

#THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

TWEET

**140 Prompts for
Designing and Executing an Effective
Thought Leadership Campaign**

LIZ ALEXANDER, PhD and CRAIG BADINGS

FOREWORD BY JEFF ERNST, PRINCIPAL ANALYST,
FORRESTER RESEARCH

BOOK 01

A THiNKaha® BOOK

#THOUGHT LEADERSHIP **tweet** Book01

140 Prompts for Designing and Executing an Effective Thought
Leadership Campaign

Book Excerpt

Liz Alexander, PhD and Craig Badings

**Foreword by Jeff Ernst,
Principal Analyst, Forrester Research**



E-mail: info@thinkaha.com
20660 Stevens Creek Blvd., Suite 210
Cupertino, CA 95014

BOOK EXCERPT Table of Contents

Foreword by Jeff Ernst, Principal Analyst, Forrester Research

Section I: What Does It Take to Become a Thought Leader?

Section III: How Will You Know You've Succeeded?

Section IV: What Space Has Already Been Claimed?

Section V: What Will Be Your Unique Point of View?

Appendix: How to Successfully Execute Your Thought Leadership
Point of View

About the Authors

Contents

This is the Table of Contents (TOC) from the book for your reference. The eBook TOC (below) differs in page count from the tradebook TOC.

Foreword by Jeff Ernst, Principal Analyst, Forrester Research	13
Introduction	
What Is Thought Leadership?	14
Section I	
What Does It Take to Become a Thought Leader?	17
Section II	
What Impact Do You Want This Campaign to Achieve?	37
Section III	
How Will You Know You've Succeeded?	57

Section IV	
What Space Has Already Been Claimed?	73
Section V	
What Will Be Your Unique Point of View?	87
Section VI	
What's Your Communication Strategy?	105
Section VII	
What Are the Next Steps?	123
Appendix	
How to Successfully Execute Your Thought Leadership Point of View	143
About the Authors	153

Foreword by Jeff Ernst, Principal Analyst, Forrester Research

“Thought leadership marketing doesn’t just educate potential buyers about an issue; it provides a strong point of view that brings new insight and thinking to an issue. Any B2B company that solves complex problems should create a set of strategic objectives, resources, and processes that make thought leadership happen.

“Companies that lack a process or framework find themselves practicing random acts of thought leadership. They react to industry and customer issues in an ad hoc manner rather than proactively planning a cohesive thought leadership platform.”

From “Thought Leadership: The Next Wave Of Differentiation In B2B Marketing”
(June 7, 2011) by Jeff Ernst, Principal Analyst, Forrester Research

Section I: What Does It Take to Become a Thought Leader?



Section I

What Does It Take to Become a Thought Leader?

Individuals and organizations call themselves “thought leaders” all the time. But what really counts is whether your clients, customers, and competitors recognize you as such. To give you the best chance of success with your thought leadership initiative, there are some preliminary questions you should be asking yourself.

The following prompts will help you identify the cultural underpinning (prevailing attitudes as well as available resources) that make or break thought leadership campaigns.

13

Thought leadership is the willingness to go one way when most people are going the other. Does your culture support that?

14

Is your environment supportive of a culture of innovation? How have you demonstrated that in the past?

15

An innovative culture accepts failure as part of the way great ideas are born. Does yours?

16

General Patton once said, "If everyone is thinking alike, someone isn't thinking." How differentiated is the thinking in your organization?

21

Which members of your team will challenge your organization's assumptions in order to engage in truly breakthrough thinking?

22

Who are your internal thought leadership champions? Why have you chosen these people? Have you drawn from a diverse range of thinkers?

23

How far do the values of your organization align with your thought leadership point of view?

24

Will your thought leadership topic have long-term potential? The campaigns that benefit clients and organizations best run for many years.

Putting Into Practice

In order to clarify whether you are ready to move forward with an effective thought leadership approach, here are three areas on which to focus your preliminary discussions:

1. Environment (having a supportive culture)
2. Strategy (how this campaign aligns with your overall vision and mission)
3. People (who is on board?)

Environment: Innovative thinking requires a supportive environment: a culture that encourages and facilitates cross-disciplinary meetings and sharing of information, as well as a willingness to encourage, accept, and learn from the ups and downs of your creative endeavors.

Cultures that exemplify thought leadership don't proscribe expectations, such as, "Have that thought leadership report on my desk by 5:00 p.m. today!" or "Produce some new ideas to help generate leads for the next quarter."

