

**Profiting
from
Thought
Leadership**

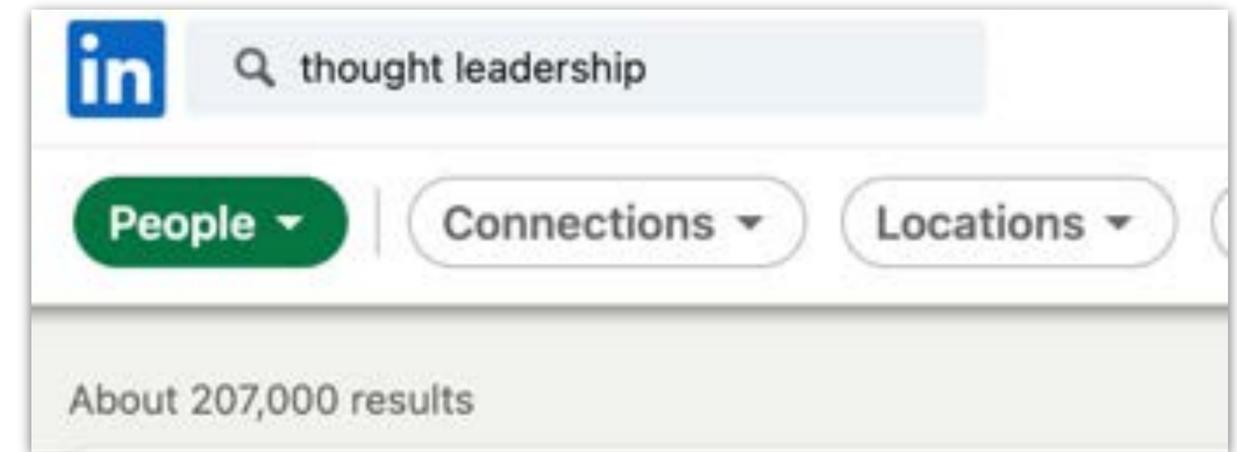
JULY 21, 2022

A Peek at our 2022 Thought Leadership Research

PART 1 — WHY CUSTOMERS NEED THOUGHT
LEADERSHIP AND WHAT REALLY MOVES THEM

Thought leadership has become crucial for B2B firms to attract customers

- ▶ Building unique expertise to differentiate commodity services (consulting, IT services, accounting, etc.)
- ▶ Differentiating commodity products (tech, financial, etc.)



Your customers need it and want to see it

69% State thought leadership is extremely or very important

74% Say it's become more important in last five years



- Primary reason: increasing digitization of their industry
- The higher-ranking the executive, the more important it is

3 reasons executives love thought leadership

▶ Customer complexity

- Your customers' customers

▶ Digital complexity

- AI, machine learning, blockchain, social media, etc. – jobs that didn't exist until the last decade

▶ Competitive complexity

- Netflix competitors
 - 1990s: Video stores (Blockbuster)
 - 2000s: Video boxes (Redbox)
 - 2010s: Other streaming services (Hulu, Apple, HBO)
 - 2020s: Social platforms (TikTok)

