

How To Become A Thought Leader:

**Dr. Marshall Goldsmith, World-Renowned
Executive Coach, Consultant, & Author**

A RainToday.com Interview

A Thought Leader has Passion PLUS Market Relevance and Reach.

You can't go after a market without something authentic and valuable to offer, without something spun from the passion you hold for your area of expertise... and you can't continue to teach others and sustain your business as a whole without developing an ongoing relationship with your market. One without the other just doesn't work.

- *How To Become A Thought Leader,*
The RainToday.com Research Team

How To Become A Thought Leader

RainToday.com interviewed **Dr. Marshall Goldsmith**, world-renowned executive coach, consultant, and author, while creating our research report on ***How To Become A Thought Leader***. He is one of 9 thought leaders in professional services who participated in the research, along with:

- **Brian Carroll**, Influential "Start-With-A-Lead" Blogger & Lead Generation Guru
- **John Doerr**, Global Marketing Expert, Coach, & Wellesley Hills Group Founder
- **Bert Gregory**, REI Store Designer and Sustainable Design Expert
- **Tom Hood**, Dedicated Leader, Educator, & Volunteer For The Accounting Field
- **Bruce W. Marcus**, Professional Services Marketing Philosopher, Writer, & Pioneer
- **Michael W. McLaughlin**, Guerrilla ConsultingSM Guru & 22-Year Deloitte Veteran
- **Dr. Martha Rogers**, Best-Selling Author & Celebrated 1to1 Marketing Evangelist
- **Peter Zeughauser**, Client-Focused Consultant To The World's Top Law Firms

In addition to 95 pages of powerful and candid advice offered by these thought leaders, ***How To Become A Thought Leader*** offers 100 pages of expert analysis on building thought leadership in your field; 20 learning checklists and questions for self-evaluation; and down-to-earth views of how passion, relevance, and reach work together for you on your path toward establishing thought leadership to grow your business.

Visit <http://www.RainToday.com/thoughtleader.cfm> today to learn how to get started, and become a thought leader in your field.

Dr. Marshall Goldsmith: World-Renowned Executive Coach, Consultant, & Author

Current Position:	Dr. Marshall Goldsmith is currently a University Professor at Alliant International University's Marshall Goldsmith School of Management, co-founder of Marshall Goldsmith Partners, and a world-renowned executive educator and coach.
In The Public Eye:	<p>Dr. Goldsmith has authored 20 books, most recently <i>Global Leadership: The Next Generation</i> and <i>The Art and Practice of Leadership Coaching</i>, with 7 of his books ranked by Amazon.com as "most popular in their field".</p> <p>He has been named on many of the most impressive lists in business, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The American Management Association's 50 great thinkers and leaders who have influenced the past 80 years of management; • <i>Businessweek's</i> 50 great leaders in the United States; • <i>Wall Street Journal's</i> Top 10 executive educators; • <i>Forbes'</i> 5 most respected executive coaches; • <i>The Economist's</i> most credible consultants in the new era of business; and • <i>Fast Company's</i> preeminent executive coach in America. <p>As of 2005, he is a Fellow with the National Academy of Human Resources, the highest award for an HR professional. He has also been named Volunteer of the Year by the International and American Red Cross.</p>
Also Known As:	Dr. Goldsmith is an adjunct professor in executive education at Dartmouth's Tuck School, and a 10-year veteran of the Board of the Peter Drucker Foundation.
Websites:	<p>http://www.marshallgoldsmithlibrary.com</p> <p>http://www.marshallgoldsmith.com</p> <p>http://www.marshallgoldsmithblog.com/</p>

The Interview

As part of RainToday research on thought leadership, RainToday.com interviewed Dr. Marshall Goldsmith, world-renowned executive educator and coach. Dr. Goldsmith's accolades within his field and in management overall, both in the U.S. and abroad, are truly impressive. He has been referenced as a thought leader over 200 times by the premiere business publications and journals of the world.