Weekly product-focused white papers, regularly curated content, PR responses to an industry-related development, or news reports may provide value to your clients. But the disciplined, time-consuming, iconoclastic thinking that defines true thought leadership is nurtured in a very different setting.

Strategy: Thought leadership needs to be recognized as a business-wide alignment between new ways of thinking and your organization's mission and vision. It should never be reduced to a mere communications or marketing tool.



Section III

How Will You Know You've Succeeded?

Don't make the mistake of waiting until the conclusion of your campaign to gauge whether it was successful or not. By determining what measures you need to put in place at the outset, you can continually make informed adjustments and tweaks along the way. This will help ensure the best possible returns from the time, effort, and financial resources invested in your thought leadership campaign. Use the following tweet-sized prompts to provoke discussions around how best to measure, evaluate, and recalibrate your campaign.

47

Will your thought leadership motivate your target audience to act or change the paradigms of your industry or market sector?

48

Is everyone clear that thought leadership is not just about generating new ideas but ones that are relevant & actionable for your audience?

49

How will you avoid suffering
the all-too-common mistake
of being data rich but insight
poor with respect to your
thought leadership metrics?

53

What relevant measures do you have in place to capture the coverage, online mentions, and impact of your thought leadership campaign?

54

How do you plan to measure the internal (not just external) effects of your thought leadership campaign?

55

Who will be responsible for measuring the impact of your campaign and will they have access to all the data they need?

56

Have you created and communicated a detailed briefing document for all the parties involved, outlining expectations and deliverables?

Putting Into Practice

By now you should be clear that effectively measuring the impact of your thought leadership campaign requires identifying key metrics from the outset. In planning your campaign, you will need to carefully define the objectives, gain senior management buy-in, and then determine how you will measure success.

Let's illustrate this with an example: Booz & Company's Innovation 1000 Global Campaign.

Its objectives are threefold:

1. Showcase Booz & Company within the top tier business media worldwide as a leader in innovation thinking and research.
2. Provide an effective vehicle to interest and engage clients and prospective clients.
3. Secure speaking engagements.

Booz & Company measures these outcomes by:

- Tracking media coverage, social media mentions, and traffic to booz.com and strategy-business.com.
- Tracking the interest, leads, and sales generated directly and indirectly as a result of Innovation 1000.
- Comparing the speaking engagements it secured against the number it had in previous years.

Section IV: What Space Has Already Been Claimed?



Section IV

What Space Has Already Been Claimed?

We cannot stress enough the importance of research in your thought leadership journey. Once you've identified the key issues affecting your customers' or clients' lives, it's critical that you discover what conversations are already taking place. After all, avenues that you think represent potential thought leadership topics may already be "owned" by someone else. Consider the following questions to help you determine who is saying what in your industry or market sector, including using content creation as a vital preliminary step to discovering your unique thought leadership point of view.

65

When did you last research your market's issues and challenges? Who is currently answering these through their thought leadership, and how?

66

Have you overlooked how content curation helps you better understand, attract, and engage the audience you want for your thought leadership?

67

What key trends are impacting your clients? Can these inform your thought leadership or is someone else already providing insights on these?

68

Imagine yourself in the shoes of a key client or customer. What are the pressing issues on your mind and how are others solving them?

69

Have you considered how curating others' content helps boost brand visibility as a precursor to launching your thought leadership campaign?

70

For what do you want to be known? Does this deliver a thought leadership opportunity aligned with your values and your clients' issues?

71

Have you searched globally and locally for all possible content in the thought leadership space you have identified?

72

Are you curating others' content wisely to help complement the new, fresh perspectives of your emerging thought leadership?

Putting Into Practice

To emphasize the value of the learning and insights that were hopefully provoked by the prompts offered in this section, let us consider a couple of examples to demonstrate how best to proceed.

If you were operating in the health and beauty sector, we would not advocate positioning yourself as a thought leader around the topic of “real beauty” because this is an area well leveraged by Dove® with their Campaign for Real Beauty. Likewise, the theme of innovation is to a large extent owned by the management consultancy, Booz & Company. If you were a management consultant, you would probably battle to gain traction in that space. But as a specialist plastics manufacturer, you could well explore and own a niche thought leadership space in the area of plastics innovation.

The importance of establishing your thought leadership in an area no one else owns (in order to showcase new and innovative thinking) can also be illustrated by considering what would happen if someone tried to emulate IBM’s Smarter Planet campaign. By trying to position themselves in this already “taken” space, newcomers would run the risk of being labeled a follower at best or a plagiarist at worst.

