Top 10 Social Media Marketing Success Checklist

Before you spend a single dime on marketing, check this list:

1 - Focus of "Thought Leadership?" That is, what key areas of your expertise could you blog about that people would be interested in about you and your solutions. That is, it will always be about content, content and content whether movies, products or services. And, if things go bad, respond quickly and with personal conviction to customer complaints, rumors or worse.

2 - Add More Keywords/tags/labels about your Expertise or Businesses. Examples would be: bicycle repair in Boulder, bicycle tours in Boulder, etc. The more tags/keywords/label are will generally increase you SEO traffic.

3 - Post Calls-To-Action on Social Media - Examples: Your life suffers because you . . . With xyz product, you will ….Our products have been proven to . .

4 - Push or Pull - Marketing for some is either inbound or outbound. The point is to do both. Newsletters, ads, tradeshows are examples of outbound. Ads are examples of inbound where customers come looking for you.

5 - Posting or Pinning - Blog posts are great to establish you as thought leadership. Pinning on Pinterest is a great way to create your own online catalog. Combine your blog posts with pictures and pin them on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Linkedin and others.

6 - IP-Intellectual Property and Legal - We have always advised clients to focus their efforts on their website rather than letting Facebook control their brand and to protect their brand name a critical part of their intellectual property.

7 - Consumer Service Education - Probably the easiest and greatest ideas to blog and share is information on your products and solutions. As has been said, "can't sell what you don't know" also means that in a DIY-do it yourself world, educate both your sales and customers to everyone knows more about what you do whether it be about the thread in your clothes or the way you build products.

8 - Channels - Who are you networking with in your community, online and social groups. Supporting friends' idea is often a great way to help you with your idea.

9 - Go Mobile - If you have read this far, one of the most important points we can suggest is begin redesigning your website for mobile access. For example Chanel.com has a mobile version of their website to be viewed by smartphones aka iPhone. There are many examples of great mobile websites. Then get going because 50% and growing number of viewers see your website on their smartphones.

10 - Vision - Remember to always look toward the future and keep your vision focused and evolve as customers and markets change and change you along the way.

If you are located in Boulder, we will provide a Free one hour social media marketing evaluation - call 303-594-1694 or email cross@gocross.com

If you are interested in more details, read more in the following pages.

I Hate Marketing - Marketing through "Thought Leadership"

or A Few Thoughts on "How To" Become a Thought Leader

By Thomas B. Cross

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Abstract: This paper was inspired by a blog post by Brad Feld of the Foundry Group, a venture-capital firm in Boulder. I don't know Brad but the idea of thought-leadership hits home to my own views of the "compelling argument" which I used in former teaching a graduate class at the University of Colorado for nearly a decade. What Brad does not say but alludes to, what does it take to become a thought leader or "how to" which is the premise of this piece. Certainly like cooking recipes there will be many, many ways how to be a thought leader. If, as Brad also suggests that thought-leadership is really what marketing, then explore what some of the key elements are in creating and maintaining it. Also if becoming a thought leader rings a bell with those who struggle with how to do marketing at all, then so be it and so here goes.   Click here for Brad's blog.

Premise: The focus of this article is to use an approach called a strategic customer assessment to provide the basis for becoming a thought leader or rather building "thought content" or if you prefer "thoughtful content." That is, there are far too many white papers, articles, case studies and other content pieces that focus on a particular mission, task, POV-point of view to promote and sell products or services. The process of building thought content to demonstrate your ability as a thought leader is the process of analysis and presenting a topic in a "why should I care about this" approach. People care about so many thing so it is hard to get their attention to your particular plight or point-of-view (POV). Thirty years ago I was quoted in Lotus Magazine and I compared a particular technology to sex. Not surprisingly it was the "most read" article in the entire issue. Spring forward to this week, there was a study of successful rock-and-roll songs and those that had the highest number of references to sex were the most popular and likely the most profitable. No doubt certain products like fashion, beauty, health, even cars and others can be embellished with sex, however, many of the products that you market would be ill-received or even litigated if there were such inferences. Armed without the use of sex, what are you left with? Pain is often used to describe a particular situation which motivates a buyer to consider or acquire your product. Finding the customers pain is particularly a great challenge and it represents the opportunity to make a difference in the life of your customer.

