

The Influencer Project:

THE SHORTEST MARKETING CONFERENCE EVER

60  speakers
 minutes

6
July



Sam Rosen

CEO, ThoughtLead



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A Case Study
+
An Opportunity to Work with
ThoughtLead

A brief warning: I *am* going to make you an offer at the end of this case study. It will involve asking for money. If that makes you uncomfortable, angry, or violently aggressive, you are free to stop watching this presentation whenever you'd like. Really, we'll still be friends, and I won't hold it against you.

But I'm also going to share virtually *everything* we did to make The Influencer Project a success, step-by-step. My ultimate goal is for you to walk away from this presentation with the know-how to pull off your own "big idea."

So with that, let's start with the birth of our own
“big idea”: the 60-in-60 conference.

The Birth of an Idea

My business partner, Steve Haase, and I were traveling from Philadelphia to New York. We started to let our creativity run wild, and began thinking of big ideas, ideas that could put our brand on the map, that would stand out.

The Birth of an Idea

We didn't want it to take months upon months to execute, so the question we asked ourselves was:

“What's something that can bring *a lot* of people together in a very short period of time?”

The Birth of an Idea

But before coming up with the idea, we asked:

“What do people *really* care about? What’s something that our tribe truly wants more of?”

The first word that emerged was “influence.” We cared about it, and we knew everyone else in our tribe did too. So we went with that.

The Birth of an Idea

Then, the idea popped out of my mouth, as if the ghost of Orville Redenbacher suddenly entered my neo-cortex:

“What if we asked 60 thought leaders to speak for 60 seconds each about increasing digital influence...and called it ‘the shortest marketing conference ever’?”

Steve and I looked at each other and smiled. We knew the idea had legs.

No Time to Lose

We wanted to launch it in less than a month, though, so we **didn't have any time to waste**. All of the typical concerns, such as, "But will it work? Can we do it? Is it reasonable?" got thrown out the window. We were **on a mission**, and were going to make it happen no matter what.

No Time to Lose

And that's a **key point**: we were willing to go all the way to see our idea come to fruition. There was absolutely nothing half-hearted about it. We had pursued “great” ideas before, but had never been as committed as we were now.

Inviting the Influential

We started contacting people right away. Our subject line was, for most of our speaker invitations, “**60-second interview :)**”. We kept them short—usually between 6 and 12 sentences—and wrote in a collegial but conversational manner.

Inviting the Influential

Here's a sample of the email:

60-second interview Inbox | X

☆ **Sam Rosen** to [redacted] [show details](#) Jun 8 Reply ▼

Hi [redacted],

Hope you're well. We haven't met personally, but as an idea guy, I'm an admirer of your work. I'm reaching out because my company, ThoughtLead, is curating and hosting "the shortest marketing conference ever" on July 6th, called The Influencer Project. We're interview 60 of the web's leading thinkers for 60 seconds each on how entrepreneurs can increase their digital influence in 60 days. :)

Would you be interested in speaking about the lesson(s) you've learned from [redacted] for one minute? All we'd ask is that you promote it to [redacted]'s social media and email channels.

Thanks in advance for your consideration. Look forward to hearing from you!

Warmly,
Sam

Inviting the Influential

An astonishing number of people said “yes.” The three ThoughtLead co-founders—Steve Haase, Christiana Briddell, and me—began contacting all of the thought leaders we knew and liked. We used both our own experience—books we’d read, blogs we subscribe to—**and indexes like the AdAge Power 150 and Alltop.**

A Method to the Madness

We started with people we had *some* connection to—whether we had met them once personally, or subscribed to their newsletters, or read their blog. Then, we mentioned who had said “yes” to new influencers we were reaching out to but didn’t know personally yet.

A Method to the Madness

And as we got speakers on board, we reached out to digital media outlets, like Read Write Web, Which Test Won, and MarketingProfs, to see if they were interested in partnering, by sharing the event with their communities. Given the caliber of speakers we had gotten on board, many of them said “yes.”

Early Wins Build Momentum

As soon as we had gotten our initial 15-20 speakers on board, we put up the website.

Tom Fadiel of ErraticWisdom.com designed the header graphic.

