

Using Pink Sheets
to capture and expand your ideas

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PART 1

Before we begin

The purpose of this book is to get you pink sheeting. Getting started with a pink sheet is more important than reading the whole book. The sooner you start, the better.

The book is divided into two parts: the first is an exploration of the Pink Sheet Process, the second is an examination of examples of pink sheets in action.

Some of the most profound books are those that reveal new information each time you read them. Information that you could swear was not there the first time you read it. We think that understanding pink sheets works like this. So your goal is not to read this book in one sitting and put it on a shelf (or in a folder), never to look at it again. The first half is worth a few reads: the initial read to get you pink sheeting, the second reading to get you pink sheeting well and the third to explore nuances and distinctions you can only absorb on the other side of having done a bunch of pink sheets.

So what is this thing we are calling a pink sheet?

A pink sheet is a tool we have been teaching here at Thought Leaders for decades. A more highbrow way of defining a pink sheet is to call it an intellectual property snapshot. Here's what it looks like:

Model	CONTEXT	Metaphor
CONCEPT		
Statement _____		
Explanation _____		

Study	CONTENT	Story
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
thought leaders		

Although usually it would be printed on pink paper.

Why on pink paper? And why is it called a pink sheet? People have come up with a dozen reasons pink sheets are called pink sheets. Pink equals think. A pink slip is a certification of property registration and this is intellectual property. A pink slip is an old-fashioned pay slip and if you want to get paid for your ideas you need to get pink sheets, etc.

The reality is a little more prosaic. One of the first times Matt taught this tool there happened to be, for reasons lost to history, pink paper in his office printer. In that early workshop they got dubbed pink sheets and the name stuck. So really it was a printing error that just worked. And, like all nicknames, once it sticks it's hard to change. Thus *pink sheet* it is!

And what goes into the pink sheet? What should you write in all the different areas? We'll come to that, but before we do the first couple of chapters will explain why we think they are so important.

WERE YOU EVER TAUGHT TO THINK?

Imagine you are invited into a quiet room and given the instruction to do some thinking. What would you do?

- Would you pull out a pen and notepad?
- Would you sketch out a mind map on a tablet?
- Would you sit still and concentrate on your breathing?
- Would you look for some stimulation by searching the web?

And at the end of that time what would you have to show for your deliberate thinking? Could we take that thinking, put a price on it and share it with others?

It's all a bit hit or miss, isn't it?

If we asked you to reflect on your schooling; when were you taught to think? We really weren't. So here it is. The pink sheet process is a way of thinking deeply and deliberately about something. We are sure it's not the only way to think and maybe not the best

way — although we suspect that perhaps it is. Without doubt, it's a very effective way to think; to capture and flesh out your ideas.

Thinking Consciously

For many of us, when we think we find ourselves reflecting on a past event or planning for a future one. The question is: “Are you consciously thinking?”, or is the monkey mind running things? The monkey mind being that noisy, reactive, paranoid, jibber jabber that passes for a stream of consciousness.

Often, when teaching the idea of pink sheets, we are struck by how hard it is to get your head around what is, in essence, a straightforward idea. How to sit down and think deliberately about something.

We realised that teaching this is a bit like teaching meditation or mindfulness. It's through the *practice* of meditation that you get better at it. Similarly, it's through the practice and application of this thinking process that you get better at thinking.

We both love the non-thinking state of meditation. Pete has written a book on it, emphasising the scientific benefits of regular meditation. We both choose to live — that is to be — in the present ‘now’ moment as much as possible.

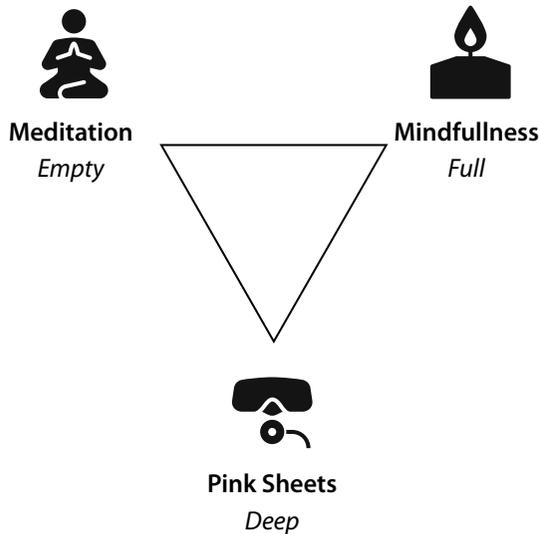
As business partners who live in different cities, we are often connecting on the phone. Matt likes to start most calls with the question: “What's not on your mind?” — a code for remembering that thinking is not the goal state of Pete's meditation practice. You might think it ironic then that a meditation teacher would be the CEO of a business named Thought Leaders. You wouldn't be alone.

One of Matt's virtual mentors is Thich Nhat Hahn, the Vietnamese Zen Monk who teaches mindfulness in the south of France. As an aside, if you could choose anywhere to practice being fully present the idyllic south of France would have to be in your top three. Genius. It is through mindfulness training that you learn how to fill your

mind with the present moment. It is about eating, walking, breathing, sitting, listening and being fully present to what's in front of you.

It may be useful to consider meditation and mindfulness on a spectrum. On one side, meditation is about emptying your mind, releasing thoughts and focusing on very little. On the other side, mindfulness is about filling your mind and the act of deep sensory immersion. It's probably truer, though, that meditation and mindfulness become the same thing over time: a state of being present. If we then took this idea further, the process of pink sheeting is the third element of a triangle. It becomes about opening your mind, contemplating an idea and focusing on solving a problem — something Buddhism calls deep insight.

It could look like this:



This is a simple idea that is often hard to grasp. It's not that it's complex — it's just not our typical state. As in meditation and

mindfulness training, however, it is something you can get better at through regular practice.

So, the book is small, the idea is simple. Practice is the key. As soon as you can wrap your head around it, have a go at a pink sheet. Don't wait to finish reading the book. Indeed, your experience of the book will be enhanced by having had a go at creating your pink sheets along the way.

YOUR UNFAIR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

We'll often see someone delivering their expertise, be it speaking, writing or training, and we will feel sorry for them. It is not that their ideas aren't good, or that they aren't capable of delivering them, but that they haven't put them through the pink sheet process.

That may sound a little arrogant, but we think pink sheets give you a competitive advantage over people who aren't using them. As we mentioned in the previous chapter, they give you a way to expand your thinking, to structure your thinking and to capture your intellectual property.

There are a huge number of benefits that come from this approach.

Conviction

There is something that happens internally through this process. You'll start to believe that you are an expert.

There are times when you will be blown away by your own pink sheets. You will impress yourself. Just about everyone we've worked with and who has done a significant number of pink sheets, confirms this experience.

If the only thing that this work did was to give you conviction in your own IP, that would be enough. It does much more than that, but this part of it cannot be overstated.

We all have a voice inside our head which says, to a greater or lesser extent, "I'm not good enough". We all have our doubts and our dark nights. Our answer to these isn't more therapy, personal development or spiritual practice (although by all means do these things too — we have). It's pink sheets.

Commercial PhD

We call 52 pink sheets in a domain of expertise, a 'commercial PhD'.

If you're an expert in leadership, or you want to be, you could start by grabbing an old school manila folder and writing "Leadership" on the front. Then print out 52 blank pink sheets and put them in the folder. By the time you have completed them, you would have 52 unique, fleshed out ideas that each make a point and are backed up with some detail. This is a significant body of work.

And we say that this work gives you the right to call yourself an expert in this domain.

Depth

Have you ever seen someone speak for an hour and it felt like they said everything they knew in that hour? That if they had to go for another 15 minutes, they couldn't.

On the other hand, some people give you the feeling they are just skimming the surface of what they know. You could ask a question about anything they say, and they could talk for an hour just answering that enquiry.

Pink sheets give your thinking depth. You've done the work and captured it in a way that's accessible to you. You'll feel this depth (it's part of your conviction) and so will your audience.

Getting it out of your head

If you're a teacher, or an expert, or a knowledge worker of any kind, your value is in your head. The problem is that it's often not much use there. It's hard to access it, or to evaluate it, or to organise it.

Coming back to our leadership example, if you've been working in this field you will have a lot of ideas about leadership. How to do it well, why it's done badly, what makes a good leader, and so on.

You're probably not sure which of these ideas are yours and which came from someone else, however. You're not confident that you can produce them when you need them (our brains are great for storage, but retrieval is sometimes an issue). You haven't separated the wheat from the chaff. And your ideas aren't organised into a body of work.

Now imagine that we have grabbed 52 of these ideas out of your head and put them on paper. They are spread out in front of you on your dining room table. And they have been given some time and some love, some energy and some attention. Now we're talking.

You can put them into a hierarchy. Create links. See which ideas are yours and which ones came from someone else. You can see which are the *good* ideas and which are the *great* ideas. You can even

have someone else look at them (often you're too close to your ideas to see your own brilliance).

Think once, deliver often

Once an idea is captured on a pink sheet, we can use it again and again in different contexts. It's part of a speech, or a chapter in a book. It's a coaching session, or a training module. It's a blog post, or a white paper. It's the answer to a question, or a key point you make in a meeting.

Ironically, the pink sheet process helps you get out of your own head. Having your ideas captured like this allows you to be more present. You can relax knowing you've done the thinking and you're not going to have to go searching in your brain to find what to say next.

Pink sheets cha-cha-cha

OK, so we think pink sheets are pretty amazing. And there's a reason we're selling them so hard at the front of this book.

Learning pink sheets is a bit like learning a new language. It's going to take a while to get fluent (you can expect that after around 101). And even to get competent will take you 10–20 pink sheets. So, we're asking for a big leap of faith from you. You'll need to stick at it for that long before you start to see the benefits. Hopefully, what we've talked about here is enough of an incentive for you to want to learn the pink sheet language.

FULL-SPECTRUM THINKING

Aristotle explained that *logos*, *pathos* and *ethos* are the three artistic proofs. He suggested that if you are trying to convince an audience of something, you need all three. Ethos is all about the ethical appeal or the idea of character and credibility, pathos is all about the emotional appeal, and logos the logical and rational. The pink sheet process is designed to touch on these. It needs to contain the educated opinion of logos, the emotional connection of pathos and the enlightened insight of ethos.

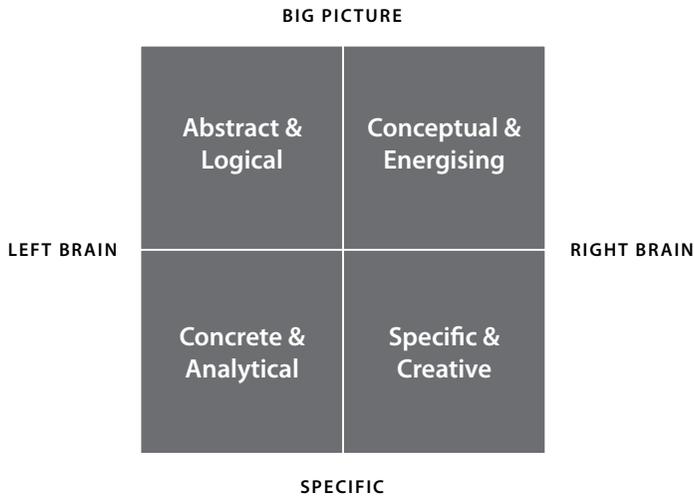
Jill Bolte Taylor is a neuroanatomist and professor at Harvard who had a stroke and wrote *My Stroke of Insight* about the experience of love, peace and connection she achieved when the left hemisphere of her brain shut down for a while. The narrative surrounds her observations of herself, a self-declared scientific left-brain thinker, going 'right brain', and highlights the idea of left- and right-brain thinking preferences.

Consider that there exists a horizontal line from left to right where the left equals logic and reason and the right equals creativity

and relationships. While modern neuroscience tells us that it's not completely accurate to say that the left brain does all the logical thinking and the right brain does the creative thinking, it's a useful metaphor.

Generally, we have a personal preference for one side or the other — logical thinking or creative thinking. Alongside our personal thinking preference, certain subjects lend themselves to a left- or right-brain bias. A conversation around a commercial enterprise will most likely be presented in a left-brain rational, logical view while an essay on parenting might lend itself to a right-brain skew.

If we divide the pink sheet horizontally into left brain and right brain, we can also divide it vertically into abstract and concrete.



As the model demonstrates, at the bottom we are representing concrete, specific ideas and at the top abstract, conceptual ones.

We are all at home in one of the quadrants of this model. But staying at home has two problems. Firstly, that's where we do our thinking. And secondly, that's where we communicate from.

So, if you have a left-brain detailed preference, that's where your ideas will live. You'll make logical arguments that have great evidence. And the trick that the pink sheet process performs is to force your thinking into unfamiliar territory. It expands your brain, sends you down different neural pathways and stretches you as you struggle to find the big picture using right-brain expressions of your ideas. And what comes out the other side is more complete thinking — what we call full spectrum thinking.

This then solves the second problem, that we communicate from our preference. Our hypothetical, left-brain, detailed thinker will have a slide show with lots of bullet points and lots of logic and lots of detail, but not much heart, imagination or context. And while that might speak to a quarter of the room, lots of people will get left behind. (See what we did there?)

Forcing our thinking into all the other quadrants means that we can communicate our ideas to everyone, not just to the people who share our thinking preference.

The key to creating great messages then, is to structure them so that they dance across the full spectrum of left-brain logic through to right-brain creativity, and then from concrete specific examples up to high order contextual ideas.

Ideas exist at various levels of logic and creativity (the horizontal axis). Just as we need both hemispheres of the brain, we need to mix logic (logos) and emotion (pathos). We need to have our ideas able to appeal to both the rational and emotional perspectives.

When you try to connect with someone, the attempt can be a battle between putting in too much information (the bottom of the model), resulting in the essence of the idea being lost; or making the message so abstract (the top of the model) that it is not seen as practical or relevant by those considering it. Full spectrum thinking using the pink sheet process resolves this.

Model	CONTEXT	Metaphor

CONCEPT
Statement

Explanation

Study	CONTENT	Story
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____

AN INTRODUCTION TO PINK SHEETS

Using the pink sheet framework to capture your ideas creates depth in your thinking and forces you to create messages with substance and balance. Each concept or point you want to share will have its own pink sheet.

