

## Can You be the Next Business Thought Leader?

Written by Ginny Grimsley  
Monday, 29 July 2013 13:57

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### Corporate Thought Leader Architect Shares Tips

Plug “thought leader architect” into the title field of a LinkedIn search and only one name pops up: Mitchell Levy, CEO of THiNKaha and author of the new book, “#Creating Thought Leaders Tweet,” ( [www.thinkaha.com/experts2gurus](http://www.thinkaha.com/experts2gurus) ).

“The truth is, a lot of people are trying to become viewed as ‘thought leaders’ because they recognize that being a well-publicized, well-respected expert in their field is good for business,” Levy says.

“But most people have a hard time figuring out how to do it on their own.”

Levy, who works with corporations to develop thought leaders among employees, says CEOs recognize that the wide availability of information on the internet has changed how customers do business.

“Customers are quite knowledgeable, and they get that way by using the resources available online,” Levy says. “It doesn’t take long before they know enough to spot a true expert – someone with vision; someone with a strong track record of success; someone who knows their field so well, they can tell you where it’s going, and where it should go.”

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When we had only the traditional media and its well-guarded access, our thought leaders tended to be people who were already in vaulted positions, such as elected officials, CEOs of major corporations and entertainment personalities, Levy notes.

Today, thanks to the egalitarian nature of social media, anyone can become one. But many people don't know where to begin.

Levy offers these suggestions for developing your reputation as a thought leader.

- Start by zeroing in on an area of your field in which you excel. Focus on one area of your business or profession that excites you. Rather than stepping out as the consummate expert on a broad range of topics, choose one slice of your expertise that you enjoy – that you love to talk about. The beautiful thing about social media is that it caters to niche interests, which is a great way to start building your following. The more focused you can make the space you want to be a thought leader in, the easier it will be for you to reach your audience.
- Develop your own message and share it in a distinctive style. Think about who your audience is and what they want and need – remembering that they don't care about you, they care about themselves. Are there better ways to do something that everyone has been doing the same way for years? Can you solve problems or foresee trends that others seem to be blind to? Craft a message that will resonate with your audience. Share it in a distinctive, authoritative voice. Don't be afraid to show some personality. Do you need to be bigger, tougher, louder, stronger, wiser? You don't need it all, but you do need to set yourself apart.
- Create useful, valuable content that people can use. Online, you can write a blog; create video tutorials on YouTube; share nuggets of information on the various social media sites. Write a book on your topic! By constantly sharing information that solves problems for users and readers, you begin developing a reputation as knowledgeable, helpful and reliable. This should be an ongoing process – which is why you need to be passionate about it! Thought leaders make it look easy, but they work at it every day.

About Mitchell Levy

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Mitchell Levy, Thought Leader Architect and CEO at THiNKaha, has created and operated 15 firms and partnerships since 1997. Today, he works with companies who are active in social media to leverage their IP and unlock the expertise of their employee base to drive more business. He is also an Amazon best-selling author with 18 business books, including the new “#Creating Thought Leaders Tweet.” Levy is a frequent media guest and a popular speaker. In addition to the companies and joint ventures he has started, he has provided strategic consulting to more than 100 companies, has advised more than 500 CEOs on critical business issues through the CEO networking groups he's run, and has been Chairman of the Board of a NASDAQ listed company.