

How to Write Killer Thought Leadership: 11 Tips

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Sometimes you have an idea. A great idea, something you want to share with the world. Maybe it's a cool new trend you're seeing in your industry, or a prediction for the future of your profession – either way, you know it's good, and you want to shout it from the rooftops.

But that's neither sane nor practical.

Instead, you decide to craft a thought leadership byline that – you hope – will get published in leading industry publications and blogs. Your goal is to position yourself as an innovator, a trendsetter, a guy or gal with a finger on the pulse and an eye glued to the crystal ball. You're ready to sit down and bang this thing out.

So now what?

Creating a compelling thought leadership byline isn't easy – but we hope these 11 tips will help:

1. **Know your audience:** What does your audience want to learn from your article, and what would make them take the time to read it?

2. **Include stats:** Any time you can include background research from reliable third-parties, it goes a long way toward backing up your angle.
3. **Show, don't tell:** Don't just make a statement and leave it hanging. Provide solid examples that reinforce your points. If it's an outlook piece, for example, cite past events that make a case for the future you're predicting.
4. **Keywords are ... key:** Use a keyword planner to ensure you're using some hard-hitting keywords – especially in the headline and subhead. You won't use every keyword in every piece, but you should incorporate them whenever they are natural.
5. **Don't forget the subhead:** While headlines are important, the oft-neglected little subhead is, too. It should give a clear idea of where you plan to go in the piece – without giving everything away and while also giving the reader a reason to stay with you.
6. **Get to the point:** Start addressing whatever you promised in the head/subhead relatively quickly. This is not to say you can't start off with a catchy or creative intro – just don't let it drag on too long.
7. **Write for the Web, even if it's for print:** In addition to incorporating those keywords, none of your paragraphs should be longer than three or four sentences. Break up longer pieces using subheads. No one wants to read huge blocks of text on a screen.
8. **KISS:** Don't make it difficult for readers to understand what you're talking about. Use simple language without talking down.
9. **Use strong verbs:** Adjectives and adverbs get all the attention, but a strong verb blows them both away.
10. **After you write, just walk away:** Leave your article alone – for a day or even just an hour, if you're on a hard deadline – and come back to it later. Reading your own work with fresh eyes helps you edit yourself.
11. **Get a second set of eyes:** Always get someone else to review your work. Even the best writers in the world need editors.

And if all this sounds a little more complicated than you thought it would be, or if you realized you don't actually have the time to sneeze out 1,200 to 1,600 words that do justice to your idea, we can help with that, too.