Concept

Your concept and a summary of the idea lives in the middle of the pink sheet. The goal of this section of the pink sheet is to make you carefully select your words. There are four primary ideation strategies we recommend, and we'll unpack these in Chapter 8, The Point. You can do any, or all of them. Each will stretch your mind in different directions, with the goal being to uncover something special that you didn't realise you had in you.

As thought leaders, we need to make statements in a way that is memorable — to craft great ideas into powerful memes that spread. The concept layer of the pink sheet is where this process happens.

Context

At the top of the pink sheet is context, the overarching theme within which your idea lives.

Context is characterised by two parts:

1. **The Model.** The model is a diagram which describes where this idea lives in the greater hierarchy. The model might be a Venn diagram, a ladder, or an XY graph. It's a tool which helps visually describe the hierarchy of ideas in play and provides a map for navigating them. A single model will often be the 'parent' of (and therefore shared across) a number of pink sheets. A five-rung ladder model, for example, would lead to at least five other pink sheets.
2. **The Metaphor.** As a tool for gaining rapid understanding of the significance and importance of an idea, the metaphor is invaluable. Metaphors allow the brain to use existing neural pathways and cognitive understanding and immediately apply it in the new context. Some metaphors will be shared across multiple pink sheets. Some will apply only to one. In his book *I've Never Metaphor I Didn't Like*, Mardy Groth unpacks the history of the most enduring metaphors and offers hundreds of examples from famous thinkers and writers that might stimulate your own ideas.

Content

The bottom layer of the pink sheet contains the 'stuff'. Here's where the supporting data, case studies, stories, anecdotes and pictures live.

Remember that each point should be represented as much as possible by left-brain analytical content like data and case studies, along with right-brain creative content like stories and anecdotes. Ensuring you have a variety of content across the spectrum means you'll be well equipped to back up each point with compelling and relevant content, cherry-picked to suit the audience.

One of the key takeaways for you to consider when learning this IP snapshot process is understanding the layers of thought. There are small ideas — detail and content — which rise through layers of abstraction right through to the higher levels of understanding.

For example:

LARGE	Energy	Movement
MEDIUM	Food	Transport
SMALL	Hamburger	Red Bus

The hamburger is the concrete detail of the idea, but the higher context to consider when hamburgers are in the conversation is energy. Learning to identify the higher contextual ideas that frame your content, and successfully communicate them with your audience, is going to increase the strength of your presentations amazingly. It helps dispel disagreements of the “he said, she said” kind that tend to be mired in detail and achieve little or nothing. It helps link each of your points into a bigger, more convincing overall argument that more people can understand and identify with. It also helps group your points into congruent ‘families’ that share common themes and build off each other.

So, for each of your ideas you'll need to work out where on the pink sheet the idea lives. Is what you've got the equivalent of 'hamburger', 'food' or 'energy'? Is it content, concept, or context? Have you got a 'red bus', 'transport' or 'movement' idea? Do you need to think up or down (or both) from this starting point? Have you recorded a basic story (right brain, content)? Have you drawn a model (left brain, context)? Have you thought of a metaphor (right brain, context)?

Once you've worked out where on the pink sheet the initial idea lives, you'll know what thinking needs to be done to flesh it out. You may find that some of your different ideas actually belong together on one pink sheet. Perhaps a workplace story beautifully illustrates a concept statement from elsewhere. Perhaps a few separate points can be tied together into a single overarching model.

It's good to be 'light' in this process. Don't be too concerned with detail and locking things down. Aspire to be playful and try lots of different ways of arranging and connecting information. You may be surprised what wisdom hides within your mind, waiting to be unlocked by the process of getting into full spectrum thinking.

Here is a quick overview of the five elements of a pink sheet.

	COMPONENT	EXAMPLE	APPLICATION
1	CONTEXT Left brain context	Model	Gain consensus
2	CONTEXT Right brain context	Metaphor	Embed understanding
3	CONCEPT Key point or meaning	Concept	Cut to the chase
4	CONTENT Logical evidence	Case study	Back it up
5	CONTENT Emotional engagement	Story	Make it memorable

GENERATING IDEAS

Now that we know how to capture it and how to store it, let's see if we can get your genius really flowing.

Your tribe want to hear from your experience and your expertise. People are keen to hear what you recommend. Coming up with ten fully fleshed pink sheets might not be so hard, but what about the next ten? The next fifty?

Imagine yourself as a gemstone collector, searching for the fabled 'diamond in the rough.' There are rocks of all shapes and sizes in the field through which you're searching, and you know that beneath the surface, some of them are valuable. Of course, you wouldn't try to cut and polish every rock trying to turn it into jewellery right there in the field. You'd take a satchel along with you, pick up the promising rocks and drop them in your bag for proper inspection and processing later.

Once back at your camp, you can sift through the rocks you've collected, cutting and inspecting them, perhaps finding small gems which are somewhat plain on their own, but complement each other

nically once set into a ring together. Sometimes you'll find a truly amazing stone under the gritty outer layer, which, with just a little refinement and polishing, will become a valuable gem.

Trawling your mind for ideas is like searching for these diamonds in the rough. It's something you should be doing all the time, taking along your figurative satchel so that you can drop each stone in when you happen to find it. In practice, this means a notes app in your phone, a Moleskine notebook, or a steady supply of napkins and envelopes. Every time you have an idea — even the incomplete and unrefined ones — you jot it down for collection now, to be inspected and polished later. The habit of taking your idea-recording system with you at all times is essential if you want to create world class intellectual property.

You can collect ideas from anywhere. Books, newspapers, magazines, conversations, daydreams, actual dreams — you name it. Anything that piques your interest is worth noting down. With the ubiquity of smartphones and note taking applications like Evernote, there's really no compelling reason not to jot down any little thing that you find interesting or potentially useful. The first step to building an ideas bank of great IP is making sure that you're capturing every good idea that you come in contact with.

And when you're in gathering mode, don't start evaluating and editing. It turns out, in this case, quantity is the key to quality. All the thought leaders that have brilliant ideas get there by capturing lots of ideas, doing lots of pink sheets, and then identifying the ones that stand out.

Start with quotes

In 1124, Bernard Carnotensis said: “Nanos gigantium humeris insidentes.” Centuries later, Isaac Newton modernised (stole) the meme, saying that “If I have seen further than others, it's because I have stood on the shoulders of giants.” Ironic, no?

Their point is that there is no shame in building your expertise on the prior work of others. When trying to expand and unpack your intellectual property you can use quotes to kick-start your thinking.

18th century German philosopher, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe once said that “Seldom should we let the urgent take the place of the important but oftentimes we do.” With that as a basis, Dr Stephen Covey went on to write *First Things First* and built a thought leadership empire.

Famous quotes — statements of such profundity that they last through the ages — are great mental stimulators, and with the advent of the internet it’s easier than ever to utilise them. Identify a contextual word that encompasses some of your thinking, a word like ‘leverage’ or ‘success’ or ‘leadership’ (or whatever applies in your case), and just Google “quotes on <your word>”. There are hundreds of sites that collect thought-provoking quotations from all over the world, and these can often form the basis of great trains of thought.

“Yes, but...” or “Yes, and...”

Nobody is brilliant in a vacuum. All of the world’s great thinkers have built on the foundations of ideas established by those that went before them, and you will be no exception.

The fear of accusations of plagiarism is one reason that people seem a little more reluctant to use the work of others. That’s an idea we definitely don’t subscribe to. Nearly every great human advancement came about when multiple great minds tackled a problem and worked with (and sometimes against) each other, with the whole becoming more effective than the sum of the parts.

Respectful attribution is the key to handling this gracefully. Always be completely open about where an idea came from and honour the original thinker. When an audience hears a thought leader praise another person in public, they appreciate a person who is willing to recognise the achievements of others. In elevating others, you elevate yourself.

So, here's a useful process for developing expertise, starting with the existing knowledge base in your field. Firstly, buy ten books on your chosen area of expertise and read them with your preferred note-taking device at hand. Each time you feel compelled to write down a point made by the author, write the point and then write: "Yes, but..." or "Yes, and...". By doing this, you're going to start with their idea and expand them a step further.

A student says, "That's a great idea."

A teacher says, "That's a great idea, how do I share that?"

A thought leader says, "That's a great idea, what do I think about that?"

The "Yes, but..." or "Yes, and..." exercise helps you build your own unique expertise upon the existing ideas present in your field. It helps ensure that you don't pigeon-hole yourself as a 'me too' expert and enables you to contribute your own unique thinking to the world. As you read each book, see if you can take the disparate bits and pieces you've noted in your journal to form an overarching context. Can you identify the contextual, thematic elements that tie all this thinking together? Most authors, like most leaders, dwell in content. Your contribution to your field might be to pull all of it together into an elegant contextual whole.

Lots of these 'ands' and 'buts' will end up being the points *you* make and will live in the middle of your pink sheets.

Where to start

You can start anywhere on the pink sheet. There is no correct order in which to create the pink sheet or to fill in the different elements.

Generally, when you're creating your first pink sheets, the middle is the obvious place to start. On the other hand, the most efficient way to build pink sheets is to start with the model, and so people who have a lot of pink sheets under their belt often start there. However, if you are more detailed person, it might make sense to you to start from the bottom with a story or case study.

All three approaches will work, and it's probably worth giving them all a go. Let's unpack each one just a little.

START AT THE POINT

Any time you find yourself giving advice, having an opinion, making a point or writing down a "Yes, but" or "Yes, and", you probably have an idea that belongs in the middle of a pink sheet. Make sure you capture it, and that it ends up in the middle section of your pink sheet.

From there we would move up and create a model. Think about what the idea is about at a higher, more contextual level, and how that could be captured graphically. Next, consider a metaphor you could use to help people understand your point.

We then move down to capture the evidence. You've made your point, now back it up. Give us some detail to support your assertion.

MODEL BEHAVIOUR

When you start with a model, you actually have a whole family of pink sheets, not just one. The first one will make the overall point of the model. But then each element of the model will have its own pink sheet.

For example, if the model is a two by two matrix (i.e. a horizontal axis, a vertical axis and four squares), each of these will have its own pink sheet. What's the point you would make about the horizontal axis? That goes in the middle of a pink sheet. What's the point you make about the first square? That goes in the middle of another pink sheet.

So, this model has now given us at least seven pink sheets (the overall pink sheet, the two axes and the four squares). And each of these pink sheets has the same model in the top left corner (and probably the same metaphor).

Remember that each of these pink sheets will have different stories and case studies that you use to illustrate and support the different points.

STUFF UP

You can also start at the bottom. If you hear an interesting story or read an interesting study, you can put that into the bottom of a pink sheet. You might not even know what point you will make yet, you just know that this is useful content for something. There is a reason why you are interested.

Our friends, Nils Vesk and Anders Sorman-Nilsson (both thought leaders, speakers and authors), were bodysurfing in Sydney one day, a long time ago. Nils is a strong swimmer and surfer and has lived on the beach for a big chunk of his life. Anders, who is Swedish-born, not so much.

On this day, Anders got caught in a rip, and was suddenly, and terrifyingly, taken out to sea. Don't worry, it all ended well as Nils was able to orchestrate a rescue. Afterwards, when we spoke to Anders about it, he shared something fascinating.

He said that when it was happening, it was very scary. Very quickly, he was a few hundred metres out to sea. He also said that he had the experience of observing it happen, almost as if he were looking down on himself. He remarked that even as it was happening, he had the thought, "If I survive this, it's going to make a great story in a keynote."

In other words, even as he was almost drowning, and not sure if he would survive, in his mind he was already putting the story on the bottom of a pink sheet and imagining how he would tell it during a keynote.

MODELS

Models live at the top left of the pink sheet. They are our primary left-brain contextual tool.

Models are profoundly useful. There is something almost magical that happens when we think in models and teach through models. A model will stay in our brain in a way that a statement or a series of points doesn't seem to be able to.

From one well-considered model you can create a huge number of pink sheets. At the intersections of shapes and the borders of ideas you get to create new distinctions and new thoughts. These thoughts often appear as if channelled through you, and not from you.

The practice of designing and considering ideas via a model is like borrowing brilliance. The act of drawing a model, and thinking as you do so, creates structure. It creates a framework for thoughts, in which you get to capture genius and play with ideas regardless of your brain's capacity to do so.

A model is geometric in nature and may consist of squares, lines, circles, triangles, graphs, as well as any variation and combination of these elements. At its simplest, a model is a visual representation of your key ideas using shapes to convey meaning and connections.

Michael Henderson is the bestselling author of seven books, including *Above the Line*, and is known as the ‘corporate anthropologist’. As an anthropologist Michael studies icons and symbols for a living. He says that square-shaped models are perfect for institutional thinking and circles for social thinking. So, there is often a logic to a model’s shape and the message it conveys.

Whether it’s a quadrant, some concentric circles, a pyramid or even a simple triangle, a model helps you make more than one point. It helps define the conversational boundaries of any discussion.

Some great models are:

- Dr Linda Hill’s *Collective Genius*: Venn diagram
- Dr Stephen Covey’s *First Things First*: quadrant
- Dr Carol Dweck’s *Fixed Mindset Vs Growth Mindset*: contrast frame
- Simon Sinek’s *Start With Why*: concentric circles

The four categories of models

We teach that there are four categories of models and that there are two classic models in each category. This creates eight core model types and you can see a thumbprint of the first four here in this model of... um... models.

In the category of ‘Why’ you can see a simple Ladder model, in the category of ‘How’ you’ll see a Venn diagram. In the category of ‘What’ is a 3x3 matrix and in the ‘If’ category there is a simple contrast frame of two columns.

If you are just starting out with pink sheets, this is probably enough. Your intellectual property will take a quantum leap just through the expression of it in model form. The four examples above are all pretty simple (and you will see them all in use later in the book). Play with circles, squares and triangles, and reflect on whether

If



Why



How



What

	YOU	IT	THEM
HIGH	Obsession	Uniqueness	Purpose
MEDIUM	Category	Analogy	Problem
LOW	History	Example	Solution

you are considering Why, How, What or If. Bernice McCarthy does a slight different version of this in her 4MAT model.