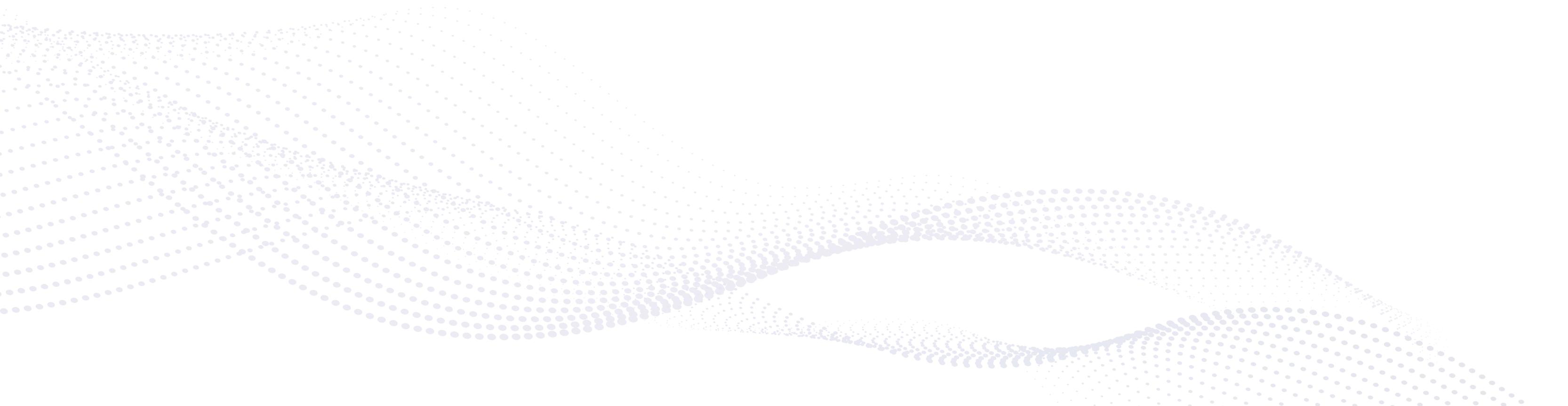


What you'll learn over the next 3 months

- ▶ **July 21:** Why Executives Want Thought Leadership, and What They Want
- ▶ **Sept 9:** How B2B Companies Are Creating and Marketing Thought Leadership
- ▶ **Nov 2-4:** How the Best B2B Companies Compete on Thought Leadership
 - Executive perceptions of various industries and top thought leaders
 - Qualitative insights from in-depth executive interviews
 - Best practices from study of B2B companies

What you'll learn today

- ▶ What Executives Think About Thought Leadership
- ▶ What Your Clients and Prospects Really Want...
- ▶ About the Conference



What Executives Think About Thought Leadership



About the research team



Bob Buday
Founder and CEO



Jason Mlicki
Principal



Binayak Chodhury
Partner



Comprehensive thought leadership consulting for B2B and professional services firms.



Thought leadership development and lead generation for professional services and B2B SaaS firms.

