

The Legacy Lounge Podcast with Tiffany Neuman

Season 1, Episode 29

10 Reasons Why You Need A Thought Leadership Brand Strategy

INTRO: Hi, I'm Tiffany and you are listening to The Legacy Lounge podcast. If you are a high achieving, mission-driven entrepreneur who wants to elevate your income, impact, and influence, you're in the right place.

I left my corporate career as a creative director for Fortune 500 brands to create a legacy with my work and to support entrepreneurs to do the same. I'm not talking about having your name on a building or statues in your image. I'm talking about leaving behind a positive impact and creating something enduring that can be passed on. You pour your time, energy and passion into your business, so let's make sure your efforts will create a ripple effect that reaches far into the future.

Each monthly series will guide you through the business leadership and life skills you need to successfully leave a legacy that stands the test of time, and each episode is totally valuable on its own. We are here to provide you with the tools and ideas to make massive shifts and quantum leaps in your business, transforming you from entrepreneur into legacy brand.

TIFFANY:

Leadership is a choice, not a position.

Today, we are going to dive right into the top ten reasons why it's so important to build a thought leader brand as an entrepreneur and how it's different from being an influencer or simply having a personal brand.

I promise this valuable information will fire you up with new ideas to elevate your brand and business. If you can't tell, I'm super fired up to share it because I've seen first hand what having a stellar thought leadership brand can do for a business and how quickly businesses can grow after the founder realizes it should be their top priority.

This podcast is meant to help you build a legacy through conscious action.

And the most important part of your business truly is, you guessed it, your brand. Your brand is a gateway to your legacy.

You know that you're here to do something amazing, to create and help others through your work. The question is, how can you set up your life and work so that you can do it? The answer lies, of course, in your brand.

When you create a compelling brand, you attract people who want the promise of your brand, which you then deliver.

I began this monthly series by talking about the difference between a personal and thought leader brand, because oftentimes we get so caught up in building our businesses, we lose sight and end up building our brand unconsciously. It is so common for people to not actually have a brand strategy and to know where they're heading and why.

So if you have not heard last week's episode, I'm going to share a quick recap because it's so important to understand these concepts. Otherwise, I urge you to push pause and go listen to the full episode. Don't worry, it's pretty short to gain clarity on whether a personal or a thought leader brand is best for you and your business.

As a founder, entrepreneur, CEO, or influencer, your personal brand serves as your most precious asset that can go with your business and grow with your business at a dramatic pace. It creates the opportunity to communicate with millions of people who admire your work. Now, what entrepreneur, coach, influencer or marketer wouldn't want to utilize such a powerful asset to achieve their business goals, right?

So personal branding is essentially how you project your brand and its value to the world. To ensure that your target audience knows who you are, what you stand for, and why it's worth choosing you over everyone else with similar offers.

Effective personal branding will differentiate you from the competition and allow you to build trust with prospective clients.

Research shows that a third of people trust messages from a brand in general, but 90% of people trust messages that come from someone they know.

You've probably heard of the know, like, trust factor, right? So your marketing in your brand, your personal brand is how they get to know you.

Well, it may not be possible for everyone to know you on a personal level without direct interaction, of course, a personal brand can give people an idea of who you are and what you're all about. The easier it is for people to access your personal brand, the easier it will be to create success within your business.

Now, a thought leader brand still has all of those elements of a personal brand, but we take it one step further. While the term thought leader might sound like another corporate buzzword, its meaning is so valuable to people and businesses alike.

As a notable expert, a thought leader is someone who offers guidance and insight to those around them. Now, personal brands may do this too, but thought leaders are very strategic in the process.

Thought leadership is an extension of one's personal brand, specifically their ability to build an authentic online reputation and truly become a trusted expert in their field. Thought leadership matters because it's

stretching these old ideas beyond their traditional boundaries. It's really all creating new perspectives. It creates a competitive advantage because trust is a prerequisite for sales.

Like I said earlier, if people trust you and they believe they know you, it's a lot easier for them to purchase from you. So thought leadership is the way to build trust in an overcrowded online space.