But he had to start somewhere... and you could say he's done a few things well along the way. With the confidence of someone who loves what he does, and the straightforwardness of someone who has helped the topmost executives in the world achieve their goals, Dr. Goldsmith shares some of the lessons he's learned about making choices, investing for the long term, and choosing the best area to focus your passion in the quest for thought leadership in professional services.

RainToday: Does it surprise you that you're considered a "thought leader" by practitioners in your field? In other words, do you consider yourself an "Intentional Achiever" of thought leadership, or an "Accidental Tourist"?

Dr. Marshall Goldsmith: Both. I'll start with the accidental, and then go to the intentional.

The way I got into business was largely accidental. I worked with a very famous person, Paul Hersey¹. He gave me an opportunity. I learned what he did. I was a college professor, and he offered me a job making \$1,000 a day. I was making \$15,000 a year at the time. Because he was double-booked, he asked if I wanted to deliver a session in executive education for a very large corporation, and I said, "Sign me up!" I did the session. It was extremely successful. And that's how I got into the executive education business. So, in that sense, it was very accidental.

How I got into the coaching business was also accidental. I was working with a CEO. He said, "We have this young guy who is smart, dedicated, hardworking, driven to achieve, entrepreneurial, gets results, stubborn, opinionated, and all that. It would be worth a fortune to us to turn the guy around. Do you think you could help us?" I said, "Sign me up!" He said, "I don't think it would work."

¹ Dr. Paul Hersey is a recognized authority on training and development in leadership, management, and selling, and is best known for his work regarding Situational Leadership®.

Then I came up with my idea, and I said, "I'll work with him for a year. If he gets better, pay me. If he does not get better, it's free." He said, "Sold!" That's how I got into coaching. Both of those were reasonably accidental.

On the other hand, I have made a conscious effort to become well-known in the field. That was not accidental. I've done this through speaking, through writing, and through interviews, like I'm doing right now, to intentionally get my name out there in the broader market. So, has this been accidental or intentional? The answer would be both.

RainToday: Let's verify a few of the activities you might take part in these days:

- **Books Written:** I've written 20 books. My next book, which is coming out in September 2006, is called *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*. It is going to be a very large book, published by Hyperion, which is very exciting. I'm going to be out there working to get that book out in the broader marketplace.
- **Articles Published:** I average one article every couple months or about 8 a year, for the last, say, 6 years. I also have a regular column in *Workforce Performance Solutions* and previously had a regular column in *Fast Company*.
- **Speaking Engagements:** I speak a lot. I'm guessing 100 days a year. The largest group I work with would be people inside corporations. For example, I spoke to the top 2,000 leaders at Kaiser Permanente, Johnson & Johnson, and BellSouth. UBS, a Swiss bank, is one of my largest clients. I've been teaching the UBS High Potential Program for at least 7 years. Then, I teach regularly in executive education programs: for example, at Dartmouth. I've been asked to teach on an intermittent basis at Wharton School, University of Michigan, Oxford, Cambridge, London Business School, and many of the top business schools. Then I give keynote speeches for a variety of different associations or organizations, for anywhere from 6 to 5,000 people.
- **Press Mentions:** There have been lots of interviews written about me. I was interviewed in *The New Yorker*, which wrote an 8,000-word story about my life in April 2002 (the audio version is on my website). Last year, *Forbes* magazine did a very large story about me, *Harvard Business Review* interviewed me, and if you look under "Marshall" in press, I'm guessing I've been in the press about 200 times. Various interviews, references, whatever. And from all around the world. The furthest country is probably Saudi Arabia.

For my next trip, I'm going from San Diego to Hong Kong, to Singapore, to Saudi Arabia, to London, to Houston, and back to San Diego in two weeks. I travel all the time. I've been in the press in a variety of different countries.