The approach from my class and from other research is what I call crossnetpoints. Crossnetpoints is a systematic evaluation of ten key factors and presenting the findings in a means for action and deliberation. Focused on key customer trends, uses, mobile applications, technology and vision, strategic assessment they are designed to yield

specific corporate tactical and strategic strengths and weaknesses. Once completed, specific tasks, functions, organizational, marketing, operational and technical tasks will be created. Certainly you can build your own cube, circle or other shape, concept, theory to fit your own thought leadership approach. There are many really cool ideas build your own is always a good approach.

This is the CrossNetPoint Model before Assessment, results are also shown later in this article. The point is to look at the ten "points" and evaluate your own company, market, personal or product position in terms of thought leadership. Through this process you can see areas in need of improvement or leadership.

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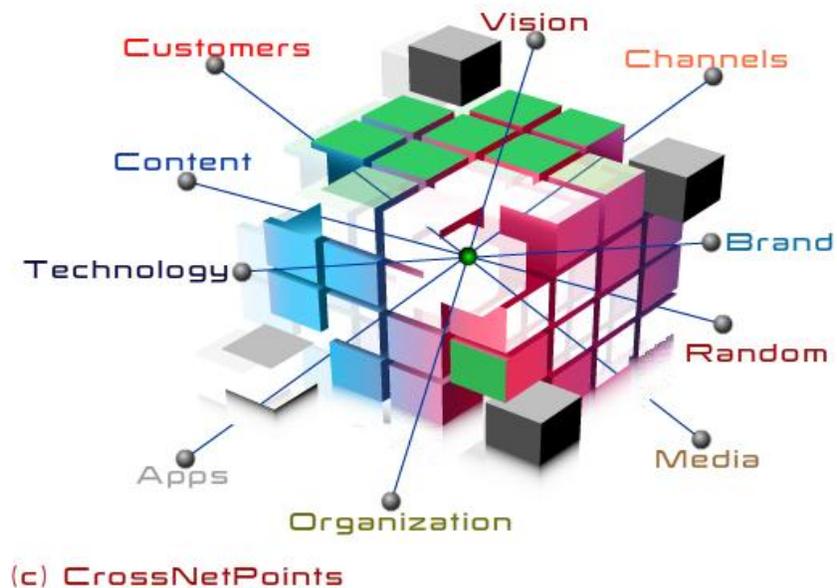
Here are the Top-10 Areas of Focus in a Strategic Customer Assessment:

NOTE: Each assessment is unique to the customer and hence these comments are designed to provide an introduction, not indepth analysis of the each topic.

1 - Customer - customer and customer - it is now and will always be about the customer. The simplest way to understand customer is that if you are not talking, being with, helping with your customers, your competitor will be. Or worse, customers will do nothing, not buy anything, think ill-will of you or and the absolutely worse possibility is to not think about you at all. If you don't know anything about your customer or would-be customer, then go ask them and not, as a focus group, just as individual people.   Rather, ask them as individual unique and most-valued people as well, not just customers. What do they like, dislike, want improved upon and what-when they want to buy next. Everything that follows in this paper "circles back," intersects or crosses back to the customer. The process is to really understand not through a series of True-False, Multiple Question or even focus groups, what the customer is saying. You will often be surprised to find the difference between what they tell you what they mean is often completely different. I have personally found this to be true more times than not. Oddly in a thought leadership world, we often forget that the real thought leaders are our customers, we are just the Jimmy Olsen's reporting the news back to Perry White and hopefully reporting accurately. However, what thought leadership could also be is something also of my own persuasion; you cannot react to trends, you cannot predict them either, you must direct your customers to your own strategy. IBM, Apple, Starbucks and so many others epitomize this in the way their listen and build but also extend their products as to where they both want the customer to go and also the customer wants go there already. Therefore, truly great thought leadership is a thorough understanding, almost reading the mind of the customers and then building a platform on

which to create successful solutions for them. As a result you will become the thought leader they look to, listen to and want more from.

