



Forward Thinking Leadership

The Delphi technique applied to thought leadership

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Why Forward Thinking Leadership

This kind of approach in the Innovative Lawyers marketing and public relations category is illustrated by Clifford Chance, which stood out for its International Climate Change Survey. Carried out with Gracechurch Consulting, the objective was to inform and influence governments, regulators and business leaders. The survey revealed that businesses see climate change as a significant opportunity, not a threat, and want to see more regulation, not less, to facilitate global trading. It secured extensive media coverage and was discussed at the World Economic Forum in Davos, the United Nations Bali conference, the Economist Forum, Chatham House and with the UK's environment minister.

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Every organisation would love to have a commercial crystal ball. A clear view of the future would help us all to plan our investment, take advantage of emerging markets and opportunities and to protect ourselves in advance from economic and market downturns.

Sadly, we have yet to locate such a device – but we may have the next best thing.....

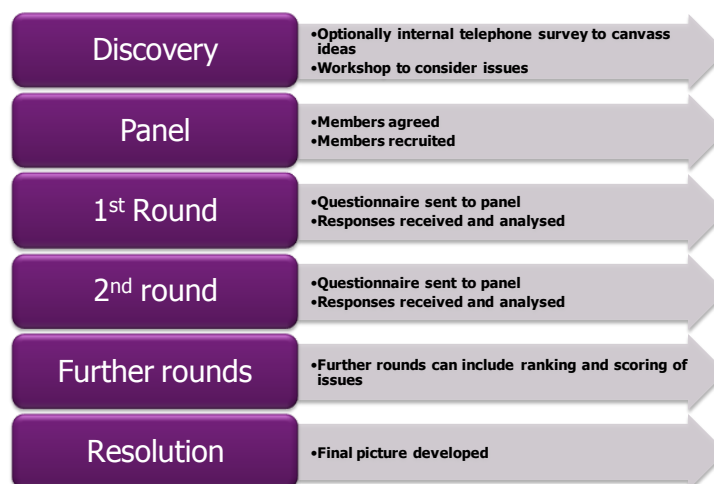
Over the past 5 years, Gracechurch has developed “Forward Thinking Leadership”, specifically for the professional and financial services arena.

Based on the Delphi technique, created by Harvard and widely used in sectors such as healthcare and aviation, Forward Thinking Leadership employs a panel of experts to develop a picture of the future through a series of iterations.

Harvard developed the idea so that group discussions were not dominated by the opinions of one or two individuals – and Forward Thinking Leadership benefits from this ability to let all participants contribute equally.

The technique has very much come into its own with the speed and ease of email. In our experience, respondents find engagement easy whether in the office or remotely with the help of their Blackberry.

Figure 1: Forward Thinking Leadership





How it works

Forward Thinking Leadership is an excellent way of initiating a campaign or thought leadership exercise.

The project usually starts with a discovery session (see Figure 1) where our client explores the issues and sometimes develops some possible scenarios to get the process started.

A panel of experts is then chosen. This panel can be nominated by our client or created by Gracechurch. In practice, most projects have involved a mix of the two.

The panel should be created from as diverse a range of experts as possible and might consist of an expert in areas such as:

- Economics
- Technology
- Finance
- Recruitment
- Regulation
- Branding/reputation management

as well as experts of particular relevance to the subject being explored.

Generally, panellists will participate without payment because they gain from the experience of the debate and are typically offered a copy of the findings.

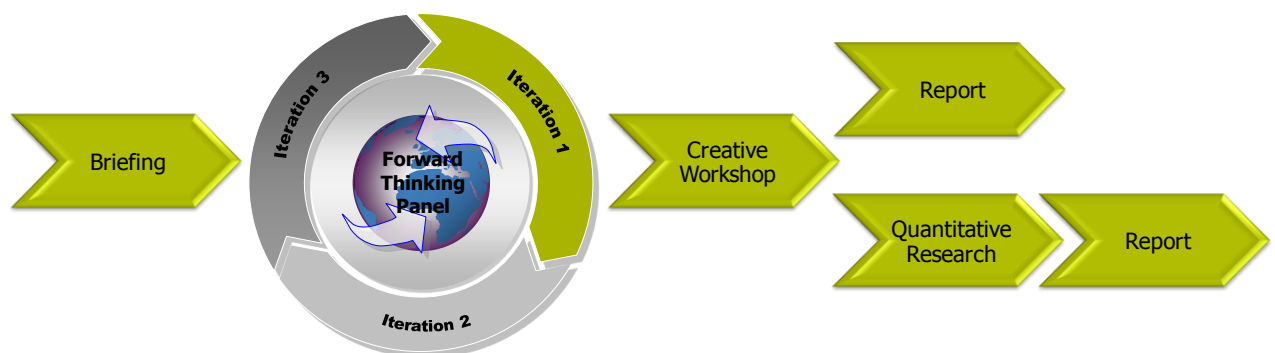




The Forward Thinking process

Forward Thinking involves a series of questionnaires being sent by Gracechurch to members of the panel. After each questionnaire, responses are collated and analysed, and then a refined questionnaire is sent out to panellists showing anonymised responses and viewpoints from all other panellists. Panellists are asked to comment on each of these and the process goes through a series of iterations before a final viewpoint is reached. This is fed back into a creative workshop (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: The Process



Each iteration produces a rich seam of comment and discussion which can be used in any eventual report published.

For some of these projects, the iteration process is just the means of developing a small number of scenarios or honing down on some issues which are then explored in more detail through a conventional research process. Sometimes too, clients want some quantifiable data and to achieve this, a survey of a wider base is required. Gracechurch has extensive experience of running research projects both domestically and globally. Several Forward Thinking Leadership projects have involved upwards of 300 interviews in 10 or more territories.

With or without quantitative research, Gracechurch often produce a report for clients for distribution to their clients and other audiences. We use a small number of freelance writers who can write reports in a very digestible style so minimising the effort required by our client.





Next Steps

We would very much like to discuss Forward Thinking Leadership with you and explore whether it might help your firm with creativity in thought leadership and campaigns.

Please contact one of our team for an initial meeting:

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