



2023 Strategy



Thesis

Today Focused Labs has minimal market recognition outside of our existing client base and past network. In order for the business to sustain itself in the short term and grow in the long term the company needs a larger and more reliable pipeline of new clients and projects. Creating a strong association of our thought leadership with the Focused Labs logo will increase the opportunity for collisions with potential clients, equip our sales team with a stronger narrative for close, and attract top talent.

In order to establish ourselves as thought leaders we need a combination of individual recognizable personalities, re-usable content (written or otherwise), and consistency of presence in a variety of mediums.

A Vision for Thought Leadership

Thought leadership is a core part of our strategic vision for Focused Labs in becoming a “badge of honor” that amazing people to seek to have on their resume. Practitioners that spend time at Focused Labs should be proud to have Focused Labs as a part of their professional work history, confident that it will open up incredible opportunities for their career. In order for our peers and industry to share in celebrating that badge of honor they first need to be aware of it. Our 2023 vision for thought leadership is all about getting out there so that everyone knows who Focused Labs is and what are thought leaders on.

First Goal

As a starting point, we need to focus on **creating habitual behavior** in publishing content that expresses all the amazing things that we already are doing. Our high level strategy is to categorize and deliberately target content at two distinct (but not mutually exclusive) audiences: buyers and practitioners.

▼ Practitioner Audience

We need Focused Labs to become a trusted source of high quality content for practitioners who are looking to hone their craft. I personally think about sources like [Baeldung](#), [Silicon Valley Product Group](#), or [Martin Fowler's blog](#) as examples of reputable and reliable sources of high quality content.

Some examples:

- If I am looking to understand a particular coding pattern in the Spring framework I will scroll past StackOverflow and Medium results and jump to the Baeldung result first because I know it's concise and accurate every time.
- Perhaps I am looking for some additional reading to send to a client after a conversation about iteratively evolving software architecture. Martin Fowler's blog is the first place I'm going to find supporting material.
- Perhaps, my client isn't familiar with writing or using Gherkin style acceptance criteria. I send them [this blog](#) to read before we get together to pair on the first set of stories for our backlog.
- You identify that one of the sources of pain for your client company in adopting a more agile and empowered team way of working is that communication between the team and leadership is broken. You send [this overview](#) of how to write great executive summaries from Reforge to your client to consider and then get together to make a plan on next steps to improve communication on this team.
- [need some design centric examples, help!] Design systems, Research best practices, How to critique and evaluate interfaces etc.

While those examples set a pretty high bar, remember our first step is to **create habitual behavior**. We can be thoughtful about areas of focus and excellence but we don't want that to be a blocker. Let's not let the enemy of good be perfect.

Content Budgets

Starting on March 1st, 2023 each of our practices (Product, Design, Engineering, DevOps, and Delivery Lead) will have monthly content budgets for their departments to use in order to generate content. Directors will be accountable for making sure that resources are allocated and content is produced but the expectation is that individuals are responsible for creating the content itself.

Content Guide

We don't want to constrain creativity. At the same time a blank canvas can be a difficult place to start. Below are some ideas to get the gears turning. @Justin Williams has put together a great guide to get you started on different forms and voices of written content.

Who exactly are we writing this for?

- Think about writing to your fellow Focused folks and to your future self. We create some pretty incredible patterns, team dynamics, and solutions on every project. Writing down interesting solutions may be something you or your peers will find valuable on the next project!
- Other practitioners of your craft. The goal is to share our skills out with the world. We do some pretty incredible things when it comes to building software and we can help other practitioners learn from what we do.
- Other teams within a current client. When we help large enterprise clients establish better ways of working, more effective software testing strategies, or develop outcome oriented roadmaps you better believe there are other teams within the organization struggling with similar issues.
- Yourself. Creating a brand and a history of content is something that you can reference and carry with you throughout your career.

What exactly are we supposed to be writing about?

- It's really easy to convince yourself that an idea might not be all that interesting or interesting to everyone. Beware of getting blocked. Seek feedback from your peers.
- Thought Leadership isn't always novel or revolutionary. Rather it can be a unique repackaging of a few ideas or the implementation of a theory in practice.
- Write about what you are doing today, it's already quite extraordinary.
- Think about the things we do that are differentiating. Our practices may seem routine because we do them all the time here at Focused Labs, but are they industry standard? Think about the ah-ha moments that you have had with clients and teams. Tell a story.
- Ask yourself about what things you find yourself having to introduce to most new clients. Let's create a toolbox full of getting started with Focused Labs supporting materials.
- Start small. Our initial goal is to create habitual behavior. Default to quantity over quality, then evaluate quality.

What types of content are we aiming for?

- Written form content has the lowest barrier to entry and is the best place to start forming habitual behavior. We strongly encourage everyone to start there.
- We are open to other types of content and don't want to constrain creativity. If you have another medium that you are interested in meet with your Director and to make a case and expect feedback.

 [Writing Guide](#)

▼ Buyer Audience

Content specifically targeted at potential buyers needs to align with our GTM strategy and to appeal to leaders who having buying power over our services. The primary goal of this narrative is for *Focused leadership* to present themselves as innovative peers that our buyers crave to have on their team. Focused Labs leadership team members will primarily be responsible for creating this content.

Our aim is to:

- Have vision on the future of our industry and paint a picture of how a customer fits into that vision.
- Amplify what the company has accomplished for other customers to create and realize that vision
- Tie it all together with why Focused Labs is the right partner to help the next customer achieve that vision.

Starting Point (Q1)

- Focus on content related to what we are currently good at, back fill content for success to date.
 - Building highly productive software teams in a traditional IT environment.
 - PODs - building a marketplace platform to enable a new business model
 - Building strong remote culture with the transparency leadership needs
 - Internal Case study on the efficacy of our remote culture. Start to shape our offerings as a "remote first" playbook.
 - Getting organizations "un-stuck" on long standing problems
 - Ford Marketplace - Event Storm reorganization of teams and unblocking new product development
- Design and document a repeatable publication flow. Where (LI, dev.to, sub-stack, etc...), how (documented instructions, shared FL accounts, syndication, canonicalization). Repeatable by GSA staff.

Types of Content

- Case studies, conference talks, co-presenting with clients, webinars. Public facing, real time and conversational content.