Assessment Process: Contact ten or more customers (including channel partners) at their location, not with survey's or focus group but individually and personally by a senior consultant. That is, go see them and listen to what they have to say and most importantly, not sell them anything. Certainly ask about what they like, want improved but this is not a selling meeting but an information gathering session. After analysis of interviews you will be in a better position to determine their present and future needs.
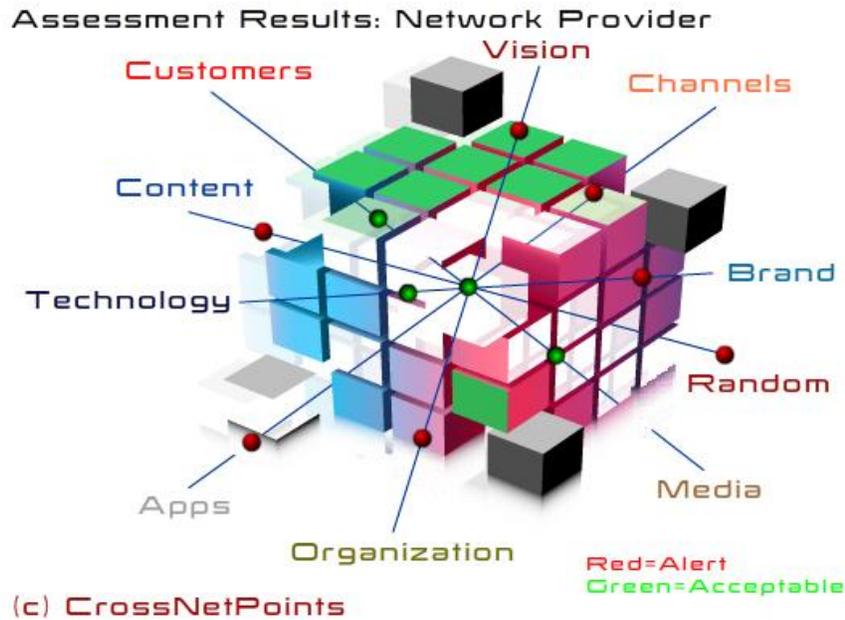
2 - Content - is simply the words or messages you use to communicate to the customer. Brand is the concept/image you present to them and will address that in a moment. Content or in this context thought leadership is the message, the way you use the message and the way, the customer uses and thinks about what you are saying is the meaning of content. "Four score and seven years ago" sets the tone as an introduction to the message and "shall not perish from the earth" sets the tone for the end of the message. Your job is to say something like "Never was so much owed by so many to so few" and be as remembered by so many who have read these most famous citations. Thought leadership in the form of content development explores the way management (C-level, full-disclosure, community and leadership), organizational (uses in web, print, etc.), distribution (via media channels and channel partners) and diffusion (common understanding and experience) uses information critical to "lift all boats" and ensuring common understanding by all involved.

Hyde Park "Speakers Corner" - Photo Courtesy The Guardian.co.uk

Assessment Process: Review and evaluate all relevant content in use and under development. The approach is to take an independent view "outside the forest" or if you prefer "not out of the box but rather what's a box?" approach to analyze messages and determine key words/tags that are used internally and externally to develop "model messages." Step back from who you are your company, industry and look at what you are saying if you just landed from outer space. The benefits of doing this are illustrated in the example of one company that used a term so ingrained to them they didn't realize the industry had moved passed the term and customers really didn't understand what the term actually meant. In order to be thought leader, you need to also look over the mountains and see what is beyond.

The following and others are examples of findings after the Assessment. Assessment findings show Acceptable performance levels and Alert areas for improvement.

