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*Understanding customer needs and trends.
Honing your message and strategies to meet market demands.
Building a reputation to create and sustain your leadership.
Demonstrating value.*

These are all paramount to your success.

Inspiration and ideas come from a wide variety of sources. The ability to integrate new thoughts and make the strategy + communications + leadership link helps companies and executives alike elevate their performance.

Because it's challenging at the top, [The Aerie Company](#) offers you useful and thought provoking ideas to help you soar to new heights. Enjoy these latest insights.



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Breaking Through Business Malaise

It's not news that people are tired of being marketed and sold to in the traditional manner. Yet the malaise threatens organizations from demonstrating their real customer and industry value. As companies build their market leadership, the aim should be to arm teams with what's of most value to your customers and prospects - information and insights about their sector, their issues, their challenges. Imagine how refreshing it is to drop the 'hard sell' and to have conversations that show deeper business and industry insights.



For middle market companies looking for a refreshed and more relevant way of engaging with clients and prospects, there are a number of creative, free and inexpensive approaches to maximize marketing budget with research. Today few companies have extra funds sitting around and, when they do, research isn't typically at the top of the list of spending options. However, the good news is that quality research doesn't necessarily have to break the bank, particularly when survey results can provide rich material for

campaigns to help bolster your leadership.

Consider strategic tactics like the following that we've used to help bolster company leadership and position firms as aligned with customer issues, credible and trusted advisors and equipped with opportunities for longer-term conversations beyond the sale.

- **Explore Available Research and Free Public Information.** To build a strong foundation and establish authority, knowing that's already been produced in the field is critical. In addition, with the wealth of free, public records and information available online, proxy statements, press releases, newsletters, blog posts and company websites offer a treasure trove of data, trends and insights that await gathering and analysis. Relevant information related to customer issues and how your company is positioned can be incredibly useful to your offerings as well as become a centerpiece of your media relations, marketing communications, industry relations and events.
- **Look Internally at Your Own Data.** Most companies have a vast amount of information they gather and then neglect to consider how they can capitalize on insights gleaned from their own data. If you conduct benchmarking, survey customers on satisfaction or solicit feedback on product development you may be collecting relevant nuggets that could translate into broader trends that are of interest to clients, media and the industry. Review how your company collections information on current and prospective customers and explore how you might add a few simple questions to the various data collection points that can reinforce your credibility as a thought leader.
- **Collaborate with a Partner or Association.** Often companies lack the resources to take on initiatives like this alone so they seek out external partners or influential industry, customer or advocacy groups to conduct surveys. Professional associations and consumer or trade groups can be effective and successful collaborators where both parties enjoy a gain and share resources to extend the promotional impact.

To get to the top and attract attention and drive value, aspiring market leaders must make an investment that becomes more than merely a compelling perspective. Findings and insights from your research should both fuel client and industry conversations and be packaged so you can use the data again and again. You have to be committed to express your results and point of view in various forums, venues, media outlets and industry channels to reach the audiences you intend to engage.

If you would like more insights on how to leverage your data collection to enhance your market leadership, contact us at [The Aerie Company](#).

Are You An Honest Speaker?

Mark Twain, who made most of his income from speaking not writing said, "There are two types of speakers: those that are nervous and those that are liars."



People rarely say what they truly feel, yet this is what audiences desire most. If you're honest, even if people disagree, they will find you interesting and keep listening. So getting an audience interested in your ideas or showing them how interested you are in theirs enables you to establish important connections with people.

In his new book, *Confessions of a Public Speaker*, best-selling author and sought after speaker Scott Berkun reflects on speaking as a distinct form of expression. "It's about the connection between a person and ideas," says Berkun. "When you strip away all the layers, such as slides and presentation handouts, all public speaking becomes more intimate and real." He's learned that the more honest you are the faster those connections happen as honesty is one of the easiest ways to be interesting.

At a recent event I attended in Nashville sponsored by the healthcare network Women's Business Leadership (www.womenleadinghealthcare.org), Susan Brennan, VP of Manufacturing of Nissan-USA, spoke to a group of female executives about the automaker's healthcare and benefit issues. While the topic was of particular interest to audience, what was most captivating about the presentation was Brennan's honesty. The senior leader is a frequent speaker to audiences of women and girls where she shares her passion for science and engineering to encourage more women to pursue careers in the sector. Adapting her message to include more of the healthcare and business challenges within manufacturing, she delivered a compelling speech that wove together her professional career of successes, failures and frustrations that she intended as encouragement for others to follow suit and become more effective communicators for it.

Doubtful the very busy Brennan has had a chance to read Berkun's latest book, but she's certainly incorporating advice to stop hiding and posturing, and just tell the truth. "You don't need to be perfect," advises the accomplished speaker and best-selling author. "Just strive to be useful, good and sound like yourself."

If you or your leaders need support in being more effective with what you say and how you say it, [The Aerie Company](http://TheAerieCompany.com) welcomes the opportunity to show you how we've helped rising and seasoned executives enhance their professional communication and build their market leadership. Let us know about your challenges.

New Links

Links on making connections and finding the right words.

Ted.com - Great ideas and human connections are making TED a unique phenomenon. This global education brand of the 21st century has grown from a conference to a platform for ideas worth spreading that [Fast Company](http://FastCompany.com) has called it "The New Harvard."

Wordnik.com/thesaurus - Find the right word quickly and accurately. [Wordnik](http://Wordnik.com), the online dictionary and language resource, has just launched a new smarter online thesaurus that shows related words in context, how the word is used by others and how to use it correctly yourself.

See our website at www.aeriecompany.com for more links.

About The Aerie Company

At The Aerie Company, we help organizations and executives demonstrate their value and accelerate growth. Because it's challenging at the top, we show our clients how to go beyond where they are today and elevate their business and personal market leadership performance. We build a strategic stronghold with better understanding of your current market, an aligned and articulate vision, mission and strategy, a compelling position that resonates in the marketplace and effective communication so your stakeholders recognize your real benefits and value.

For more information, visit www.aeriecompany.com, email us at suzanne@aeriecompany.com or call 847-556-8873.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Suzanne Glaser". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Watch for regular updates from The Aerie Company on best practices, advice on communication and market leadership development, and other insights we gain as devoted lifelong learners to help you demonstrate your value and improve your performance.