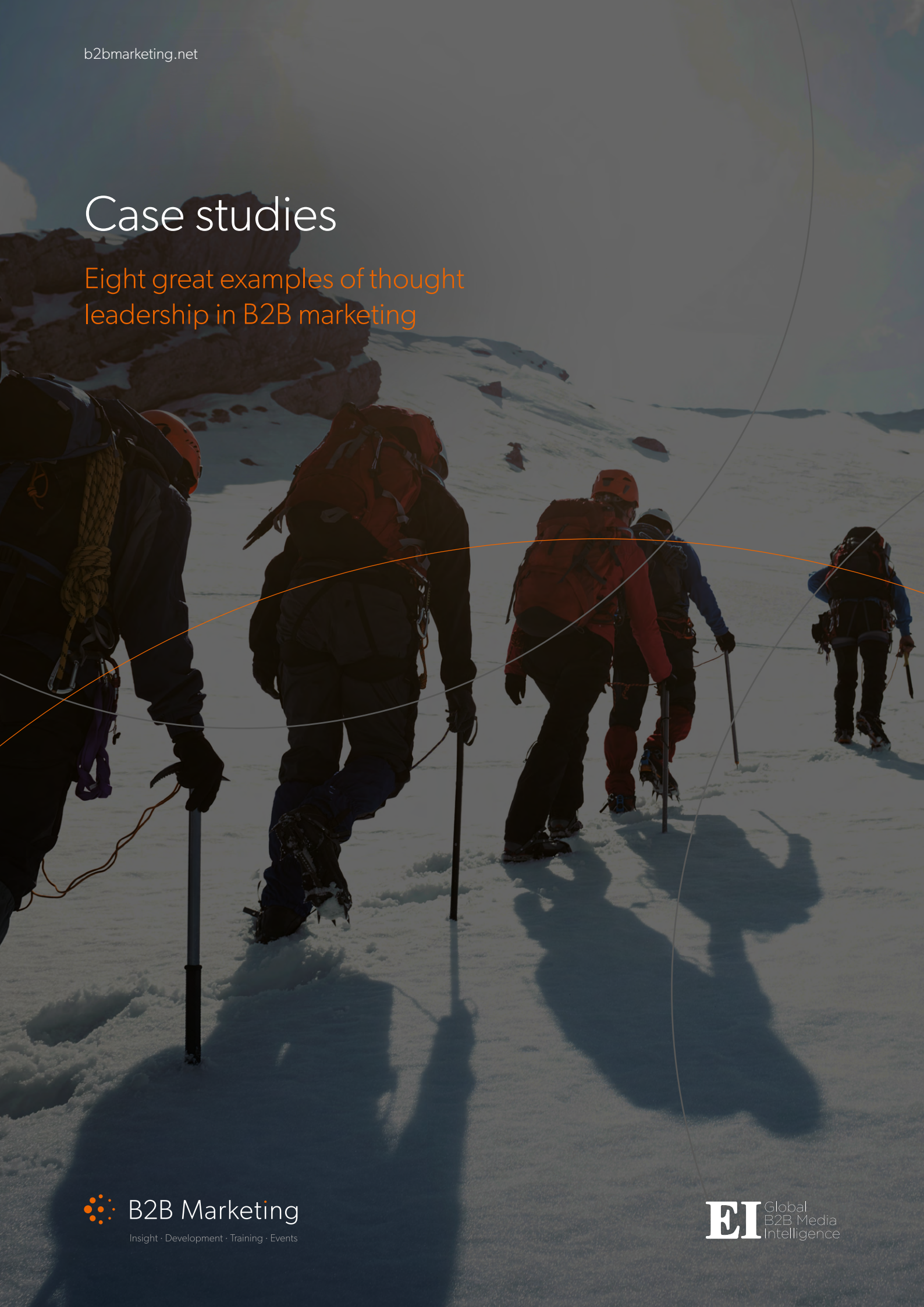
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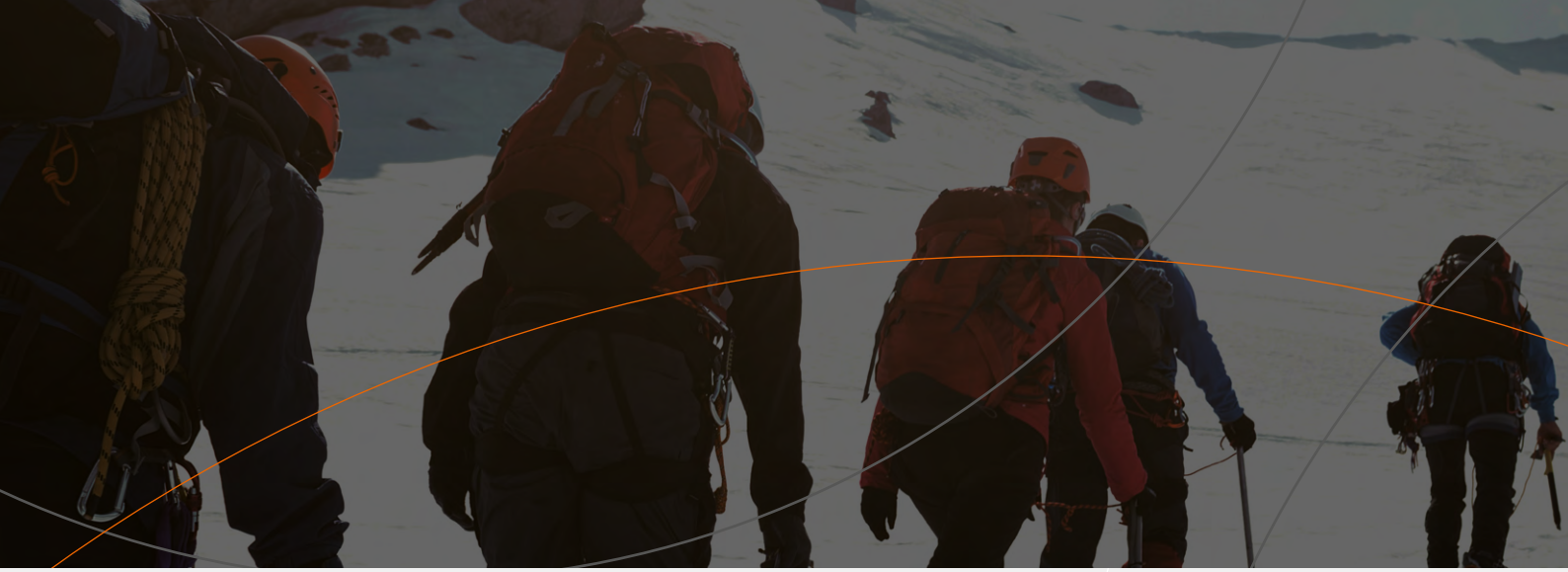
# Case studies