So, in my humble opinion, having a personal brand is key to success. But creating a thought leadership brand is next level if you want to be seen as the true leader in your industry.

So now let's dive into my top ten reasons why building a thought leader brand is important and to learn and all the reasons why.

1. So, number one, a thought leader brand establishes you as an authority and creates name recognition. Credibility. Wouldn't it be nice for people to know your name without ever having to introduce yourself?

Think of Tony Robbins, Rachel Rogers, Amy Porterfield, Marie Forleo, Gary Vee, for example. What comes to your mind when you think of these brands? Your personal brand reflects more of what people think of your product or service. It's what they think of you and it will determine what your business is really worth in the end.

The great news is you are already a brand, you just have to dig deeper to discover it within yourself.

Then, to elevate to thought leader status, you simply need to position yourself. Thought leaders create exposure through campaigns. They create awareness about themselves through various forms of marketing and advertising, all focused on getting their unique knowledge in front of people.

But first they have to establish why people should even recognize them and recognize their names.

So it's critical to tell your audience about your philosophies, your objectives, and share more about who you are as a human.

Now, the examples I shared are massive public figures, so we don't want to get into comparison. For most business owners, name recognition is most important in your circle of influence, which is really where your ideal clients are hanging out. So that's a big part of building a brand. And a thought leader brand is figuring out who you're targeting and exactly how to reach them.

So people typically go, as I mentioned in a few episodes ago, to Google and type in whatever they're looking for, right? That includes your name, but it also includes...; say, you're a business coach and your audience needs a business coach. Creating a strong thought leadership brand would drive your audience to go straight to your website or social media because they already recognize your name and what you do because you're seen as the go-to expert.

As an individual, you can either go to your audience and tell them about yourself or you can establish a powerful online presence and thought leadership brand to attract people to you.

So this statement might feel a little harsh, but I want you to realize that you will stay unknown unless you have a strategy to get people's attention.

Let's face it, it's not like that movie *Field of Dreams*. It's not that you build it and people will magically come. (Although I do believe in manifestation and energy of like attracts alike, which I use heavily in my business.)

But for real, you can't just sit on the couch and meditate.

You need the brand and the marketing to get the word out there and you need to know that it's going to resonate with your audience and have them take action.

Getting your audience to pay attention is key. We see thousands of businesses that have website and social media profiles, but unfortunately they have absolutely no clue why they are unable to reach their audience.

Thought leader branding is a powerful tool that helps you rise above the noise.

You want to make your audience fall in love with your business, right? So positioning yourself as a thought leader should be a goal to establish yourself as an authority and create name recognition.

That one was a little long, but I'm, as you can tell, very fired up about it. So the next nine are going to be a little bit shorter, but they're all equally important.

2. Number two is building trust and confidence.

Showing up online and delivering value also creates trust. So of course, getting known as a trusted leader is the first step to trust, but you also have to follow up with value and it helps you establish that credibility. Both are really key elements when it comes to growing in a competitive environment, which you have to admit, online right now, it's pretty darn busy.

Thought leader branding acts like a platform where you can easily build that trust and confidence.

It becomes easier for your clients and customers to feel comfortable dealing with you. And since people don't want to waste their money on poor quality products or services, they tend to trust brands that keep their promises and stand for something. This is why you can't just show up and post or share your brand story. You also have to provide the value. I can't say that enough.

It's not hard to understand that people are likely to do business with someone they trust. But being a brand, you must again establish why people should trust you. And when you do so, instead of considering you as a last option, your potential customers will start seeing you as their first choice.

The good news is this is simple. Show up, be genuine, authentic, and then be prolific. You'll experience a huge amount of growth after you start engaging with your audience in a way that can be trusted and also delivers value.

3. Number three is this is one of my favorites, you guys. Your business starts to sell itself.

Once you get your content out there and you create a brand story, the perfect people will start to see your content in line and start to lean into your message and story more and more, which will eventually turn into them being raving fans and making them loyal customers.

So if your personal brand has failed to tell a story, it would become increasingly difficult to keep your audience engaged. So building a brand narrative is the most effective thought leader branding strategy.

