



# WHERE ASSET MANAGERS FAIL AT THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Six tips to make your  
campaign deliver results

# “Take the logo off most thought leadership campaigns and you’d be hard pushed to know who produced them.”

## THE CHALLENGE



### SPEED READ

- Thought leadership needs to be part of a strategic plan
- Consider your user personas and their customer journey
- Make sure everything you produce embodies your brand

Although a term much derided, scaling the heady heights of ‘Thought Leadership’ is the goal of many Asset Management firms. From a marketing perspective, the ambitions are laudable. A successful campaign engages a cynical audience with relevant insight, builds brand consideration and provides the front line with collateral.

The problem is that, all too often, ROI of thought leadership campaigns is measured solely in PR column inches, not whether the target audience has actually gained anything from it.

While there are great examples in the sector (see page 4), from a content marketing

standpoint, a lot of what’s produced is ineffective. When we benchmarked content approaches in Asset Management as part of our annual FS survey<sup>1</sup>, we found the sector polled below average on Clarity and Cut-through.

But this doesn’t mean you should abandon thought leadership. Instead, you need to approach it from a content marketing perspective. Consider where it will appear on your customer journey and whether it is relevant to your target audience. It needs to be of interest and add value to them, or it won’t serve any purpose.

Read on for our 6 tips to help your thought leadership work harder.

<sup>1</sup>Editions Financial and the Financial Services Forum carried out the first Content Marketing for Financial Services survey. All results can be found at [www.editionsfinancial.co.uk/cmsurvey](http://www.editionsfinancial.co.uk/cmsurvey)



### Richard Mellis

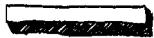
*Content strategist Richard previously ran his own marketing agency and has developed CMS for number of Asset Managers and other financial brands.*

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# OUR THINKING



## 1 Start bottom-up

Success shouldn't be measured in column inches. The real returns most often come from the ability of your front line teams to use your insights as currency for profitable conversations.

Interrogate your front line to understand the conversations they are having, and their engagement process. Then develop your outputs in the format that best supports this, whether it's a conversation map (as IBM do), an iPad app, infographic or benchmark tool.

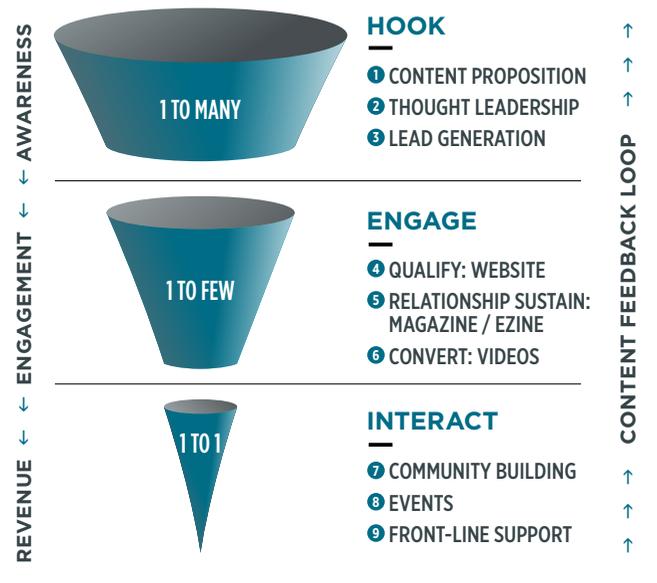
## 2 Think funnel

Many marketing departments approach thought leadership along the binary track of 'Research > Write Report > Get Headlines > Mail'.

We plan campaigns through an Engagement Funnel (see opposite). We look at how the content can be activated through all lead generation channels, including owned, earned and paid. We then map the prospects' journey through all subsequent touchpoints and optimise the conversion journey at each point. Even micro content tweaks can have a dramatic impact on conversion.



