

10 Ways to (Really) Make a Difference as a Thought Leader



CHANGE YOUR ATTITUDE

Aspiring thought leaders are focused on making change – changing people's beliefs, behaviors, the way things have always been done. They are willing to take a stand for or on behalf of big ideas, causes, groups of people, even the planet.

**What do you stand for?
On whose behalf are you working?**



AMPLIFY OTHERS

So often as thought leaders, we get caught up in our own messages and methodologies and we tend to forget that one of the roles we can play for our community is to curate and amplify the best ideas of others.

Make a list of people whose content you consume regularly. Who said something that needs to be shared widely? Then take action and share it!



STEP OUT OF YOUR SILO

The best ideas often come from outside of our silo and our value-add is that we're willing to look for new perspectives, systems, frameworks and processes that have never been tried in our arena, even though they've added value somewhere else.

Where can I gain a new understanding/approach - by reading, watching or talking to someone?



STEP BACK FROM THE FUTURE

Imagine you are standing in your ideal future, where everything you've ever wanted has come true. You are looking back to today and ask yourself, "What would have had to have happened to make that future possible?"

Envision your dream future - write it down in detail and then reverse engineer how to make it happen.



STUDY THE CONSEQUENCES

Look at the trends in your industry and take time to think through the possible first and second order consequences of those trends. First a utopian future and second a dystopian future. This can help you prepare for what might be ahead.

Choose a trend in your field & describe the first & second order consequences as those trends play out in a utopian and dystopian future.



DETERMINE YOUR ROLE

Be honest with yourself about what role you can play to assure you are living your highest potential as a thought leader. To truly scale your ideas, decide which role is your 'highest and best use' and then identify others to fill the rest of the team.

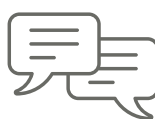
Think through what role you will play and come up with a plan to hone your skills in that arena.



GATHER THE IMPACT STORIES

Spend the time needed to document the stories that can inspire and inform others who want to engage with you and your work. The more you can make these stories real, with true-to-life details, the better, while also being short and clear.

How can you share your journey in a way that engages and allows people to identify with you? What other success stories do you have to share?



BECOME MORE PERSUASIVE

Thought leaders must be adept at holding their own in dialogue and debate, able to support their perspective and point of view against doubters. This requires us to start with a deep empathy towards the other's point of view.

**Why don't people agree with me?
Why don't people see the world the way I do?**



LEVERAGE THE TRENDS

We can move more quickly when we can ride the trends and deeply understand the world in which we are operating. Aim to understand the forces at work in our world from a variety of perspectives and move forward accordingly.

Using a Context Map as inspiration, map out trends in your industry. Then come up with five ideas of how you can capitalize on these trends.



EMPOWER THE NEXT GENERATION

It is never too early to begin thinking about who can pick up your work and carry it forward and what they might need to make that happen. Document your methodologies so others can build on what you've created without reinventing the wheel.

Is there anyone who might be interested in learning from your expertise? How might you mentor them to understand your approach?