Once you’ve got a few models under your belt, 3D modelling will be useful and help add nuance. It may feel a bit overwhelming when you’re starting out — that’s normal. So feel free to skim or skip the rest of the chapter for now and come back to it down the track.

3D modelling

Each of these types of model categories has an additional third dimension worth considering. While the model is drawn in a 2D format on a screen or page, they have a third-dimensional potential when you present or reveal them to any group. What follows is a walk-through of the three dimension used in Why, How, What and If applications.

WHY

Why models are all about explaining the reason behind an idea. The Why model is the sales tool and as such we often call the model in this category a value model. Its job is to communicate the value to someone who will be paying money for and/or attention to the rest of the ideas that follow. A good Why model has a currency of value, a location and an aspiration.

1. *Currency*

The very first thing this model needs is a currency. Nobody will buy your stuff if they can't see how it will help them. In other words, climbing up the ladder needs to give them what they want.

Your currency could be:

- Money: How to either earn more or save more.
- Time: How to get more time back or spend time on what they want.
- Status: How to improve our narrative about ourselves.
- Happiness: How to feel better.

2. *Location*

The second thing your Why model needs is a location. People need to see exactly where they are right now. On a scale from *low* to *loving it*, where does your audience stand on the ladder?

3. *Aspiration*

The third thing your Why model needs is aspiration. This is the rung of the ladder your audience wants to reach. When they get there, they'll achieve the currency they're ultimately after.

When you introduce currency and location, it tells people your program is relevant to them. For example, think about a personality model like the Myers-Briggs test. The moment you introduce it, everyone wants to know what personality type they are. They want

to see themselves and say: “Ohh. That’s me! I can identify with that. That’s relevant to me.”

When you introduce currency and aspiration, you create desire. When you include location and aspiration, it tells people that you are the person with the plan to help them get where they desire. You give them a sense that there’s a roadmap that’s all about future possibilities.

HOW

How models are all about the overview — the strategic big picture. They explain what the big ideas are and create a relationship between the various concepts on your pink sheet. A How model is a map which explores the territory of your ideas. A good How model creates awareness, provides distinctions and suggests prescriptive actions.

1. Awareness

In the Venn diagram, awareness is generated from the big ideas at the centre of each circle. These are the obvious moving parts in your subject.

2. Distinction

Models often come alive at the intersections. This is very much the case with How models. Continuing the Venn diagram example, this distinction would be the names and ideas that sit at the intersections of two circles.

3. Prescription

Because How models are about the big picture, it’s nice to be able to suggest some practical actions that can be taken. These prescriptions give movement to the strategies being discussed.

WHAT

What models are the prescriptions and tactical ideas that your thinking suggests. This is where the action is. If a How model is the satellite view of your route, the What model is the turn-by-turn directions.

1. Journey

A good What model has a beginning step and an end step with an obvious shifting point along the way. In the 3x3 matrix poster child for this type of model, this is often achieved by the naming of rows and columns.

2. Sequence

A good What model has a suggested focus and sequence to the steps. In the 3x3 matrix again, this is often achieved by numbering the steps in each of the 9 boxes.

3. Pathways

A good What model should lay out the ideal path and give warning signs as to what happens if you stray from the path or miss a step. Each step of the matrix has a plus and minus in the corner which is a good place to work with the idea of pathways.

IF

If models look like before and after weight loss pictures. In the two-column contrast frame model of this category, you can see past contrasted with future, or good with bad, etc. This model creates an awareness that shift is possible.

To make your If models come alive consider these three dimensions:

1. Contrast

The key to these models is to make a comparison of sorts between what was and what could be.

2. Gradient

One of the keys to a good If model is to close the gap between your contrasted categories but to do so with an awareness around what seems feasible or true, and what might be more fanciful. Bigger leaps require more consensus, smaller leaps, less so.

3. Evolution

Once you have a general agreement to an If model you can deepen the conversation by adding a new layer. In the contrast frame this is often achieved simply by adding a third column.

Five ideas on models

Here are five thoughts to help you when working with models:

1. Your geometry teacher lied to you! When creating models there are only really three basic shapes: a circle, a square and a triangle. Build your models from these.
2. Layer your models. Each model should be able to be revealed at three levels of depth: the first is the *awareness*, the second is the *distinctions* and the third is the *prescriptions*.
3. Snapshots multiply fast. One great model may make several points and so the model will be duplicated on a bunch of pink sheets.
4. Work the intersections. On every model, you can often create finer distinctions if you work through the boundary lines on the shapes.
5. Mix it up. Balance your geometry, try not to have too much of the same shapes across your intellectual property deck.

METAPHORS

The metaphor is the abstract right-brain tool. As such, it will come easy to those who live in the big picture and lean to the right, creatively. And don't worry, we're not as pedantic as your English teacher about the metaphor–simile distinction. Either is fine. For simplification purposes, we will stick with the term 'metaphor'.

Metaphors are powerful. They take up a huge amount of space in the mind and are able to communicate massive amounts of meaning in a very short amount of time. They dominate the mind, they take up space.

There is a certain hands-off intention when sharing metaphors. The power of a metaphor is the picture it creates in the audience's mind. This picture cannot be directed by you too much but rather it is connected to mental pictures that already exist in the individual audience member's minds. The connection and subsequent mental images are co-created. It's a collaboration between you as the messenger and them as the audience. This giving up control as the communicator is actually what makes the metaphor work. It is the ultimate Trojan horse ... see what we did there?

When building out your pink sheets be careful that you don't use the metaphor to direct the thinking too much. Metaphors are what

professional wrestlers call a finishing move — they don't get you to the win, but they are a perfect end to a bout. Often, in the commercial conversations we have as thought leaders, our audiences are sceptical of people who lead with metaphors. In our experience, it is better to end a pitch or a message with a metaphor than to start with one. We think this applies less to the creation of a pink sheet and more in the delivery of ideas. In other words, when you deliver a pink sheet, the metaphor is the slam dunk at the end that brings home your point.

The critical test of a metaphor is how it sits with the rest of the pink sheet. Ultimately you want to be able to draw a triangle of connected meaning between the point you are making, the model that explains it and the metaphor that encapsulates it. A sequence that you can run to mentally test the congruence between the metaphor and the point you are making is to say your point, unpack your model, summarise it in a metaphor and then repeat your point. If in this process everything feels aligned, you have nailed it.

Often, though, you might find that the metaphor is forced, like a swollen foot in a dried-out boot (wink). Honestly, we promise not to overdo the metaphor jokes ... too much. So, if the metaphor doesn't fit, then let go a bit. You may have become attached to a cute metaphor that you like, even though it isn't the perfect metaphor to make your point.

Metaphors open the mind and create synaptic connections that you, as the pink sheet creator, did not intend. They are brain bombs, landing in the mind of your audience and setting off chain reactions and unknown connections. Models are expansive in that they take you to new places of thinking that you had not considered — that's why models are useful creation tools. While models have defined edges and boundaries, metaphors have no such boundaries.

Metaphors need to land a message, more than grow it. This is why we use them at the end of the process and why we need to be careful not to mix our metaphors. Each metaphor needs space and room to breathe. The power of the metaphor is diminished by crowding it with too much detail, a different metaphor, or some laboured

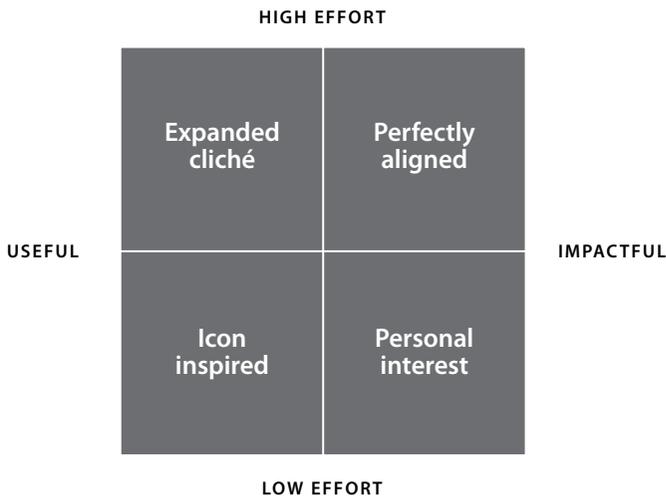
personal story. The connection the audience makes through a metaphor is more powerful than the words I say as a communicator.

As you become fluent in pink sheets, you'll spot metaphors everywhere. There have been five in this chapter so far — how many did you notice?

The four types of metaphors

Here is a quick overview — a visual representation of the four types of metaphors. A model for metaphors, if you will.

They include the *icon inspired* metaphor, the *personal interest* metaphor, the *expanded cliché* and the *perfectly aligned* metaphor. All are useful and, rest assured, the perfectly aligned metaphor need not be on every pink sheet you ever create.



THE EXPANDED CLICHÉ METAPHOR

OK, so you don't draw metaphors, you don't explain them, you don't start with them and they are not stories. They are symbolic, iconic, and oftentimes they are clichés. A cliché is an idea that feels archetypically true and as such, while you risk the cynic's derision using them, they are often the perfect place to start.

Three common metaphoric clichés are icebergs, compasses and driving. Icebergs are often used to communicate deeper meaning, compasses are often used to communicate purpose and driving is often used to connect to the idea of learned competence.

If you find yourself interested in a cliché then try to possess it, to make it your own and labour over it. Clichés are a great place to start with metaphors. They are clichés because they hold truth and shared understanding that you can use to make your point more powerful.

THE ICON INSPIRED METAPHOR

A second place to explore metaphor is to look at icons and clipart images. Take any slide tool, such as PowerPoint or Keynote, and glance through the clipart options. You will see *light bulbs* for innovation, *gears* for work and *podiums* for public speaking. A clipart image is iconic and, as such, perfect for the role of metaphor. If the embedded clipart native to your software system is not expansive enough you can google icons and have the same effect.

Please don't put the clipart on your pink sheet — just the idea. Write: "It's like a lightbulb" — don't show us a clipart picture of said lightbulb. And when you're teaching your pink sheets, don't show the audience a picture of your metaphor. Remember, metaphors are a collaboration between you and your audience. Speak it, and they will produce a much more powerful image in their head than the one that you could put on a slide.

THE PERSONAL INTEREST METAPHOR

A third idea is to explore your personal interests and hobbies as a source of metaphor. This has the added benefit of making you, as the author of the ideas, accessible. By sharing something about yourself in service of the audience's understanding, you get a double win: rapport and education.

Matt loves knives; indeed, some might say he has an unhealthy fascination with them. Matt will often explain that a well-articulated point is like a single-edged carving knife; the initial statement should cut through the fat and grab someone's attention while the explanation that follows should be the separating blunt edge of the knife. He tells it better live, we promise. The point is that when he is discussing knives, you get to see more of him, and as a result, you get the message and a bit of the messenger at the same time.

THE PERFECTLY ALIGNED METAPHOR

The fourth idea, and perhaps the ultimate goal, is to create perfectly aligned metaphors that add layers of depth to the point of the pink sheet. When these collapse over the model it's beautiful and elegant. For thought leaders, this is even more true in the case of a *green sheet* (a kind of pink sheet used specifically for communicating commercial value).

At Thought Leaders Business School, the primary goal is to help clever people be commercially smart by building a personal exertion practice around what they know. Students are subject matter experts who come to learn how to capture, package and deliver what they know, by speaking, training or coaching for a fee. They do this by selling their time 50–200 days a year and billing between \$500,000 and \$1,500,000 dollars.

The model that explains this borrows from the martial arts' coloured belt metaphor.

BELT	TURNOVER	FOCUS
Black	\$720,000	Investment
Red	\$600,000	Leverage
Blue	\$480,000	Positioning
Green	\$360,000	Activity
Yellow	\$240,000	Value
White	\$120,000	Decision

These two tools, the model and the metaphor, are inseparable. This is the metaphor sweet spot, and when this happens, angels sing. It's not always possible, but it's something worth pursuing with your big ideas.

Metaphors are the perfect final touch to great pink sheets. They are the icing on the cake (wink wink). They are a practice themselves, within the practice of pink sheets. You will find metaphors are everywhere and once you embrace them you will be stunned at how prevalent they are and how useful the habit of crafting them deliberately can be.

THE POINT

The point is kind of where it's at for a pink sheet. It's the key idea that differentiates one pink sheet from another. A set of pink sheets can share the same model; indeed, one model should populate a whole stack of pink sheets. The metaphor may also stay the same for a series of pink sheets.

The point, however, is always unique. One point, one pink sheet. Different consulting groups try to communicate a similar idea when they apply acronyms like NONG (No overlaps and no gaps) or MECE (mutually exclusive collectively exhaustive) to critical thinking. They are all posh ways of saying each idea is its own idea. The middle of the pink sheet, the point, is where this idea is captured.

Your concept lives in the middle of the pink sheet and summarises the point of the idea. The goal of this section of the pink sheet is to make you carefully select your words. As thought leaders, we need to make statements in a way that is memorable, to craft great ideas into powerful memes that spread.

The concept layer of the pink sheet is where this process happens. There are four primary ideation strategies we recommend. You can do any, or all, of them. Each will stretch your mind in different

directions, with the goal being to uncover something special that you didn't realise you had in you.

A/B statement

This is the most common method of writing your point and it's basically an exercise in imagining what you would name a book if it were about only this one idea. The 'A' statement is the title of the book. Ten words at most but probably less, as you want it to be snappy and memorable. Something that would stand out on a bookshelf. Something that would entice a prospective reader to take a closer look.

The 'B' statement is the strap-line, the explanatory statement that spells out, in a little more detail, what the reader would expect to find beyond the front cover. The 'B' statement should be carefully worded too. It's the sentence that either will or won't sell the book — or the idea — to someone passing by. It needs to have impact.

To illustrate the point, here are three A/B statements taken from the pink sheets that were behind one of Matt's other books on public speaking.

- A: Speakership is leadership.
- B: Every time you speak in public you are auditioning for a leadership position.

- A: Fix nervous with service.
- B: The cure for nervous tension is acting in service of the tribe.

- A: Stop wasting genius.
- B: Capture and store your genius in an ideas bank, so you can access it and share it when the time is right.