## THE CONTENT ENGAGEMENT FUNNEL

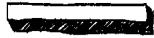


## 3 Don't get heavy on a first date

Engagement works in a pyramid. The first touchpoint might be as little as 15 seconds, and your content has to deliver on that. Then expand the amount of content, and flex the mediums you use, as your audiences engage with you more deeply. Don't serve up a 5-minute video to your audiences at the top of the funnel and expect them to watch.

CONTINUED | ►►

## OUR THINKING / CONTD



### 4 Make it two way

Today's audiences don't want to be just passive recipients. Give them the chance to shape the insights they want through interactive data and content tools. And engage them in a dialogue so their insights get shared to the wider world.

### 5 Marry the qual and quant

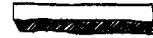
Information may be beautiful, but the insights most often come from people. For best results, we try to blend the rigorous data analytics with pithy nuggets of insight from clients which bring it to life.

### 6 Don't just be 'on brand'

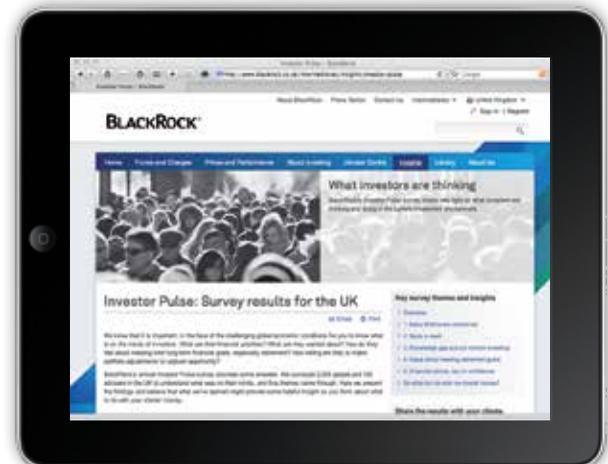
Take the logo off most thought leadership campaigns and you'd be hard pushed to know who produced them.

The art is to differentiate your proposition by embodying your brand. This can be through the topics you talk about, the way you curate this content and how you surface the voice of your own thought leaders.

## BEST IN CLASS



Several asset managers have delivered brilliant thought leadership initiatives. These are the ones whose campaigns embody their brand, are engaging and are cleverly positioned as part of overall strategic initiatives. Just a couple of our favourites are shown here.



BlackRock show how to empower intermediary clients to become thought leaders with easily digestible content assets.



↑ Franklin Templeton show that thought leadership doesn't have to be dry. They are exemplars of how content assets can be accessed through every channel.



↑ Legg Mason's 'What to Watch 2014' is a great example of how pithy content can be used to hook attention at the start of the customer journey.

## IN PRACTICE

### The challenge

Our client wanted to build on its support for clients' global trade aspirations. They wanted to look at predictions of future possible trade flows to help customers and commissioned research to find this.

Customers were interviewed around relevant topics to build qualitative insight. The results were built into an interactive infographic that

customers can interrogate based on their needs. This was activated online in print and video.

The front line now has an invaluable tool to use as a conversation piece and audit tool. This demonstrates their knowledge and cements their position as a market leader.



### RESULT SNAPSHOT

**\$1.1m**

PR VALUE

**2.14%**

INCREASED DIGITAL  
CLICK-THROUGH RATE  
FOLLOWING RESEARCH

**\$12.9m**

NEW REVENUE BROUGHT  
IN FROM FRONT LINE  
DIRECT ENGAGEMENT

# ABOUT US



## Who we are

Editions Financial is the UK's only content marketing agency dedicated to finance.

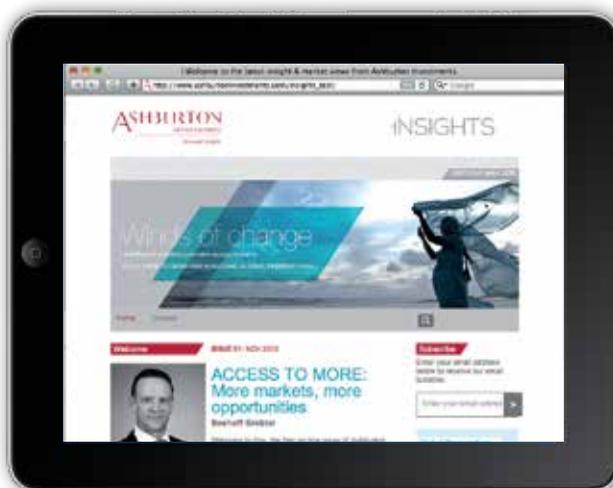
In the past 15 years, we've successfully delivered over 2000 content projects for leading global financial brands.

