



THE NOW AND FUTURE OF EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Navigating an Extended Virtual World

December 2020



FLEISHMANHILLARD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COVID-19 dramatically altered executive communications in 2020 – and will continue to do so in 2021.

The pandemic ushered in a new digital environment that upended the traditional ways that brands and executives participate at events and engage with media and social media.

Trends that were simmering or emerging are accelerating or erupting; the pandemic also has created new opportunities.

Third-party events, leading social platforms and major media have revamped their offerings and created new means to drive thought leadership.

We're now all virtual, all the time. The future will be a hybrid world: part real, part virtual life.

This virtual landscape will require executives and brands to adapt and more cohesively plan to maximize opportunities and speak with one forceful voice.

WE'RE NOT MEETING LIKE WE USED TO – AND WON'T FOR MUCH OF 2021



	APRIL – JUNE 2020	JULY – SEPT. 2020	OCT. – DEC. 2020	JAN. – MARCH 2021
Likelihood of comeback	Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Somewhat Likely
Risk of hosting your event	Very High	Very High	Moderate	Moderate

World Economic Forum says annual meeting in Davos will be delayed until summer 2021

SXSW to return in 2021 with online sessions – and in-person events are possible too 🔑

A List of What's Been Canceled Because of the Coronavirus

1. Source: [MarTech Today](#) (2020)

NAVIGATING A VIRTUAL WORLD



FINDING THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

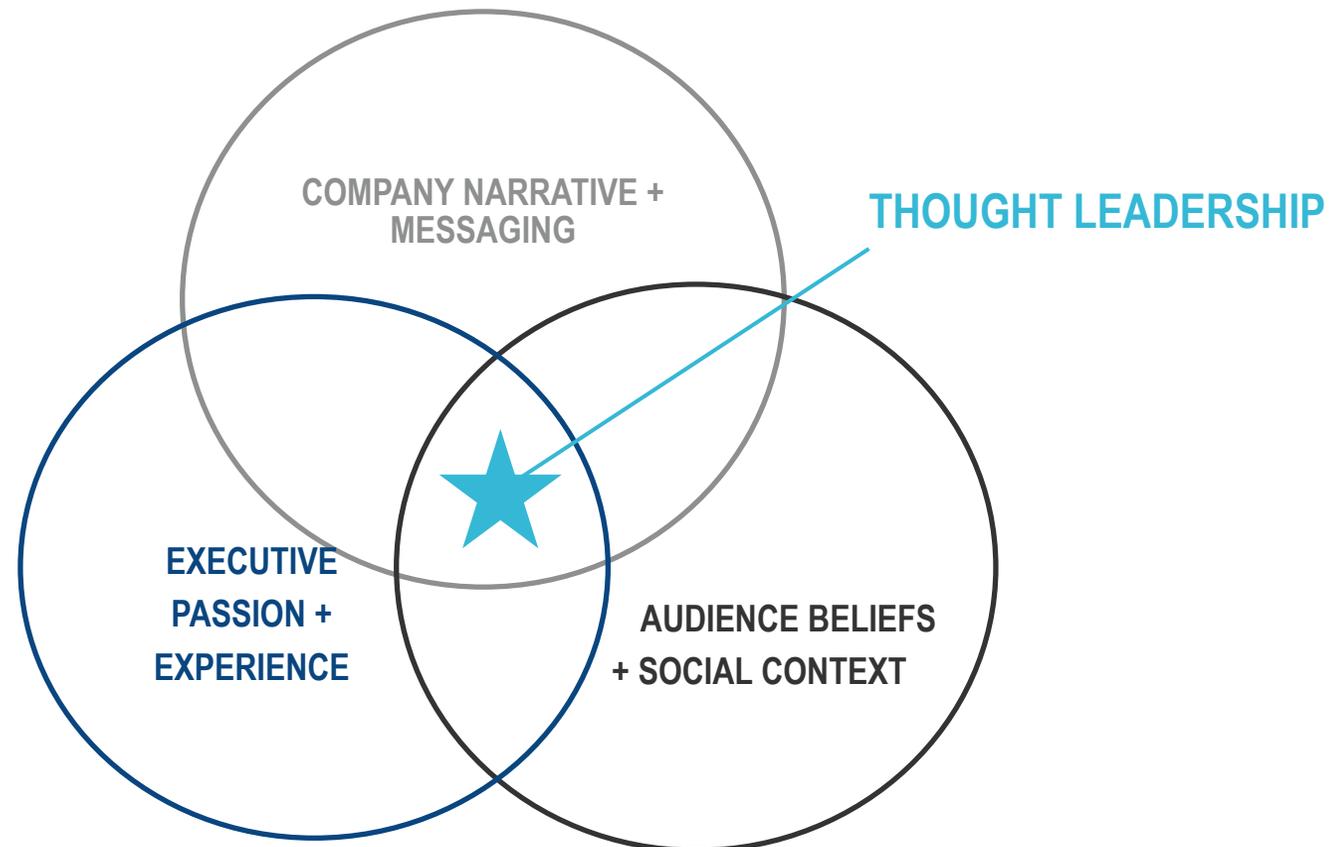
The virtual din of ever-increasing digital opportunities demands thought leaders carve powerful and relevant points of view that stand out from the pack.

