



# **Why & How to Establish Thought Leadership In Your Industry**

***With Mary Elizabeth Bradford***

## **The many benefits of establishing yourself as a 'thought leader':**

- Potential exposure to future “dream” positions – they contact YOU!
- More quality opportunities, better pay and quicker promotions.
- Establishment as an expert in your industry.
- Wider networks.
- Greater ability to garner positive references and testimonials.
- More control over who you work with and how you work.

## **Why most of us are thought leaders (but just can't see it ourselves):**

- The impostor syndrome, sometimes called impostor phenomenon or fraud syndrome, is a psychological phenomenon in which people are unable to internalize their accomplishments. Despite external evidence of their competence, those with the syndrome remain convinced that they are frauds and do not deserve the success they have achieved.
- Psychological research done in the early 1980s estimated that two out of five successful people consider themselves frauds and other studies have found that 70 percent of all people feel like impostors at one time or another.

## **How to showcase your accomplishments and skills without bragging:**

- Keep track of your work accomplishments! Sit down and write out your measurable/quantifiable achievements every 30, 60 or 90 days.
- Shift your focus to what happens when you do what you do – vs. what you do.
- Concentrate on value and the big picture.
- Demonstrate your commitment and passion for what you do through your contributions, committees and attendance.

## **Easy platforms and mediums to establish thought leadership:**

- What was the last certification you received? How about ongoing training? I recommend making sure that each year you commit to 2-3 actions that result in your learning a new tool for your trade. To make sure you will be motivated to do this, make it that one training, certification or learning experience that has been in the back of your mind to master – you know the one I’m talking about! Check with your employer’s ongoing education benefits to find out if your training might be a covered expense.
- Use LinkedIn.
- Join groups and broaden your network.
- Use activity broadcasts highlighting articles you have read, conferences or industry events you have attended with pictures of you and experts/keynote speakers.
- Use Associations – another option is to get involved in your industries association and ask them if you can volunteer to write short articles for their blogs and/or newsletters on topics you are knowledgeable and passionate about. Associations are ALWAYS looking for content for their newsletters/e-zines and blogs. You can position yourself as a thought leader in your industry quickly this way! Years ago, I began writing short articles for Career Directors International on job search cold calling, and those articles led to my being published in The Business Journal, The Wall Street Journal, Forbes and MSN.
- Public Speaking – great if you are energized by crowds and “live” events.

- Blogs - comment on others or write your own. Introduce yourself to the blog owner.
- Trade Journals - great place for information, networking and sharing your expertise. Introduce yourself to the director. Ask what do you need, what can I do, pitch ideas.
- Take courses and get certifications. Demonstrate your real commitment and expertise!
- Company Spokesman for industry, position or causes.
- Show yourself as a leader in areas where you are comfortable.
- Local: Community Contributions, Non Profit Committees & Boards, Economic Development or Chamber of Commerce (represent your industry to companies moving into town).

### **How to make high-powered and powerful connections to help you establish yourself:**

- Find on LinkedIn and through associations, conferences and even Facebook.
- Pick up the phone and make a call, send a letter or write an email.
- Find key players through LinkedIn groups and invite them to your network.
- Be brave and don't be afraid to try. Progress not perfection.
- Establishing mini celebrity status doesn't mean you have a gigantic ego. It's simply a wise business move that opens doors of possibility for you. You will be amazed how putting these simple tips into action will quickly change up your career status!