

The Legacy Lounge Podcast with Tiffany Neuman

Season 1, Episode 30

Meditation on Confidence and Best Practices for Building a Thought Leadership Brand

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: Thought leadership is not about being known, it's about being known for making a difference.

Thought leadership is more important to your brand and content strategy than most other buzzwords. Thought leader can be an advantage that improves your prestige and dramatically expands your reach if you incorporate it into your marketing strategy.

Now, if you're sitting here thinking, what is thought leadership and why is it so important?

Specifically, I want you to press pause and go back two episodes to get all the details. Not only did I share what thought leadership truly is, but I shared the differences between personal branding and thought leadership branding. And then last week I shared my top ten reasons you need to be building not just a personal brand, but a thought leadership brand.

If you haven't yet, go binge those two episodes, they're fairly short and then come back and listen to this one.

Before we dive in, I want to make something super clear: this isn't about influencer culture. While it's true that many influencers began out as thought leaders or evolved into them, they're compensated to advance someone else's agenda, we're talking about a different kind of influence, the kind that comes from your specific knowledge, skill, and authority. This is not about getting famous or getting tons of followers, because those are vanity metrics. This is about being seen as an authority and turning your influence into income.

By creating true value, you must build confidence, develop a reputation, and maintain consistency to have a thought leadership brand. However, if you stay the course and commit to the long term, you will generate more leads, attract more followers, and establish a reputation as a brand that knows what it's talking about. And that type of faith in your audience is invaluable.

If you want to be a thought leader, your objectives must be more important than just making money. The Economist's columnist Mina Saretium argues true thought leaders don't sell items because they understand their audience.

They give suggestions to assist their audience in resolving problems. And after their fans figure it out, leads or sales, if you're doing it right, start to pour in. I love this because it's true anyone could create good, even great content. But delivering it in a way that is most useful to your audience requires high level of awareness and industry experience. Once you understand the importance of thought leadership in your content strategy, you then want to consider how you might help your clients save time, money and stress.

Use the answer to help you come up with thought leadership themes and locate perfect partners to help you bring blogs, articles, podcasts, and social media to life and reach the right people. The goal is to be your audience's first choice, and you are already an expert in your field. Now, I get people all the time. They're like, I don't want to call myself an expert. The thing is, and I mentioned this in one of the previous episodes, is nobody else is going to give you permission all of a sudden to be an expert.

You need to step out of your comfort zone and claim it. And I know that can be a little bit tricky. Some of you may already be like, hell yeah, I'm a thought leader. I'm an expert. Awesome.

Personally, it took me a while to get there because although I was an expert in the corporate world, rightfully so, and labeled one, and I was a professor, when I came into the entrepreneurial space, I felt like a kindergartener and like, I had to start all over again. So I get it. I understand that claiming yourself as an expert can feel a little scary, but nobody else is going to do that for you. And if you can get your clients results and you have an area of expertise, you are an expert. Of course you'll need not only to walk the talk, you also need to start conversations to produce meaningful thought leadership content.

One that will, over time, bring in so many more qualified leads who are ready to do business with you.

Now, you already understand there's a huge amount of content to choose from online and that you must stand out to get noticed. I think we all know that, and I repeat it all the time. And we spend a lot of time at your legacy brand assisting our clients in differentiating themselves by presenting their material in a way that the audience resonates with your thought leadership. Marketing doesn't have to be absolutely unique.

In fact, some cases uniqueness can work against you. Thought leadership material should aim to anticipate questions from your audience and then respond to them in the clearest, most detailed and most

approachable ways possible. So if other sources agree with your conclusions, but yours is the most well presented and useful, you're going to be the one who gets their business. As you start growing your brand or as you wish to refresh your brand, if you're further along, you need to know the best practices so you don't run into common mistakes. A single misstep can set your brand back and hurt your reputation.

So this is particularly true for those who are becoming thought leaders. Your brand revolves around your ability to educate people based on the knowledge that you have. And if people think you don't have the ability to share your knowledge effectively, you're not going to have a business. That's why you need a carefully crafted brand. So let's dive in to the best practices for building a thought leadership brand strategy.

And now there's more than this. And I could talk about this for days. This is what I teach my clients. But we're going to really just talk about the top strategies today.