RainToday: Before you met Paul Hersey, did you have any intention or ambition of putting your name out there? Did you have any inclination that you would be building this eventually someday?

Dr. Marshall Goldsmith: No way. I had no idea. If you'd have asked me then, would I have ended up where I am now, I would have never dreamed that would be possible.

It's all built on itself. When I met Paul, I already had a Ph.D. in organizational behavior. It's just a matter of where you would like to start the line. I liked the field. It's lots of fun.

The other thing I've done, that has been very helpful, is that I have a very positive network with other top people in the field. So, we're all basically friends. We don't compete with each other.

RainToday: Can you identify certain decisions, opportunities, or experiences that turned out to be important milestones in your progress toward being known as a thought leader?

Dr. Marshall Goldsmith: I had one just a few years ago. One of my clients really helped me understand that I should focus on coaching successful people, and help them get better, and not worry about coaching people who might be fired. This also changed my career. Now, my whole focus is helping successful leaders get better. I don't work with anyone who might get fired. I just work with mega-successful people who want to get better.

That was a big change. This person really helped me. He was my client that I'd coached, who improved more than anyone else. He really helped me understand the importance of having great clients, and working with people who were already successful, and positioning myself as a person whose entire mission is helping successful people get better. My mission is to be the world authority in helping successful leaders get even better, by achieving positive change and behavior for themselves and people in their teams.

I'd say another thing that helped me was being around Peter Drucker. I was on the board of the Peter Drucker foundation for ten years, which was great, so I got to spend a lot of time with Peter Drucker.

RainToday: What effects did you notice happening as a result of some of these turning points?

Dr. Marshall Goldsmith: They all radically changed the profile of people I was dealing with. I'm dealing with increasingly upscale people, which is good! When someone else opens the door, you still have to deliver after the door is open. It's not a matter of them opening the door and you win. Then, it's up to you. Other people have certainly opened the door for me, and I would not have been nearly as successful, had they not opened the door for me.

RainToday: What do you think has been the tipping point from being a respected practitioner to being seen as a "thought leader"? And how do you know you're there?

Dr. Marshall Goldsmith: For me, it's not any one thing. It's a whole series of books, talks... For example, one of my relationships is with a company called Linkage, which gives very large conferences. Linkage has sent out 1.4 million pieces of paper with my picture on the cover. What's that worth? Phil Harkins (at Linkage) and I have a very good relationship. Basically, years ago I told Phil, "Look, I will help you any way I can. All I want you to do is help me get famous." Phil said, "Fine."

I'm completely booked for a year. If you wanted to hire me to be your coach, this year is over. I'm sure I charge more than any coach in the world. Why? Because people know who I am.

The idea of "No charge without results" was a breakthrough idea. Clients like that. Also, the clients I deal with, if they get better, whatever they pay me is worth it. If they don't get better, it's worth nothing.

RainToday: How would you answer these for yourself? My career / practice would definitely have been LESS successful through the years if I had never...

Dr. Marshall Goldsmith:

1. ... met Paul Hersey.
2. ... had an opportunity to coach at a very high level.
3. ... met a client who told me I should work with successful people, not fix problems.
4. ... published so much.
5. ... given so many talks.
6. ... made a huge investment when there was no short term payoff, probably the most important of all.

What I've done over the years is I've made a huge investment in long term success. All those articles I've written that you've read... I didn't get paid to write those articles. Many of the conferences and speeches I've given, I've done for free. All the boards I've been on, I don't get paid. Like the Drucker Foundation, I don't get paid for that. So I've made a huge investment.

My website: I give away all the materials, and I don't get paid for that. If you go to my website (<http://www.marshallgoldsmithlibrary.com>), it's all free. People from 131 countries have visited my website in the past six months, thousands of people. I don't get paid for that. It's all free.

I've made a huge investment. Most people don't invest.

RainToday: What gave you the confidence to make that investment over the years?