And this is what I hope all of my clients do. You have to have a brand narrative and a brand story. Crafting a story around your brand that people can relate to and engage with leads to mastery, being able to talk about your brand and your business, and then your business starts to sell itself like magic.

If you find it a challenging task to become a great salesperson or you don't like sales (that would be me), thought leadership allows you to simply be good at telling your own story with confidence and of course, providing that value we talked about before, then you will never have to sell a day in your life. You can simply invite people to work with you.

(And also stay tuned here in the Legacy Lounge because I can talk days around brand story, so it is a theme coming up in the next few months and I'm going to reveal how to create and share your personal brand story.)

4. Let's move on to number four, which is the reason you should create a thought leader brand, which is it automatically builds relationships for you.

As I mentioned earlier, we can only have so many one-on-one conversations, which makes us limited in the number of people we can actually reach and then really limited in the people we genuinely build relationships with.

The solution is that a thought leadership brand allows you to have fewer one-on-one conversations and more one-to-many conversations. You know your brand is successful when people listen to you and interact with your content while you're talking to many.

Unfortunately, many entrepreneurs and marketers are too busy to focus on developing a strong brand and as a result, they fail to build these key relationships.

And I understand time is a scarce commodity. We're all in the same boat, being pulled in every direction. However, the lack of time can lead us again to neglect relationships. So if you want to amplify your relationship building efforts, focus on building a thought leader brand and networking with other thought leaders to make your own brand even stronger.

I've seen this work not only in my own brand, but in so many others.

5. Number five, when you create a thought leader brand, you become more memorable.

Creating a thought leader brand isn't limited to making your content, products or services memorable. It makes your brand more authoritative in the market.

I want you to ask yourself, are you worth remembering? And why should people remember you? Some of the leading brands are truly unforgettable.

Have you ever noticed that? Memorable people are great at attracting others. It's because they manage their impressions. We know from research that the first impression that people get of us matters. Their perception matters.

So you want to be strategic when presenting yourself to the world.

Your audience will remember you for what makes you valuable and unique. If you have nothing unique to offer, there's no point in creating a brand in the first place.

Memorable thought leader brands are consistent in how they look and communicate over time, which is also what makes them special and unique among others.

And we all know, say for instance, Oprah's amazing story. No one deemed her famous or gave her permission. She simply made a decision and never gave up on her dream. And now she's one of the most respected thought leaders of all time, and personal brands. And she's constantly sharing the stage with others that are following in her footsteps.

So if you're sitting here thinking, okay, Tiffany, that's Oprah you're talking about, I'm not memorable, I want you to know that that's simply not true.

I've dealt with this myself, thinking like, "OK, I'm a professor, I came from corporate. I'm not super fun and exciting."

I've also had many clients who say when we began working together, that they don't really feel like they're special or memorable. But remember what I always say, "you can't see the label from inside the bottle."

We don't necessarily feel unique because we are with ourselves all the time.

I promise you, you are a rare gem and it's time to step out of your comfort zone. One of my favorite things to do is help women uncover their uniqueness and blend it into their brand. And then the day when your audience instantly recognizes who you are and what you stand for, all based on your name, you'll realize you have become a memorable brand and be so glad that you invested in yourself.

6. All right, on to number six. The reason you should invest in a thought leader brand is because you become more relatable.

So on top of being more memorable as a leader, you should enable people to feel that you can relate to them or connect with them with ease. When you nourish relationships with the right people, you open up doors for positive interactions.

And relatability isn't really based on some preordained quality or charisma that's impossible to get to. It's a skill that can be developed over time.

The last few years, we've seen a massive shift from influencers being on these pedestals that people admired and looked up to, people really wanting to work with experts that they can relate to.

Being authoritative yet relatable is key to build an authentic community of supporters and being seen as a thought leader.

So here are two habits that will really help you cultivate this skill. The first one is to network consistently. When you attend an event or any sort of gathering, focus on expanding your network.