Make it a mantra

This idea relates very closely to the ‘A’ statement above. A great idea can be expressed as a short, punchy statement. A slogan. The word ‘mantra’ has Hindu origins and the literal meaning is “chanted or sung as an incantation or prayer”. Although in this context we’re using it to describe the slogan, you might use it multiple times throughout your presentation as the punctuation of your major point. We’re not suggesting you get people literally chanting your key ideas, but it is the effect we are going for.

A great thinker creates memorable phrasing. It’s almost as if they are providing the language people can then use to express their ideas. It happens in some conferences when a speaker leaves such an indelible impression, that for days afterwards, people are using phrases from the speech.

This is not just a self-serving goal. It’s indicative that your thinking has touched and influenced the audience in a positive way. You have made sense of their world and provided a frame of reference that is so agreeable that the audience chooses to carry it forward for you.

The audience become advocates of your thought leadership. In each utterance and use of the language from your delivery, the size of your audience grows beyond those who were in the room when you spoke. This is the basis of a powerful meme. It will grow and influence the world in a way you could never hope to on your own.

Left brain / right brain

Like the A/B statement, this method also creates two statements but this time it's about the linguistic palette you use. The two statements should describe the same point, however one with a left-brain flavour, and one with a right-brain slant. For example:

Left brain: Speakership is the new leadership imperative.

Right brain: Speakership is leading out loud.

These are two statements used regularly throughout the speakership curriculum. Another example is the value statement of Thought Leaders Business School:

Left brain: Earn \$500K–\$1.5M, working 50–200 days, with one or two support staff.

Right brain: Do work you love, with people you like, the way you want.

The goal here is to maximise the gap between the two statements. Try to maximise the positive tension between the two, even while they're making basically the same point.

7/17/37/70

This is an exercise of using language to make the point appealing to people of widely varying ages. Forcing yourself to stretch the palette of words you use in order to unlock the best possible IP from your mind. The process for this one is straightforward:

7: Make it simple. Short, sharp and effective. A 7-year old needs to understand your message.

17: Make it inspiring. Word it so that a 17-year old would want to take it and show it to the world.

- 37: Make it pragmatic. A parent with two kids under five just wants to know what needs to be done and get on with it.
- 70: Make it wise. Say it like an experienced old-hand.

Again, here are some examples taken from the pink sheets that crafted the *Speakership* book:

- 7: Speakership is leading out loud.
- 17: Speakership is leadership and every tribe needs a leader.
- 37: Stop managing and start leading; stop informing and start inspiring.
- 70: Speakership is the missing link between strategy and execution, between wanting people to do something and inspiring them to act.

Get to the point

Each of these four strategies can help you unlock the ideas in your head and create memorable phrasing for your ideas. This will make them more exciting, easier to remember, and easier to repeat. Language is the primary building block of a powerful meme.

All that said, work on the poetry of your points. Craft them.

They should be your book titles and blog post headings. They will become memetic slogans — viral messages — and they are in essence your quotes. In 100 years, when you are dust and ash, they may remain. They may be a legacy that someone shares on the 2120 version of bookface. If that's what's at stake, then put some energy into the point. It is your ultimate legacy, and not merely the middle of your pink sheet.

CASE STUDIES

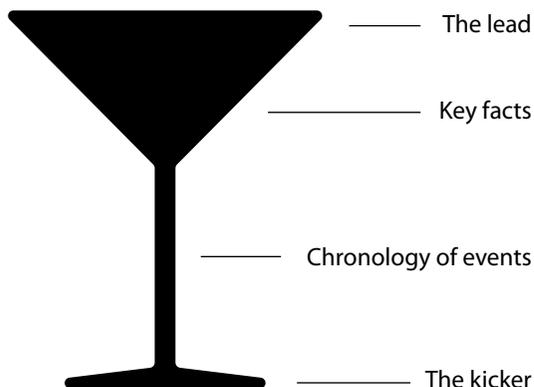
The left-brain tool for adding content to your ideas is the sharing of real-life case studies that bring your ideas alive. A case study is indicative of the practical application of your idea. Commercially, case studies are a powerful piece of social proof. Like stories, they increase engagement, relevance and meaning for the people who are exposed to your ideas.

At times, case studies and stories feel very similar. This is certainly true when writers like Seth Godin and Malcolm Gladwell introduce us to a situation where the point they are making applies. Like a model that has a perfectly aligned metaphor, a case study that has a story in it is powerful. If you are visiting pink sheets for the eighth time, you may find this synchronisation of elements at the top and bottom of the pink sheet useful. Probably less so if you are still exploring how to think pink. So, let's keep them separate for now.

Case studies have the structure of anecdotes. An anecdote has a triangular organisation, with steps that include *incident*, *point* and *benefit*. So, introduce a situation or incident, make your point clear and then explore the applied benefits of reviewing the incident. The key distinction between stories and case studies is the real-life application of the case study, and typically, its specific industry or market

relevance to the audience. Case studies are also more likely to have numbers and statistics in them, whereas stories will have more emotional elements, such as characters and how they might be feeling.

Journalism provides some guidance in the creation of anecdotal case studies. The martini glass is often taught to students as a helpful structure to unpack a real-life scenario such as a crime, fire or disaster article for a newspaper.



A few years ago, the salon industry had a run on using Matt as their preferred conference speaker. Researching a point on lateral thinking, Matt identified a salon in New York that moved from appointments with an ideal 6-week rebooking goal, to a 'drop in anytime' business model. This is so counterintuitive as an idea for high-end salons, where clients usually have a serious attachment to their preferred hairdresser. Matt named the salon, showed the traditional appointment book, explored the risk of key person reliance in cottage industry salons and then drew parallels to old-fashioned,

traditional barbers who encourage drop-ins. He explored the mathematics of 6, 8, 10 and 12-week appointments over the annual lifetime commercial value of a client. This became the relevant case study on a pink sheet that Matt created, in this case about making status quo the enemy.

Stories and case studies can be shaped for different audience types. When creating case studies, try to pick an example that has direct and useful application to the audience for your pink sheet. In certain high stakes deliveries you will want to create truly applicable or even customised examples.

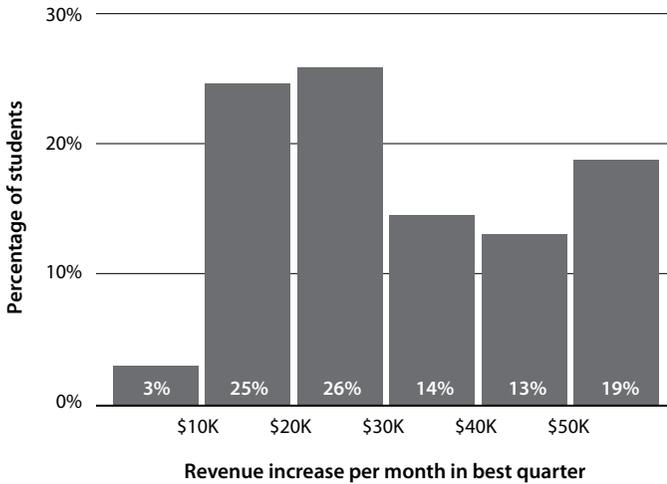
In the sharing of your case studies, consider using blended media such as videos, music, interviews, slides, handouts and anything else that engages the different learning and thinking styles of your target audience. A story is often best delivered live, by you. A case study, on the other hand, will often benefit from other supporting media or delivery techniques.

Example case study

Here's an example of a case study from our Thought Leaders Business School. At Business School, our curriculum is designed to help thought leaders reach black belt level revenue (\$720k per year) in their practice. Using our purpose-built practice management software, we are able to track every approach, meeting and sale to determine exactly how much progress each student makes.

Here's what we have found. The average student joins business school with white belt revenue (\$120k per year) and goes on to more than double that to just over \$246k during their first year in the program. Focussing on 'running rate' (revenue over the last 3 months), the average student will also log a 'best quarter' which is over 25k a month higher than before starting the program.

To ensure these numbers are not inflated by a few outliers, we graphed the distribution around the results. Here's what it looks like.



This case study demonstrates that after 12 months in business school, the majority of students will have progressed at least two belts up the ladder in their running rate and be firmly on the path towards the goal of black belt.

Tools for Case Study

PICTURES ARE POWERFUL

One of the ways you make a case study come alive is to include images of the location and people who are represented in the case study. Preferably these are images that you have taken yourself and are not stock images downloaded from the internet. Google Maps is a great fall back for location.

DATA CONVEYS MEANING

Where possible, load the case study with maths. Think about the number of people tested in a research study, the length of time the idea was applied and the percentage of A versus B in the example. Build out statistics, use infographics and draw conclusions.

PROCESS IS PRACTICAL

Case studies should provide meaning that can be applied. If a story is inspirational, a case study is practical. Case studies should outline a relevant series of steps that can be used to move someone from where they are to where they want to be.

STORIES

The bottom right of a pink sheet is where you note down the stories you might share that will make your point come to life. There are numerous resources for brilliant storytelling methodology and this chapter will cover less of that and a little more of how stories sit within and around your ideas.

Obviously, the pink sheet itself will capture only the titles, names and memory joggers for your stories and not the whole story. This is true of each element of a pink sheet. The top left, for example, is too small for a fully fleshed out model — the pink sheet is literally a snapshot. In other words, we don't write the whole story on the pink sheet, just the name of the story and a couple of bullet points if we need them.

At a high level, you write and speak your stories. Chapter 12, Delivering Pink Sheets, will address this idea in more detail.

Stories are one of the tools of content and serve the function of creating messages that are engaging, relevant and meaningful. The stories you share must do the work of carrying the point home. They must make a point that fits your central theme. The *content* (bottom of the pink sheet), supports the *concept* (middle of the pink sheet) and serves the *context* (top of pink sheet).

Like metaphors, there is a wondrous synchronicity when your stories have a tone or flavour that is on brand and perfectly shaped for your deck of IP. We teach the nine stages of selling your thought leadership in a book we wrote titled *Sell: The Power of Conviction* (previously *Conviction: How thought leaders influence commercial conversations*). It is our belief that the correct, useful and true state for selling is to create a sacred moment.

Pete uses a story of how he proposed to Trish to explain this belief. He unpacks, through this touching story, the depth of thought that goes into a good engagement. Pete explains the series of steps he took that led Trish on the journey to say “yes”. This story leaves you in no doubt that he believes that the decision to buy is a sacred moment. You get the strong feeling that to him, a sales conversation is like a marriage proposal. You understand that while Pete is super committed to the YES, he also knows that he needs to set things up so that a YES is the most likely outcome. Pete’s story and his belief have this synchronicity — he even includes a perfectly aligned metaphor too!

Tools

Stories can be ideally structured through the dramatic arc that Joseph Campbell introduces in his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. A quick overview will step you through Campbell’s stages for structuring and telling stories (see facing page). These steps are labelled with titles like the *Call to adventure*, the *Apotheosis*, and the *Belly of the whale*. So, do yourself a favour and spend time understanding how humans have a preferred archetypical way of sharing experiences through a story. You can learn this structure and use it.

Three tools that bring stories to life are the use of *drama*, *humour* and *social object theory*. You want to not only tell your piece but make it come alive in the minds of your audience; not simply informing but inspiring. Use drama in the form of characters, physicality and scene setters. Don’t tell your stories, act them out. Use humour often — less



in the classic one-liner or ‘punchline joke’ formats and more like humorous situational humour (think Seinfeld, not Jimmy Carr).

The lesser known tool of social object theory is also super helpful. Drama requires that you put yourself at risk in the telling. Humour is often hard to take advantage of if you feel that you are not naturally funny. Social object theory, on the other hand, is fast, safe and effective.

A social object is defined as the centrepiece in a dialogue between two people. The theory argues that people connect via these identifiable objects. Social media and marketing experts have isolated this as the primary reason why something goes viral or not. The quick version of this social object theory is trivia or quirky facts. Plant a few of these in your stories and they will have a greater impact.

You may be telling a story about cooking dinner. You use an act of pantry improvisation as a way of illustrating the capacity we all have

to be resourceful regardless of resources. On a side note, this is one of Pete's family's favourite games to play — “What can I make out of what I have?” In the telling of this story, you might include a couple of social objects about how we all stop microwaves with one second to go on the clock or how oiling steak creates less smoke than oiling the pan. Both are social objects that people will connect with and share later with friends.

Types of stories

There are four different types of stories. The *icon's*, the *personal*, the *anecdotal* and the *historical* story will be effective content for different ideas.

THE ICON'S STORY

A great place to start is to find someone you admire and tell their story. This type of story gives you humility, is easy to access and is powerful in the reflected admiration. You telling me that you are great is less potent than you telling me about someone else who is. The third person orientation also seems to unlock the gift of story-telling in the driest communicator.

Don't be the hero — tell me about one. These people can be known celebrities that you have never met. Matt often refers to these people as his ‘virtual mentors’. The heroic icon, however, could be your non-famous sister. Be careful of using your kids as the icons however. Often parental pride competes with the narrative and these stories can be awfully tedious to sit through.

THE PERSONAL STORY

Everyone believes that this type of story is the easiest to tell. It turns out that it's possibly the most difficult. It's hard to see if your bum looks big in a mirror and similarly it's hard to remain objective when

telling your own story. If you believe a personal story is the best choice, then work hard on delivering it through a humility lens — not false humility but rather the type that lets the audience know that you are just like them. Your personal story needs to make you accessible, not put you on a pedestal.

In *Rich Dad Poor Dad*, Robert Kiyosaki tells a lot of personal stories, but he cleverly uses the device of putting his mentor (his “rich dad”) on a pedestal, rather than himself.

THE ANECDOTAL STORY

Using the right story structure, you can bring the most mundane activity to life. The situation does not need to be grand for the story to be useful. This is what makes an anecdote. It’s short, often amusing or interesting, and just an everyday life observation. We often look to find some life story that has us climbing down a mountain with one arm tied behind our back, carrying our Sherpa to safety. While you may have actually swum the English Channel or competed at the Olympics, the scenario is not where the magic lies. The power is always in the telling. As such, small everyday anecdotes can be just as compelling when they are told well.