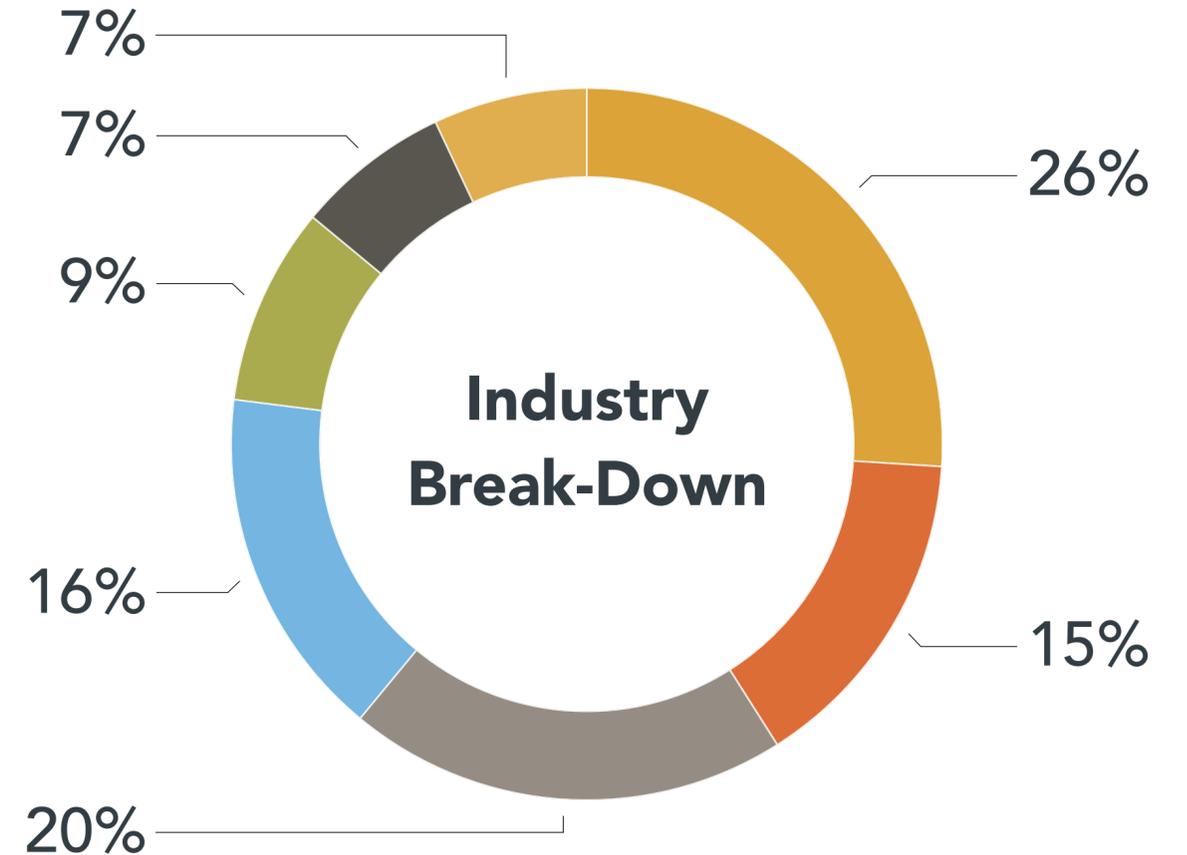
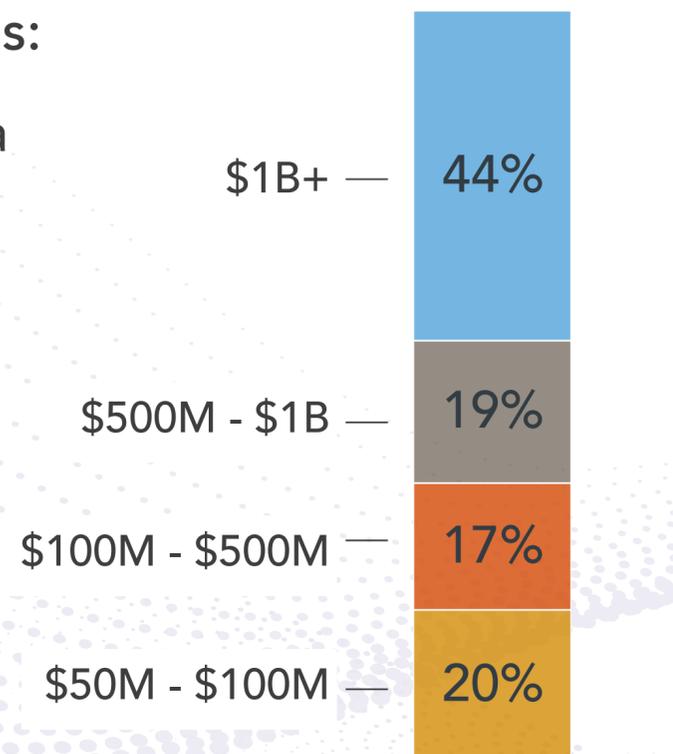


Global research and analytics firm.

Demographics: Who took this survey?

