

Driving Engagement: How to Choose Trending Topics for B2B Thought Leadership

B2B media thought leadership programs are essential for enhancing brand awareness and building brand equity. However, poorly executed initiatives are unlikely to deliver the desired results.

Successful B2B thought leadership efforts depend on a strategic focus on three key components: identifying the target audience (also known as buyer personas*), developing a content strategy, and selecting the right subject matter experts or spokespeople.

In what follows, we explore the selection of topics for the thought leadership program in detail.

Detavernier Strategic Communication offers a Venn diagram model consisting of three interconnected circles to guide the decision-making process for topic selection. This exercise follows the mapping of buyer personas and precedes the identification of which subject matter experts will contribute content to the program.

Circle One: This circle encompasses all trending media topics that engage at least one key buyer persona. As mentioned earlier, by the time topics are outlined, buyer persona mapping should already be completed, allowing for the identification of the media channels that these buyer personas consume.

Circle Two: This circle encompasses the company's expertise based on its experience building products and solutions for its clients.

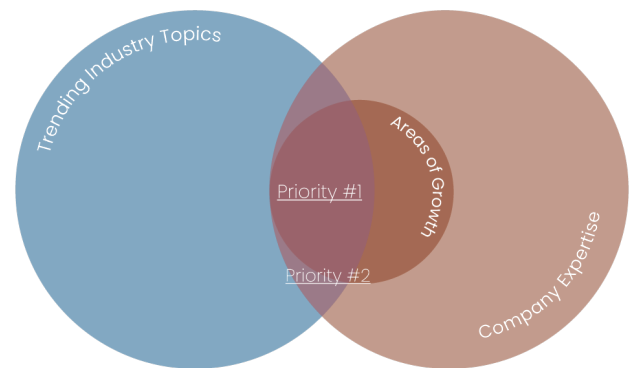
Circle Three: Nested within the second circle, this section includes topics where the company possesses significant expertise and has identified strong growth potential.**

It is important to acknowledge that trending topics unrelated to the company's expertise should not be considered in a media thought leadership program, nor should areas of expertise lacking trending media relevance.

The program should focus on the overlap between the first two circles ("Priority #1"), particularly where trending topics intersect with high-growth areas of expertise ("Priority #2").

As a rule of thumb, it makes sense to focus at least 50% of the company's thought leadership content on the trending and high-growth topics.

Thought Leadership Topics



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Example

Consider the fictional company Better For You, a B2B food ingredients firm. This company has expertise in several trending areas related to ingredients, including the growing popularity of third-culture cuisines, the rise of functional ingredients aimed at mental health, and the increasing consumer interest in protein-rich foods—all of which are featured in trade and business media.

In protein ingredients, Better For You has an edge over its competitors because it offers protein solutions that in terms of nutritional balance and taste and texture are second to none. For this reason, Better For You views its protein solutions as a significant growth area. While the company should pitch content on all three trending topics, it would do well to put a particular emphasis on its protein ingredients.

*The term "Buyer Persona" has gained popularity as a label for individuals within the Decision-Making Unit (DMU). This designation can be useful, provided it's understood that not all DMU members targeted are actual buyers of the product or service.

**Promoting expertise in a product or service that has yet to launch is acceptable and can even be highly beneficial, but it must be approached with caution. A company should be careful not to set customer expectations for solutions it may not be able to deliver.