just explained about, you know, traditional publishers, like McGraw-Hill, and Wiley, and so on, because I do think it meant something in the past. I don't think it means quite so much now to have a book published by one of them.

You know, the primary purpose of a book is to force you to figure out what you believe. Even if nobody reads the thing, I think it's so important to write a book. And I keep waiting for the day when books will no longer mean

The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley

<http://www.RogerDooley.com/podcast>

The Business of Expertise with David C. Baker

<https://www.rogerdooley.com/david-baker-expertise>

anything. But we're at least a decade away from that, maybe longer. And so while that's the case, it's still important to write them. It also feeds speaking engagements as well. It's very hard to get paid much money for speaking, unless you've actually written a book too.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative), yeah. I discovered that really early on, when several conference booking folks asked, "Well, what's your book?" This was before I had a book. And so I, "Well, I don't have a book." "Oh, that's no problem." But it was a problem, because they never called back. You know, and admittedly, they have a difficult job. They're trying to get people that have something to say that's important. And you know, it's sort of like a degree from an Ivy League school. There are plenty of smart people who did not go to Ivy League schools; in fact, quite a few who probably are smarter than those who did. Nevertheless, when somebody has that, it's just, "Okay. There's been some kind of a vetting process." And you know, of course, the big consultants and so on tend to hire from those schools when they can, because it's simple. Somebody else has done the prescreen for them.

David C. Baker: Right, exactly. Yeah. And if nothing else, it means that you were disciplined enough to go through the application process, to finish all the schoolwork. You know, you're networking with great opportunities as well. So, yeah. Those are definitely good things to pay attention to. And I think like, if we think about ... Let's pretend there's an expert here, and they need a marketing plan. And there are, I don't know, 50 different things they could do, right? Well, the simplest marketing plan, not the easiest to pull off, but the simplest marketing plan would be to write a really good book every three years, have a few key

The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley

<http://www.RogerDooley.com/podcast>

The Business of Expertise with David C. Baker

<https://www.rogerdooley.com/david-baker-expertise>

speaking engagements in a keynote setting, four or five a year. And that's all you'd need to do, right?

Now, if that is not accessible to you, then you have to step down and do some other things that require more effort. But I love writing, even if nobody ... As it turns out, people do read them, thankfully. But I love writing. I just, it forces me to think deeply and spend time with a subject.

Roger Dooley: One surprise I found in your book, David, was that there was a common element that you found amongst successful experts, and this was based on a sample of well over 1,000, that virtually all of them were risk-takers. And I guess it wouldn't surprise me that, you know, that was a common trait. But that it was a near-universal trait is the surprising part to me, I guess. What's your observation on that?

David C. Baker: Yes. It really surprised me as well. It shouldn't have, maybe, but I was surprised. I thought maybe there'd be some correlation between successful experts and the degree to which they were right; or the degree to which they did research, or they were process-driven, or they were extroverts, and so on. There was no correlation at all. The only correlation ... I ran all the data through SPSS, which is the statistical analysis software. The only correlation at all was the fact that they were risk-takers. So they ... And in fact, that meant that some of the risks they took did not turn out to be right. But people who were selling their thinking for a living, none of them were successful. Well, there were four exceptions, but virtually none of them were successful unless they took risks. That means they invented a new service, or they decided to spend money launching this something-or-other, or they hired ... Whatever it was, the key was making lots of

The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley

<http://www.RogerDooley.com/podcast>

The Business of Expertise with David C. Baker

<https://www.rogerdooley.com/david-baker-expertise>

decisions, most of which turned out, some of which did not. Not making decisions was not a recipe for success as an entrepreneurial expert.

Roger Dooley: Yeah. There was ... One other even, perhaps, slightly more surprising thing was, an observation that you made, is that when experts who are entrepreneurs have a lease coming up, in other words, they have to renew the lease on their office, or building, facility, or whatever, and maybe sign up for another 5 or 10 years; that in the year leading up to that is when they really start thinking about their business, because they have a decision to make. And you know, they sort of put themselves in the position, I assume, of, "Well, okay. This is what I'm doing. Do I want to do this for another 5 or 10 years," because in those kinds of businesses, they sort of are the business. It's not like a large corporation, where it's going to carry on. Someone else will keep the lease payments going.