Assessment Results: Network Provider

Vision · Customers · Channels · Content · Brand · Technology · Random · Apps · Media · Organization

Red=Alert
Green=Acceptable

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3 - Media Channels - Once was used to mean TV, radio, print, yellow pages and other traditional means. Now it means Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, websites, search and hundreds of other "social media" channels. It may not be easy but some of you may remember the days when there were just three broadcast networks. Now there are literally millions of broadcast sources with their own YouTube channel. The good news is you can have your own news channel and your own news anchor team too. The bad news is that you have to produce then news or thoughts to get and keep the attention of the viewers. The key point is that media channels are not like other media channels. They are "your" channels and you need to get into the act as their channel media master. Of course, you only have one second to capture the attention of the viewer so use the time carefully. One more thing, if you don't have good content and production, you video won't go viral and you will get bad reviews like any Hollywood movie and just as harsh. Take a look at the movies on iTunes and you will find the vast majority receive four "rotten tomatoes."

Before you embark on thinking you are going to be a movie star or movie director let me remind of this simple but profound statement, "If you are boring face-to-face, you are still going to be boring via teleconferencing." This really means that people will ignore what you have to say if you don't look good as well. As the esteemed journalist, Jim Lehrer said on Jon Stewart, "candidates who don't pay attention to what they look like or what their body language is, as well as their spoken language, are making a terrible mistake." Embarking on becoming a thought leader requires that you increasingly "look the part, not just play the part." That is, you may need some "image training" as well as content training. Also, in case you also forgot, the written word is not the spoken word. Last, rehearse, rehearse and rehearse again. I have worked with so many C-levels who think they can do it right on the "first take." I send them and tell them to rehearse in front of a mirror and they come back the next and seriously they do it in "one take." There is also much to do about "getting" followers-viewers and "engaging" the viewer, it should also be not "disengaging" the viewer.

Measuring those unsubscribing or unfollowing from your newsletter or channel should be as important as measuring adding new viewers. That is, if your content is really good, the world will share it or tell all their friends if it's awful. Seriously, you don't want everyone; you want everyone you need to accomplish your mission.

Assessment Process: While social media is the new "buzz" term for marketing and there are those who actually suggest that the term "marketing" to not be used at all or as Brad believe marketing makes him "throw up a little."   Every company has traditional marketing activities like billboards or coffee cups, even the oldest marketing concept - word-of-mouth. They may also perceive that the new social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter etc.) as the hot-cool trend then need to jump into. However, it's through an analysis of the customer interviews will determine what channel should be used and when.   Your assessment will present recommendations on which social media channels work for your customers. Thought leadership should be the **persistent, consistent and often thought-provoking contribution** to blogs, Twitter, Facebook and industry publications and journals. Like the photo from London's Hyde Park Corner, if you are not talking, then the people (customers) are listening to someone else.
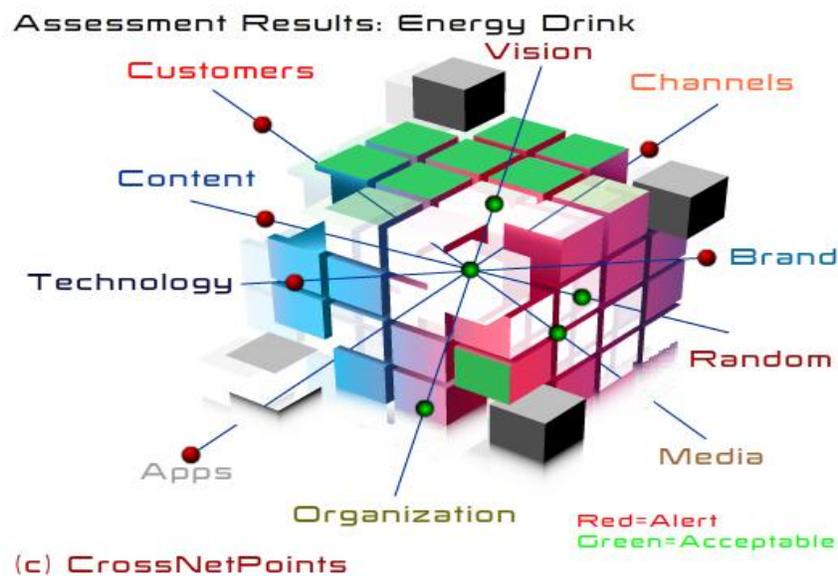
4 - Channels of Distribution - you cannot ever do anything alone, and the more your do it with others the more you will find you are not alone and the more customers you will reach and the more you think you with others, as you are not alone in the channel. Channel partner programs extend and enhance everything you do, if you know what you are doing. Creating, facilitating and building partners are a critical part of strategic customer relation. Channel partners or missionaries extend your thought leadership in places where you can't always go and in ways you often need. However, untrained or ill-informed you are better off foregoing these opportunities.

