7 Must – Ask Questions to help you get clear on your unique role

as an I-Story Brand Thought Leader

1. What are your selling- a commodity or a signature solution?

We all have to pay the bills. Often we end up taking the work clients ask us to do, even when it’s not our core competency, passion or expertise. It happens all the time. Frequently, clients don’t know or realize what they really need. Which means you need to educate them on the value of your breakthrough solution, or else accept your fate servicing the status quo. In comparison, Thought Leaders provide a fresh perspective and focus on the systemic issues at the root oft he problem. It takes courage to be a Thought Leader!

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Desired Outcome: You are hired for your ture value and unique expertise.

1. What do you want to be known for and associated with?

Your brand is only as strong as the stories that people tell about you. What do people say about you? In the effort to „ fit in“, its easy for many of us to come off as „middle oft he road.“ Its not that you have a bad reputation, you just haven’t made a distincitve impression. Or perhaps you’re too bold and provocative, to the point where people get confused what you’re really about. People need help, singposts really, to reinforce the story you want associate with yourself.

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Desired Outcome: Your are remebered and thought of for the right reasons.

3)How are you inspiring interest and curiosity?

You want to give people a reason to talk with you and about you. When asked what I do, I say that – „ I am a business storyteller“. This invariably leads to a question to which i respond; „ I advise companies, entrepreneurs, and nonprofits on how to get others to believe in their story“ And from there, an opening is created to explore the topics of trust, perceptions and communications. The possibilities are endless. I shape the dialogue by first catering to peoples natural curiosity, and connecting it back to what they do or care about.

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Desired Outcome: You have a consistent and effetive way to engage people.

4)Why must you invite others into relationship?

In today’s world, social capital is your rocket fuel. Whether your facebooking, linking-in, twittering or doing it old school- you need to keep building connections. Leverage comes from the width and breatdht of your social network. Of course, ist not just about „ collecting“ friends. Our network is only as strong as the strenght of our relationships thenseves. It’s more than just the act of ntworking or making yourself accessible. The ambitious thought-leader creates the gathering places forums and mechanisms for their world to connect. Shape the network and you natuarally become a central node, connected to everything.

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Desired Outcome: You have activated a network of people around your ideas.

5. What structures will expand your marketing footprint?

Many aspiring thought leaders are guilty of voodoo marketing, the act of believing, wishing and praying that new business will just appear form the skye. While a little magic never hurt, new business is built on the principles of trust, familarity and reach.

People need to become exposed to your ideas on a repeated basis. Whether that’s a newlsetter, an interview series, or live gatherings. – if you’re a Thought Leader you have to be in the business of publishing and education. Get used to it. Thankfully there are countless negligible or low cost ways to build a platform that translates into a growing footprint.

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Desired Outcome: you have meaningful way to expand your reach.

6) What tables would you like to have a seat at?

You have a fresh perspective, a deep sense of purpose and a desire to share your gifts with the world. Yet, you’re frustrated by the limites of your current standing. What kind of projects will allow your gifts to have the biggest impact possible? When you play at a bigger level, you gain access to new kinds of linkage and leverage. Being a real Thought Leader translates into opportunities across geography, sectors, and culture. It starts by getting clear on what circles you want tob e a part, and what you can contribute as an active member.

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Desired Outcome: you are playing at the level you need for greatest impact.

7) What will make others believe and trust you?

If you make your living on your ability to sell ideas, you need to consciously cultivate your reputation- whether that’s based pedigree, authenticity, or originality. Align yourself with existing ideas and institutions that make your Thought Leadership and ideas more approachable. Yet, don’t let yourself become confined. Real Thoughtleaders don’t wait around for permission, they lead by example. That’s why we call them Thought Leaders.

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Desired Outcome: You are recognized for guiding the path forward.