1. And the first one, I've already talked about this a little bit is believe in yourself as a brand.

Many business owners never even bother with personal branding because they don't believe that they are a brand. The truth is, you become a brand the moment you put yourself out there. Even if you are more comfortable focusing on your products or services, you still need to enter the limelight from time to time.

If you missed last week's episode, which was the top ten reasons a personal brand is more important than ever, go back and listen. As I mentioned earlier, because it's such a mistake to not at least show up in a personal brand this day and age—and there's a reason I put this step first, because you do have to believe in yourself in a brand. As I mentioned a few moments ago, as an expert, if you want to be a thought leader. Because if you don't believe in yourself, your audience is not going to either.

In fact, this is so important, it's actually a huge part of the process. When I work with my clients, having confidence in your brand is key. It's not just about pretty pictures and pretty logos. It's about clarity and confidence.

And I make sure that every client walks away with clarity and confidence when they step into their brands.

So if you struggle with this, simply believe in my belief in you. Truly, I believe in you. Because if you're listening to this message, I know you're serious about your business and you have something amazing to offer.

2. All right, number two, the second step is really harnessing learning to harness your personality.

Your personality is the most unique thing about you and sets you apart from your competitors.

I've also said this a ton of times, but think about how your personality can help you share your knowledge with your target audience. Maybe you're extremely outgoing and extroverted. You can use that character trait to illustrate your skills and attract people to your personal brand and your thought leadership brand.

The opposite is true if you're introverted. My client, Selena Soo, shares her character trait of being introverted often, and it's really the foundation of her personal brand.

And it actually helped effectively share her message because she's not extroverted and she doesn't love putting herself out there. So it actually helped her clients relate with her so much more when she started sharing that. And we helped her create that inner brand strategy. People are attracted to educators and business owners who can effectively communicate their ideas and knowledge on a large scale. That's why your personality becomes so important for your brand.

So what I want you to do is make a list of all the personality traits that people love and have commented on in the past and what sticks out the most? How can you amplify that character trait to make your brand stronger? Number three is to know your strengths and your weaknesses. You don't want to paint yourself as the person who has the answers to all the questions. Instead, you do have to make yourself human.

The best way to do this is to own your weaknesses as well as your strengths. And I have some clients who worry about this because they're like, well, if I'm supposed to be a thought leader, people are going to look to me for the questions. But they're going to respect you more if you also can share your weaknesses. Every person on this planet has certain strengths and weaknesses, and often your weaknesses show your humanity. But it makes your strengths that much more powerful because this is the secret.

Your clients have weaknesses that your strengths complement. That's basically the reason that they're hiring you, because they have a weakness, which is your strength. The thing is, as business owners, our strengths come to us so easily, we don't even realize that they're our superpowers. So you have to embrace yours if you want your brand to come off as authentic not only your strengths, but your weaknesses. Many of the high profile brands that I've worked with have even made their narrative all about their weaknesses, again, not being too vulnerable, but being human.

So this doesn't mean that you lay out every personal thing for the world to see. But building your brand requires you to be honest about what you know and what you don't know. And people will only trust you more for doing so.

3. All right, next step is to curate your online presence. We talked about this some last week when I talked about how thought leaders have the ability to really shift and change and choose their perceptions, right?

Well, authenticity is undeniably important for your brand. You also have to have boundaries before you begin to present your online persona to the world. Decide what you will and will not share with your followers. For some entrepreneurs, for example, family is off limits. They don't want to subject their loved ones to online scrutiny.

Other entrepreneurs have no problem posting photographs or information about their families online. There's truly no wrong answer. You have to decide what's right for yourself. You can also decide what you want to share with regards to your education, your work history, personal struggles, and anything else about your personal life. Choosing not to share certain things doesn't make you less authentic, as long as you don't make up an opposite truth, right?

So, for instance, if you didn't go to college for what you're teaching, that's totally fine. And you don't necessarily have to share that. Like, I did go to college for design, but if I didn't, that wouldn't make me any less of an expert because of all the other expertise I've had, right? But I also shouldn't lie and say that I went to college. Obviously, some of these things are obvious, but we don't necessarily instead of the lies being obvious, we don't think it's obvious to not share certain things.

