

Leaders must regularly develop their expertise in a variety of arenas. Identify a few skills you'd like to develop in the coming year. Then select a few actions that you can commit to making time for.

Improve Your Ability to Tell Stories

- Start a blog – www.wordpress.com
- Comment on the blogs of others who are thought leaders in your niche/industry/organization.
- Start or join a writing group - www.sanfranciscowritersworkshop.com/ or <http://www.shutupwrite.com/> (Is there something similar in your community?)
- Join Toastmasters – www.toastmasters.org to develop your speaking skills
- Take an improv class - www.improv.org to improve your spontaneity and presence (Is there something similar in your community?)
- Learn storytelling - www.storynet.org/ or www.storytelling-in-business.com
- Attend a National Speaker's Association Event – www.nsaspeaker.org
- Watch TED Talks – <http://www.ted.com/talks> to see how others present their ideas
- Apply to give a TEDx Talk at an event near you. <https://www.ted.com/tedx/events>
- Read Nancy Duarte books: *Resonate* and *Slide:ology* books on how to create great slide presentations
- Watch Prezis about interesting Thought Leaders - www.alimat-inc.com
- Read *Pop! Stand Out in Any Crowd* by Sam Horn about how to make your ideas memorable
- Study ideas from *[Paid to Speak: Best Practices for Building a Successful Speaking Business](#)* – NSA
- Subscribe to SpeakerNetNews - www.speakernetnews.com/
- Develop a 3-minute talk on a topic you care about and videotape yourself presenting it. Replay the tape and give yourself a fair critique. What did you do well? What could you improve?

- Hire a speech coach recommended by people you know and respect.

Build Your Self-Confidence & Resilience

- [What's Holding You Back](#) by Sam Horn
- [The Art of Possibility](#) by Rosamund & Benjamin Zander
- [This is Not the Life I Ordered: 50 Ways to Keep Your Head Above Water](#) – by Stephens, Speier, Risley, Yanehiro
- [Finding Your Own North Star](#) by Martha Beck
- Complete the *Personal Compass Workbook* from The Grove - <http://tinyurl.com/3esoymm>
- Find a mentor/role model that you can watch and emulate
- Hire a coach
- [Brag! The Art of Tooting Your Own Horn Without Blowing It](#) by Peggy Klaus
- Fire your 'Itty Bitty Shitty Committee' in your head that tells you it can't be done
- [Designing Your Life](#) by Bill Burnett & Dave Evans

Nurture Your Innovation & Change Orientation Skills

- Read [Design a Better Business](#) by Lisa Kay Solomon and use some of the helpful templates to get started on your innovation journey
- Take an improv class - www.improv.org
- Identify something big that needs improving at work and create a strategy to fix it
- Engage others in making a change in your community
- Volunteer for a political campaign
- Start a meditation practice to give yourself quiet time to rest your mind.
- Read an innovation newsletter like www.springwise.com to get inspired.
- Stay up to date with topics in your industry by setting up a Google alert www.google.com/alerts

Build Your Leadership Skills & Credentials

- Ask someone to nominate you for an award – like the San Jose Business Times Women of Influence Award - <http://tinyurl.com/3d5g58w>. Provide them with your bio and the key supporting information for the nomination to assure they put the best case forward.
- Apply for a fellowship in your field of study
- Take part in a Leadership program in your community. Here is the California program - www.leadershipcalifornia.org
- Before seeking another credential or degree, be sure that it is really necessary to what you want to achieve. Ask 10 people who already have one if it really helped them get ahead.
- Read blogs or listen to podcasts related to your field so you stay up to date on what's happening – www.alltop.com to find the top blogs and [Stitcher](https://www.stitcher.com) to find podcasts.
- Step forward to lead a strategically important initiative at your company or in your community
- Join a non-profit board
- Write an article for your company or industry newsletter that showcases your expertise.
- Create a personal web page
- Watch the Center for Creative Leadership webinar on Creating a Compelling Vision <http://www.ccl.org/leadership/community/leadershipWebinar.aspx>

Expand Your Network

- Join the board of a trade association or non-profit in your niche
- Develop your “Brag points” – see [Brag! The Art of Tooting Your Own Horn without Blowing It](#) by Peggy Klaus
- Update your LinkedIn page - www.linkedin.com
- Sign up for a weekly update of events in your niche (check www.Meetup.com) and attend 3-4/month
- Host a teleseminar or webinar on a topic you are an expert in and invite others to attend
- Start a monthly breakfast group with others you want to meet

Build Followers for Your Ideas

- Start Tweeting (www.twitter.com) – share resources, links, ideas (not what you had for breakfast). Re-tweet others and follow key influencers in your niche.
- Use Hootsuite social media dashboard to monitor your followers. <http://hootsuite.com/>
- Read [*The New Relationship Marketing: How To Build A Large, Loyal, Profitable Network Using The Social Web*](#) by Mari Smith or [*The Complete Idiot's Guide to Social Media Marketing*](#) by Jennifer Abernathy.
- Read [*Enchantment*](#) by Guy Kawasaki.
- Get training in writing an Op Ed - www.theopedproject.org
- Write an article for a specialized publication in your field
- Guest blog on a popular blog – www.alltop.com
- Start a podcast in your area of expertise. - <https://podcastersparadise.com/>
- Start an e-newsletter and send it to people in your industry/niche
- Convene a group of people with the same title/job across your industry for quarterly calls or meetings
- Speak on a panel at a leadership conference

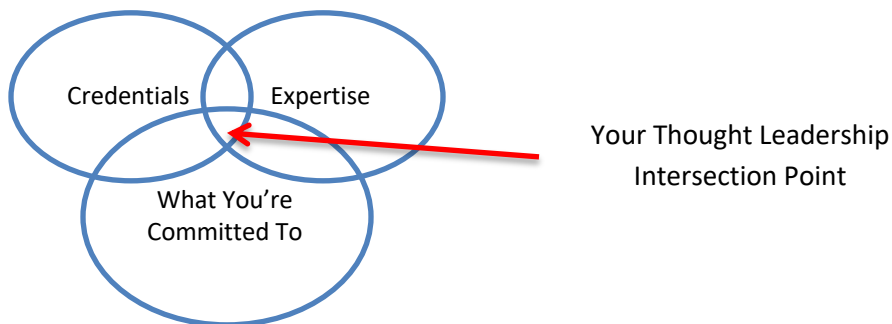
Improve Your Strategy-Setting Skills

- Read Herminia Ibarra's excellent case study on [*Women and the Vision Thing*](#)
- Read [*Design a Better Business*](#) by Lisa Kay Solomon and use some of the helpful templates to get started on setting your team's or company's strategy
- Read Jim Collins' articles on strategy - http://www.jimcollins.com/article_topics/articles-strategy.html
- Take a strategy class at a local college
- Hire a strategy consultant to teach you everything they know and actively participate in strategy sessions at your company
- Use the templates from The Grove to set your organization, team or group's strategy <http://store.grove.com/>

- Join a LinkedIn Group of people in your niche or volunteer to moderate an existing group

Begin to Develop Your Platform

- Search SlideShare to see what other experts in your niche have created to support their platform www.slideshare.net
- Find thought leaders in your niche and follow their activities.
<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/discover>
- Choose a thought leader you admire that is active on social media and study how they repurpose their material across multiple platforms – book, Twitter, blog, video, etc.
- Identify your thought leadership intersection point: What are your credentials and expertise? What are you committed to? Where do those overlap?



If you like these resources, or have more to add, let us know! Contact me:
<mailto:denise@thoughtleadershiplab.com>.