

02/2013

THE BIG PICTURE

Thought leadership is more than a buzzword: here's how companies give shape to it.

By Mignon van Halderen and Kym Kettler-Paddock



A rapidly growing number of companies claim to be thought leaders. Over the past six months, thought leadership sections have mushroomed on corporate websites. These sections focus on the knowledge and expertise of the organisation. However, these two factors alone do not turn a company into a thought leader and are only pieces (albeit important) of the puzzle.

Thought leader companies are capable of breaking through conventional thought patterns in the market and thereby offering refreshing

insights to customers and other relevant stakeholders. Thought leaders are recognised leaders within their own sectors thanks to their novel point of view on issues that really matter to customers. One case in point is IBM, widely considered a thought leader. Through its 'system perspective', IBM allows its customers to take a fresh look at the issues they are grappling with (such as energy efficiency, water management, traffic congestion).

For example, IBM rejects the traditional way of viewing traffic problems in cities. It argues that society must stop focusing exclusively on

smaller parts of the bigger problems: building a new bridge, broadening a road, putting up traffic signs, assigning rush-hour lanes. Instead, we need to concentrate on the relationships within the whole system and all related systems: the supply chains, the environment, the private sector: how people live and work. IBM gives shape to its perspective by offering effective solutions to customers that help them to improve their businesses or lives. As such, IBM is able to position itself as a reliable thought leader and expert that understands the world of its customers.

That said, thought leadership is not similar to innovation. Innovation is the process that translates an idea or invention into a product or service that customers are prepared to pay for. Innovation disrupts the status quo in product use, but does not necessarily entail novel thinking that goes beyond the product itself. The truth is that many companies have innovative ideas. That's what business is about, after all: providing good services and products to meet customers' needs. However, in an era in which society is facing truly daunting societal, economic and environmental issues, good product ideas are no longer enough to impress customers. They are on the lookout for refreshing viewpoints that break away from old thinking. IBM, for instance, did not just come up with a good idea on how to reduce energy consumption in homes and offices. Importantly, the company gave us a novel and thought-provoking perspective on the whole subject...

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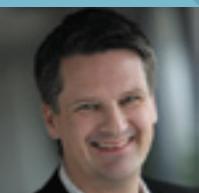


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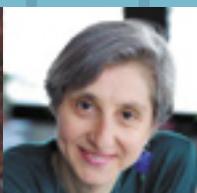
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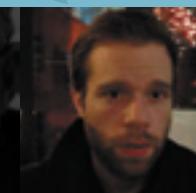
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Facts & Figures

IDENTIFYING THE CHAMPION BRANDS

APCO Worldwide, a global communication strategy firm, has measured the “brand strength of nearly 600 of the world’s largest public and private companies. The Champion Brand Index measures those brands that APCO judges to have most successfully aligned “their business strategy, vision and values with the shared interests of their stakeholders”, according to Margery Kraus, founder and chief executive officer of APCO Worldwide. Promising a “corporate brand-building model for the 21st century”, APCO surveyed more than 70,000 people in 156 countries. Their survey’s model centres around “the four A’s”: “Alignment: meeting stakehold-

ers’ most important expectations; Authenticity: acting in a way that is consistent with what a company says; Attachment: the extent to which stakeholders connect emotionally with a company; Advocacy: advocating on behalf of stakeholders’ interests, applying unique expertise and assets to add value to society.” According to Bryan Dumont, president of APCO Insight, “Companies that perform well against all of the 4 As move from being good corporate brands to becoming Champion Brands, and Champion Brands are winning in this new environment.” One of the discoveries heralded by the survey is ‘stakebrokers’, a group of unusually proactive influencers who “engage with companies from

the perspective of, and with the interests of, all of the different traditional stakeholder groups simultaneously: consumers, community members, environmentalists, policy influencers, employees and investors.” By having a fully-rounded view of the practices, policies and behaviours of companies, these ‘stakebrokers’, says APCO, are “a company’s surest path to becoming a Champion Brand.” The top 50 of these Champion Brands are listed below: from a European perspective, four German-headquartered firms – BMW, Bayer, Volkswagen and Siemens – feature in the global list, as well as Michelin from France. *Taken from APCO Worldwide, Champion Brand Index 2013*