Juanma Teixido of TeixidoHQ.com designed and developed the page.

Early Wins Build Momentum

Then our thoughts turned to sponsorship.

HubSpot is one of our favorite brands, and we were already customers. They had expressed interest in sponsoring one of our other virtual conferences, so we approached them about The Influencer Project. We just knew this was the event for them to back, but we were floored when they actually said “yes.”

Early Wins Build Momentum

When we had enough speakers and a website we were proud of, we reached out to Lenox, MA-based Winstanley Partners to see if they were interested in doing our PR. They were.

Pretty soon, the word started to spread—tweets, Facebook posts, blogs.

It Wasn't Magical

Now, people didn't "just" start tweeting it and joining our Facebook group.

Using InfusionSoft as our email service provider, we programmed in an automatic welcome message that *included* both of those links.

It Wasn't Magical

And we “auto-populated” tweets. So the raw URL looked like this (watch out, it's pretty ugly):

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```
http://twitter.com/home?status=Join%20me%20for%20the%20"shortest%20marketing%20conference%20ever."%2060%20speakers%20in%2060%20minutes:%20http://j.mp/bffIVj.%20Plz%20RT!)
```

It Wasn't Magical

And then used Bit.ly to turn it into:

<http://bit.ly/InfluencerTweet>

All people had to do was press "Tweet," and this is what showed up: *Join me for the "shortest marketing conference ever." 60 speakers in 60 minutes: <http://j.mp/bffIVj>. Plz RT!*

It Wasn't Magical

Similarly, we used Bit.ly to invite them to join our Facebook group:

<http://bit.ly/InfluencerFB>

And that sent them straight to our Facebook page.

Let's Have Some Fun

As buzz started to build—people we didn't even know were blogging and tweeting about it—we decided to do something fun: hold a contest for one deserving individual to become the 60th speaker.

We set up a “Welcome” tab on our Facebook page to introduce people to the contest, and told contestants to use #influencer in all of their tweets.

Let's Have Some Fun

People were participating, but things *really* shot through the roof when we sent out an email to our list.

The subject line was, “Will you be the 60th speaker?”

Suddenly, hundreds of people were tweeting their ideas on increasing digital influence.

Technology and Tweets

Now, we had also put a “Tweet This Page” button on our homepage, which had the same auto-populated tweet as our email.

That, plus some guest blog posts and interviews, were really beginning to build momentum.

Down to the Wire

On Friday, we chose our 60th speaker.

On Monday, **we sent an email out to all confirmed speakers with two auto-populated tweets**: one for the day before, and one for the day of. And we used Bit.ly to shorten the Facebook Sharer technology (<http://www.facebook.com/share/>).

Being Nice

Making everything really easy for our speakers was key. And I have to give credit to Jim Kukral for really pushing us to “do the work” for our speakers.

He was right. Bending over backwards for our speakers, and using the available technology to “**automate**” the process as much as **possible** for them, made all the difference.

The Thought That Saved Our Event

On the day of the event, we sent our list an email reminder.

And, almost as an afterthought, we told them that the “backchannel” chat on Twitter would use the hashtag #influencer.

That turned out to be our saving grace. **Nearly 3,000 tweets went out *in the hour itself*** with the #influencer hashtag alone.

A Community is Formed

People were re-tweeting each other, responding to each other's commentary, sharing which bits of advice they loved the most.

And we were right there with them, diving into the conversation, answering questions, and doing the best we possibly could to keep up.

A Community is Formed

And then it hit us: **a community was forming.**

It was amazing.

Metrics to Inspire

To date, over 50 blogs have published an article on The Influencer Project.

More than 4,500 people have registered.

At least 4,000 tweets have gone out about the event.

Metrics to Inspire

