EXTRACT

SOURCE GLOBAL RESEARCH

November 2019

# Missing the point

## Why consulting firms might be targeting the wrong people with their thought leadership

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**Our latest research into how people use thought leadership reveals a stark divide between people at the very top of organisations and those underneath them.**

The good news is that CXOs, by and large, love thought leadership. The bad news is that the senior managers sitting underneath them don't. That's a problem because, while it can't do any harm to have CXOs on your side, the senior managers are the ones buying consulting services.



 

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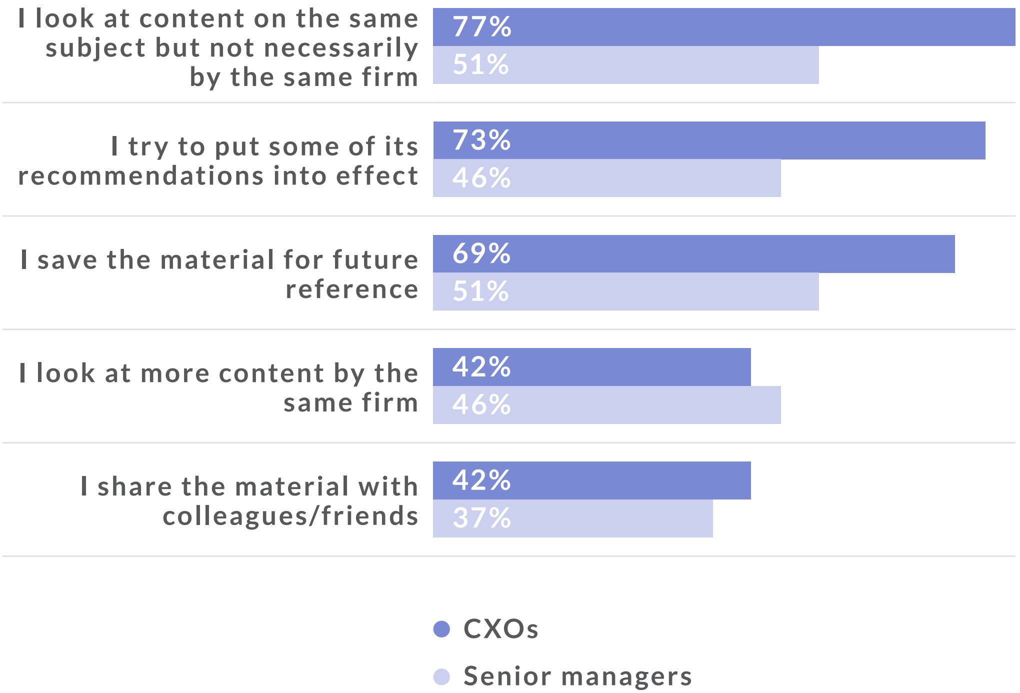
## The great divide

Across a range of topics, the difference between the opinions of CXOs and their subordinates is significant, but perhaps the most persuasive and important evidence of this is found at the end of the thought leadership journey that we tracked in our research: What the two groups do as a result of reading content. Across the five types of responses we asked about, an average 60% of CXOs said they took action, while just 46% of senior managers* did so. And nowhere was the difference more marked than it was around the question of whether people actually put the recommendations in a piece of thought leadership into effect: 73% of CXOs said they tried to do so, while 46% of senior managers made the same claim. Why? What's working so well for CXOs? And what, by contrast, is not working for senior managers?

*What, if anything, do you do as a result of reading business-related content?*




*We refer to "CXOs" and "senior managers" throughout this report, for the sake of simplicity, but a more detailed breakdown of the two groupings can be found at the back of the report.



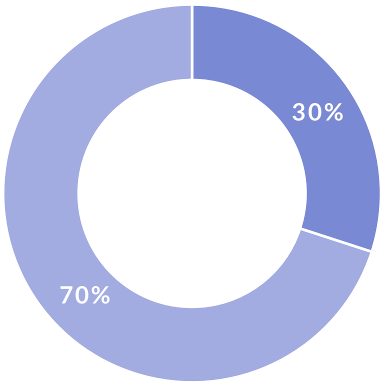
## Conclusion

It’s hard to find fault with the work consulting firms have done to target people at the top of organisations with their thought leadership, and the fact that it’s so much easier to find and please these people than anyone else makes it all the more understandable that they’ve become the priority.

