Crisil
Coalition
Greenwich

Thought Leadership: Now a Deciding Factor in Manager Selection

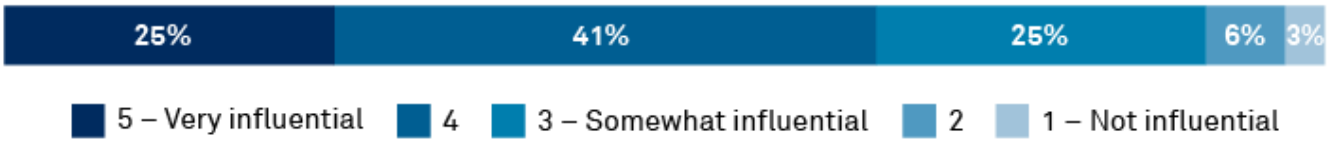
April 19, 2023

Investors Are Seeking New Differentiators

Thought leadership is easily and often recognized as a “nice to have” value-add. Half of U.S. investors in a recent Coalition Greenwich study identified it as a key contributor to a best-in-class brand, and a similar percentage reported it was fundamental in gaining familiarity with an asset manager. But faced with fee compression and low dispersion of returns in many asset classes, institutional investors and pension fund consultants are increasingly incorporating thought leadership and knowledge transfer as “need to have” factors in their manager selection process.

In the same study, two-thirds of global investors reported thought leadership had a high impact on the likelihood of winning mandates. In a hypercompetitive and highly commoditized market, managers that create, package and distribute differentiated thought leadership with actionable advice can tip the scales in their favor.

Impact of Thought Leadership on Likelihood of Winning Mandates



Note: Based on 298 respondents.
Source: Coalition Greenwich Voice of Client – 2022 Maximizing Brand Impact Study

Pandemic Impact and the “New Normal” Reset

With the onset of COVID-19, asset managers embraced and adapted to virtual relationship management. Almost overnight, managers began to produce podcasts and webinars, and develop social media touchpoints. It was a remarkably nimble shift to information delivery as institutional investors, facing unprecedented market conditions—and elevated free time previously taken up by commutes, long meetings and social activities—reported a meaningful increase in their thought leadership consumption during this time.

But now the pendulum has swung back, and managers are struggling to fine-tune their thought leadership strategy. Investors are inundated with content, and with only so many hours in a day, much of it goes unconsumed. In our annual Institutional Investor Study, the top 10 managers who were most consistently selected as an asset owner’s “best source of intellectual capital” in 2021 saw an average decrease of 10% in those citations.

This flattening of the curve could be great news for the smaller shops, as the traditional thought leadership powerhouses slip in their rankings, but we haven't seen a corresponding uptick from lower-ranked managers. In other words, the market is flooded, and investors are having a harder time identifying exactly who their best source of content is. Client demand for thought leadership isn't decreasing, but it's becoming increasingly difficult for managers to stand out in the sea of offerings.

Thought Leadership 2023 and Beyond – Best Practices

Our latest research module, fielded in Q1 2023 as part of our annual Institutional Investors Study, seeks to better quantify the components of successful thought leadership strategy from the perspective of institutional asset owners. Beyond the easy-to-preach best practices—timely, relevant, actionable—successful thought leadership hinges on developing a partnership mindset with clients and matching their content consumption patterns with the right deployment strategy.

In this blog series, we aim to identify some basic patterns within investor groups, such as the preferred frequency, length and medium of content consumption. Beyond that, we'll look at more nuanced components: Do investors prefer to seek out thought leadership on their own, or have it delivered to them at a specific cadence? Are investors widening or narrowing their horizons in terms of where to access content? For which asset classes—and which issues within those asset classes—are they turning to thought leadership?

We don't expect to see a clear, one-size-fits-all answer. Investors are consistent in their articulation of the key role that content plays in their relationships with managers, but in a diluted marketplace, deployment strategy can determine whether content is consumed or not. Tailoring content to fit investor type, size and behavior is a science that all managers wishing to gain an edge in the marketplace need to learn.

Follow our blog series on the latest updates from the asset management industry as we explore the results of this new study.