- ▶ 152 “consumers” of thought leadership completed the entire survey.
 - 3,500+ executives answered a handful of “omnibus” questions.
- ▶ Headquarters Locations:
 - 50% North America
 - 18% Europe
 - 30% Asia-Pacific
 - 2% Other

Revenue Break-Down



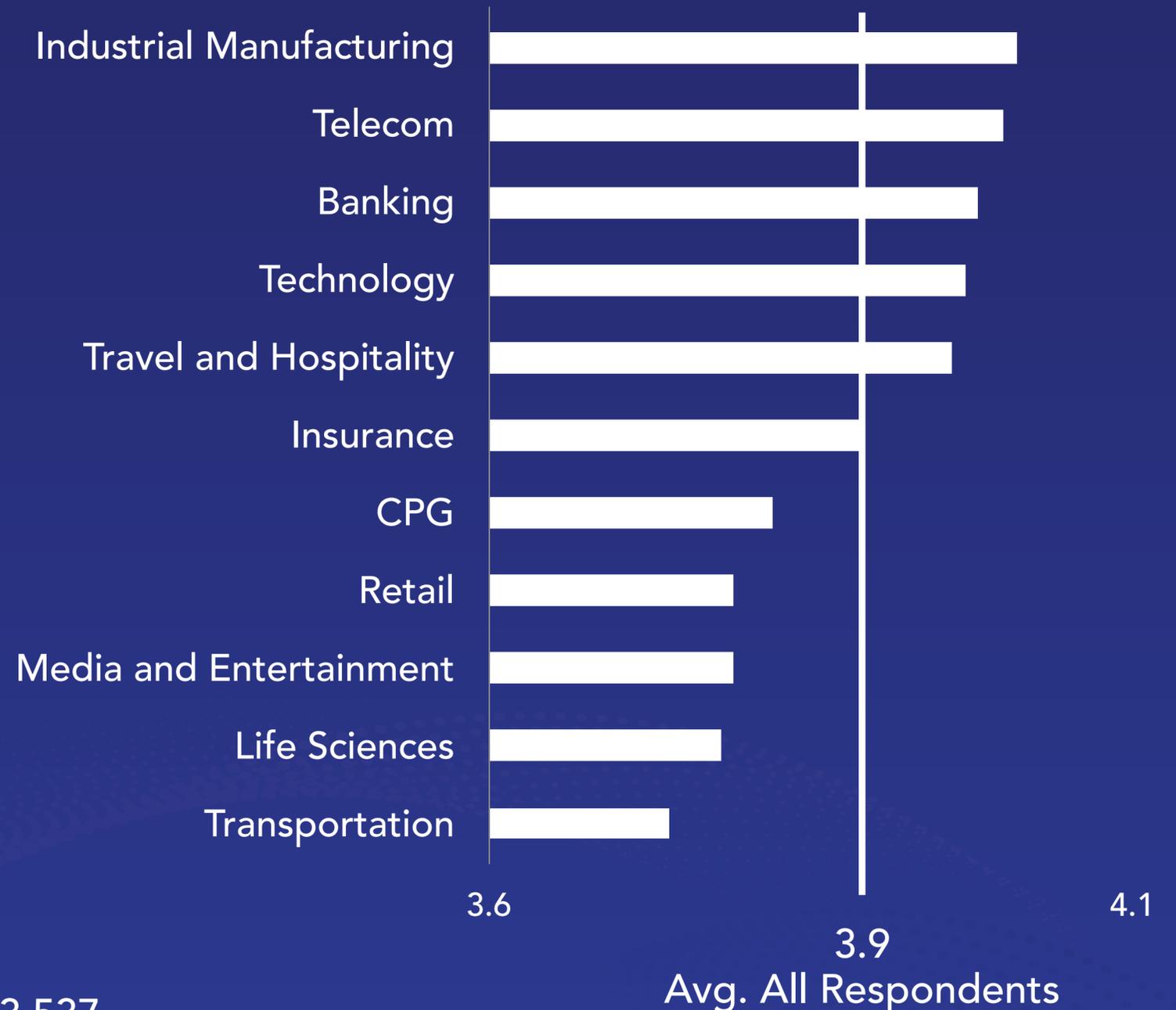
- Financial Services and Insurance
- Retail and CPG
- Technology
- Automotive and Industrial Manufacturing
- Telecom, Media and Entertainment
- Life Sciences
- Other

Insight 1

Thought leadership helps bewildered customers create coherence out of complexity

- ▶ On a range of 1 to 5, where 4 = very important, executives rated the importance of thought leadership as 3.9.
- ▶ Industry averages ranged from a low of 3.74 in Transportation to a high of 4.01 in Industrial Manufacturing.