Our team includes ex-FT journalists, best selling business authors, BAFTA-winning TV directors, award-winning designers, digital developers and content strategists.

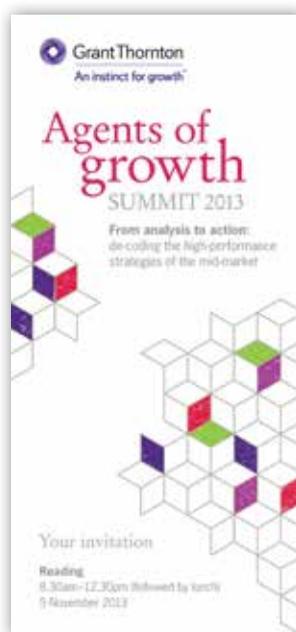
[EDITIONSFINANCIAL.CO.UK](http://EDITIONSFINANCIAL.CO.UK)



↑ The Financial Services Forum member magazine we design, write and produce.



↑ A client micro-site we designed, developed and built.



↑ We created this brand proposition, set campaign agenda and created pre and post engagement for a series of events.

## What we do

### CONTENT STRATEGY

- ⇒ Content marketing strategy
- ⇒ Content audits

### CONTENT CREATION

- ⇒ Web writing
- ⇒ Video
- ⇒ Thought leadership
- ⇒ Magazines
- ⇒ Social media content
- ⇒ Ezines
- ⇒ Apps

### TRAINING

- ⇒ Content marketing strategy workshops
- ⇒ Tone of voice
- ⇒ Copywriting



B2B  
Marketing  
AWARDS 2013  
SHORTLIST



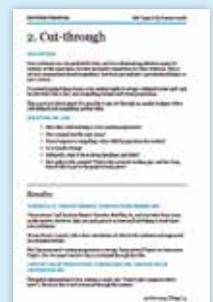
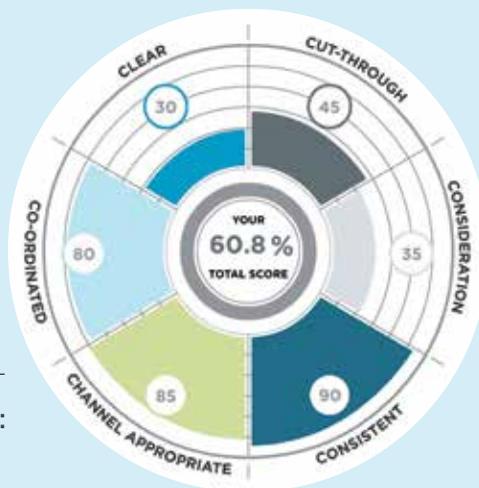
# WANT TO SEE HOW YOUR CONTENT BENCHMARKS?

We have developed a content audit tool which assesses your current approach against the 6 C's of content marketing strategy and benchmarks it against best in class, both in your sector and across wider financial services content marketing.

We can run through this in a 45 minute session and demonstrate examples.



TO FIND OUT MORE, CALL TONY DICKSON:  
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Email: [tony@editionsfinancial.co.uk](mailto:tony@editionsfinancial.co.uk)



↑ An example of bespoke audit results and report.

## USEFUL RESOURCES

Order other ebriefs in the series:



- 1 IS PRINT DEAD?
- 2 5 STEPS TO DIGITAL CONTENT STRATEGY
- 3 CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY

Request our  
*Journal of Content Marketing*:

