



The 7 Step Checklist to Thought Leadership Success

Increasingly, the exposure and reputation businesses and executives gain in the press, in search engine results, and in the minds of prospective customers is in their own hands. In the evolving world of journalism, there are fewer opportunities for staff reporters to generate thorough and accurate coverage of the thousands of companies and products requiring coverage.

As a result, each of us is our own best PR representative. Additionally, our own ability to share the authentic stories about the industries we serve and the areas in which we are expert, is one of our very best avenues to increased sales, revenue, customer engagement, marketshare and market awareness, and positive reputation.

Additionally, thought leadership publishing is making it increasingly possible to tie publishing and public relations to revenue and to direct ROI. What could be better?

As one of the top authorities in thought leadership driven public relations, we would love to tell you more.

In the meantime, here's a 7-step checklist to help you determine where your thought leadership, PR and content marketing programs currently stand.

Consider the following steps and rate yourself from 1-10 in your current capability level in each:

_____ **Step 1: Messaging and Mission.**

Do you and your company currently articulate your vision, your mission and your messaging accurately and well?

Who are your intended audiences?

What is your value proposition, and what could it accomplish for the target audiences you address?

Is your message consistent and pervasive on your website and in the coverage of you that appears in the press?

_____ **Step 2: Thought leadership authorship and publishing.**

Do you blog? Or do you author columns, or produce videos?

Are you a frequent keynote speaker?

Do you appear in podcasts or in broadcast?

If you do not, you are missing one of the top opportunities available to you to engage customers, as well as to be on the record for your genuine values and mission, and to forge and build your own personal and company brand, as opposed to having it assumed or thrust upon you by default or by others? (accurate and favorable or not).

_____ **Step 3: Social Media presence and following.**

You and your company should be at least functionally present on the social media platforms that are most prevalent for the customers you serve.

Beyond this, social media is an ideal way to build a sizeable following, and to enact this following audience both on topics pertaining to your business, or to other issues, such as corporate responsibility that are important to you.

_____ **Step 4: News.**

Do you generate at least occasional press release news, and do you post this news on one of the primary wire posting services? (Such as

Businesswire, PR Newswire or MarketWired.) These are the most immediate and best way to build SEO presence and traction through a mechanism in which you control every word.

Additionally, do you issue news that is “evergreen” and of interest and value to readers, as opposed to simply announcing and seeking acknowledgment for awards and customer wins? Your releases should interest and educate readers and in summary should create a set of digital footprints that communicates your continuing growth and success.

_____ **Step 5: Brand Mentions.**

If a customer were to run a search on your product or service category, where would you appear? Or would you appear? Would your prospect find sufficient evidence that you would be the right or the best decision within the category you are in?

_____ **Step 6: Reputational Mentions.**

Are the reputational items that appear about you and your company accurate and positive? What about GlassDoor reviews? Yelp? Are there negative issues you haven’t addressed such as negative ratings from the Better Business Bureau or negative write-ups on sites like RipOff Report or PissedOffConsumer.com?

Could you or your company be mistakenly identified or associated with any negative stories in the press that are not actually about you?

_____ **Step 7: PR Crisis Plan.**

Every business should create at least a cursory crisis plan that identifies in the case of an emergency what should happen in regards to any statements or response to the press.

- Who would be your primary or backup spokesperson?
- Who would need to be notified, and in what sequence?
- Who should review and approve any strategy or statement before you respond to the press?

We suggest you rate yourself honestly on each of these issues to determine the areas in which you need to improve. Repeat this checklist at least quarterly to strengthen the areas in which you're lacking and to record and measure your progress over time.

Would you like to learn more? You can follow the columns and writings of Thought Leadership expert Cheryl Snapp Conner at Forbes.com and Inc.com.

We invite you to download our free ebook, The Definitive Guide to Thought Leadership and to subscribe to our bi-weekly Snappington Post newsletters at www.SnappConner.com.

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