Executives largely see thought leadership as very important.



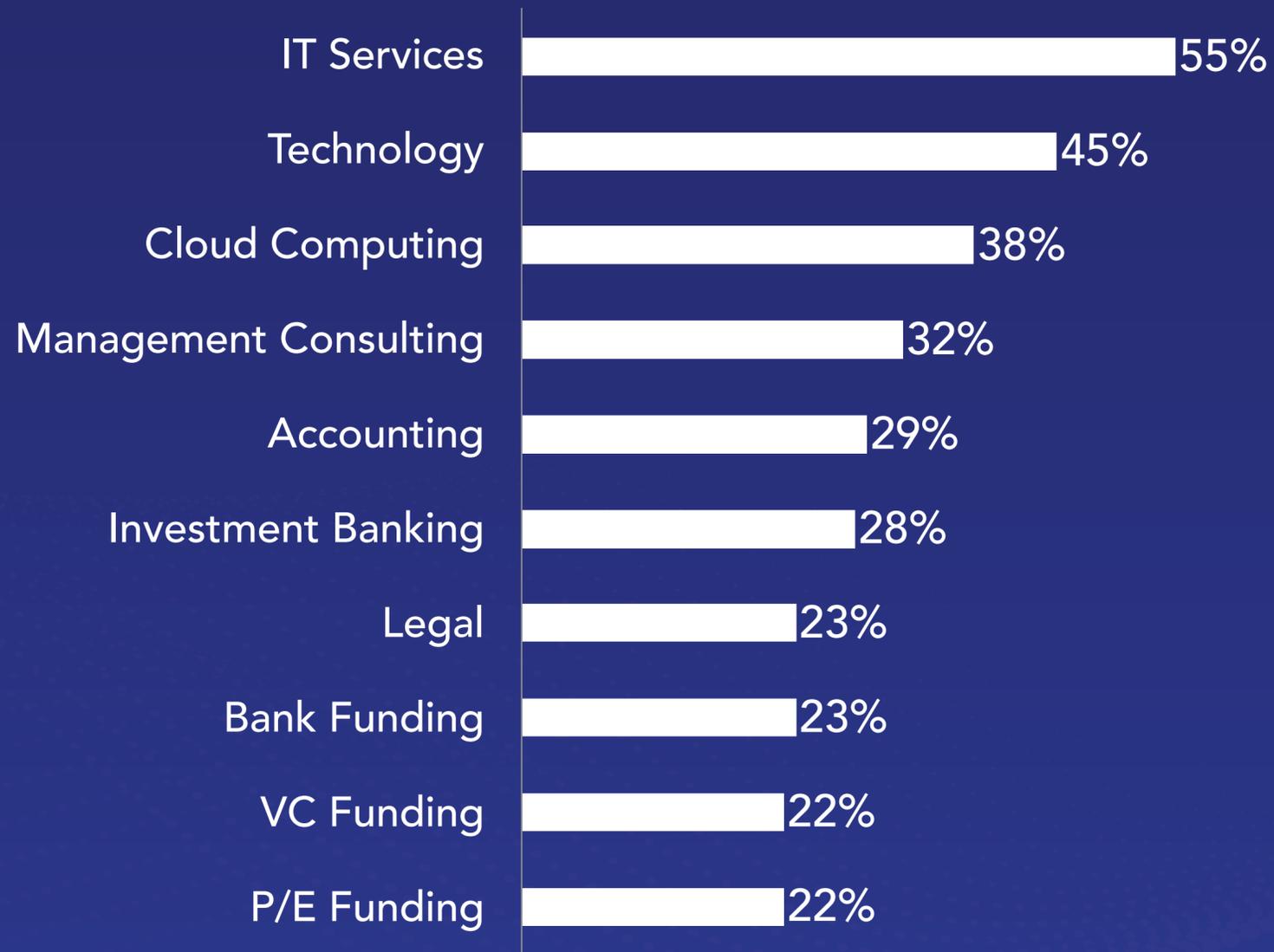
n = 3,537

Insight 2

Executives use thought leadership to identify warning signs and determine how to solve problems.