And that was *all within 4-5 weeks of hatching the idea.*

Within a month, we became part of something that's bigger than our own company. That hit home when, using SurveyMonkey, we sent out a simple 12-question survey after the event was over, and found that more than 420 people responded.

Making friends

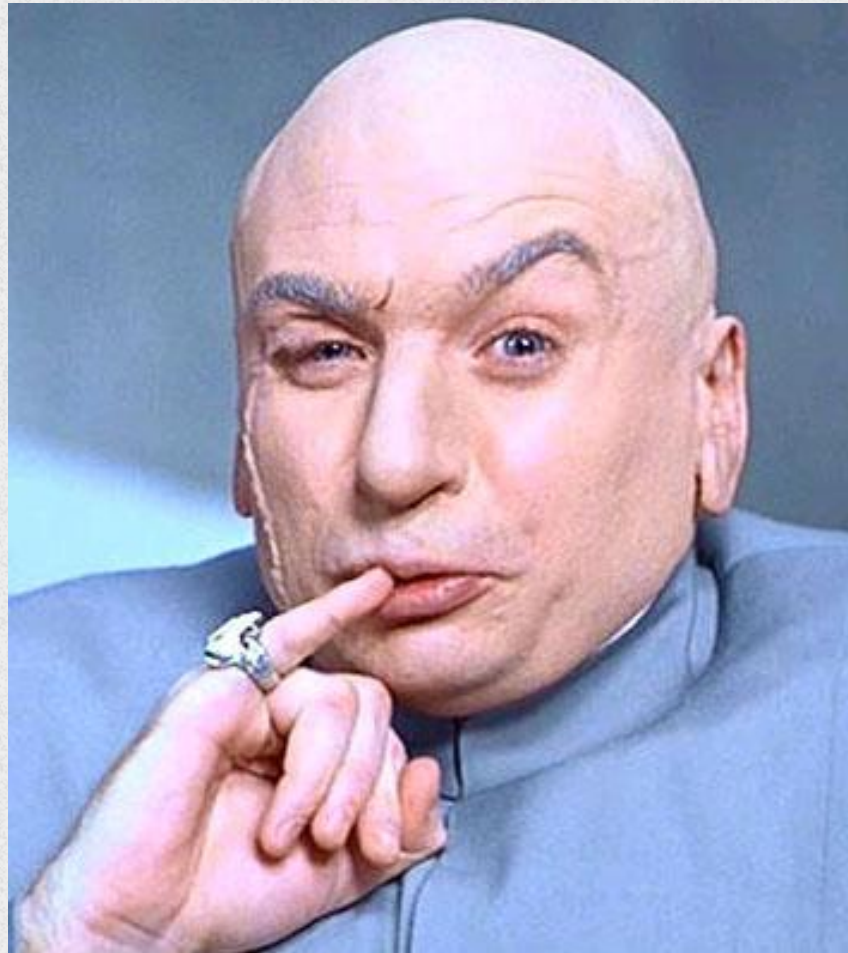
We asked participants what *they* wanted to see. We wrote humorous error messages. As @TheGirlPie picked up on, we added “Custom” as a gender option.

Each of those little things matters. We wanted people to feel part of something. To be treated like human beings, not eyeballs. And all of that contributes to a certain “brand ethos,” a “digital intimacy,” if you will, that transcends technical barriers.

The Transition Slide

As you can imagine, we learned some important lessons along with way. On this page, you'll find some links to articles describing what worked, what didn't, and what we'll do differently next time. And now, on to...

The Offer



The Offer

Here's the skinny: I want to work with a small group of entrepreneurs and business owners to help them create their own success stories of fun, effective, and innovative campaigns like The Influencer Project.

The Offer

And because this is a test group, I'm going to offer ThoughtLead's consulting services at a radically reduced rate.

The Offer

But that also means that this is open only for a radically small number of people: **10, to be exact** (and I mean that—it's not just a silly marketing gimmick).

Why?

The whole purpose of the offer is to help you, the entrepreneur and small business owner, convert your knowledge into digital influence—using the same principles and strategies that made the Influencer Project so successful.

What Is It?

That's why we're calling it **The Influential Thought Leader**. Because our whole mission is to empower innovators like you to share your ideas with the world, and we want to help you turn them into greater influence and income.

How It Works

You'll work closely with me and our core team.

We'll collaborate with you through the **Five Stages of Digital Influence: Understand, Speak, Create, Spread, Sell.**

What We'll Cover

There are several points we'll be focusing on:

- Gaining a better understanding of **what your market wants**, why they buy, and how they talk about you and your competitors' products and services
- **Coaching you to speak about what you're doing** in a much more powerful and impactful way
- Creating an **innovative campaign** idea that makes you **stand out**
- **Helping you leverage social media**, email, and other online channels to spread the campaign far and wide
- Turning the leads you generate from the campaign into **new business**

What You'll Receive

As I mentioned earlier, we'll be collaborating with you throughout the Five Stages of Digital Influence. Each stage has its own set of deliverables and outcomes.

Let's get into each one.

Stage 1: Understand

It's common knowledge: if we don't *understand* our customers and prospects, we won't have the influence we want. And even though most of us *think* we understand our target market, we often don't—and *especially* in terms of their online behavior and psychology.

Stage 1: Understand

So the first thing we'll do is send you a questionnaire and do our own digital analysis of what your customers' main pain points, motivations, and ideals are. We call it Market Listening™. And we'll create a **“Market Listening” document that you can hold on to forever.**

Stage 2: Speak

After we gain deeper insight into your market, we'll move on to you and your business. How are you communicating what you're doing? Are you conveying your brand in the stickiest way possible? Are your brand values actually lining up with your market's hopes, dreams, frustrations, aspirations?

Stage 2: Speak

In Stage 2, our team will first send you a detailed questionnaire. Then, you and I will have **2 phone calls** to hone in on your ideal positioning—so that **you talk about what you're doing with impact and emotional power**. And I'll write up a document with a collection of headlines, taglines, talking points, and descriptions of what your company does.