THE HISTORICAL STORY

This historical story is a safe story which has the benefit of a double lesson. You share an historical event in such a way that your point is made. Matt often shares stories of Ancient Rome. He uses a comparison of Julius Caesar and Marcus Cicero, for example, as a way of making the point that message trumps method when public speaking. It used to be said that when Caesar spoke, men wept (he had the method of public speaking down) but when Cicero spoke, armies marched (he had a compelling message that the audience could not ignore).

Stories are magical in the way they enter the mind. It's as if they have a VIP access to the exclusive club of your audience's mind. Writing and performing them requires some skill. A little attention to your stories though will reap huge rewards. Bring your pink sheet alive with amazing stories.

PINK SHEETS 2.0

There is a lot to get your head around as you begin to unpack your thinking on to a pink sheet. So it is with some caution that we approach the 2.0 conversation. Once you have a number of pink sheets under your belt you may wish to add great depth to them.

This is really just a list of ideas, perspectives, or lenses through which you can consider your idea. They are very useful for thought leaders who wish to take their pink sheets (and their thinking) to the next level.

Before we add to the list, let's summarise what you want to have considered thoroughly before you can call a pink sheet done. A pink sheet is a discrete idea you have put down on paper (whether it be digital or analogue). It should include:

1. a model
2. a metaphor
3. a key point
4. a case study
5. a story.

These five elements on a pink sheet make up a completed pink sheet.

Model	CONTEXT	Metaphor
1		2
CONCEPT		
Statement _____		
Explanation _____		

3		
Study	CONTENT	Story
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
4		5
<small>thought leaders</small>		

Those who continue to use pink sheets in their practice as thought leaders may add six more elements. This is what we call Pink Sheet 2.0

The word

If you look at your completed pink sheet 1.0, is there one word you could use to summarise what that's about? Can this word be used in a mantra? The word might be the name of a folder that holds several pink sheets, such as *leadership*. It might also be thematic, around the specific subject of an individual pink sheet, such as *revenue*.

In our Business School, we often suggest that thought leaders create a big word that drives all their work, something like *growth* or

frequency or *implementation*. The word on the pink sheet may nest under this big word somehow.

Card ranking

We like to think of a compilation of intellectual property on a certain subject, say *leadership* or *service*, as a deck of playing cards. Aces are high, face cards next, then 10, 9, 8, etc. The higher the card, the better the idea. The 7 and below are not your bad ideas but more likely they are referenced Aces from other people in your field of interest. You might have an Ace pink sheet on how to work smarter and so Dr Stephen Covey's *important and urgent* model might sit as a #7 card in your deck.

Don't rank your ideas too early in your ideation process. You shouldn't rank a pink sheet until you have gone back to it and upgraded it a few times. Pink sheets can suffer badly from a ranking critique too early in their life.

Quote

Quoting others is smart. When teaching pink sheets, we will often quote Harper Lee: "Many receive advice, only the wise profit from it." We also quote Oliver Wendell Holmes: "One's mind, once stretched by a new idea, never returns to its original dimensions."

When you're teaching your pink sheet, do more than simply read a quote — memorise it. Show a picture of the person you are quoting. Show their most famous thing — maybe a book they wrote, a building they designed, an achievement they made. Tell us some interesting fact about them that may not be common knowledge.

One piece of advice is to try to avoid using quotes exclusively from dead white guys. There is a lot to be achieved by selecting quotes that not only make your point but also add another dimension of message to your story.

Learning activity

A pink sheet is an idea you have thought about with an intent to share. It is a smart leverage strategy then, to consider an activity you may run with a small group of people in order to embed the idea, reveal nuances and transfer knowledge. These activities can be simply a series of questions they can have a table discussion about or a full-blown mixed-media, decision-based simulation. It's up to you. This element of a pink sheet turns facilitators into guides and makes train-the-trainer opportunities possible. A great learning activity can expand the learning beyond the borders of your own thinking.

Infographic

An infographic is traditionally some data turned into a visual metaphor. You can easily design your own and use them in your programs. If you are less tech-savvy, you can often find them ready made on the internet as social posts. (Of course, be mindful of copyright when sharing found images.) This infographic lives in the bottom section of the pink sheet, right on the line between the case study and the story, as it is a data-rich way of making your point.

12 Questions

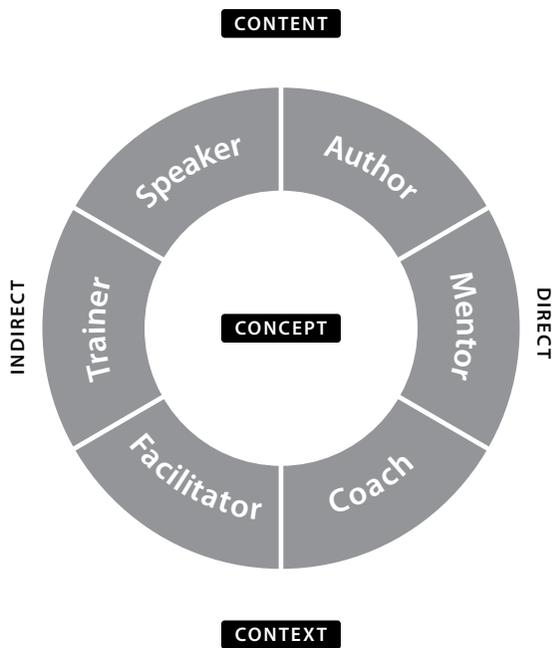
It's a good idea to catalogue questions you might ask to connect people to the idea on the pink sheet. These questions can be written on the back of the pink sheet, and used in coaching sessions, boardroom discussions and facilitated strategy off-sites

A lot of coaching methodologies encourage open-ended questions. In this exercise, we respectfully disagree. The questions on the back of your pink sheet can be leading and closed in nature if you wish. Their purpose can be to stimulate discussion or they can lead someone else down the path of your intellectual property.

DELIVERING PINK SHEETS

In our Business School, we teach thought leaders that they have three jobs in their practice; to *think*, to *sell* and to *deliver*. The pink sheet is our thinking tool, the green sheet is how we sell, and our six primary modes of delivery are how we deliver pink sheets to the world.

There is a direct relationship between the different sections of the pink sheet and each of the delivery modes. This chapter explores that relationship.



The mode model can be broken down into three *styles* of communication and two *approaches*.

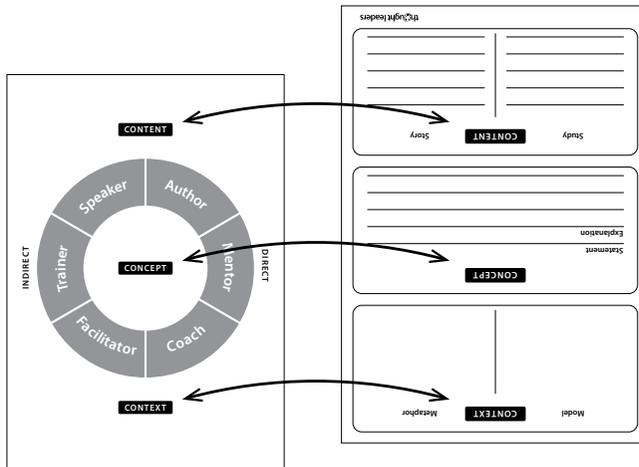
The three styles

The three styles are called *tell*, *show* and *ask*. ‘Tell’ moments are where you deliver great ideas through stories and examples (*content*); ‘show’ moments are where you deliver great education by sharing ideas and principles (*concept*); and ‘ask’ moments are where you use the power of questioning to lead people through your ideas, individually or in groups (*context*). At Thought Leaders, we call this your delivery mode and we suggest that true thought leaders need to be able to access all modes as required.

Before we unpack this further, it’s worth stating explicitly that all elements of a pink sheet are present in all delivery modes. This is not

a dogmatic either/or concept. It's not cut and dried, not a set of rules to be followed but rather an idea to be explored over time. There are lots of layers here.

When we teach this stuff in workshops we'll often have A1 posters of all the models around the room. We'll then pick up the pink sheet model and bring it next to the mode model, before flipping the pink sheet model upside down to illustrate which part of the pink sheet to focus on with the different delivery modes.



So, here are the suggestions of how these styles can be used.

SPEAKER AND AUTHOR: TELL A STORY

When keynote speaking, be sure to focus on **content**. For example, tell stories that inspire, or unpack a three-step process, or even share some facts and statistics.

It is the same for authoring; the best books don't have models. And yeah, we are aware that this book is bursting with models. When you have a spare three hours feel free to ask Matt about why that's

okay. Just know that it's three hours of your life you will never get back. There can be no doubt, however, that if you want best sellers, fill your books with stories, anecdotes and applied examples of the ideas in the real world.

TRAINER AND MENTOR: SHOW AN IDEA

When training or running a workshop, be sure to focus on the **concept**. You need to stay on point when you are training or mentoring. The heart of the show style is teaching concepts. Many educators stray from the topic, they get lost in telling a personal story or they get really lost in some abstract theory. If you are facilitating, you can be abstract. If you are speaking, you can get personal and tell a story. If, however, you are transferring knowledge in the trainer or mentor mode, then you need to get to the point, stay on point and don't move on until your audience really gets the point.

FACILITATOR AND COACH: ASK A QUESTION.

When coaching people, be sure to focus on **context**. For example, ask questions that elicit content from the client, then draw a model. Similarly, when you facilitate, establish the context and allow the audience to provide the content. If things stall then you can drop a little content into the conversation but, as the room leader, this can often be unhelpful. The power of the ask style is that the audience feels that they are in control of the story.

The two approaches

The two approaches to delivering your message can be found on the left and right sides of our model. The direct approach equates with the author, mentor and coach modes of delivery, while the indirect approach links with the speaker, trainer and facilitator modes.

DIRECT

The direct channels allow you to focus on an audience as individuals. With this approach, you are engaging a person directly.

- Tell: author
- Show: mentor
- Ask: coach

People often think that the author mode isn't direct, that it's not a one-on-one delivery method. However right now, while you're reading this book, it's a direct relationship between you (the reader) and us (the authors). And actually, your writing will be better when you are writing it with one person in mind, rather than a large audience.

INDIRECT

The indirect channels allow you to deliver your message to larger groups, rather than individuals.

- Tell: speaker
- Show: trainer
- Ask: facilitator

We suggest that you package your thought leadership so that it can be delivered across any or all of these six delivery methods. So, you capture what you know in a 'mode agnostic' way and you can deliver your ideas as needed. In business, there is a leverage mantra that states: "To be successful in business you need to build once and sell often." This is one of the main benefits of capturing what you know on pink sheets. The pink sheet is how we *think once, deliver often*, and as such, it helps a thought leader achieve leverage in what is mostly a personal exertion business model.

This book concentrates on how to create an IP snapshot of your ideas with three distinct yet aligned components: a content piece, a concept piece and a context piece. You use all three elements when you communicate but one of these three elements will take priority depending on the delivery mode you select.

PART 2

The best way to learn pink sheets is to do one, or three. Once you have, you may find that you need to re-read a few key chapters that are relevant to any questions that may have come up. Maybe models are easy, but metaphors are hard. If so, go back and re-read the chapter on metaphors. Everyone will click with different elements of the pink sheet.

There is so much we could say about pink sheets. Many chapters were deleted or scaled down in the process of writing this book. Our goal was not to be exhaustive on the topic, but rather, to get you up and running using the process and methodology. This is a simple and elegant idea with many layers of nuance. Over the last few decades of using the process and teaching it to others, lots of layers, suggestions and complexities have been created around pink sheets. At its essence, it is the stuff that you say — that makes some kind of point and is part of some bigger picture — and you write that down somewhere.

The rest of this book is dedicated to the demonstration and analysis of pink sheets. Remember that the idea of pink sheets is a simple one. It's just not familiar. When you make the study, application and awareness of the process explicit, and then work long enough for it to become unconscious and pervasive, you will start to see new wonders.

PINK-SHEETING FAMOUS IDEAS

Attempting to distil some well-known ideas down to a pink sheet can be an illuminating exercise. It can help you see how these thinkers fleshed out their ideas over time, so that they could tell their story in different ways and in different contexts. In some cases it can also suggest where some ideas could be further developed.

So in the following pages we've broken down some ideas you're probably already quite familiar with: Stephen Covey's *First Things First*; Carol Dweck's *Fixed Versus Growth Mindset*; Simon Sinek's *Start With Why*; and Linda Hill's *Collective Genius*. Of course we're not claiming that these thinkers used—or have even heard of—a pink sheet. In each case we are simply using our collective admiration for these great thinkers and our familiarity with their ideas as a way of teaching the pink sheet process.

STEPHEN COVEY

First Things First

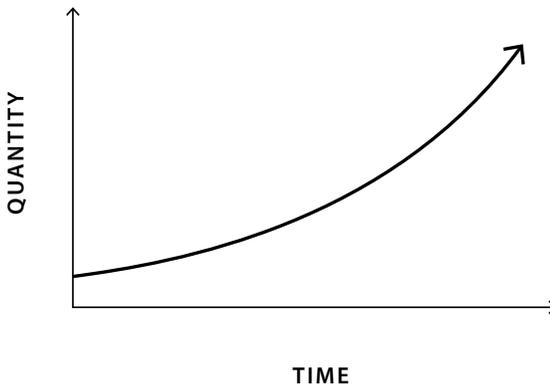
<p>Model</p> <table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">IMPORTANT</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Q1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Q2</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Q3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Q4</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">NOT IMPORTANT</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">URGENT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NOT URGENT</p>	IMPORTANT		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	NOT IMPORTANT		<p>CONTEXT</p>	<p>Metaphor</p> <p style="font-size: 1.2em;">PUT IN BIG ROCKS FIRST</p>
IMPORTANT										
Q1	Q2									
Q3	Q4									
NOT IMPORTANT										
<p>CONCEPT</p> <p>Statement <i>First Things First</i></p> <hr/> <p>Explanation <i>Prioritise Quadrant 2 activity.</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>										
<p>Study</p> <p><i>Time management history</i></p> <p><i>Eisenhower method</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>CONTENT</p>	<p>Story</p> <p><i>Big rock story</i></p> <p><i>Teaching son to clean up the lawn</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>								

A brilliant piece of intellectual property is the Important v Urgent matrix by the late Dr Stephen Covey. The foundation of a multi-million dollar global empire can be distilled to a single pink sheet.