But if that’s happening at the cost of making real inroads with people lower down, who may be the ones most likely to buy consulting services, then this seems less easy to excuse; particularly when theirs is a need being less well served by anyone else. They may be more demanding about the content they need than their colleagues at the top, and they may even be more lazy when it comes to looking for it, but right now there’s a very real chance that the people who matter most are getting the least.

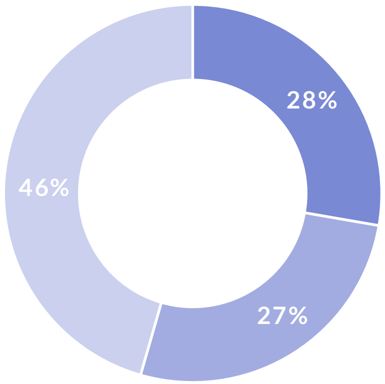
## Respondents (N=97)

*Respondents by organisation size*



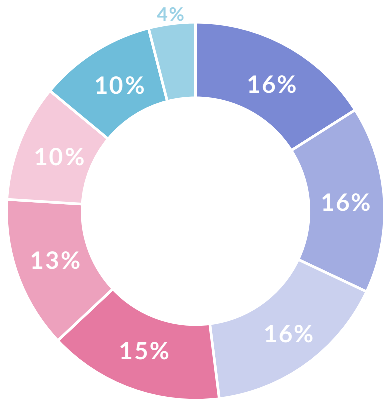

- 1,000–4,999 employees
- 5,000+ employees

*Respondents by organisation responsibility level*



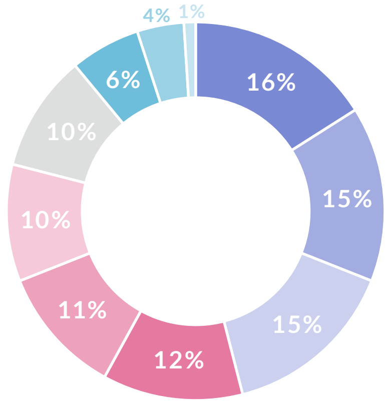

- CEO or other CXO/ board level management
- Head of Department
- Direct report into CXO/ board level management

*Respondents by organisation function*




- Technology
- Operations
- Strategy
- Financial management
- Customer services
- Sales & marketing
- Risk
- Other

*Respondents by organisation sector*




- Retail
- Technology, media & telecoms
- Manufacturing
- Healthcare
- Financial services
- Public sector
- Other
- Energy & resources
- Pharma & biotech
- Services



# Programme schedule for 2019

| Reports 2019 | Market Data and Analysis | Client and Brand Insights | Emerging Trends |
|---|---|---|---|
| January | Forecasts for 2019 | | |
| February | UK | UK<br>Nordics<br>GCC | |
| March | GCC<br>Benelux<br>Nordics | France<br>Germany<br>US | The Future of Pricing |
| April | France<br>DACH<br>Southern Europe | Energy & Resources<br>Financial Services<br>Healthcare<br>Technology, Media & Telecoms | |
| May | US<br>Eastern Europe & Russia | | The Value Problem |
| June | Canada | | |
| July | South America<br>Australia | Perceptions of Audit Firms<br>Perceptions of Risk Firms<br>Perceptions of Tax Firms | |
| August | Africa<br>Risk | | The Make-Buy Decision |
| September | India<br>Energy & Resources<br>Planning for Growth in 2020 | Talent Attractiveness in 2019 | |
| October | Financial Services<br>China<br>South East Asia | | |
| November | Japan<br>Healthcare<br>Technology, Media & Telecoms | | The Future of Delivery |
| December | Tax | | |

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A powerful research tool that allows subscribers to keep up to date with the latest content being produced and maximise their return on investment. A series of reports that analyse the quality and effectiveness of thought leadership are published throughout the year.

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## We provide advice and custom research services to the world's most successful professional services firms, helping them to identify, and develop strategic responses to, their most pressing opportunities and challenges.

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- Deep market and competitor analysis
- Acquisition strategy
- Proposition strategy and development
- Brand and client sentiment analysis
- Thought leadership strategy, development, and review

For more information about any of these, please visit our website or get in touch.

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# Source Global Research is a leading provider of information about the market for professional services.

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