Percentage of organizations that use thought leadership to inform various types of purchase decisions



n = 152

Insight 3

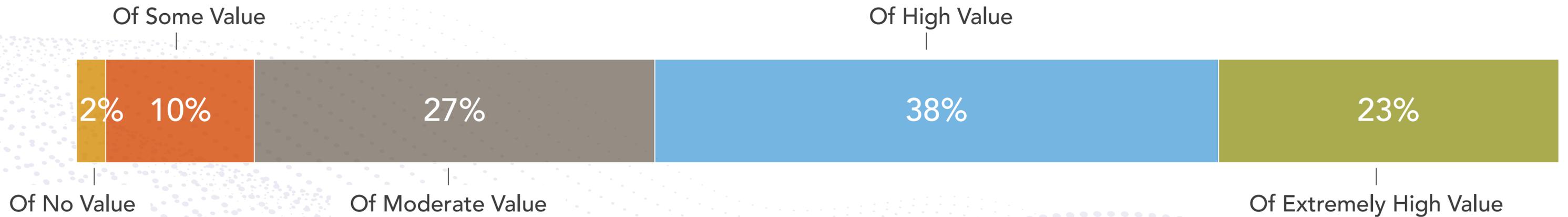
They're not using it to make purchase decisions as much as you would think.

- ▶ It is used most frequently for technology-based decisions.
- ▶ That said, 74% of executives say it has become more important over the last 5 years
 - Only 3% say it's less important

Insight 4

Many are not using thought leadership because it's simply not valuable enough.

How valuable thought leadership has been in helping organizations choose which firm to use to solve a business problem in the last 5 years.



n = 3,537

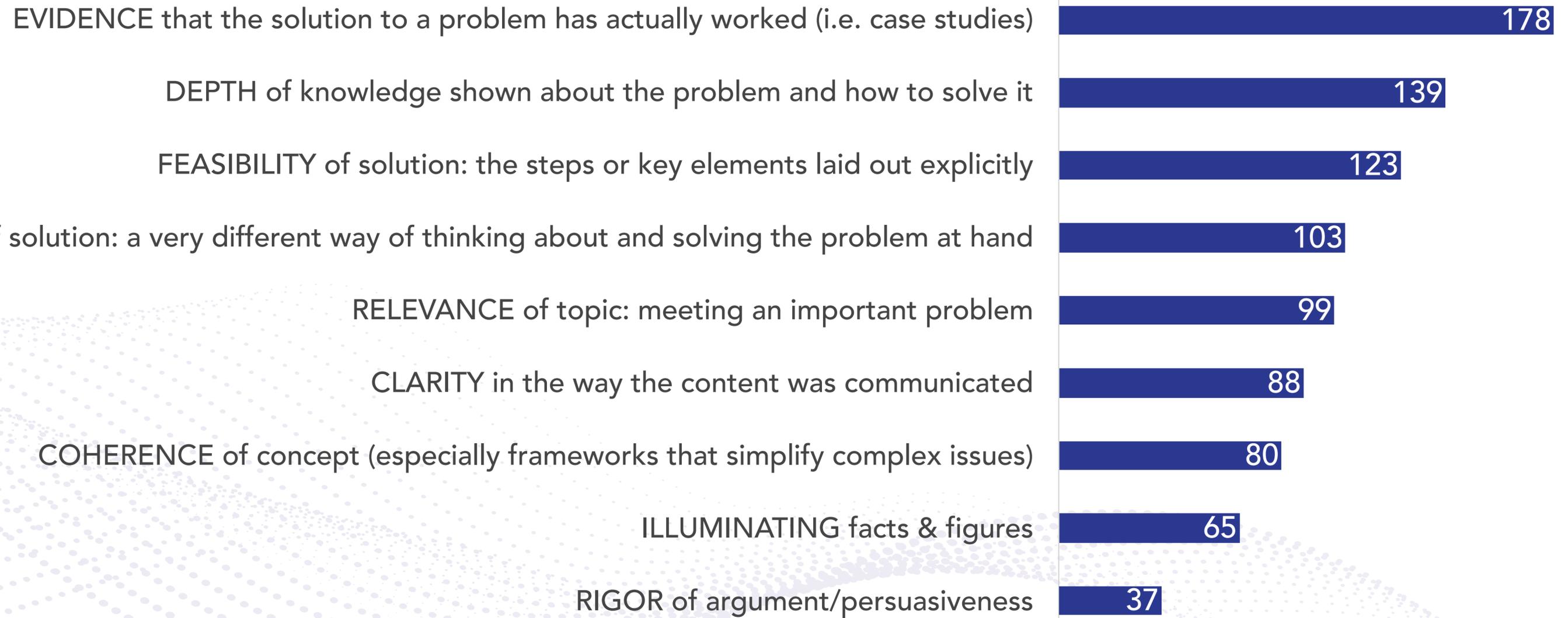
**What Your Clients and
Prospects Really Want...**