## Eight great examples of thought leadership in B2B marketing



B2B Marketing
Insight · Development · Training · Events

EI Global B2B Media Intelligence



# Introduction

With so much content in the market purporting to be thought leadership, how can you make your voice heard and position your brand as a genuine trusted source of expertise?

These eight case studies – shortlisted in the Best use of thought leadership category at 2016's B2B Marketing Awards – highlight the innovative approaches forward-thinking brands have taken to engage audiences and position themselves as thought leaders in their respective industries.

You'll learn from these campaigns how to:

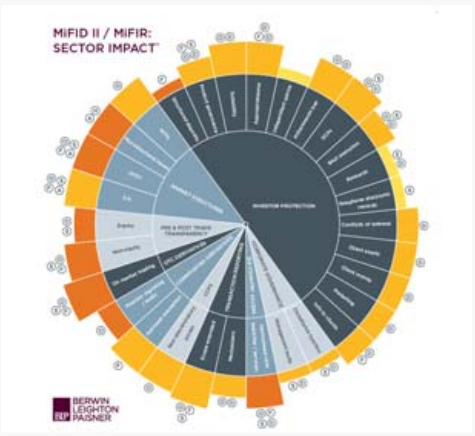
- Take a risk
- Change the industry 'changes to your brand will follow'
- Solve your audience's challenges rather than your own
- Provide personalised solutions
- Position your brand as an expert
- Prepare a content toolkit that you can execute at any time
- Know your KPIs and budget accordingly.