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Top 50 Global

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Adobe	Dell	HTC Corporation	Microsoft	Siemens
Amazon	Discovery Communications	IKEA Systems	Nestlé	Sony Corporation
Apple	Disney	Intel Corporation	NIKE	Stanley Black & Decker
Bayer	Ford Motor Company	IBM	Panasonic	The Coca-Cola Co.
BMW Group	Google	Johnson & Johnson	PepsiCo	Toyota
Canon	H.J. Heinz Company	Kellogg	Philips Electronics	Visa
Caterpillar	The Hershey Company	Levi Strauss & Co	Procter & Gamble	Volkswagen Group
Colgate-Palmolive Co.	Home Depot	LG Electronics	Samsung	Whirlpool
Costco Wholesale Corp.	Honda Motor	MasterCard	SC Johnson & Son	Yahoo!

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COMMUNICATION
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Personnel



Robin Kiely
Head of Communications
Ryanair

Start: February 1

Ryanair announces new head of communications

Ryanair, the Irish low-cost airline, has promoted its communications manager Robin Kiely to the position of head of communications. Former journalist Kiely ("31 - but looks 15" according to Ryanair's official press release) joined Ryanair last April after a career in journalism and replaces Stephen McNamara ("35 - but looks 45 thanks to Europe's media"), who joins the Irish Rugby Football Union after four years at Ryanair. As part of its new communications platform, the airline is to launch a series of media relations initiatives over the coming months, including a dedicated media website.



Xavier Guepet
Group Communications
Director
Steria

Steria appoints Guepet to lead communications

Steria, the multinational information technology services company, has appointed Xavier Guepet to the position of group communications director. Based at the company's head office at Issy-les-Moulineaux (France), he reports directly to Patricia Langrand, executive vice president, director of business development, marketing and communications. Guepet comes to Steria from French multinational Veolia, which he joined in 2001 before ultimately becoming director of the digital and sponsorship department in 2011.



Stephen Jolly
Director of Media &
Communications
MoD

Start: April 2013

Ministry of Defence drafts in Stephen Jolly

The University of Cambridge's communications expert Stephen Jolly has been appointed to the top communications role at the Ministry of Defence (MoD), the United Kingdom government department responsible for implementing the defence policy set by the UK's government and which is the headquarters of the British Armed Forces. Jolly has been director of external affairs and communications at the university since 2005. He steps into the post after the departure of Stephen Wren who left to join the Home Office early in 2012. The post is currently being filled on an interim basis.



Bettina Schragl
Head of Corporate
Communications &
Spokesperson
Immofinanz Group

Start: January 1

New communications head at Immofinanz

Bettina Schragl has taken over the management of communications of Immofinanz Group. As head of corporate communications and press spokesperson Schragl will be responsible for the real estate company's external and internal communications and will be the media contact. Schragl has been employed in business and financial journalism for approximately 18 years. In February 2005 she joined Styria Börse Express as editor-in-chief. She was appointed to executive management at the beginning of 2009.



Jan Hol
Senior Vice President
Communications
VUmc

Start: February 1

Jan Hol moves into the health care field

Jan Hol has taken on the role of senior vice president communications at the Free University Medical Center (VUmc) in Amsterdam. VUmc is one of the leading Dutch medical centers, founded in 2001 from a merger between the Health Science Faculty of Free University and the Free University Hospital. Hol's most recent position was senior vice president communications at printing and copying hardware company Océ (2005-2012); before that he was executive vice president communications at energy company Nuon NV (2002-2005).



Katrin Lauterbach
Spokesperson, Solar Energy
Bosch

Start: February 2013

New faces in Bosch corporate communications

There have been a number of changes to the corporate communications department at Bosch, the global technology and services company. Katrin Lauterbach is head of marketing and communication at the Solar Energy division. Thilo Resenhoeft is corporate spokesperson for technology and innovation. Michael Mack is head of internal and external communications at the company's Gasoline Systems division and Dr Bettina Dannenmann is head of communications for the Power Tools division, replacing Karin Heinlein, who is Bosch headquarters's head of executive communication.