In smaller organizations, based on expertise, at least, it's often the owner or the founder who's really got skin in the game, and is going to be on the hook for the lease if something goes wrong. But it seems to me that that is telling, and it's an indicator that maybe entrepreneurs of all kinds should be asking themselves that question, not once every five years, but maybe at least once a year; saying, "Okay. Well, hey. If I had to sign a new lease right now for the next 10 years, would I want to do that," and sort of see how you, what kind of thoughts that creates in your head.

And if you find yourself reacting negatively to that, "No, I don't think I want to do that," then maybe that's an indicator that you need to change your business, or do something else, or sell the business, or something; rather

The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley

<http://www.RogerDooley.com/podcast>

The Business of Expertise with David C. Baker

<https://www.rogerdooley.com/david-baker-expertise>

than waiting for this external trigger, because I mean, obviously, sometimes external things happen in life that we have to deal with. And they force us to think about these questions. But you know, I thought it was so telling that this one little event in a business life caused people to really reflect.

David C. Baker: Yeah. That's so true. I hadn't really made that connection in my mind about how they should be asking themselves that question, because what keeps these entrepreneurial experts in business sometimes isn't the right thing. It could be, like you said, a building lease. Or it could be debt that they have to pay off. Or it could be that they're afraid to make a decision about stopping. These big businesses, like you said, they have these big flywheels, and one person drops off the merry-go-round, and the thing's going to keep spinning. But the smaller ones don't.

One thing that's different nowadays, for sure, is that there's not as much social stigma in stopping an entrepreneurial enterprise like there was in the past. In the past, you kind of did it for 10, 20, 30 years. And the mark of how good, and smart, and disciplined you were was how long you did it. People now have the freedom to stop these things. And I think that's fantastic. It means that the social contract we have with employees needs to be carefully looked at, because when they join us, we don't want them to necessarily assume that they're going to be with us forever.

But I do think we should ask ourselves the question-

Roger Dooley: These days, I think that most of them do not think that, David.

The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley

<http://www.RogerDooley.com/podcast>

The Business of Expertise with David C. Baker

<https://www.rogerdooley.com/david-baker-expertise>

David C. Baker: Yeah, that's right.

Roger Dooley: In fact, they join you, and they're already thinking about their next move someplace else. So it goes both ways, though. And I think we can thank Silicon Valley for some of that, where the stigma attached to a failed business is pretty much gone. It's like expected that, "Okay." Maybe, you know, 8 out of 10 businesses are going to fail, so if you don't have a failure or two in your background, there's something wrong.

David C. Baker: Right, yeah. Could be.

Roger Dooley: Well, that's probably a pretty good place to wrap up. Let me remind our listeners that we're speaking with David C. Baker, author of the new book, *The Business of Expertise: How Entrepreneurial Experts Convert Insight to Wealth*. David, how can people find you and your ideas?

David C. Baker: Probably the two best places would be to go to the micro-site for the book, which is Expertise.I-S, Expertise.is. And then also the site where I do my speaking, writing, and consulting, would be DavidCBaker.com. And I want to thank you for letting me be on your podcast. I've really enjoyed the conversation with you.

Roger Dooley: Well, it's been a lot of fun. And we will, of course, link to those places, to the book at Amazon, and to any other resources we talked about. And those links will be on the show notes page at RogerDooley.com/podcast. David, thanks for being on the show.

David C. Baker: Thank you, Roger.

The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley

<http://www.RogerDooley.com/podcast>

The Business of Expertise with David C. Baker

<https://www.rogerdooley.com/david-baker-expertise>

Thank you for joining me for this episode of The Brainfluence Podcast. To continue the discussion and to find your own path to brainy success, please visit us at <http://www.RogerDooley.com>.

The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley

<http://www.RogerDooley.com/podcast>