Insight 5

Executives want evidence, depth, and feasibility.

What Executives Say are the 3 Most Important Criteria in Thought Leadership



n = 152

Note: Respondents were asked to rank order 3 criteria from a list of 9. Those responses were weighted by rank.

Without providing the *evidence* your solution works, you're asking them to trust you.

► Why evidence is important to your clients

- Company fortunes can ride on choosing the right firm
- Careers can be on the line



... what a mining company spent on an enterprise system that its employees largely shunned

► Why evidence is hard for you to get

- Clients don't want to admit they needed help
- Clients don't care about your careers (only theirs)



If you don't show *depth* of knowledge, they'll assume you don't have it

▶ Why it matters

- Mitigates client risk — Showing them extensive depth of your company's expertise gives them more confidence in you
- Those with a veneer of expertise run out of gas quickly

▶ Why it can be hard to show

- Arbitrary limits on lengths of articles and research reports
- The longer it is, the more difficult it is to make it compelling

If you haven't demonstrated the *feasibility* of your solution, they'll assume it's infeasible.

- ▶ A "Guinea Pig" approach appeals to very few
- ▶ Even if you have it, your experts may not want to "give it away"

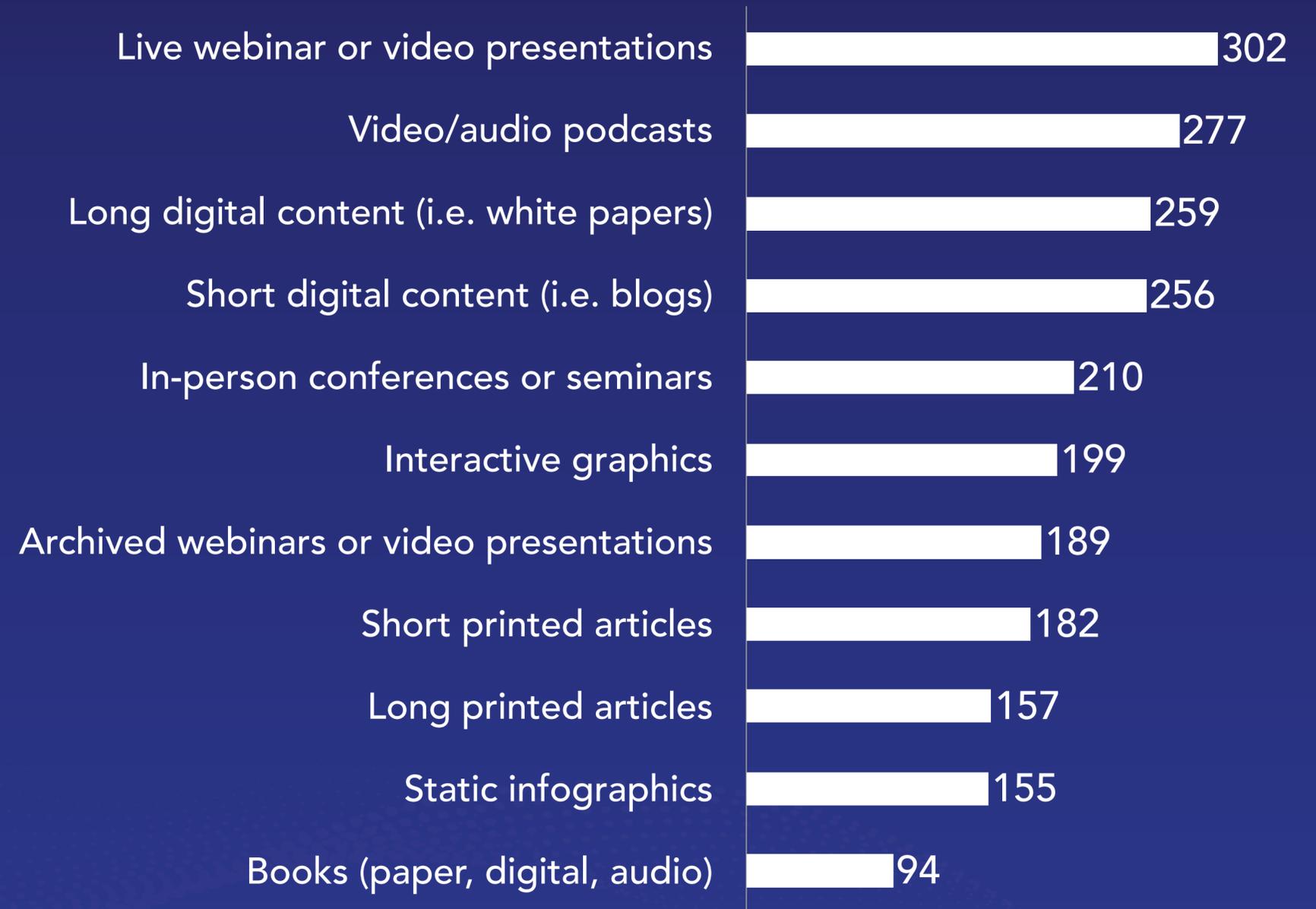


Insight 6