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*This series of case studies is published as a collaboration between B2B Marketing and EI Advisory. Words and editing by Lydia Imirtziadis and Paul Snell.*

# Get personal









In the legal sector, you don't often come across a lot of groundbreaking marketing innovation. Law firm Berwin Leighton Paisner (BLP) delivered by doing something different. The firm directly addressed the 25 regulatory issues that keep senior financial services executives up at night, and asked new prospects about their challenges so they could create personalised content for them, which in turn drove new leads. BLP captured their audience's attention with fun, new content such as a bank-note themed report, making the topic appear fresh and engaging.

In doing this, BLP turned its strategy around, moving away from using old-school, offline marketing to using social media, PPC and influencer marketing in its thought leadership for the first time. The firm exceeded its target for vetted leads by 400%, with a third of those being senior business leaders. Just under a third of new leads came from social media. It's estimated that the campaign ROI has reached 250% and continues to rise.

# Become a first mover







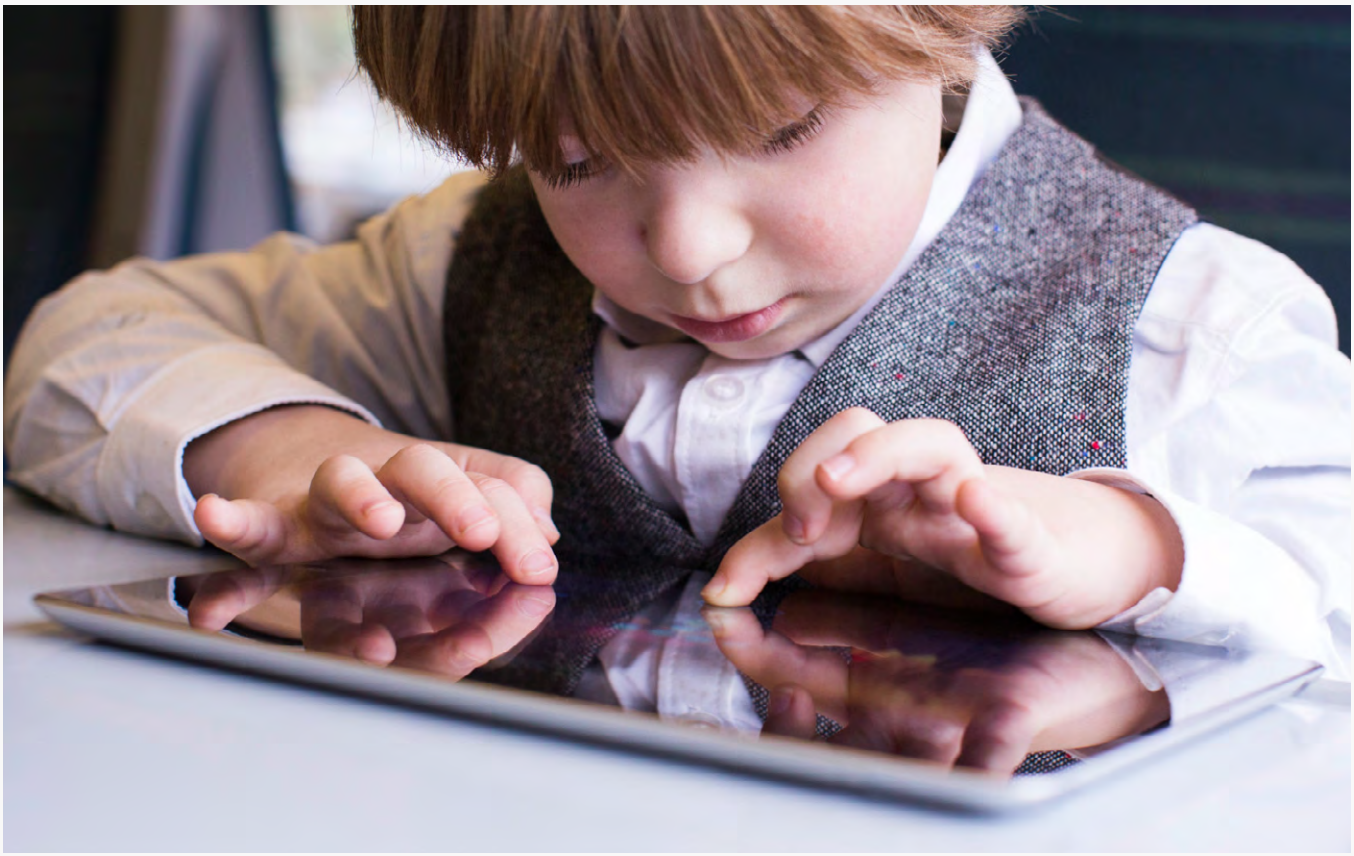



Knorr identified an opportunity and turned it into a competitive advantage. The company was the only gravy brand that was gluten, MSG and allergen-free. When specific industry regulations were brought in, this gave Knorr first-mover advantage in overcoming its challenge of lower market share than competitors, and growing its market share by 5.7%.

The 'Dishing up advice on gluten-free' campaign educated chefs – Knorr's target audience – on the business benefits of catering gluten-free, and supported them in implementing regulations. Knorr gathered 40 chefs and influencers on board the 'gravy train' to the Hospitality Show, where they briefed passengers on the benefits of their products. The campaign also included an educational guide, a masterclass roadshow, and video content, which Knorr knew was an in-demand format for this audience from its interviews with 1200 chefs.

The campaign generated more than 350,000 video views, 3.4 million 'opportunities to see' from press and social media coverage, and more than 700 guide downloads. Knorr also ran the industry's first 'Thunderclap' – where a single message is mass-shared on Twitter. The results were astounding: over 1000 chefs got the hashtag #knorrglutenfree trending, which helped raise brand and campaign awareness. It's no wonder this campaign was the winner in the Best use of thought leadership category at the B2B Marketing Awards 2016.

# Bring a new perspective to a hot topic



The c-suite audience is notoriously hard to reach. Ricoh got their attention by focusing its thought leadership on a challenge of the multi-generational workplace, where four generations (baby boomers, generation x, millennials and generation y) are working together for the first time, each with a different relationship with technology.