Assessment Process: Every company markets through others (including recommendations by friends). How these channels are organized, function and managed is the focus of this phase. Evaluating current or new channel partner programs always uncovers opportunities and improvements.

5 - Apps - you may wonder why mobile apps are on this list at all. Like matchbooks, mobile apps extend content, brand, and everything else to the customer. Rather than relying on customers coming to you, apps bring you to them. In other words, you bring thought leadership to them. Apps are simple, complicated, fun, foolish or just the means to show you are "with it" or cool. For a few thousand dollars or more, you can get going on a mobile app and then keep adding features as you find interest. And, if you still don't understand why you should do this, there are now more people accessing customers and content via mobile devices than PCs.   We are now in the post-PC era, so get on with it and

think of your customers connecting with you anytime and anywhere for coupons, billing, talking and connecting with you.
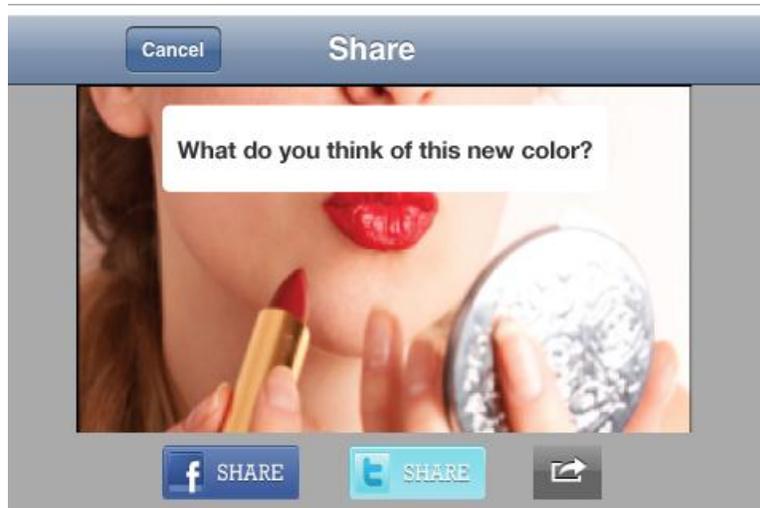

Photo Courtesy iMakeupModel.com

Assessment Process: If there is already an app, it will be evaluated and tested in person with a few customers and features added to include more thought content, not just sales information. If there is no app, draft recommendations will be presented on scope and type of app needed or marketplace void for one.

6 - Technology is not the same apps. Technology is all and everything you do to bring everything to and from the customer as well as all the communications transactions along the way. Physical distribution comes to mind but it is not moving matter but it is about the connecting with the minds of the customer. Thought leadership means distributing content in all kinds of ways like YouTube mentioned above but don't wait for YouTube, your website is one of the greatest ways to get your own message distributed. In fact if you look at what Chanel, D&G, Coca Cola, GM and other market leaders are doing, they are turning their websites into their own media hubs, portals and their own channels. They want to the thought leader in their marketspace so why send them to another place such as Facebook, etc. Using search engine optimization, customers and prospective customers seek them out. This is not at odds with the above in pushing media out via apps; it recognizes that it is an inbound and outbound process. Without mentioning names you know the companies who can move something to and from you when you are unhappy and talking to you when you want to is all about technology.