What Is Thought Leadership?

- An authentic and unique point of view
- Forward thinking and solution oriented
- Shared insights, lessons learned
- Focused on critical issues
- Grounded in action and commitments

What It Isn't:

- A company news announcement
- A one-and-done, one-way conversation
- A set of messaging statements
- A sales pitch (reputational or product driven)



THE CHANGING NATURE OF EXECUTIVE STORYTELLING

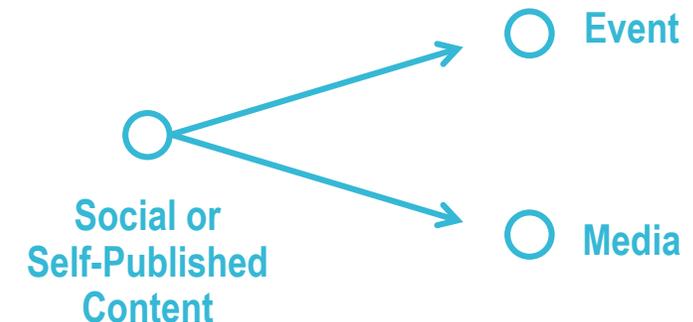
Old Way

Advocate clear points of view via external speaking events and media interviews, then amplify through social media.



New Normal

Start with social media to advocate clear points of view to build stakeholder visibility. Leverage social presence to secure speaking engagements and media coverage.



ESTABLISHING POWERFUL POINTS OF VIEW

The growing ranks of digital opportunities also expand the risk of missed chances and errors, intensifying the need for greater planning, platform development and coordination across the C-suite.

Cultivating a cohesive, influential thought leadership voice in a virtual world requires:

- Centralized teams that work together to manage executive strategy, content and tactics in alignment with business objectives
- Succinct swim lanes that clearly identify individual executive voices and target audiences
- Editorial calendars that outline multi-executive activities across platforms

Three Phases of Platform Development

Discovery

Research and competitive analysis to inform executive foundation, current external perceptions and ideal state.

Output: Executive and competitive audit.

Narrative and Strategy

Articulating executive vision and purpose narrative in alignment with business goals through interviews and media and event curation.

Output: Vision and mission statement, with narrative framework and activation blueprint.

Activate

Bringing the platform to life through measurable, multichannel activation.

Output: Editorial calendar, measurement dashboard.

2021 STORYLINES



THEMATIC NARRATIVE TRENDS

What focus areas are going to be explored for at least the first half of 2021?

- Workforce transformation: Recruiting, retaining talent; new norms + forms
- Digital transformation
- The broader arena of healthcare: COVID-related and impacted
- Economy: Economic recovery, inclusive of the broad spectrum of workers and businesses
- Equity
- Purpose: Call for executive authenticity, transparency and purpose
- Sustainability: Commitment to climate strategies as something core to business

THE NEW POWER OF EXEC SOCIAL



SOCIAL PLATFORMS ARE GATEWAYS TO ENGAGEMENT

The new ecosystem of social drives executive communications outcomes.

SOCIAL DRIVES NEWS

LinkedIn pitchable editorial opportunities

- Podcasts
- Newsletters
- Livestream shows

Media outlet newsletters and are social sharable

- Fortune “The Broadsheet”

SOCIAL DRIVES CONTENT

Multimedia storytelling

- Video, visual, written

LinkedIn Stories

- 24-hour content highlights

LinkedIn “Idea of the Day”

SOCIAL DRIVES CONNECTIONS

Owned events

- Hosting in-real-life gatherings
- e.g.: LinkedIn Live

LINKEDIN'S GROWING INFLUENCE

No. 1 most trusted social thought leadership platform¹

- Engagement up 50% YoY²

Now a news content engine with increasing clout

- 75 journalists across 18 countries + logistical support

Earned media model where editor and publisher relationships can drive coverage

Exec profiles frequently checked by leading third-party events and major media

Top-tier media outlets cite long-form articles and short-form executive posts

Leading executive social platforms have undergone significant transformations and evolved far beyond the traditional job postings and virtual resumes, now behaving more like news content engines.

New suites of social tools offer earned media opportunities, paid content amplification and multimedia formats for sticky executive storytelling.

1. Source: [Business Insider](#) (2020)

2. Source: [Hootsuite](#) (2020)