



Podcast transcript

What's in your Thought Leadership? Content Marketing at its Best

INTRO: We're talking with Marcia Jedd, owner of Marcia Jedd & Associates, a marketing communications consultancy in Minneapolis. Today, we're kicking off this podcast series on content strategy with the topic of thought leadership as it relates to marketing.

(Interviewer JP): Marcia, first of all, how do you define thought leadership?

(MJ): The term “thought leadership” has roots at the management consulting firms in the ‘90’s who had to differentiate their services. A “thought leader” can be defined as an individual or organization that’s recognized by their peers for innovation or progressive ideas and thinking.

(JP): OK, that was a good high-level description. What's a more specific example of thought leadership?

(MJ): I think a classic example is Fred Smith, founder of FedEx. Back in the early ‘60s, he wrote a paper for his college econ class on the concept of overnight shipping.

He was further inspired by his military experience to create a better way to ship small packages that traditionally were cumbersome to send via the regular passenger airlines.

In the ‘70s, FedEx was created around that revolutionary model. Others went on to emulate its services which raised the bar industrywide, even at indirect competitors.

(JP) So where does thought leadership come from on an organizational level?

(MJ): Thought leadership can arise out of an organization’s collective or individual wisdom, ideas or actions—it’s often around how they innovate. So sharing thought leadership helps advance the market’s understanding of a concept, problem or situation—it helps others approach an issue or do something better, save money, streamline and so forth. Thought leadership can come from anywhere within the organization. Often, while thought leadership can enhance the customer’s ability to use a product or service successfully, that’s not always the end game.

(JP): So how does thought leadership relate to marketing communications?

(MJ): In terms of marketing communications and content strategy, thought leadership can really be leveraged to advance the company within its industry or broader marketplace.

When companies harness what they already are doing in coordination with marketing efforts, they can better position themselves to become thought leaders.

Good thought leadership will educate and engage with audiences, whether customers, prospects or others.

(JP): So what are examples of thought leadership packaged into content marketing?

(MJ): A classic example of thought leadership is a bylined article by company executives or other industry experts—and that's how it got its start and was coined as a term. It can spill out to blogs, podcasts, videos, you name it.

Thought leadership is certainly found in white papers, e-books and other downloads because these types of pieces are more about educating than direct selling.

An organization can also “package” their knowledge into things like custom-created infographics (all the rage today), ROI calculators, apps or other software tools or proprietary reports. These things all bring utility and value to an end user as thought leadership.

(JP): We just heard from Marcia Jedd from Marcia Jedd and Associates on the topic of thought leadership as it relates to marketing.

What's in your content strategy? For assistance with your marketing communications, contact Marcia Jedd of Marcia & Associates LLC. She helps organizations worldwide improve their reach, reputation and revenues with insightful marcom that includes copywriting, PR and marketing research services. For more information, please visit www.marciajedd.com or call 612.805.1425.

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