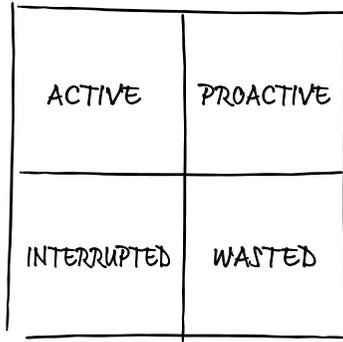
Inspired by a quote from Goethe, this is a great example of a *judgmental quadrant model*. A quadrant model can either be accepting, where all the elements are equally valid (the DISC personality model is an example of this) or judgemental, where there is a hierarchy. This model is clearly judgemental — the top right quadrant (Q2) is the best.

It's interesting to unpack the process that Covey followed in deciding to put that quadrant in that position. Generally, using a left to right access model, 'Not urgent' would be on the left and move through to 'Urgent' on the right, so it seems little odd that he has transposed them.

But perhaps that's because one of the most common models we see is a line or bar chart which plots time on the X-axis, and quantity on the Y-axis. Where progress has been made we are accustomed to seeing a line move from the bottom left to the top right of the chart.



It is a lesson in elegant simplicity that the quadrants are called Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4. This gives them a purity that labels would not. He could have called them:



This would have made the model more obvious but less teachable. The reveal of how to manage each quadrant in workshops would not have been as powerful. The labels as quadrants also leads to a ‘Q2’ lexicon and jargon. You can charge more for jargon.

Stephen Covey Biography

Dr Stephen Richards Covey (October 24, 1932–July 16, 2012) was an American educator, author, businessman and keynote speaker. His most famous book is *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. His other books include *First Things First*, *Principle-Centered Leadership*, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families*, *The 8th Habit*, and *The Leader In Me*. He was a professor at the Jon M. Huntsman School of Business at Utah State University at the time of his death.

Covey was heavily influenced by Peter Drucker and Carl Rogers. Another key influence on his thinking was the study of American self-help books that he completed as part of his doctoral dissertation.

Covey was also affected by his Mormon beliefs. According to Clayton Christensen, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* was a secular distillation of Mormon values.

In 1985, Covey established Stephen R. Covey and Associates, which in 1987 became The Covey Leadership Center. In 1997, this merged with Franklin Quest to form FranklinCovey, a global professional services firm and specialty retailer selling both training and productivity tools to individuals and to organisations. Their mission statement is: “We enable greatness in people and organizations everywhere”.

CAROL DWECK

Fixed Versus Growth Mindset

Model		CONTEXT	Metaphor
FIXED MINDSET	GROWTH MINDSET		BRAIN PLASTICITY
Intelligence is static Avoid challenges Give up easily See effort as fruitless Ignore useful feedback Threatened by others' success	Intelligence can be developed Embrace challenges Persist after obstacles See effort as path to mastery Learn from criticism Be inspired by others' success		

CONCEPT	
Statement	<i>Growth Mindset</i>
Explanation	<i>A growth mindset drives motivation and achievement.</i>

Study	CONTENT	Story
<i>Challenge</i>		<i>Chicago school giving</i>
<i>Experiment with 10-year-old kids (and other studies)</i>		<i>'not yet' grade</i>
<i>Praise process</i>		<i>Letter from 10-year-old boy</i>
<i>Native American kids outperforming Microsoft kids</i>		

thought leaders

In this world-famous piece of research, Carol Dweck attempts to establish a new way of thinking about praise and performance. This is quite a revolutionary idea that is contrary to the way many people think and operate. Her research was solid and the evidence was clear — we have been going about praise all wrong.

The challenge is that to accept this as true you need to understand that the whole way you have been doing something in your life is out of date and fatally flawed. If you were to present this idea as baldly as we have just stated it, you would get resistance. The key to positioning massive change or an evolution in thinking is to establish a *contrast frame*.

A contrast frame is a simple two column diagram, a logical *this versus that* model. The old view is typically positioned in the left-hand column and the new, preferred or evolved view is positioned on the right. The model in this pink sheet is a classic example of this in action.

Notice the labelling of the two points of view. The first, old or out of date perspective is labelled as a ‘Fixed Mindset’, while the second, preferred perspective is labelled as a ‘Growth Mindset’. These labels are descriptive of what they represent but they also give the audience a jargon to adopt. This jargon will become a vernacular shorthand for the details that are listed underneath these headings in each column.

Furthermore, the ideal, evolved choice ‘Growth’ sounds much better for you than the old way ‘Fixed’. This subtle labelling de-personalises the preference and makes the new idea a naturally or logically preferable one.

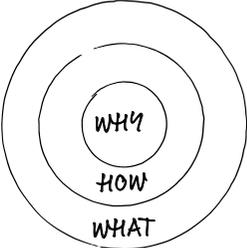
In our opinion, this pink sheet would benefit from a better metaphor. ‘Brain plasticity’ is a metaphor that the field of neuroscience uses and so it’s not really Dweck’s metaphor.

Carol Dweck Biography

Dr Carol S. Dweck Ph.D. (born October 17, 1946) is the Lewis and Virginia Eaton Professor of Psychology at Stanford University and is one of the world's leading researchers in the field of motivation. Her research has focused on why people succeed and how to foster success. She has held professorships at Columbia and Harvard Universities, has lectured all over the world, and has been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Her scholarly book *Self-Theories: Their Role in Motivation, Personality, and Development* was named Book of the Year by the World Education Federation. Her work has been featured in such publications as *The New Yorker*, *Time*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Boston Globe*, and she has appeared on *Today* and on *20/20*.

SIMON SINEK

Start With Why

<p>Model</p> 	<p>CONTEXT</p>	<p>Metaphor</p> <p>GOLDEN CIRCLE?</p>
<p>CONCEPT</p>		
Statement	<i>Start With Why</i>	
Explanation	<p><i>Inspired leaders and organisations communicate and act from inside out.</i></p> <p><i>People don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it.</i></p>	
<p>Study</p> <p><i>Apple</i></p> <p><i>Martin Luther King</i></p> <p><i>Brain Biology</i></p>	<p>CONTENT</p>	<p>Story</p> <p><i>Samuel Pierpont Langley and Wright bros.</i></p>

The first thing to identify in Simon Sinek's Start with Why model is the elegant simplicity of the three circles. This is a worldwide virally explosive meme and yet, it's just three concentric circles. The lesson here is: *keep it simple*. Don't try to be too clever or so clever that you do yourself and your ideas a disservice.

This model's success is a testament to the power of elegant simplicity. Squares, triangles and circles are enough. Just taking the idea here — *start with why* — and representing it in a model has incredible power. The idea would not have spread in the same way if it was just the words without the image.

The middle of this pink sheet is also simple and powerful. We've probably combined two pink sheets into one here — it would be more accurate to separate “Inspired leaders and organisations communicate and act from the inside out” and “People don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it”. Two big ideas distilled to their essence.

The second one, “People don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it”, became a mantra in Sinek's TED talk and gets repeated there to great effect.

This pink sheet and idea could benefit from a solid metaphor. The title that Sinek uses for his model — the ‘Golden Circle’ — is a metaphor of sorts but it doesn't communicate meaning. If the idea of ripples in a pond to represent radiating impact was used it might add to the velocity of the share (not that it really needs this).

The stories shared throughout Sinek's Book and TED talk are great. From Harley Davidson to Apple and onto the US Armed Forces, he picks rich, heroic narratives to build out his IP. He has a nice balance of left and right brain examples in the stories and case studies that he uses.

Take a moment to explore some of Sinek's other ideas on the web. He explores the nature of millennials and the anthropological link between leadership and parenting.

There are seeds of others' ideas in Sinek's work, such as Bernice McCarthy's *AMAT learning* model. We would argue that Sinek could

benefit from referencing these other ideas more. In our example, these would be included in the bottom section of the pink sheet.

Simon Sinek Biography

Simon Oliver Sinek (born October 9, 1973) is an unshakable optimist who believes in a bright future and our ability to build it together. He has discovered remarkable patterns about how the greatest leaders and organizations think, act and communicate.

Sinek may be best known for popularizing the concept of *Why* in his first TED talk in 2009. It rose to become the third most watched on TED.com, with over 37 million views and subtitled in 46 languages.

Sinek is the author of multiple best-selling books including *Start With Why* (global best seller), *Leaders Eat Last* (New York Times and Wall Street Journal best seller), *Together is Better* (New York Times and Wall Street Journal best seller), and *Find Your Why*.

As a trained ethnographer, he is fascinated by the people and organisations that make the greatest lasting impact on the world. Sinek has devoted his life to sharing his thinking and leading a movement to inspire people to do the things that inspire them.

With a vision to change the way businesses think, act and operate, Sinek is working with Ernst & Young to help transform company culture and create a better working world. He is also an adjunct staff member of the renowned RAND Corporation.

LINDA HILL

Collective Genius

<p>Model</p>	<p>CONTEXT</p>	<p>Metaphor</p>
<p>TOO MANY COOKS</p>		
<p>CONCEPT</p>		
<p>Statement <i>Collective Genius</i></p> <hr/> <p>Explanation <i>Innovation is not about solo genius, it's about collective genius.</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Need to create space where people willing and able to do hard work of creative problem solving.</i></p> <hr/>		
<p>Study</p>	<p>CONTENT</p>	<p>Story</p>
<p><i>Pixar</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Infrastructure group at Google</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	

Linda Hill takes an evidence-based look at what it takes to build a creative enterprise. The three themes (*creative abrasion, creative agility & creative resolution*) are the result of several years' work looking globally for trends in creative businesses.

This three-circle model is expanded out in further layers to become a complex instruction map. For example, here are the three elements of creative agility that sit behind the bottom right-hand circle in the model.

This demonstrates the layering of information into easily understandable parcels. We often crowd our models with too much detail making them unwieldy. Think of the three circles as the first layer. Each of these ideas has a series of action steps (and other pink sheets) behind them — these are the second layer. Using this method, we can reveal information slowly and in a digestible manner. In an ideal world, all models will have at least three layers.

Hill's landmark case study surrounds the team at Pixar, led by Ed Catmull. Ed went on to write the book *Creativity, Inc.* (famous for the cover art featuring *Toy Story's* Buzz Lightyear). If we were going to give Hill some constructive feedback, we'd say that she could spend a bit more time on the right-hand side of the pink sheet. Not surprisingly for a scientist, she's very left brain heavy, and her ideas and presentations could use more stories and emotion.

Linda Hill Biography

Dr Linda A. Hill Ph.D. is the Wallace Brett Donham Professor of Business Administration at the Harvard Business School and chair of the Leadership Initiative. Hill is regarded as one of the top experts on leadership. Hill is the co-founder of Paradox Strategies and co-creator of the Innovation Quotient. She was named by Thinkers50 as one of the top ten management thinkers in the world in 2013 and received the Thinkers50 Innovation Award in 2015.

Hill's research focuses on implementing global strategies and leading innovation, building innovative organizations and

ecosystems, developing leaders for innovation, and on the role of the board in governing innovation. She is the author of highly-regarded books and articles on leadership, including her latest book *Collective Genius: The Art and Practice of Leading Innovation*. *Collective Genius* was named by Business Insider as one of “The 20 Best Business Books” in 2014, and received the Gold Medal for Leadership, Axiom Business Book Award.

In 2015, Hill, along with her co-authors, received the first Warren Bennis Prize for the Harvard Business Review article *Collective Genius*, based on the book. Hill is also the co-author of *Being the Boss: The 3 Imperatives of Becoming a Great Leader*, noted by the Wall Street Journal as one of the “Five Business Books to Read for your Career in 2011”, and author of *Becoming a Manager: How New Managers Master the Challenges of Leadership*. Her books are available in multiple languages.

Hill has authored or co-authored numerous Harvard Business Review articles, including *Where Will We Find Tomorrow’s Leaders*, *Winning the Race for Talent in Emerging Markets*, and *Are You a High Potential?* She is a contributor to the HBS Press Pocket Mentor series *Managing Up*, *Hiring*, *Becoming a New Manager*, and *Negotiating Outcomes*.

SOME OF OUR PINK SHEETS

These next four pink sheet examples form the core intellectual property unpacked in our book *The Thought Leaders Practice*, and are the key ones we use to communicate what happens at Thought Leaders Business School. For each example we dive deeper into the thinking behind, and application for, each pink sheet.

If you are reading this book it's likely you already know about Thought Leaders Business School and so, like with the external hypothetical examples, we hope that analysing familiar ideas helps you understand the pink sheet process.

Of course, in stark contrast to the examples in the previous chapter, this set of pink sheets was designed from the ground up using the pink sheet process.

THOUGHT LEADERS

The Revenue Ladder

Model			CONTEXT	Metaphor
BELT	REVENUE	FOCUS		
Black	\$720,000	Investment		WHITE BELT TO BLACK BELT IN MARTIAL ARTS
Red	\$600,000	Leverage		
Blue	\$480,000	Positioning		
Green	\$360,000	Activity		
Yellow	\$240,000	Value		
White	\$120,000	Decision		

CONCEPT	
Statement	<i>The Right Things at the Right Time</i>
Explanation	<i>Grow your business by focussing on what matters at the time it matters.</i>

Study	CONTENT	Story
<i>ICF coach figures</i>		<i>Matt-top speaker \$500K</i>
<i>NSA Speaker statistics</i>		<i>Pete 10 years at white belt</i>
<i>Results and progress</i>		<i>Corrinne Armour her way</i>

thought leaders

The Revenue Ladder is the primary *Why* pink sheet for our Thought Leaders Business School. It describes the journey we take people on and provides the context for the whole program.

We say that a successful thought leader's practice is one where you:

- turn over \$500k–\$1.5M a year, whilst working 50–200 days with one or two support staff
- do work you love, with people you like, the way you want
- make the difference you were born to make.

We talk about the three of these elements together as the 'Black Belt Game'.

You can see how the pink sheet informs all of this. The elements of a successful practice all come from the middle of the pink sheet, and the name of the game — the Black Belt Game — is drawn from the martial arts metaphor.