Stage 2: Awkward Sidenote

I don't like to toot my own horn too often, but I did think I'd mention here that one of the greatest copywriters of our time, Joe Vitale, did say that I was "a genius at writing copy," and my positioning work consistently gets very high praise. Okay. There, I said it. Now, let's move on. 😊

Stage 3: Create

Now we understand your market, and we're speaking about your brand in a powerful and sticky way. But none of that will amount to much unless we create **innovative and creative** campaigns that get you noticed. And in Stage 3, we'll work directly together to come up with the big, outside-the-box campaign idea that can grab attention and make the marketplace look twice.

Stage 3: Create

We'll get on **2 more calls**, and by the end, you'll have an idea for a campaign that meets the criteria of what made the Influencer Project successful. And I'll develop not only the concept, but also **the name**—and I'll make sure the **URL is available** for the campaign—as well as the **positioning copy**. You'll walk away from Stage 3 energized and bursting at the seams to get your name out there.

Stage 4: Spread

Ideas, though, are useless without a strategy for executing them. That's why, in Stage 4, I'll create a strategy for you to actually *implement* the idea. Based on our experience with the Influencer Project and previous campaigns, I'll share what steps to take for making the campaign an outstanding success.

Stage 4: Spread

During Stage 4, **we'll get on the phone again** and develop your roadmap. One of ThoughtLead's team members will then turn our call into a **powerful Execution Roadmap** that you can use to guide your implementation efforts—so you won't be left wondering what to do next. We'll include **Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, email, blogging, media partnerships**, and everything else involved in spreading your campaign far and wide.

Stage 5: Sell

Okay. We're at the last stage of the process now—Sell. You can drive all the traffic you want, but if you don't have a plan in place to turn that into new business, your investment, while perhaps not entirely lost, won't be returned in the way you want it to.

Stage 5: Sell

In Stage 5, we'll discuss **how to generate demand** from your campaign. I'll share some of the tactics we used at ThoughtLead to have **a larger pipeline than ever before** after The Influencer Project. We'll **get on a call**, and then a ThoughtLead team member will turn our call into a **Post-Campaign Sales Strategy**, so that the question of, "How do I make money from this?" doesn't go unanswered.

And That's a Wrap

So there you have it: five stages, intimate consultation and coaching, one-on-one work. Here's a summary of what you're getting:

- 6 intensive, **one-on-one calls** with me
- A **Market Listening™ summary** of what your market wants and how they think
- A **Brand Positioning document** with “sticky” language describing what you do
- A **Disruptive Campaign Concept™** designed to get you noticed and build influence
- An **Execution Roadmap™** so that you know what you're doing and how to implement it across all of your marketing channels
- A **Post-Campaign Sales Strategy** to make money from your campaign

Complimentary Learning Resources

Or, as they say where I come from, “bonuses.” Here’s what else you’ll receive:

- **Social Media Crash Course.** To use social media, you have to “get” it. So we’ll also give you a guide with the core concepts and **foundations of social media**, including how to use Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube.
- **Premium Interviews.** One of our previous speaker series now retails for \$200. We’ll give you interviews with thought leaders like Chris Brogan, Danielle LaPorte, Dave Navarro, Adam Baker, and more. Each will give you **fresh insight into what it takes to succeed online.**
- **Online Services Guide.** It’s tough to know where to look for designers, developers, and the like. We’ll provide you with our proprietary guide that helps you navigate the technical maze of building your website and digital presence.