---

www.greenwich.com | ContactUs@greenwich.com

Coalition Greenwich, a division of CRISIL, an S&P Global Company, is a leading global provider of strategic benchmarking, analytics and insights to the financial services industry.

We specialize in providing unique, high-value and actionable information to help our clients improve their business performance.

Our suite of analytics and insights encompass all key performance metrics and drivers: market share, revenue performance, client relationship share and quality, operational excellence, return on equity, behavioral drivers, and industry evolution.

About CRISIL

CRISIL is a leading, agile and innovative global analytics company driven by its mission of making markets function better. It is majority owned by S&P Global Inc., a leading provider of transparent and independent

ratings, benchmarks, analytics, and data to the capital and commodity markets worldwide.

CRISIL is India's foremost provider of ratings, data, research, analytics, and solutions with a strong record of growth, culture of innovation, and global footprint.

It has delivered independent opinions, actionable insights and efficient solutions to over 100,000 customers through businesses that operate from India, the U.S., the U.K., Argentina, Poland, China, Hong Kong, and Singapore.

For more information, visit www.crisil.com

Disclaimer and Copyright

This Document is prepared by Crisil Coalition Greenwich, which is a part of Crisil Ltd, a company of S&P Global. All rights reserved. This Document may contain analysis of commercial data relating to revenues, productivity and headcount of financial services organisations (together with any other commercial information set out in the Document). The Document may also include statements, estimates and projections with respect to the anticipated future performance of certain companies and as to the market for those companies' products and services.

The Document does not constitute (or purport to constitute) an accurate or complete representation of past or future activities of the businesses or companies considered in it but rather is designed to only highlight the trends. This Document is not (and does not purport to be) a comprehensive Document on the financial state of any business or company. The Document represents the views of Crisil Coalition Greenwich as on the date of the Document and Crisil Coalition Greenwich has no obligation to update or change it in the light of new or additional information or changed circumstances after submission of the Document.

This Document is not (and does not purport to be) a credit assessment or investment advice and should not form basis of any lending, investment or credit decision. This Document does not constitute nor form part of an offer or invitation to subscribe for, underwrite or purchase securities in any company. Nor should this Document, or any part of it, form the basis to be relied upon in any way in connection with any contract relating to any securities. The Document is not an investment analysis or research and is not subject to regulatory or legal obligations on the production of, or content of, investment analysis or research.

The data contained in the Document is based upon a particular bank's scope, which reflects a bank's data submission, business structure, and sales revenue Reporting methodology. As a result, any data contained in the Document may not be directly comparable to data presented to another bank. For franchise benchmarking, Crisil Coalition Greenwich has implemented equal ranking logic on aggregate results i.e., when sales revenues are within 5% of at least one competitor ahead, a tie is shown and designated by = (where actual ranks are shown). Entity level data has no equal ranking logic implemented and therefore, on occasion, the differences between rank bands can be very close mathematically.

The data in this Document may reflect the views reported to Crisil Coalition Greenwich by the research participants. Interviewees may be asked about their use of and demand for financial products and services and about investment practices in relevant financial markets. Crisil Coalition Greenwich compiles the data received, conducts statistical analysis and reviews for presentation purposes to produce the final results.

THE DOCUMENT IS COMPILED FROM SOURCES CRISIL COALITION GREENWICH BELIEVES TO BE RELIABLE. CRISIL COALITION GREENWICH DISCLAIMS ALL REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES, EXPRESSED OR IMPLIED, WITH RESPECT TO THIS DOCUMENT, INCLUDING AS TO THE VALIDITY, ACCURACY, REASONABLENESS OR COMPLETENESS OF THE INFORMATION, STATEMENTS, ASSESSMENTS, ESTIMATES AND PROJECTIONS, ANY WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE ARISING OUT OF THE USE OF ALL OR ANY OF THIS DOCUMENT. CRISIL COALITION GREENWICH ACCEPTS NO LIABILITY WHATSOEVER FOR ANY DIRECT, INDIRECT OR CONSEQUENTIAL LOSS OR DAMAGE OF ANY KIND ARISING OUT OF THE USE OF ALL OR ANY OF THIS DOCUMENT.

Crisil Coalition Greenwich is a part of Crisil Ltd., a company of S&P Global. ©2026 Crisil Ltd. All rights reserved.