Everybody in the Thought Leaders Business School is playing this game. In other words, to get into the program you need to be running a thought leader's practice and be aiming for these three things: *revenue*, *lifestyle*, and *legacy*. This, as an aside, makes for an extraordinary culture and community in our Business School.

The black belt game also provides the context for how we run the program. We are clear that the job of the program is to get people from white belt to black belt. We pass all of our decisions through that filter. If we are looking at a new piece of content, or an external speaker, or a new session, we'll ask whether that will help our students get to black belt faster. If we don't think it will, we won't do it.

The set of pink sheets that flow from this Revenue Ladder pink sheet help our faculty to coach and mentor students. There is a pink sheet for every belt level and each one has become a whole chapter in our book *The Thought Leaders Practice*. For example, the Yellow Belt pink sheet details the things to focus on at yellow belt level. So,

a faculty member advising a yellow belt student will be informed by that pink sheet.

We also use this Revenue Ladder pink sheet to sell the program. The thinking that has gone into this pink sheet makes our sales conversations clean, elegant and enjoyable. We can say with complete conviction that this is the game we know. If you are an expert, running a practice and you want to get to black belt, we can help. And if you aren't, then we shouldn't work together.

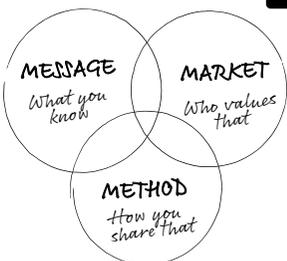
The bottom of the pink sheet also gives us the content for our busking out (information) sessions. Pete will generally take 7–10 minutes to talk about his journey. In a nutshell, he spent ten years at white belt before learning this approach. After this, he reached black belt level in under a year.

Matt will often talk about the martial arts metaphor, and how different belts helped the marines to learn karate more efficiently. He also explains how, as in martial arts, if you try a black belt move when you're a white belt, you're likely to get hurt.

We'll also play a video of Corrinne Armour talking about how she got to black belt while being the primary carer in her family and only working school hours. Finally, we'll share the Business School case study that was shared in Chapter 9, Case Studies.

THOUGHT LEADERS

The Cluster Strategy

Model	CONTEXT	Metaphor
		<p>LIKE A TUMBLER SAFE</p>
CONCEPT		
Statement	<i>Start With What You Know</i>	
Explanation	<i>Build experimental market offers and launch a new one every 90 days.</i>	
Study	CONTENT	Story
<i>Cluster generator</i>		<i>Pete 'Love Your Business' v</i>
<i>Easy v. Dream clusters</i>		<i>model</i>
<i>Lean start-up methodology</i>		<i>Imagine a new training</i>
<i>Minimum viable products</i>		<i>business</i>

This is the primary *How* pink sheet for our Thought Leaders Business School. Everything we teach comes from this. We say that we only have one strategy for climbing up to black belt level and this is it: *clusters*.

All the other pink sheets that make up the methodology we teach, nest under this one. The Delivery Mode model, which was introduced in Chapter 12, Delivering Pink Sheets, sits behind the 'Method' circle in the cluster model at left. On page 103 we include the Selling Thought Leadership model that sits behind the 'Market' circle.

And at the risk of getting a bit 'Inception' on you, the pink sheet of pink sheets (i.e. the pink sheet that explores the idea of pink sheets) sits behind the 'Message' circle. (We are currently still discussing who will be played by Leonardo DiCaprio.)

The model describes what a cluster is. It a unique combination of a message (a domain of expertise) and a market into which it can be delivered using one of the six delivery methods. Essentially, it's an income stream in your practice. And a successful cluster is one that gets up to \$10,000 a month into your practice.

Our book, *The Thought Leaders Practice*, takes 60,000 words to unpack the cluster strategy and how you use it to move up through the revenue belts. Obviously, we're going to struggle to do it justice here in a couple of pages. So, instead, we will share a couple of the key ideas and how they fit on this pink sheet.

The big idea that sits in the middle of this pink sheet is to launch a new offer to market (a new cluster) every 90 days. Essentially, this gives the blueprint for how we get to black belt. We launch a new cluster every 90 days, and although we expect half to succeed, we also expect half of them to fail. We don't get hung up on the ones that fail. The two successful ones add two belts (or \$20k a month) to your practice.

It's typically a three-year journey to get to black belt. Over those three years, you will launch 12 clusters; half will succeed and get to \$10k a month, at which point you have six clusters doing \$10k

a month, which is \$60k a month, \$720k a year, and *voila*, a black belt practice. It's never that neat mathematically, but the focus and intensity is correct.

The 'tumbler safe' metaphor helps us explain how to generate new clusters. The three circles in the cluster model are like the tumblers on a safe. Turning one tumbler just a little can make a big difference (i.e. just changing your message, market or method means you have a new cluster). Sometimes when the safe door opens, the safe is empty. Sometimes, though, there is some money there, and sometimes there is a lot of money behind the door. You just have to recall some good combinations, create some and try a few bad ones as well.

THOUGHT LEADERS

Business Versus Practice

Model		CONTEXT	Metaphor
BUSINESS	PRACTICE		
Large team	Small Team		LIKE A BRAIN SURGEON
High start-up \$	Low start-up \$		
Based on systems	Based around expert		
Can be sold	Can't be sold		
Low margins	High margins		
Slow	Agile		

CONCEPT	
Statement	There is another (better) way
Explanation	You can have the freedom of business without the tyranny of one.

Study	CONTENT	Story
E-Myth Michael Gerber		Matt private fitness studio
The three choices (add job)		Pete and Bali fishing boats
Branson combining business and practice		

thought leaders

Business versus practice is the key distinction that sits behind our Thought Leaders Business School. As we explained on page 92 in the Revenue Ladder pink sheet we help people who want to run a successful practice. This pink sheet explains the idea of a practice — and lets us throw rocks at some forms of business.

There are three ways you can make money: a job (where you work in someone else's business or organisation), a business (where you own the organisation), or a practice. A practice is the choice which makes a lot of sense for smart people who have something to say. A practice is also the choice that we don't hear much about. This is why there is a risk that those who run a practice will often get well-meaning but bad advice from experts in business.

The contrast model included in this pink sheet lets us explain what a practice is by contrasting it with something everyone is more familiar with. While a business is based around systems, a practice is based around the expert (the thought leader). In a business, a 20–30% profit is extremely good. (In some industries single figure profit is all you would expect.) In a practice, we want that to be our cost base, and for you to take home 70–80% of the revenue as profit. A business typically needs investment, while a practice is cash flow funded.

We say being a thought leader in a practice is like being a brain surgeon. This is our metaphor. If you're a brain surgeon your business relies on you. You do one thing — the brain surgery — and you have a team who answer the phone, do the prep work, send the invoices, etc. Brain surgeons don't cold call or advertise in the Yellow Pages. This metaphor relates how your practice should work (although we should note, as with clusters, you will actually do more than one thing).

We have both had the experience of running businesses before starting our practices. This has enabled us to share our back stories as part of our content. Most importantly, we can share the insight that we prefer thinking and working with clients more than we liked

Monday morning team meetings, HR and all the other elements of a small business.

This pink sheet is something that we use both to teach our program and to sell it. When we are teaching this, we remind thought leaders that this isn't business as usual — that what we need to do, as thought leaders in practice, is different to what everyone else in the world is doing. This gives context for everything that follows.

When we sell this, we are very clear that we know the practice game. We are experts at that. Between us, we've spent over three decades working out the best way to be successful at running a practice. So, we have a lot of conviction when we say that if you want to play this game, we can help. And equally, if you're running a business you should go somewhere else to get great advice.

THOUGHT LEADERS

Selling Thought Leadership

		Model			CONTEXT	Metaphor
		BEFORE	DURING	DECISION		
CONVERSATION	MIND	COOL	SELECTIVE	REVERENT	SACRED MOMENTS	
	ENERGY	SOLD	DANCE	SURRENDERED		
		CLEAN	CLICKING	INVITATION		

		CONCEPT
Statement	<i>Sacred Sales</i>	
Explanation	<i>Selling is not a dirty word.</i>	
	<i>When you give clean, explicit invitations</i>	
	<i>to others they are empowered to choose.</i>	

		CONTENT	Story
Study	<i>Conviction v. convincing</i>		<i>Pete and Trish romantic</i>
	<i>Warm v cold selling</i>		<i>proposal</i>
	<i>Generosity marketing</i>		<i>Bianca AirBnB</i>
			<i>Michael Port red velvet rope</i>

thought leaders

This is one of the pink sheets that teaches thought leaders how to sell. Selling yourself is different to selling a product and selling in a practice is different to selling in a business. In a practice, we say that sales trumps marketing, and this is how we sell.

Lots of thought leaders we work with feel some reluctance about selling themselves. They love the approach we use, however, where selling is based on conviction and becomes an act of service.

This pink sheet has another fifteen that sit behind it. We have given each row, column and box in the model their own pink sheet. A good example of how we use these pink sheets is described in our book *Sell: The Power of Conviction* (previously *Conviction: How thought leaders influence commercial conversations*). In that book there is one chapter which unpacks this model and uses the content from the bottom of all fifteen chapters.

Here is an extract from that chapter, where we unpack the ‘Selective’ box:

Selective

During the meeting, the most powerful mindset is selective — be very clear that you are choosing your clients. Get clear before you meet about what type of people you want to work with, what sort of work you do and how you want to work.

Our friend, Bianca, runs a bed and breakfast in Singapore — she uses Airbnb to rent out some of the rooms in her house. She rejects 40% of the people who want to stay with her. 40%! Four, out of every ten people who fill in the form online, enter their credit card and are ready to pay, but she says no to them.

How cool is that? Her whole attitude is that if people are staying in her house, she wants to enjoy the experience. If someone sent her an email that just says, “We need a room for two people”, she knows that they are not her sort of people. It isn’t friendly enough, she says, it’s the sort of request you make to a hotel, not a home stay. So, she says no. And she trusts her intuition.

One of our mantras is to *do work you love, with people you like, the way you want*. Bianca is the personification of this — she only wants to do business with people she likes.

So, when you go into a sales meeting, make sure you are choosing your clients. Have part of your sales system be the point where you choose. Have a strategy for rejecting the clients that aren't a great fit.

We promise you two things will happen. Life will get better as you do more work with people you like. And paradoxically, you will become more effective at selling as you become more attractive. Notice your reaction when we shared that Bianca rejects 40% of requests ... didn't that make her more attractive? Part of you wanted to be in the 60%. The same will happen with you when you choose your clients, and more importantly, are willing to say no to the ones you don't choose.

During your meeting, you are interviewing the prospect just as much as they are interviewing you. You are determining if they are someone that you can help, that you would want to serve and that you would enjoy spending time with. If not, be prepared to walk away. Paradoxically, if this is authentic it makes you much more attractive. If it is clear that you won't just work with anyone and that there is a bar that the prospect has to reach to become your client, the prospect of working with you does become more attractive. However, this has to be authentic — please don't do this as a sales technique.

We ask ourselves three things before we take on a client. Firstly, can we get excited by their vision and what they are up to in their business? Secondly, do we want to hang out with them? Are they someone we would like to catch up with for a coffee? And finally, can we make a significant, strategic contribution? If we don't say yes to all three, then we won't take on the client. Instead, we will recommend that they find someone else who is a better fit.

Our good friend, Michael Port, writes about this in *Book Yourself Solid*. He calls it the 'red velvet rope policy' and paints a beautiful metaphor of a red velvet rope stretched between shiny brass poles, with an attendant only letting the privileged few through. He argues that choosing your clients means that you'll work with clients that you love, that you'll love every minute of it, and that you'll do your best work.

Michael Port lists the following benefits of having a red velvet rope policy (and we agree):

- You'll have clean energy to do your best work
- You'll feel invigorated and inspired
- You'll connect with clients on a deeper level
- You'll feel successful and confident
- You'll know your work matters and is changing lives
- The magic of you will come to life!

Choosing your clients is something which is easy to say and easy to agree with in principle, yet it takes incredible courage to implement it in practice. It is particularly difficult before you are fully booked, when it feels like you need the money or you need the sale. But it's worth it. All three authors have had the experience of taking on clients who weren't right and that our intuition told us not to work with. We always ended up paying for it one way or another. Please learn from our mistakes and select the clients that you will do your best work with.

You can see the different elements of the pink sheet used in the writing. The opening line, "During the meeting, the most powerful mindset is selective", locates us on the model. We are during the meeting (middle column) and looking at mindset (top row). Bianca's Airbnb is one of the stories, and the reference to Michael Port's red velvet rope policy is one of the case studies.

52 PINK SHEETS ON PINK SHEETS

You may find that this chapter may be best read after you have a few pink sheets under your belt. Indeed, reading it before that will make it feel quite academic. Once you have started to unpack what you know using the Pink Sheet Process, you will find this chapter both practical and useful. So, what is this chapter exactly? This is an example of the points taken from 52 different pink sheets. But wait, there's more! This is 52 pink sheets *about* pink sheets. Mind blown, right? All right, maybe us geeking out about this is a little cringe-worthy but we hope that it's also illustrative and useful.

But why are we only showing you the middle of the pink sheet, *the point*? That's the part of a pink sheet that is unique and different from one pink sheet to the next. The model in the top left of all these pink sheets would be the same. The metaphor of the IP as a deck of playing cards remains the same too. It's the point that always changes from pink sheet to pink sheet.

Keep in mind that a concept summary like this is a good idea when you have put together a body of work, organised into a folder of IP.

So here are our 52 pink sheets on pink sheets. We have put the 'Statement' part as part of the heading here, with the 'Explanation' part below.

General Stuff

1. Full spectrum thinking

All ideas exist across two spectrums. The level of detail versus abstraction and the level of analysis versus emotion.

2. The anatomy of a pink sheet

There are 5 common components to a pink sheet. A complete pink sheet requires:

1. model, 2. metaphor, 3. point, 4. case study and 5. story.

3. Left to right

When presenting an idea to a sceptical audience (or most audiences really), it is smart to present the logic (model and case study) first and the emotion (stories and metaphors) second.