By addressing a broad challenge across industries and geographies, Ricoh became an agent of change for technology transformation. The tech brand ran senior executive workshops and surveyed 3500 workers from 22 countries to gain insights for its 4G Workplace report, which highlighted key trends and issues, and was supported by social content, infographics and press releases.

The campaign reached over 60 million people in Europe, with more than 850 pieces of media coverage, over 200,000 impressions on social media and a further 6000 unique users on its landing page. The key to this success was taking a widely relevant issue and adding a unique perspective on it that appeals to the media.

# Turn a challenge into an opportunity

Using two forms of thought leadership delivery – ongoing and bursts of activity – encourages your audience to see you as a publisher that can deliver with your finger on the pulse of the market.

Asset manager BlackRock's iShares division took a topic that has a negative perception in the industry – volatility – and presented it as an opportunity, through a two-part campaign targeting wealth managers.

The first part, 'Foundation' messaging, was based on predictive, quarterly market themes that focused on a particular asset class iShares thought would have great impact in the coming quarter. The second part, 'Flare' messages, were quickfire advertising around market changes that could trigger portfolio changes. Together, these helped iShares to become a trusted information source.

The ongoing 'Foundation' messages build trust, while speedy delivery of the 'Flare' messages gives wealth managers – an audience that demands constant updates to make smarter investment decisions for clients – the reliability they need. Including weekly sentiment from 120 wealth managers added clout to the campaign, as the target audience gained direct insight from its peers.

The campaign contributed to iShares capturing 37% of the market, drove 14,800 investors to the iShares site through advertising, and nearly 20,000 investors have read its weekly iShares articles.

*"The marketing effort around quarterly market themes has not only enabled iShares to continue to differentiate its brand using its unique investment strategy capabilities, but it has helped the iShares business capture vital flows and revenue in volatile markets."*

**Kathryn Shiplee, head of brand and advertising EMEA, BlackRock**

# Take the higher ground







Sometimes, thinking big – beyond the company's boundaries, to the industry as a whole – is the solution to business challenges.

Trelleborg Marine Systems had been losing ground to competitors that produced inferior quality products due to exploitation of industry guidelines. Instead of focusing on its own products, the company focused on changing industry thinking, and driving action among those who set the guidelines.

