

# Seven stages in becoming an industry expert

 By [Douglas Kruger](#)

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From Amoeba to Icon; where do you currently rank in your industry's natural progression? In this piece, I walk you through the seven stages of development as you strive to position yourself as an industry expert. [video]

1. **The industry Drone:** You enter a company and you don't know what you are doing. This will usually be your first job, perhaps in an industry that you don't necessarily want to be in.
2. **The Novice:** When you've found an industry that you actually care about, but you are still finding your feet/learning the ropes. You have a boss and essentially simply do as you are told.
3. **The Practitioner:** You still take orders from a boss, but you start to observe the people around you and start caring about your own performance. At this stage you begin to compare yourself to those around you.
4. **The Specialist:** You start to act with your own initiative. You may, or may not have a boss at this stage, but essentially you are starting to think for yourself and start interacting with the world around you. Moreover, when you become a specialist, you start seeing the relevance of going to industry events, getting to know key people in the industry and making sure the key people know who you are. Thus, you start developing a reputation.
5. **The Authority:** You have been in the game long enough and you start to have opinions about how things work. People start approaching you for advice and you are becoming a respected and known figure.
6. **The Thought-leader:** When you become a thought-leader, the business starts coming to you, the media starts coming to you for advice, and the industry looks to you for how things should be done.
7. **The Legend:** If you keep the status of a thought-leader long enough, you become an industry legend. At this stage you have been a thought-leader for so long that your name is at the forefront of an industry.

## ABOUT DOUGLAS KRUGER

Douglas Kruger is the bestselling author of nine business books with Penguin, including the global release: *Virus-Proof Your Small Business*. Meet him at [www.douglaskruger.com](http://www.douglaskruger.com), or email [info@douglaskrugerspeaker.com](mailto:info@douglaskrugerspeaker.com)

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