Personnel



Sebastian Blohm
Global Head, External &
Legal Affairs
Tipp24 SE
Start: February 1

Blohm heads external and legal affairs at Tipp24

Sebastian Blohm has joined online lottery company Tipp24 as global head of external and legal affairs. In this newly created position he will support the growth strategy by establishing and expanding international relations, especially at a political level. Blohm has extensive experience of international business: over the past eight years he has been working for Reemtsma, a subsidiary of the UK-based Imperial Tobacco Group. In 2008, he was appointed head of corporate affairs with responsibility for politics and communication after starting there in 2005 as media relations manager.



Matthias Kolbeck
Director of
Communications
Veolia Wasser
Start: February 1

Kolbeck leads communications at Veolia Water Germany

Matthias Kolbeck is the new director of communications at the German division of Veolia Water, the world's largest supplier of water services. He succeeds Petra Warnecke, who moves to the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ). In his new position, Kolbeck retains his previous responsibility as company spokesperson, a role he took on in 2009. Prior to that, he worked as a spokesperson for the Berlin Senate Department of Finance from 2003 after having been a reporter on state politics for the broadcaster Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg from 2000.



Karine Arneodo
Director, Marketing &
Corporate
Communications
John Taylor

Arneodo leads comms and marketing at John Taylor

Karine Arneodo has been named director of marketing and corporate communications at John Taylor, the luxury real-estate specialist in France and internationally. An expert in the luxury sector, Arneodo is responsible for implementing a new marketing strategy to support the global development of John Taylor. Karine Arneodo joins John Taylor from her role as head of marketing and communication at the International Misaki brand of watches and jewelry in Monaco, a position she occupied from 2009 to 2011.

[Read more](#)

Events

14/15.02.2013 – European Agenda & Quadriga University, Brussels

How Brussels works: EU Public Affairs conference

Representatives from businesses and experts in EU public affairs meet in Brussels for two days of information exchange and networking. Hear speakers from Vodafone, McDonald's and Jaguar Land Rover (among others) and representatives of the European Parliament and Council.

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28.02.2013 – Ketchum Pleon, London

PR Analytics conference

For too long, PR professionals the world over have been guilty of not measuring the impact and outcomes of their work. But times are changing. The insight opportunities offered by online and social media, means that there is a commercial advantage to ensuring that you measure and analyse the impact of your public relations.

[Read more](#)

28.02/01.03.2013 – The P.world, Sofia

The Corporate Communications Experience

Featuring presentations by some of the world's biggest PR experts, the Sofia Corporate Communications Experience will enable you to create a cutting edge public relations and communications strategy in times of economic certainty and recession.

[Read more](#)

12.03.2013 – PRWeek, London

Crisis Comms & Reputation Management In Financial Services

This event aims to help communications professionals working in the financial services industry navigate their way through the reputational minefield to ensure a strong profile amongst customers and stakeholders and consequently a strong, stable business performance.

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Jobs



International
Water Association

Media & Communications Director

Deadline: 28.02.2013 **Location:** Netherlands

International Water Association

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Global Marketing & Communications Privacy Lead

Deadline: 10.03.2013 **Location:** Amsterdam, Netherlands

Philips



Associate Director of Communications & Engagement

Deadline: 04.04.2013 **Location:** Barnsley, United Kingdom

Barnsley Hospital NHS Trust Foundation



Head, Public Relations & Information

Deadline: 28.02.2013 **Location:** Vienna, Austria

OPEC - Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries



Marketing & Communications Manager

Deadline: 15.02.2013 **Location:** Dublin, Ireland

Trinity Foundation



Benelux Communications Manager

Deadline: 28.02.2013 **Location:** Diegem, Belgium

Johnson & Johnson Medical



Senior Advisor Communication – FMO

Deadline: 10.03.2013 **Location:** Brussels, Belgium

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