Trelleborg addressed PIANC, the industry body for marine product guidelines, and supplemented this with a global testing programme, whitepaper, webinar, and technical seminars at PIANC's global conference. It also relaunched a new, interactive, online version of its Barometer Report, which was based on an industry-wide survey.

The results began with PIANC changing industry guidelines, and continued with the company itself: Trelleborg articles were featured in PIANC's e-newsletters, and the company saw hundreds of whitepaper downloads and webinar views, and a significant number of visits to the campaign landing page.


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# Provide a personalised roadmap for brands

Changing customer demands are driving disruption and digital transformation in the banking sector. Oracle Financial Services demonstrated its understanding of changing expectations and its connection to the next generation of customers to senior banking executives by playing the role of organiser across three strategic partnerships that targeted prospects through digital and direct channels.

The campaign included teaser videos of a panel of 16-21-year-olds sharing their views on banking and finance, which fed into a 'Meet the Disruptors' event microsite. The event itself brought senior banking executives face-to-face with next generation finance users, and post-event content included a downloadable report and soundbite videos. Targeted email campaigns and social media brought the different elements together.

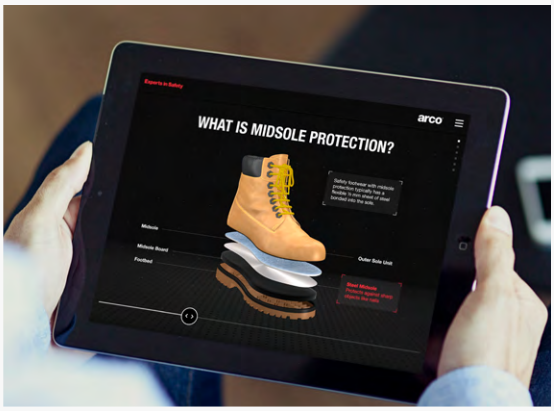
By providing a personalised roadmap for individual brands to move towards digital, Oracle positioned itself as an innovative thought leader focused on the needs of its audience. The peer panel and event created compelling content, and was attended by 52 senior executives. Data was captured from 626 senior banking executives who downloaded the report, and the videos received more than 32,000 unique views.

*"The live event, being completely unscripted, wasn't without risk! But that's what made both the event and the content it generated even more compelling. It has demonstrated that significant reward can come from calculated risk."*

**Rachel Fraser, marketing director, Oracle Financial Services**

# If you don't like the conversation, change it







If you challenge the industry, changes to your brand perception will follow. Safety equipment supplier Arco built its profile as an industry leader by changing the perception of safety as a commodity. A strategic partnership with the British Safety Industry Federation (BSIF), the UK's leading safety trade body, positioned Arco as a trusted expert and proactive agent of change, and added weight to its campaign.

Like Trelleborg, Arco stopped focusing on product promotion and delivered content that addressed industry issues, such as elevating the standard of safety equipment. By doing so, Arco built the relationship with its target audience first, and then demonstrated how it was positioned to help. By educating brands with failing products directly, and training its own sales team to educate customers and prospects, Arco achieved industry-level impact. The company also received excellent brand perception scores exceeding those of their rivals and was awarded Superbrand status in 2016, showing the importance of influencing the industry as a whole to win as an individual business.

# Build a network of advocates

In a constantly changing industry, understanding customers and offering personalised solutions is a challenge for fashion retailers. To educate senior retail decision makers on the scale of the issue, Fits.me – which provides retailers with insight into customer profiles – surveyed 2000 shoppers and produced a research report on the changing trends in consumer clothes shopping habits, giving retailers valuable data and insight on their own target audience.

Fits.me directly contacted the marketing departments of its top 10 target retailers featured in the report and encouraged them to join the conversation on social media and share it on their own channels. Giving them opportunity to contribute to Fits.me's announcements gave the campaign more clout, as it accumulated the voices of top retailers into a network of brand advocates. This enhanced the report's visibility, and enabled the brand to build trust and engage directly with prospects.

The campaign generated over 145 requests for the report and initiated conversations with Fits.me's top prospects. Fits.me received 36 pieces of coverage in UK press and over 4.5 million 'opportunities to see' across print and online. The secret to its success was creating a network of brand advocates on social media to enhance its credibility and trust, as well as using consumer opinion to show retailers how they could apply Fits.me's insights to solve customer issues.