Dr. Marshall Goldsmith: Well, it's interesting. A friend of mine gave a program, and he was getting paid \$1,000 a day. There was another very famous person named Buck Rogers who, at the time, was a speaker who was getting paid \$15,000 a day. My friend said, "If my talk is better received than Buck Roger's talk, can I get \$15,000?" The client said, "No." My friend said, "Why not? If I do better than him, why can't I get paid as much as him?" The client said, "He's famous, and you're not."

There's two ways to deal with this: 1) Say life isn't fair or whine, or 2) Become famous. You know what I decided? Become famous.

RainToday: My career/practice would possibly be MORE successful, OR more QUICKLY successful if I had...

Dr. Marshall Goldsmith:started writing at a much younger age. When I was younger, I was too busy just working. I made a lot of money, but if I had to do it over, I would have done much more investment in things that did not pay short-term money, but were very good for long-term personal brand development.

RainToday: Looking back, what has been most surprising to you along the way, for better or worse?

Dr. Marshall Goldsmith: What's been surprising is, basically, everything gets down to personal issues. If my clients don't want to change, they're not going to change anyway. My job is not to tell people what to do. My job is to help them be the person they want to be. And I think that the most surprising, or the most important thing that I've learned as a professional is, it's not about me. I try to get rid of my own ego when I'm working with clients. It's about them,

and the people around them. My success or failure is much more a function of them than it is of me. Most of what is written in our field, especially executive coaching, is all wrong. It indicated that people get better because they have a great coach. No. The coach helps the clients get better because the client is great, not because the coach is great.

RainToday: What do you consider the single most important elements of becoming the esteemed professional and thought leader you are today?

Dr. Marshall Goldsmith: I think the next thing for me is really focusing on people's identity. It's a kind of a change in the way I do what I do. It's really helping people be the person they want to be... not just act the way they should act, but be who they should be. And again, my learning over the years is, whatever happens in terms of personal change has to come from inside the person that I'm working with, not from me.

RainToday: Would you say that concept is something you've tried to apply to yourself?

Dr. Marshall Goldsmith: Oh, yeah. I have somebody call me up every night and go over 24 questions with me. Every night. Same questions. Very helpful. And the reason is, somebody asked me, "Why do I need this? Don't I understand the theory?" I wrote the theory. That's why I do it. I know how hard it is. I'm not different from anyone else. It's just as hard for me to change as it is for any of my clients.

RainToday: What would you recommend to professionals who are considering the attempt of thought leadership to grow their business and career, or maybe even to become their career?

Dr. Marshall Goldsmith: Invest. Be willing to invest for the long haul. Be willing to invest when there's no short-term payoff, and be willing to make personal sacrifice for long-term positive brand enhancement. Most professionals are not willing to do that. You get what you pay for.

RainToday: Is it possible to attain a certain level of thought leadership while staying balanced with family, friends, or other interests outside your main area of work?

Dr. Marshall Goldsmith: Sure! Part of my *New Yorker* profile included a story about me and my family. With my children, when they were smaller, I got up to 135 days I spent at least 4 hours interacting with my family. I made more money that year than the year I spent 20 days interacting with my family. Finally, my kid said, "No, Daddy. Too much! Less interaction!" I actually reached a level when my kids decided I was spending too much interaction with them! It's just a matter of what you focus on.

RainToday: Do you think that's something you have to work up to? You mentioned investing time and money, going for the long-term pay-off. For a lot of people, the luxury of being able to spend that amount of time is not available to them in the early days.

Dr. Marshall Goldsmith: I don't believe that. You know what? It's personal choice. It's not time, it's commitment. Are you willing to make the commitment, are you willing to make the sacrifice. I mean, I didn't have any money. Nobody gave me anything. My father was a gas station owner in Valley Station, Kentucky. Well, you know – who handed anything to me? Nobody. So why am I different from anybody else?

RainToday: Any last advice that you want to leave with people who might be interested in doing what you've done in their own field?

