

Thought Leadership  
2.0 Vision



## Vision

The vision of Thought Leadership 2.0 is simple: by sharing information valuable to their customers, suppliers can strengthen relationships and improve their success.

Companies engaged in buying and selling can be involved in a cycle of sharing knowledge that engenders trust and continued and deeper sharing; creating a virtuous cycle. When the individuals involved evolve to share a common goal and there is a high degree of trust, a special business relationship emerges. This relationship is mutually beneficial and can be very lucrative.





## What Happened to Thought Leadership 1.0?

Ok, so what's the new news? Thought Leadership has been around for a long time and it has not really had a great uptake.

The initial Thought Leadership concept was to "provide information of value to customers to build and strengthen relationships". This is an exciting and important goal. We have seen a few successes and a few more lukewarm results. There are a number of reasons why the approach fails to achieve its potential. Most often they have to do with immature relationships: if your products or services don't work, achieving relationship nirvana with your customers is unlikely. The other driver is that it takes a fair amount of work to develop the intellectual property you wish to share. Thankfully, some already have a great deal of knowledge but need to capture and monetize it.

The result: a proliferation of "thought leaders" without enough leading thought. Thought Leadership became a way to push information of moderate value to broad audiences. In this role it remains a branding practice of many high tech companies today.

## What's Different About 2.0?

It's not about leading. It's about sharing leading thought to create value for your customers.

It's interactive, collaborative and creative.

Learning. Creating Value. Forming knowledge based relationships.

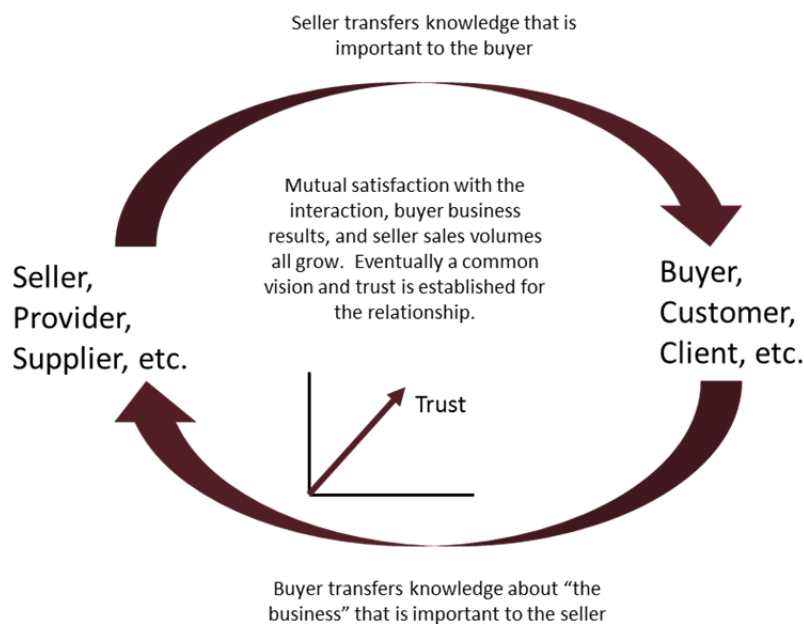
## Knowledge Based Relationships

The payoff is in the relationships that become knowledge based.

We observe that there is a virtuous cycle that results from the mutual trust created by two directional knowledge sharing.