And this may seem obvious, but so many of us are building our businesses and focus on sales and focus on getting more clients. We forget the importance of being out there and meeting new people. Now, of course, you want to make sure to understand the difference of, like, pestering someone relentlessly or staying in contact. But when you meet new people, try to offer something valuable or interesting and stay in touch, it will pay off big time. And they'll feel more relatable to you because they met you not just through social media, not just through your thought leadership content, but actually in person or online.

And the next one also may seem fairly obvious, but so many people have a hard time with this, which is be yourself we often slip into a different identity, especially in a professional environment.

Personal branding and thought leadership branding require you to show up as your genuine self.

So make a conscious effort to be yourself with the people around you. Don't hesitate to speak your mind, but still be professional. You don't want to overshare either. It's a balance. And I teach all of my clients this.

If you're always vulnerable and always sharing every little detail of your life, that can turn people off. But if you're not sharing anything and you're keeping it all inside, that's an issue too. So you're likely to be on the right track if you're simply striving to bring value to your audience.

Always focus on serving, bringing value and being authentic. And if you lead by example, the cool thing is it allows others to shine their true light as well, which is such a beautiful thing.

7. Number seven is you get to control how people perceive you.

This kind of ties back to number one a little bit is you being seen as the expert, as the go-to person, the credibility, but you get to control that. Now, I don't mean be controlling in a contrived way, and it may sound like a challenging task to control the way people view you, I get it.

But branding as a thought leader gives you the full power to create the brand you want with your style and the messaging that you feel good about. So if you were to go to my website and look at all the case studies there, of all the people that we've helped with their brand, they all look sound and feel completely different. And that's because we truly get to the core essence of someone.

You get to control that.

And oftentimes you're not sure how to do that, which is where I come in.

The fun part of creating a brand is you get to create your own rules. There are no rules to follow. If anything, I always tell my clients to break what they think are the branding rules. You can be you authentically and decide how you're going to do that.

Because when you don't have a strong brand or it's not truly aligned with your essence, people will create their own perceptions, making it harder for you to build a true relationship with them. They're going to feel that energetic dissonance. Right?

So a brand that's done well cuts out a lot of manual work because you have more opportunities to reach more people in more places at more times.

So how do you want to be perceived? I want you to think about that. What story do you want to tell? What are your strengths and weaknesses that you want to share? How is your story or background relevant to your audience? How can you develop good connections with your key audiences?

One way to control how people view you as a brand is to really understand your audience's fears, hopes, frustrations, dreams, and achievements. You really need to learn as much about your people as possible. Then you can make sure that the content you're sharing aligns with your audience's truth and blending it with who you truly are is a golden strategy.

Okay, a few more left here.

8. The 8th reason that I believe you should be building a thought leader brand is it builds consistency.

Consistency, consistency, consistency. I am so consistent in my talking about consistency. I think that's a tongue tie, but it's for a good reason.

A solid brand builds consistency in your tone, your messaging, your content, your voice, and overall image. If you look at top brands in the world, they're not going to change how they look or their overall core values, their messaging, very often because it's what people have grown to trust, know, and love.

Say Target for an example. The Target logo is never going to change its shape and it's always going to be Target red.

Now, we may look at companies like Levi's that's been around for hundreds of years and I consider it to be a true Legacy Brand™. And you can look it up and you'll see iterations of their logo kind of evolving over time just to make it more current. And over hundreds of times, you do need to evolve your brand because times change and you don't want to get outdated.

But really, their approachability mixed with the quality design and an affordable price will never change.

Just like the big brands, our brand promises must stay consistent across online and offline platforms. You really have to demonstrate consistency across your appearance, communication, and client journey. So do something unique that people can fall in love with and then stick with it.

Consistency is so critical.

Whether you're a wild, entertaining brand or one that's a bit more conservative, this is what will increase your effectiveness over time and truly make you a household name and be seen as a thought leader in the end.

Okay, we're getting close.

9. Number nine is that a thought leadership brand leads to more opportunity. We live in a competitive world where everyone vies for the same jobs, clients, and opportunities. Right?

I personally believe in collaboration over competition and that we live in a world of abundance. So there is totally plenty for all.