Dr. Marshall Goldsmith: One guideline is to do what you love. I love what I do. I'm never going to retire. If you do what you love, it doesn't feel like work. So it's not like, "Poor me, I put in long hours." I don't have to work at all. If I wanted to, I could hang out on the beach all day and do nothing the rest of my life. I don't work for money. I love what I do. Most real thought leaders in my field never retire. Warren Bennis, Frances Hesselbein, Richard Beckhart, Peter Drucker. They never retired. We all retire when we die! So my first thing is, love what you do.

Second, pick something. Be the world's expert at *something*. See, I have a very clearly defined mission. My mission is to help successful leaders to achieve a positive, long-term change in behavior for themselves, their people, and their teams. That's all I do. I don't do 50 things. I just do that. Well, if you want to be a world's expert, you've got to be the world's expert at *something*. Don't say you do 20 different things. Pick something that you love, become the world's expert at that, and develop a brand identity about that.

Finally, pay the price. And it's not really complicated. The price is speaking, writing, networking, building relationships, making those long-term investments that don't necessarily produce short-term revenue, but make a long-term difference. Like this interview! I'm not getting paid to do this interview. But it's a positive thing for the long term. ■

About RainToday.com

RainToday.com – The Website

RainToday.com is the premier online source for insight, advice, and tools for growing your professional services business. Based in Framingham, Massachusetts, RainToday.com's core offerings include:

- Free articles by well-respected marketing, sales, and service business experts such as David Maister, John Doerr, Patrick McKenna, Suzanne Lowe, Mike Schultz, and Charles Green on core topics in selling and marketing professional services
- Case studies on what's working in marketing and selling professional services
- Interviews with world-renowned services marketers, rainmakers, and firm leaders
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- Premium content, products and tools designed specifically for helping service providers to grow their firms
- Webinars, seminars and conferences for rainmakers and service marketers

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About The RainToday Research Team

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As Publisher of RainToday.com, Mike is responsible for leading the world's foremost content publication on growth strategy, marketing, and selling for professional services firms. Mike is also a Principal with the Wellesley Hills Group and consults to professional services firms worldwide. He has written articles, case studies, and research reports on marketing and selling for professional services. Prior to joining the Wellesley Hills Group and RainToday.com, Mike was Director of Training and Education Partnerships for Linkage, Inc. At Linkage, his primary responsibilities were leading the company's public and in-house seminar divisions, growing revenue and profit by over 800% in his tenure with the firm. Mike has also served as a marketing and sales process and strategy consultant with the boutique firm Product Knowledge Systems. Mike holds an MBA in Marketing and Entrepreneurship from Babson College.

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As Chief Content Officer of RainToday.com, Andrea oversees the content, day-to-day operations, and *Rainmaker Report*, the RainToday.com flagship weekly newsletter. She is responsible for the online publishing site's growth, product quality, marketing initiatives, content, and continuing usefulness to service firm marketers and business developers worldwide. Andrea has worked as a consultant, writer, marketer, and researcher within professional service firms and non-profit organizations. She has written numerous articles, white papers, e-books, and major market research reports on a number of business and management subjects. Andrea holds an MBA from the John M. Olin School of Business at Washington University in St. Louis, with emphasis in organizational leadership, marketing strategy, and entrepreneurship.

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As Editor at RainToday.com, Rebecca is responsible for editing the content for RainToday.com and creating Rainmaker Report, the RainToday.com weekly e-newsletter. She is also a co-author RainToday's research, *The Business Impact Of Writing A Book: Data, Analysis, And Lessons From Professional Service Providers Who Have Done It*. Rebecca has worked as a research consultant and business analyst for several Fortune 500 clients. Her experience includes determining the market scope for new products and services, conducting focus groups, designing websites, and writing industry reports. She has also conducted extensive research on the thought processes involved in decision-making. Rebecca holds a BA from Wesleyan University with honors in psychology.