

# THE POWER OF THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

## Surveys, Research Studies, White Papers, Executive Briefs

### Thought Leadership Projects Have Amazing Impact

- Surveys, research studies and white papers are powerful business development tools.
- The product – survey results or white paper – is important. But **the real payoff comes while engaging clients and prospects in the data collection process** through live interviews and electronic or mailed surveys
- Thought Leadership projects:
  - Position firm as innovative thought leader
  - Illustrate access to industry and market leaders
  - Serve as basis for high-level discussions with target audience
  - Establish hundreds of new relationships
  - Expand the firm's market footprint
  - Generate incremental

#### EXAMPLE: [“Will You Be Ready? How the Communications Industry is Surviving While Planning for a Robust Future”](#)



Spencer Stuart's Technology, Communications, & Media practice conducted numerous surveys and studies. They secured industry and media alliances – e.g., the Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA) – conducted face-to-face and phone interviews, and electronically surveyed TIA members & other targeted executives. Results:

- Led to \$ millions in new search work
- Established and strengthened relationships
- Secured speaking and panel opportunities

### The Process

- Create list of companies and executives that you want to work with.
- Brainstorm an appropriate subject, make the title relevant, newsworthy and compelling – i.e., something that impacts your target audience's business – and they will respond. Why?
  - People like giving their opinion because it makes them feel that their ideas matter, and
  - Executives want to learn what their peers and market leaders are thinking and doing.
- Develop a plan for data collection and writing survey results.
- Build high-level outline of assumptions, findings, and conclusions.
- **Important:** Collaborate with industry association or publication. This helps:
  - Enhance study cachet
  - Broaden market reach
  - Increase practice and firm visibility
  - Expand your business referral network
  - Secure numerous speaking and panel opportunities
  - Generate leads and new business
- Contact clients and prospects and invite them to participate in survey – **these data collection interviews open doors, establish and build relationships, and generate new and add-on work.**
- Draft survey results and highlight interview quotes. People look first for powerful commentary when reading newspaper stories, magazine articles, annual reports, etc.
- Obtain feedback on draft from colleagues, clients, PR firm, then edit and publish survey report.

### Results--New Clients and Sales! Other ways to leverage survey/study/white paper:

- Email top line findings to prospects and snail-mail to dormant clients to re-establish contact.
- Distribute at networking events, industry forums, conferences and speaking engagements.
- Media Coverage
  - Use survey results to get “foot in the door” and establish relationships with news media and business publications.
  - Excerpt and repurpose content for newspaper articles, business magazines, and newsletters.
  - Leverage survey and study results as basis for business journal article or book.