It's become a more digital, "lean back" world.

- ▶ Executives prefer digital channels over analog ones
 - They prefer live webinars and podcasts over in-person programs.
- ▶ But, long- and short-form written content is equally valued.
 - "Keep it short, always" is bad advice.

How Executives Prefer to Consume Thought Leadership



n = 152

Note: Respondents were asked to rank order 3 formats from a list of 11. Those responses were weighted by rank.

**Profiting
from
Thought
Leadership**

About the Conference

What you'll learn over the next 3 months

- ▶ July 21: Why Executives Want Thought Leadership, and What They Want
- ▶ Sept 9: How B2B Companies Are Creating and Marketing Thought Leadership
 - [Register on GoToWebinar](#)
- ▶ Nov 2-4: How the Best B2B Companies Compete on Thought Leadership
 - Executive perceptions of various industries and top thought leaders
 - Qualitative insights from in-depth executive interviews
 - Best practices from study of B2B companies
 - [Register at ThoughtLeadershipSeminar.com](#)

The conference for everyone involved in B2B thought leadership

**Profiting
from
Thought
Leadership**

Nov. 2

Strategy, Research, and Culture Building



Nov. 3

Marketing, Sales, and Publishing



Nov. 4

In-Person Training



“About the Conference” Virtual Preview Sessions:

- July 29
- Sept 23

[Register at ThoughtLeadershipSeminar.com](http://ThoughtLeadershipSeminar.com)