But Was The Influencer Project an Anomaly?

Now, if I were Don Corleone, and I were watching this presentation right now, I'd probably have questions. Like, *Why did Barzini cross me?* And, *Are these ThoughtLead guys just one-trick ponies, or do they actually know what they're doing?* Good questions, both of them; with apologies to Don Corleone, I can only answer the latter.

Past Successes

Here are the quick-and-dirty details: one of the first ventures I ever started generated 15,000 leads in three months—with no significant costs. Another one of our clients built a subscriber list of over 60,000 in nine months—also nearly for free. We helped an independent movie project increase its audience by 13,000 in a month; a sports nutrition company go from zero to 12,000 online leads and increase its web sales dramatically in under a year; and a niche magazine gain 14,000 new leads in three months.

Adding Value to Value

So yes, we've "added a lot of value" over the years. And even though that may be an overused term in business circles, there *is* a whole lot of value going around in this package. Which means that you're probably wondering just how many six figures it's going to cost you.

Let's Make This Happen

Unlike Dr. Evil, though, I'm not going to ask you for anywhere close to one million dollars. Nor am I going to ask you to pay us Madison Avenue rates. To be honest, most of our current packages begin at \$10,000—plus a percentage of revenue earned. But I don't want to break your bank. And as I mentioned in the beginning, this is a beta offering for a very small group of clients.

Let's Make This Happen

The retail value of The Influential Thought Leader is \$5,000. But because this is a beta launch, I'd like to extend it to you today for 50% off our normal rates—which means that, if you're one of the first 10 people to act, **you can work with the ThoughtLead team for just \$2,500.**

There's One Pretty Big Catch

We're entirely booked at the moment and going away for three weeks in August. So our first actual call will be in the **first week of September**. In the meantime, though, we'll be sending you the detailed questionnaires to fill out and interviews to listen to that will help you jumpstart the process. Then, when we're back, we'll hop on the phone and get started right away.

And There's One Other Thing

Now, my lawyer friends would kill me if I didn't include this particular disclaimer: I can in no way guarantee that you'll be able to replicate our results. Nor should you expect to get the same results we did. Every campaign, brand, individual, pet rock, and Internet-café-slash-mobile-office is different—and, yes, results may vary.

The Good Old Refund Clause

If Santa Claus had a universal refund clause, he'd have some seriously busy elves. Well, we're the same way at ThoughtLead—minus the elves. This is a service, and to offer a refund would be to compromise our time and expertise. That means that all sales are final, and once we're working together, we're in it until the end.

Now It's Your Turn

So there you have it: you can be one of only 10 people to work intimately with the team behind the Influencer Project—for 50% off our typical rates. We're passionate about helping entrepreneurs, business owners, and brands build their digital influence, and we'd be excited to help you increase yours, too.

Buy Now!

To get started, simply click the first button below this video. If you have questions and want one of us to call you, just fill out the form underneath that button, and we'll get back to you shortly. Remember, we really can only work with *10* businesses for this price, so I do encourage you to act immediately if you're interested in increasing your digital influence this fall with the ThoughtLead team.

Thanks for Watching

Well, I have to say, it's been a pleasure. I had fun creating this presentation, and I hope you genuinely enjoyed watching it, too. My email is to the right of my picture below, so feel free to shoot me a note with your thoughts. Thanks for watching, and talk soon!



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