And sometimes that makes it even more powerful. So that's half the work that I do in my clients work with branding is really talk about what's relevant to their audience, what needs to be shared, and what doesn't need to be shared. So they have a simple key frame to work from. So it's important to be intentional when crafting your online presence, because it's a digital business card, right, to represent you before people get a chance to actually meet you. And you not only can, but you should curate that presence.

The next one is to build a website that performs. And this goes without saying, but if you build a brand, you need a website that's your own personal platform from which you can share your digital products, blog posts, webinars, and any other content you think would interest your audience. And many of you listening, I'm sure, already have a website. The thing is, it needs to perform. So all websites that we build for clients, we make sure that it's strategic, it's relevant, it's SEO driven, and it performs.

And one thing that I really want to get into too, is blogging. For the longest time, I did not have a blog or podcast on my site. And this was to my own detriment, because I wasn't building up thought leadership, I was sharing it on social media. So your blog is something that you own. Your website is something that you own.

You don't own your social media profiles. And Facebook and Instagram could disappear in an instant. Your account could get shut down, and with it, all of the content that you've shared. I've actually seen this happen. Luckily, I haven't experienced myself.

But I don't want you to go through that. So you need to make sure your thought leadership brand is sharing content on a platform that you own. And while it's not a likely scenario for that to happen, you want to own your own property. Sharing your expertise and your ability to educate your audience is key so that the people who find your blog interesting will, of course, want to enter into your paid products. Now, last episode, I also talked about how this is not build it, and they will come.

My team and I build extraordinary websites. But you also need to have that strong SEO to attract people. It's not just a pretty business card. You need to make sure that it performs. All right.

4. The next step: provide value.

Again, this is something I talk about so often, but I have to repeat it. Information is a form of currency. It's so valuable to the people who follow you because they're interested in learning what you already know. So for this reason, you want to avoid sharing content that doesn't provide any value.

And you probably are like nodding your head yes, duh. But I can't tell you how many people make social media posts, make different things that could be providing value and they're kind of just full of air, I guess you could say. So you really want to make sure that you are not selling online products and services only. You don't want to use your website or blog as a personal diary and just share all the time. Of course you want to share some personal things for the know, like, and trust factor but think about value first.

This doesn't mean you can't share all that personal information. You can post about your kids like we talked about earlier. You should tell stories however you want to. Frame your stories in a way that helps your audience.

For instance, you might share a cautionary tale that could help your audience avoid making mistakes that you made in the past.

Focusing on providing value and providing results ensures you're crafting a legacy brand and building a thought leader brand, not just creating a one-hit-wonder business.

5. Next up is build relationships.

Another great way to build your thought leader brand is to interact with other well known brands in your industry. Find those popular thought leaders and entrepreneurs in related industries and connect with them. Interact with them online whenever you get the opportunity.

Comment on social media posts, leave feedback on their blog posts, and get to know them. Maybe go to events and invest in masterminds they're in. Believe it or not, your competition is not always the enemy.

In fact, many brands find success in partnering with what they would originally think is their competition for specific marketing campaigns. So you can also really think about aligning with other thought leader brands to make yours more powerful.

The important thing is to make sure that your brand remains unique and visible. You don't want to disappear behind a more well known figure, of course, but they can help you grow faster than you ever imagined if there's synergy and alignment.

I know this from personal experience and I'm so grateful for the partnerships that I've developed in my own brand.

So, as I mentioned earlier, thought leadership branding isn't something that happens overnight and it's not something that you should leave up to chance. You need to take control over your personal narrative and make sure that you know exactly what you want to share with your online audience.

You now have a head start with understanding the best practices of building an authentic, thought leadership brand. Once your brand begins to take off, you'll be more visible. You can leverage your network, become more identifiable, and make your business so much stronger.

So I want to ask you now, what have you done to create and promote your own brand? If you need support, go ahead and reach out to me personally. DM me on Instagram. I'm @TiffanyNeumanCreative. Or you can go to my website, YourLegacyBrand.com, and learn more about how I can support you.

Whether it's needing a new website, wanting a new visual brand, or creating your personal thought leadership and foundation, we're here to help.

[meditation exercise in podcast only]

OUTRO: That's it for this episode. Thank you for listening to The Legacy Lounge Podcast. Connect with me on Instagram [@tiffanyneumancreative](https://www.instagram.com/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?