4. 3D ideas

A chair has dimensions that makes it real: height, width and depth. An idea has dimensions that make it tangible: content, concept and context.

5. Triple C

Content, concept, context *is* stuff, point, picture.

6. Time and space

Content takes time to get through. Context is quick but fills up the space in someone's mind.

7. Aces high!

Not all pink sheets are created equal. There is a hierarchy to your ideas, some are Aces and others are face cards.

8. Aces low!

Your pink sheets are ranked Aces, Kings, Queens, Jacks, 10, 9, 8, etc. The ideas you rank 7 and below are Aces also, just not yours. They should not be your bad ideas — they should be the attributed Aces from other great thinkers.

9. Appropriate disrespect

A master knows how to re-purpose, reveal and relinquish parts of their idea to best serve the situation.

10. Stuff matters to them

Relevance to your audience is achieved through content, audience re-use is achieved through concept and context.

11. Don't stuff up

Ideas are better created from context down to content. *Stuff* is time consuming and often audience specific.

12. Think 3, deliver 1

Modes use all 3 levels of an idea, but they only deliver through one.

13. SA bottom third

Speakers and authors deliver primarily from the bottom third of a pink sheet.

14. FC top third

Facilitators and coaches mostly use context tools like models and metaphors.

15. TM middle third

Trainers and mentors use the point and travel up and down the pink sheet.

16. Prepare once use often

The pink sheet process is a leverage tool. It lets you take one piece of thinking and re-purpose into many different situations.

17. S.T.E.E.P. stuff

You can often find great stuff or content by thinking through the Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental and Political nature of the point you are making.

18. I C(oncept) dead people

Quotes can be used as a point or concept reinforcer. They can also act as powerful thought starters when looking for more pink sheets.

19. Read like a thought leader

Readers read a great idea and say: "What a great idea". Teachers read a great idea and ask: "How can I share that?" Thought leaders read a great idea and ask: "What do I think about that?"

20. 'Yes, but' or 'yes, and'

Great ideas are often built from contribution to an existing idea or the contradiction of it.

21. Speaker formula

Make a point, back it up, repeat that point, back it up and conclude with it. This is also good for authors.

22. Trainer formula

Make a point, back it up, ask a question, draw a model, repeat the point. This is also good for mentors.

23. Coach formula

Ask a question, listen to content, ask another question, listen to content (repeat as necessary), then draw a model. This is also good for facilitators.

Story stuff

24. It's not all about you!

The easiest story to tell is that of someone else you admire.

25. Silly me!

If you tell stories about yourself, do so in a self-deprecating way.

26. Follow the formula

Joseph Campbell created a handy story arc format. Follow it when you create your stories.

27. You, now and then

Stories are great when they are a mix of personal, topical and historical.

Model Stuff

28. Your geometry teacher lied to you!

When creating models there are only 3 basic shapes — a circle, a square and a triangle. Build your models from these.

29. Layer your models

Each model should be able to be revealed at three levels of depth. The first level is the awareness, the second is the distinctions and the third is the prescriptions.

30. Pink sheets multiply fast

One great model may make several points and, as such, it will be duplicated on a bunch of pink sheets.

31. Work the intersections

On every model, you can often create finer distinctions if you work the boundary lines on the shapes.

32. Mix it up

Balance your geometry and try not to have too much of the same type of model in your pink sheets.

Metaphor stuff

33. Metaphors are personal

The best metaphor is not always the one that fits your point perfectly. A metaphor is a chance to show more of you and bring a multifaceted persona to your ideas.

34. Clichés don't just happen!

If you are going to use a clichéd metaphor, own it. Explore the metaphor to its n^{th} degree.

35. A question of detail

A metaphor and a story can have the same structure and vibe. The metaphor is often the story, less the detail.

36. Stick figures must die!

Don't draw a metaphor. A metaphor is, by definition, a word picture. Don't draw it unless you have wicked illustration skills.

37. Don't be a suck up!

The best metaphor is one that brings a different experience into the room. It's better to pick a metaphor you understand completely, rather than one that fits your audience.

Point Stuff

38. The point is the difference

One pink sheet is distinct or separate from another based on the point.

39. Palette is power

Organise the language on your pink sheets so that it adopts a consistent palette.

40. Repetitive variety

Have several different palettes for explaining your ideas. Sometimes it will be better to use a casual language palette, and other times, a formal one.

41. The AB solution

Each point you make should have a short, sharp, declarative statement (A) and a second sentence that explains your statement (B).

42. Book titles rock!

When making your point it sometimes helps to think of the 'A' as the title of the book and the 'B' as the subtitle.

43. Make your 'A' sharp

It's all about getting attention. Cut through the noise and the information deluge and get to the point of the point.

44. Make your 'B' clear

The 'B' in your point needs to be very clear and will often involve two or more ideas in relationship.

45. Declare a point!

Points should not be questions.

46. Twenty questions

An Ace pink sheet deserves 20 questions written on the back. The questions should elicit content from the receiver.

47. Walk around your models

Create your leading questions by walking step-by-step through the distinctions that you have made on each model.

48. Slide your A's

The declarative statement is the perfect text for your slide shows (where it can be accompanied by a conceptual picture).

Organisational Stuff

49. Big words organise

Pink sheets are stored in folders. Each folder should be grouped under a contextual word.

50. Major in thinking, not drawing

Don't get lost in PowerPoint or worrying too much about how well you illustrate. Just get on with it!

51. Power up

Build slide decks from your pink sheets so that you can manipulate them into pitches, presentations and programs.

52. Pink sheets, Cha-Cha-Cha!

You need to keep doing pink sheets for the rest of your life. Start now and never stop dancing!

Afterword – Magical Pink Sheets

It's Pete here with a short afterword — a bit of a reflection on a couple of things I've picked up from observing how Matt, the creator of pink sheets, goes about doing them.

It's worth stating that Matt is a visionary, in all the ways you might use that word. In no way should this section take away from the remarkable body of work that he has created. I do not know of an elegant, more complete body of work on the planet. So much so that it will be my life's work to share Matt's life's work with the world.

The bottom line is that Matt believes he channelled the pink sheet process. That is, that the idea of pink sheets came through him, not from him. Not magically so, but rather through a deep immersion into the thinking field.

Elements of the pink sheet have existed forever. Metacognition — the process of thinking about your thinking — has been around forever. The Father, Son and Holy Ghost are *content*, *concept* and *context*. They are both separate and one at the same time. Sound familiar? Left and right brain dominance, as an idea or spectrum, has existed for just as long. Aristotle's *logos* versus *pathos*, as two of the three artistic proofs, are an example of this. Furthermore, the idea of a 360° spectrum is built into feedback models and it is, of course, the underlying meme of a compass.

The pink sheet process is laying the compass, as full spectrum, over the vertical abstraction of content to context and the horizontal preferences of left- and right-brain thinking. It is the amalgamation of three separate ideas to make a new one. So, it is a magic, in the way that alchemy was. Three different metals or elements melted together to create something new, something stronger than iron.

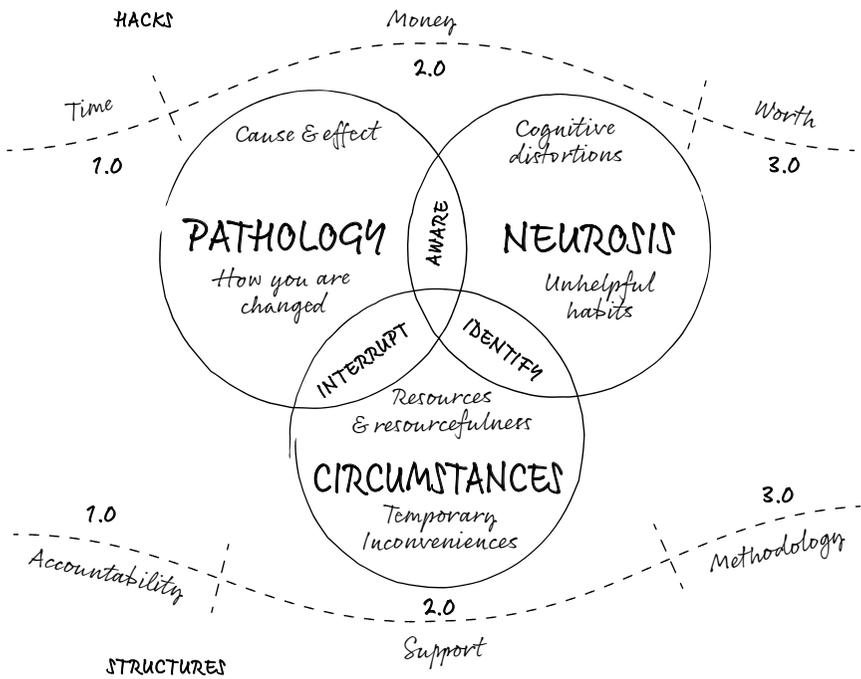
Matt has a world view that can best be described as ‘the land of make-believe’. He has, over 50 or so years and three or four major career moments, reinvented what he does again and again around this idea that “you are not what you do, but rather what you allow yourself to be”. He has a deep, spiritual faith that borrows from all religious constructs, caring less for what might be true, but rather, for what might be useful.

Matt is prolific with the ideas he generates. The number of new ideas (and new Ace pink sheets) he generates every month is a bit frightening. I asked him how this happens, and the response was instructive. Matt believes that, as thought leaders, we are tapping into the ‘wisdom of the ages’, archetypal truths that when people hear them, they ‘hear them again, as if for the first time’. He believes that these ideas fly around our culture and experience, and that if we sit still with a pink sheet in front of us, they drop into our minds, onto our desks and into our Moleskins.

Elizabeth Gilbert calls this inspiration “your genius”. The ancient Romans believed that a person had geniuses, rather than that they were a genius. This idea, that Matt’s ideas are not his, helps him create without fear of critique. If they are not yours, you don’t care so much whether they are good enough, perfectly formed or complete. Matt believes that the idea is a gift, but it’s the thought leader’s job to work with that inspiration. In this way, the pink sheet process is the black smith’s forge where ideas are melted and crafted into shape.

Matt is a deep thinker because he has practised deep thinking every day of his life for decades. Like a sportsperson who is ‘match fit’, Matt is *thinking* fit. He listens to talks and reads books constantly, almost instantly converting the ideas into pink sheets.

I was presenting a piece on mindset to a room once and Matt drew this next model on a napkin as I spoke.



All this is shared not to show that Matt is great (even though he is), it's to encourage everyone to realise that the pink sheet process is a practice, just like meditation. It's the act of meditating consistently that makes the difference. Through applied effort over time, you will be able to do this pink sheet thing masterfully.

Matt believes that his job as a leader is not to be great but rather to bring out greatness in the people around him. His leadership work has an Ace pink sheet with the point, "You are great! You lead best when the best version of you talks to the best version of us." He listens to challenges that people, teams and businesses have as if they are a Rubik's Cube puzzle to be solved. This attention-out, solution-centred orientation makes pink sheets a breeze. If you come from service to others, your pink sheets will instantly be better. Humble yourself in the process of pink sheeting. Think of yourself less, not less of yourself.

And finally, Matt finds pink sheets relaxing and a cure for insomnia. As a child, Matt did not sleep very much. Pink sheets are the evolved form of a process he has been utilising for as long as he can remember having thoughts. Doodling, mind mapping, painting and journaling are all tools he adopted to help empty a busy mind. By the time he was 21, the first rough form of pink sheet came into being and Matt had his first truly good night of sleep.

Matt explained to me that ideas back up in his mind like deceased relatives at a psychic reading, all clamouring for the psychic's attention. By pink sheeting an idea, even if it's half-baked or ill-conceived, Matt can relax, safe in the knowledge that the concept has been captured in enough detail, to be worked on later. He pink sheets when he is tired — not only when he is inspired — and this could be a useful practice for all thought leaders.

So, the instruction in this afterword is:

1. It's helpful to think that ideas for pink sheets come through you, not from you.
2. Practise makes perfect.
3. Be attention-out and in service when thinking.
4. Empty your mind daily. Collect your ideas.

Gratitude

It is typical in a book of any kind to say thank you. Traditionally this is called ‘Acknowledgements’; it suits both of us to call this ‘Gratitude’. We are both so grateful to our loved ones for all they do and the wider Thought Leaders tribe and crew — thank you.

We both love the ideal way to acknowledge a teacher by saying “You taught me everything I know but not all that you know”, and in many ways that’s how we feel about everyone’s contributions. This book is the best we can do for now and better than it could ever be because of all you have contributed — thank you.

Specifically, we are grateful to:

Michael Henderson and Scott Stein for helping shape the message sections in the book *Thought Leaders: How to capture, package and deliver your ideas*.

Col Fink and Sacha Coburn for the work on message in *Speaker-ship: the art oration and science of influence*.

Neville Cook for his critical editorial eye, Laura Barnard for her proofreading.

Michael Fink for his design, layout and demand that our thinking always be better.

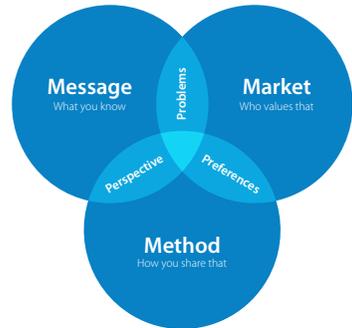
Thank you also to everyone around the world who uses pink sheets as a way of taking what you know and getting it out into the world. Ideas generate ideas and break us free of the tyranny of dogma.

YOUR NEXT STEP...

Turn your clever thinking into a commercially successful practice

Now that you've read *Think*, you're probably wondering - what next?

- Now that I'm capturing my thoughts - how do I package them?
- How do I deliver my thoughts in a way my clients will respect?
- How can I get paid well for my time and expertise - and avoid being undervalued?
- How do I leverage my thoughts to build credibility as an expert?



Since 2001, Thought Leaders has been helping clever people to become commercially successful. In Thought Leaders Business School we help experts to build commercially successful thought leadership practices – earning \$500,000–\$1,500,000, working 50–200 days per year, with 1–2 support staff.

In other words getting paid well, to do the work you love, with the people you like, the way you want.

If you're interested in finding out more about Thought Leaders Business School, register to receive an information pack at tlbusinessschool.com/think