### The virtuous cycle of knowledge based relationships



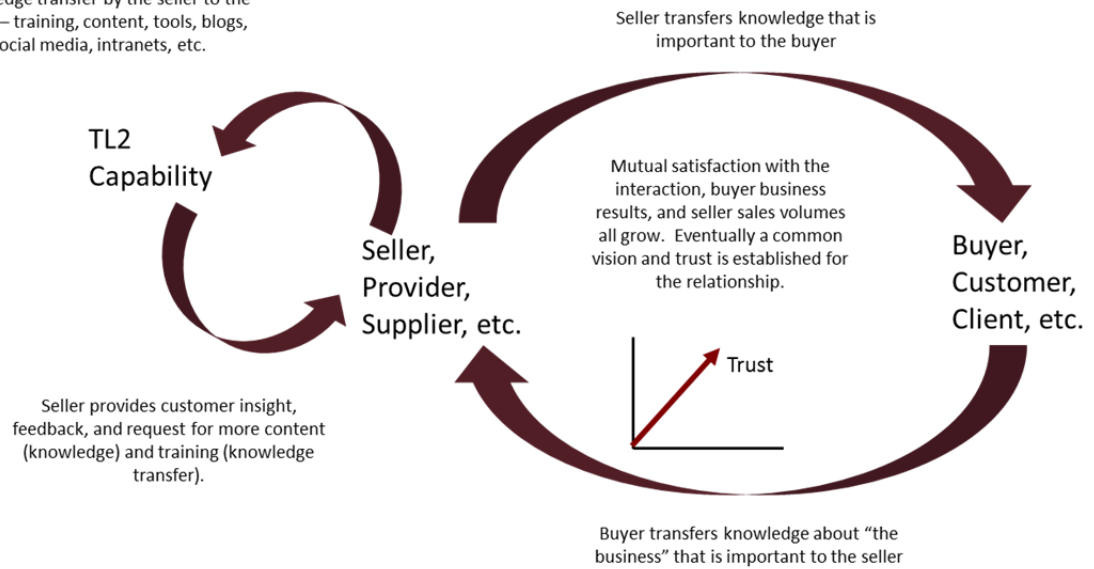


## Thought Leadership 2.0 Capability

We link what we call your Thought Leadership 2.0 Capability to drive a continual stream of knowledge into the cycle to act as an accelerant.

TL2 capability provides knowledge/information to support knowledge transfer by the seller to the buyer – training, content, tools, blogs, social media, intranets, etc.

### The virtuous cycle of knowledge based relationships



## Customer Insight

Getting the targeting and boundaries right in the business justification, strategy and plans to use TL2 is critical to its success. From the provider side it's as simple as depth vs. breadth. The often overlooked factor is customer acceptance. As a general rule, sellers perceive their intellectual property as more valuable than their buyers do. Knowledge about customers is necessary to do optimal targeting. Research is likely.

It's also important to get the TL2 topic right. The topic has to resonate with your customers. Test it with real customers. People that is. The topic also has to resonate with your company. While it should be a stretch, it can't be too far afield.

## Building Capability

One of the most important things to understand about Thought Leadership 2.0 is probably one of the reasons why TL 1.0 did not realize its potential: the knowledge based relationship cycle is hungry.

It's great to provide a stunning rich media communication that delivers great ideas about how to do something better. It's also insufficient. To do broad and high end TL2, you need to become proficient at knowledge sharing. And you have to hard wire IP development for the purposes of knowledge sharing into your business.





## Why do Thought Leadership 2.0?

Typically, businesses invest in TL2 to improve some set of business relationships. There are many symptoms of relationship weakness such as difficulty reaching people, low wallet share, lack of awareness and measured dissatisfaction. Often companies have problems reaching the high level folks in their key accounts or they are unsure that they are getting the return they could be getting from some of their customers.

Investing in the competencies necessary to build a collection of knowledge based relationships may well be the answer.

You can expect the following from a well-executed TL2 initiative:

Improved relationships and loyalty via the knowledge based cycle

- Accelerated profit in key relationships
- Reduced expenses due to reductions in turnover and reduced acquisition
- Improved return on marketing spending and assets. Generally knowledge based relationships accelerate the return on marketing and sales.
- Leveraged permission marketing. Buyers can receive a significant number of proposals for relationships and often perceive low value in the relationship. TL2 can address this value gap.
- New business opportunities from new parts of customers. Based on the sharing of relationship power within the customer.
- When marketing engages sales in the TL2 process information about customers/knowledge is bidirectional. Your business learns more about its customers.

Driving exponential business growth in your customer relationships is a great reason to get started and begin building your thought leadership capabilities.

There are great returns even at low levels of participation.



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