Assessment Process: This is not an assessment of all content media technology. This assessment simply focuses on how easily or not customers can contact and be processed through sales, supporting, billing or other corporate activities. That is, what is the "customer experience" encountered by all types of customers; small, large, channel, strategic, investors or others?

7 - Organization - everyone in the organization should be part of the thought content development and delivery process. Every employee has the ability to influence or potentially customer behavior in a good or bad way. It is always amazed me how many employees don't know anything about the business they work or. Every employee should have the "elevator pitch" on the back of their business cards just to remind them and share with customers what they do. Content development is a vast and complex process.   However, it is the real job of management to design an organization that works for customers. It's a funny thing that as the organization grows, the focus moves from external to internal until the organization is so large "it" doesn't really care about the customers at all.

Assessment Process: Essentially, every company has fundamental organizational communications flaws. Everyone has said, "They don't feel involved" in the company communications process flow. Certainly every person in the company cannot communicate every aspect of the business to everyone else, however the assessment is about how, not what, is being communicated. What internal "organizational marketing" communications technologies (and they are far too many already, however, having implement one in a Fortune 100 company, they can often fail because most organizations are designed around traditional top-to-bottom communications patters and not ready for this new approach) are in place or what needs to be implemented is one of the items in the assessment report.

Assessment Results: Retail Clothing

(c) CrossNetPoints

Red=Alert
Green=Acceptable
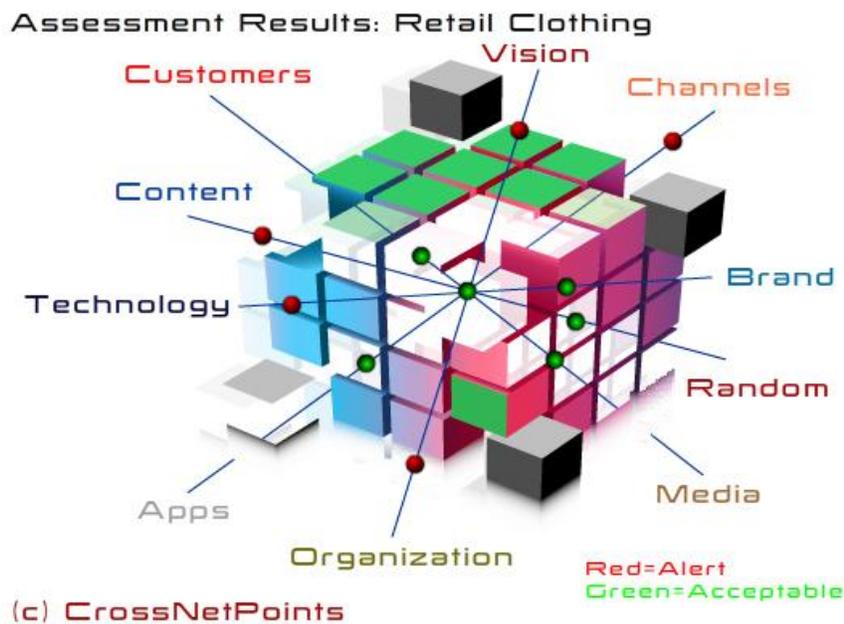
8 - Brand - is the very traditional term and yet a very real term that says who you are. You can name on your hands and toes the really great brands of all times including those that have risen and fallen as well as those that did not exist a decade ago are now on the forefront of your mind today. Find, focus and drive your brand in every way and on everything you do no matter what. If you forget your brand, your customers will forget you. Design your thought leadership around your brand and educate customers as to the reasons why they should know more about the company.

Assessment Process: Brand is how customers "visualize" the company. Brand is very important to all and we can all "name-names" of company brands that mean the most and we as customer can do little else but run and buy. The assessment will evaluate the current and potentially proposed brands.   Thought leadership is about how to use, extend or play the brand with customers. The goal is to for the customer to see the brand and associate it with thought leadership, not just a logo or image. This is a cautionary approach as brands may not always lend themselves to thought leadership, however, in tandem they can work together to make the brand even stronger.