Yet that does not mean that people do not make comparisons for deciding who to work with. Right? To stand out from the crowd, it's essential to have a strong brand. And I know I repeat that all the time, but what do we just talk about? Consistency.

So sometimes I feel like a broken record, but it's for a good reason. A personal brand moved into an elevated thought leader brand is a unique combination of your skills and experiences that make you who you are, and it's what makes you unique and sets you apart from everyone else. By developing that brand, you're giving yourself a competitive advantage.

People will remember you and your brand when they look for someone with your particular skills and expertise.

In addition, a strong thought leader brand can lead to new opportunities. When people see that you're an expert in your field, they're going to be more likely to give you opportunities to collaborate or work on new projects, new partnerships, all types of things.

For example, I've been featured in *Forbes* magazine twice and provided the opportunity to be a contributor for *Entrepreneur* magazine because I've invested in developing my own thought leader brand.

Now, it's not at the stage that I envision it for the long run because I haven't been in business for that long. But I'm on the way, and the opportunities are endless once you position yourself as a thought leader by investing in your brand.

So think about what are those partnerships and what other thought leaders would you like to be working with?

When you position yourself in that place as a thought leader, you're so much more likely to lead to those opportunities.

10. All right, we are wrapping up here with the 10th reason I believe you should create a thought leader brand, which is, of course, you know me and legacy. It creates the foundation for your legacy.

And for anyone uncomfortable with the word brand, I like to suggest another way of looking at this term. What if you called it your personal legacy?

Have you ever stopped to qualify what you want to be known for in life and how that message could tie into your business strategy?

Building a thought leader brand will help to position you as a true leader. You become the gatekeeper of information that your audience wants to know and learn more about.

You're on the right path when your target audience finds value in the knowledge you have to share, and your brand leads to your legacy.

A great legacy is based on having great character traits. The ideas people talk about in a eulogy typically are the ones that inspire us as living humans.

So think about the qualities and ideals a person is remembered for that becomes their brand identity. And I've never heard a eulogy that talks about how rich someone was or how beautiful their home was. But I have heard beautiful eulogies about how a successful CEO took personal interest in his employees and changed their lives, or how a physician refused to charge certain patients as he feared they wouldn't return if they were really sick. Or maybe how a chronically ill person managed to stay positive and enjoy the simple pleasures in life just that many of us take for granted.

These are the stories people draw strength from and what they're remembered for. So what do you really want to be remembered for?

What value do you add to your business and your community? How do you treat people you work with? And do you have a vision for what matters in your reputation? These are great things to think about.

If you're early in your career, and right now, being a thought leader seems way out there, you can start to position yourself now.

And now is the time when the choices you make and the people you help will build your brand and something you can be proud of.

If you've been in the game for a while, now is the perfect time to pivot and be more strategic about positioning yourself.

Some of the greatest pleasures in life come from knowing that you've had a positive impact, right? Your brand truly has the potential to be a statement about yourself that you'd be proud of.

Take the time to think about both what you're doing today and how you're doing it.

Who do you associate with? How do you treat people? What are you grateful for? And most importantly, how do you express that gratitude?

When you do this on a regular basis, you will become happier, more self actualized, and your brand won't be a gimmick for attracting attention to yourself and just being an influencer for a short time.

Instead, it will become an authentic description of your vision and your accomplishments that will stand the test of time.

I trust you've received value from today's episode as we covered the ten reasons building a thought leader brand is valuable.

I'd love to hear your biggest takeaways. Please go ahead and leave a comment, or I'd love to connect with you on Instagram. My handle is @TiffanyNeumanCreative.

Or you can find on LinkedIn at Tiffany Neuman.

Stay tuned for next week when I share the actual steps to developing your own thought leader brand that becomes your legacy.

OUTRO: That's it for this episode. Thank you for listening to The Legacy Lounge Podcast. Connect with me on Instagram @tiffanyneumancreative I would also love to hear your feedback to see what resonates with you and what you'd like to hear in the future.

If you love this episode, please provide a review and we will be forever grateful. You can always find links and resources shared on the show by going to yourlegacybrand.com.

Remember what you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others. What are you doing today to pour into others and to leave your legacy?