

EDELMAN/LINKEDIN B2B THOUGHT LEADERSHIP IMPACT STUDY

SOME KEY FININGS

By, Daniel Rosehill, DSR Ghostwriting | DSRGhostwriting.com | Accompanying blog and podcast.

THERE'S AN (ONGOING) GAP BETWEEN EXPECTATION AND DELIVERY

TODAY'S READERSHIP IS DECIDEDLY NOT IMPRESSED

Only 17% of those surveyed rated the thought leadership they had read as "very good" or "excellent." The rest called it "good" or "mediocre to very poor" (29%)

... BUT ACKNOWLEDGE THAT T.L. CAN WORK

While the readership of today's thought leadership are, by and large, not being 'wowed' by it, 88% of respondents still said that it *can* be effective in enhancing their perception of an organization. Producers need to address this need by adding value.

IT'S A SHARP AND DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

BUSINESS GAINS CAN BE DIRECT RESULTS

Edelman devised an index to quantify the ways in which thought leadership can impact business decisions by influencing readers. Cumulatively, 48% of respondents said that it could – by RFP inclusion, bid awards, and yielding other favorable outcomes.

... OR IT CAN DAMAGE REPUTATION AND LOSE BIDS!

On the flip side, muddling to bad thought leadership is not innocuous. 25% of readers admitted to having passed over a vendor for business as a result of their thought leadership. Further, 38% said it had decreased their "respect" and "admiration" for the author.

PRODUCERS CAN'T QUANTIFY; READERS WANT VALUE

PRODUCERS CAN'T QUANTIFY (AND PROVE) EFFICACY

Thought leadership producers are hounded by a very old problem in public relations: quantifying tangible results of soft achievements like building brand awareness and shifting market positioning. 77% of producers can't link their activity to sales or wins.

... PERHAPS BECAUSE THEY'RE NOT FOCUSED ON VALUE

The "buy" side of the intellectual marketplace, however, continues to feel that thought leadership is under-delivering on value. Producers may have a bad report card – but they also have the feedback necessary to improve.

IT THRIVES IN THE RIGHT ECOSYSTEM; MATURITY TAKES TIME

DECADES-LONG EFFORTS YIELD TOP RESULTS

Companies that have developed a strong culture around disseminating thought leadership unsurprisingly seem to do better at it and get more executive buy-in. Among those producing T.L. for 21+ years, 51% rated it good or better.

... IT'S A LONG ROAD TO SUCCESS

Those in the initial phases of instituting a thought leadership program should not become dissuaded too quickly. The internal satisfaction metric among those in the first five years of their thought leadership campaign stood at just 28%.

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