9 - Random - chaos, buzz, glitz, squawk, gossip, glam and anything you can do to get a random quote used or exposed somewhere famous is also a key "random" factor. If you could get "so-in-so" to mention your brand on their TV, radio, Twitter feed or anything is often more important than all the money you spend on marketing. RT-retweeting, sharing, forwarding, mentioning has often has more of an influence than all the sales calls you will ever make. However, thought leadership is using content to create your company as the "go to source" for all things in your marketspace. In this way, you minimize the "gossip factor" and maximize the credibility factor. As one blogger recently pointed out was a comment from a CEO, "My biggest concern with participating in social media is that we'll somehow provoke a crisis." Having managed crisis conditions and seen others do it, you take control over the media, not just message and

continuously drive the message to the result. BP in the Gulf is a great example of how not do to thought-leadership. The really lesson is did you learn that lesson as well.

Assessment Process: There is always something in life that is random and chaotic. Ideas, gossip, chitchat, prattle, chatter, and people say things that more often have profound negative impressions, you need to be prepared for the worst by being at your very best full-time, not just part-time. In the assessment process, we will explore any random results and present some random ideas for consideration.

10 - Vision - as mentioned earlier, strategically, you cannot not react to trends, you cannot predict them either, you can only direct customers to your vision or strategy. Thought leadership is quite simply that strategy. There's a device likely in your hand that has been directed to you by a company with the name of a fruit. Vision can bring ideas to reality, simply, quickly and most importantly personally. One simple example was that the music player market was already flooded with portable audio players. The fruit company created not just another device but a system for buying and organizing your tunes. Then they created their devices in "pastel" which appealed to all kinds of users not just one demographic type. Then they said, why should you have to carry two devices one for tunes and one for phone, why not just one device and the rest is simply history as they say. All from a company who was year before not thought of as player in the phone business. Vision is and will always be the directing factor in your success. Everyone demands vision and everyone knows the name of the (sadly, now former) CEO of Apple.

Assessment Process: Vision is also the internal side of brand. Vision is something for investors, staff, analyst meetings and press conferences. Vision provides "guidance" to the C-level, board and others to the destination. Vision is a powerful process and is the "juice" to guide staff, if communicated effectively, understood by staff and most importantly is acted upon. With vision comes action that is understood, "our toys are the best in the world" which can be used by everyone. All too often employees have no idea what the company does and what the vision is.

Summary - Strategic customer's assessments have been used successful for more than twenty years in thought leadership settings. They have worked in developing and delivering a strategy for successful content marketing campaigns, software products, corporate office parks, educational strategy for colleges and universities in 10 states, a highly successful corporate economic development model, a capital expenditure (CAPEX) forecasting saving literally hundreds of millions, building a nationwide channel partner strategy and others. All these strategies resulted from being the thought leader in these markets. These business models can now be replicated faster, easier and more effectively with new social media tools and methods. We urge you to do your own strategic customer assessment or get our helping in doing it not for you but with you.

Email cross@gocross.com today to begin.

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TAGS: Strategic thought leadership, thought leadership, marketing leadership, marketing through thought leadership, executive leadership, executive management, content leadership, customer assessment, strategic marketing assessment, marketing assessments, social media assessments, customer marketing assessment, marcom calendar, marketing communications, Marketing, marcom, marcom report, Strategic customer assessment, strategic marketing assessment, marketing assessments, social media assessments, customer marketing assessment, marcom calendar, marketing communications, Marketing, marcom, marcom reports, marcom dashboard, dashboard marcom, edcal, marketing dashboard, editorial calendars, PR calendar, social media calendar, social media business, event management, trade show management, PR management, Social media conferences, social business events, social media, social business, social business wire, email marketing, facebook, twitter, linkedin, social media compliance, blogging, event marketing, constant contact, online survey, email newsletters, social media, twitter training, twittering, twitter, training twitter, newsletters, marcom, newsletter services, marketing services, social media education, consumer marketing