These examples illustrate how important it is to engage in thorough research before thinking about establishing your thought leadership niche. Make it a point to conduct extensive global searches around relevant topics using Google or other search engines, and do a “deep dive” within the websites of your major competitors to identify what they are doing in that thought leadership space.



Section V

What Will Be Your Unique Point of View?

At its core, thought leadership is about two things:

1. Identifying one or more client-centric issues or challenges—especially ones your clients (and your competitors) don't see coming.
2. Devising an innovative approach that will anticipate, solve, or lessen the effects of these challenges.

Do these two things superbly and you will become indispensable and trusted, and sell more products and services. Are you ready to provoke yourself and your team to truly differentiate yourselves? The following prompts will help you do just that.

88

What are you taking for granted? Things change constantly. Are you examining all areas of change for your thought leadership platform?

89

Have none of your ideas hit the mark yet? Stop, redefine your clients' problems, and think again.

90

Be wary of moving too quickly into solution mode. Have you spent enough time asking the right questions?

91

Does your culture engender enough curiosity? What does your organization do to foster inquiry and lifelong learning?

92

What three key trends will impact your clients over the next few years, and can your thought leadership address these?

93

Do you have current content or intellectual property that could be adapted with some extra rigor into a thought leadership point of view?

94

Do you have sector experts whose insights could be backed by robust research and then packaged and leveraged as your thought leadership?

95

Are you playing it too safe?
Is your thought leadership being
sanitized by a culture of risk
aversion within your organization?

96

Creation isn't the same as
curation. It can't be rushed and is
best done in stages. What kind of
gestation period are you allowing?

Putting Into Practice

Once you've fully explored the current conversations in your industry or space, and identified what you believe to be a fruitful area for further exploration, it's time to establish the unique point of view for which you will be known.

It is here that you can establish a true competitive edge—with the requisite discipline, time, and effort. As George Bernard Shaw is reputed to have said, “Few people think more than two or three times a year; I have made an international reputation for myself by thinking once or twice a week.”

Organizations that are overly focused on short-term results and instant reactions don't think too hard or too deeply. Most never consider whether they're asking the right questions in the first place. This is the territory of risk averse, “play it safe” organizations who don't stand for anything and therefore never stand apart.

Contrast that with these exemplary organizational thought leaders:

1. BMW's Activate the Future: presenting a four-part documentary series on technology, culture, and cities and how these relate to the future of mobility.
2. IBM's Smarter Planet: articulating its point of view on the challenges facing a range of industries so that they can better meet the future head-on.
3. Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer: showcasing insights across the telecoms, media, and technology sectors, their “Mobile Matters” campaign is hosted by way of a dedicated

APPENDIX

How to Successfully Execute Your Thought Leadership Point of View

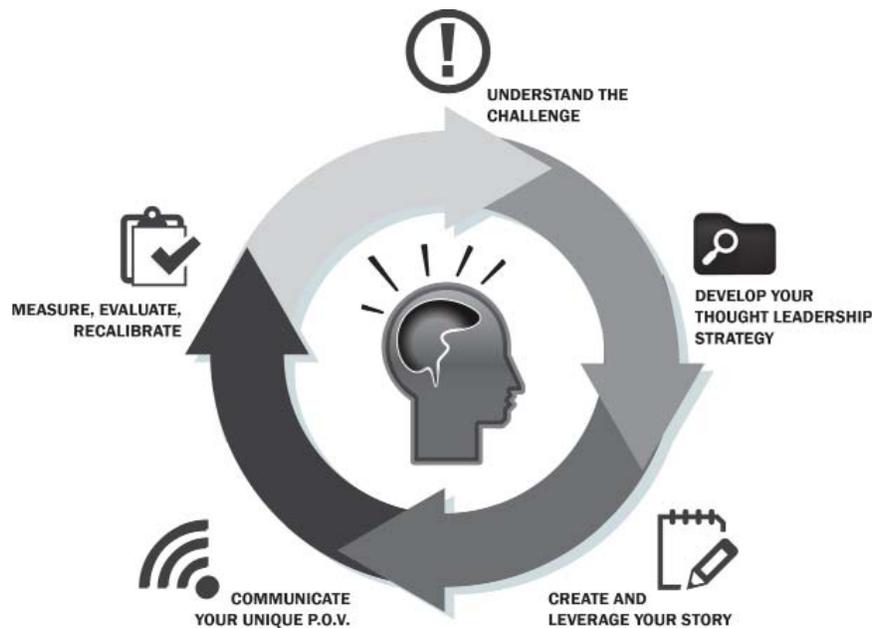


Figure A

The 140 tweet-sized prompts offered throughout this book will—as long as you act on them—help you address every aspect of an effective thought leadership campaign. This question-led methodology will assist you in arriving at the best possible thought leadership position for your organization.

About the Authors



Dr. Liz Alexander's (@DrLizAlexander) gift and passion is helping to leverage an individual, team, or organization's thought leadership, using the book development process as a catalyst. Liz draws on her 25 years of experience as an international consultant, educator, marketer, business journalist, and broadcaster to help corporate executives and other experts produce critically and commercially successful thought leadership books. She had a distinguished career in the UK as a speaker and workshop facilitator, working with clients ranging from Cathay Pacific Airways to the British government's Appeals Service, before moving to the U.S. in 2001. Liz works part of the year with aspiring business authors in India.

Liz is the author of 14 nonfiction books with a global reach of close to a million readers in 20 countries. In addition to consulting and speaking throughout the United States and India, Liz developed and teaches the Strategic Communication Certificate Program for The University of Texas at Austin's Professional Development Center. She earned her PhD in Educational Psychology from UT Austin. Her website is <http://drlizalexander.com> and she can be reached at info@drlizalexander.com.



Craig Badings is passionate about thought leadership, having witnessed first hand the power this strategy can deliver to brands and individuals. He has spent 25 years consulting with global and local brands about their communication and thought leadership strategies. Today, he speaks and consults on how companies and individuals can employ thought leadership to truly differentiate their brand in the eyes of their target audience.

Over the past six years, Craig has conducted intense research on thought leadership and has written extensively on the topic. His book, *Brand Stand: Seven Steps to Thought Leadership*, is the first thought leadership book to outline a methodology on how to arrive at a thought leadership position.

Craig is a director of Sydney-based Cannings Corporate Communications, a member company of the ASX-listed STW Group, Australia's largest communications services group. Visit his thought leadership blog at www.thoughtleadershipstrategy.net and e-mail him at cbadings@cannings.net.au.

Liz and Craig are available individually or jointly to design and facilitate thought leadership development events for you or your organization anywhere in the world. Contact them today to discuss your needs.

Liz Alexander, PhD

<http://drlizalexander.com>

info@drlizalexander.com

Craig Badings

<http://www.thoughtleadershipstrategy.net>

cbadings@cannings.net.au

Getting “#THOUGHT LEADERSHIP tweet Book01”

(<http://www.thinkaha.com/thoughtleadershiptweet/>)

“#THOUGHT LEADERSHIP tweet Book01” can be purchased as an eBook for \$11.95 or tradebook for \$16.96 at <http://www.thinkaha.com/thoughtleadershiptweet/> or at other online and physical book stores.

Please contact us for quantity discounts sales@happyabout.info or to be informed about upcoming titles bookupdate@happyabout.info or phone (408-257-3000).

#THOUGHT LEADERSHIP TWEET BOOK 01

140 Prompts to Ensure a Successful Thought Leadership Campaign

"This book echoes my view that people don't care about products! Thought leadership engages buyers about what matters to them, not your ego."
David Moerman Scott, Bestselling Author, The New Rules of Marketing and PR

"If Confucius was a marketer, he would be tweeting proverbs like Alexander & Badings do on thought leadership."
Dale Bryce, Group Manager, Marketing, Sinclair Knight Merz

"This book is thought haiku. It asks penetrating questions about the how, why, and what of leveraging the biggest B2B marketing idea around."
Matt Church, Founder, Thought Leaders Global

"Everyone wants to be a thought leader today, but can they?
#THOUGHTLEADERSHIP tweet delivers a concise overview of what it really takes."
Eric Wittlake, Senior Director of Media, Babcock & Jenkins, Inc.



Dr. Liz Alexander's gift and passion is helping individuals and organizations transition from experts to thought leaders. She is an author, business book strategist, and consulting co-author. In addition to consulting and speaking around the world, Dr. Liz teaches strategic communications at a leading U.S. university.



Craig Badings is passionate about thought leadership and how it empowers individuals and brands to differentiate themselves and engage with their target audiences. He consults with a range of companies about their communication and thought leadership strategies and how to take them to market. Craig is a director of Sydney-based Canning's Corporate Communications.

BUSINESS & INVESTING, MANAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP
\$ 19.95 US

THINKaha

<http://thinkaha.com>