*"The team delivered great results for us across the national, retail and marketing press. The work they have done has resulted in amazing enquiries into the business."*

**Jim Rudall, VP sales and marketing, Fits.me**

# Solve real challenges to win hearts and minds



**Tony Jarvis**
Managing director and co-founder, EI Advisory

Hi there.
Hello?
Can you hear me?
Is anyone listening?
Is anybody out there?

How do you know your thought leadership programme is working? How do you know if all the work you are putting into your thought leadership is actually being heard?

With the destructive forces of fake news and the sheer volume of content out there in the market, metrics like social shares and media pick-ups are not enough to determine whether your content is getting to the right people or getting lost in the abyss. In the B2B space, gone are the days where simply empathising with a senior decision-maker will turn heads. To cut through the volume of rivals competing for attention, B2B brands must be nimble, positioning themselves at the forefront of debate, developments, and challenges – while at the same time building trust and credibility.

At EI we spend a great deal of time devising thought leadership programmes that help clients step up above the clutter in niche spaces. Our experience is that to truly win the hearts and minds of your audience, great thought leadership provides the tools to elevate executives and contribute to the progress of the industry as a whole.

This year's nominees for this category are all impressive by that token. Take Trelleborg, Arco and Knorr, for example. They all saw an opportunity to 'own' their space by elevating above product discussions to address real industry-wide issues; lobbying industry bodies for clearer standards or safety guidelines, or showing commercial chefs how they can be more popular by going gluten free. These all actually serve to help buyers in their roles – not just to make a more informed buying decision. It's those elements that build trust and credibility in the market. Next you need to mirror the style and cadence of your audience in the way that they consume content. BlackRock deployed their 'foundation' and 'flare' content styles to address the need for both long term trend analysis, and fast, market-moving content delivered in real time.

Thought leadership works when it's what your clients want to see, talk about, or have access to because it actually helps them with a real challenge. It's what you become known for within your buyer group. If your front line business development teams are keen to use your thought leadership content in their sales meetings, you know it's working because it's opening doors to exciting new discussions for them and that's when you become the envy of the market. The nominees in the thought leadership category have all achieved this and more. How might you transfer their success to your own objectives?

# **About** B2B Marketing

**About the B2B Marketing Awards**

Now in its 13th year, the B2B Marketing Awards is the largest and most prestigious event in the B2B marketing calendar.

A celebration of all those who are transforming the landscape and possibilities of B2B marketing, the awards showcase outstanding work, talent and results from our industry.

Any organisation in the world can enter and win – whether agency side or client side, start-up or SME, established brand or international corporation. Over 800 guests and shortlisted companies will come together to share one amazing and inspiring night at the ceremony in London on 23 November.

To find out more go to b2bmarketing.net/awards

**About B2B Marketing**

Established more than 12 years ago, we are the number one go-to resource for B2B marketers across the globe.

Through our content hub and professional development services – including events, training and networking – B2B Marketing users are empowered with the tools, insight and inspiration they need.

**Our promise to you**

Things change fast in B2B and staying on top of these changes can be a full-time job. So, we do that job for you.

**With our subscriber content, training and events we guarantee you'll:**

- Put your best ever strategies in place
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# About EI

EI Advisory offers B2B media intelligence services to global organisations, giving independent analysis and insight to clients, based on primary research and years of expertise in media markets.

EI specialises in financial services, tech and professional services, and works to identify the best opportunities for B2B marketers across events, broad business media, trade press and associations, compiling these into an integrated, year-round marketing campaign. In doing so, EI helps clients achieve their goals, be it thought leadership, brand awareness or lead generation.

In addition to its research and reporting, EI Advisory also offers negotiation services, sponsorship activation and programme management. Ultimately, EI works to help clients execute effective sponsored content campaigns across media channels, providing them with the best opportunities to reach and engage with their audience in a meaningful way.

Call Tony Jarvis on +44 (0)207 291 9142 or email him at tony.jarvis@ei-a.com

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## Contact us

B2B Marketing
Clover House
147–149 Farringdon Road
London
EC1R 3HN

Tel: +44 (0)20 7014 4920
info@b2bmarketing.net
b2bmarketing.net