



The Power of Thought Leadership

A preview

Aims of this study

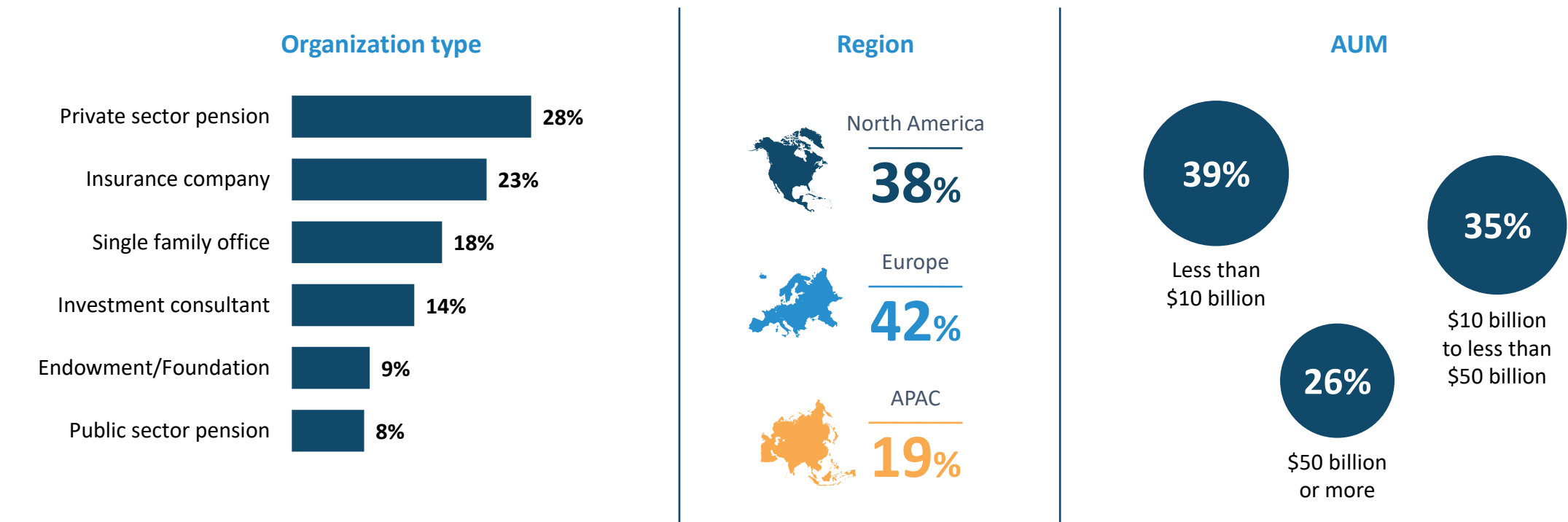
Asset managers face an increasingly challenging business environment – there is huge pressure on achieving sustainable growth amid fee compression and intense competition. Thought leadership efforts have the potential to be a key differentiator for those that understand how insights add value. The primary goals of this research are to help firms understand what institutional investors are interested in and provide evidence to substantiate the link between thought leadership and brand strength.

Using our proprietary database of asset owners, we have gathered insights in several areas:

- How does thought leadership influence asset owners' brand perceptions?
- How does it influence their investment decision making?
- How could thought leadership better serve asset owners' needs?
- Which asset managers are seen as the leaders in this space?

SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

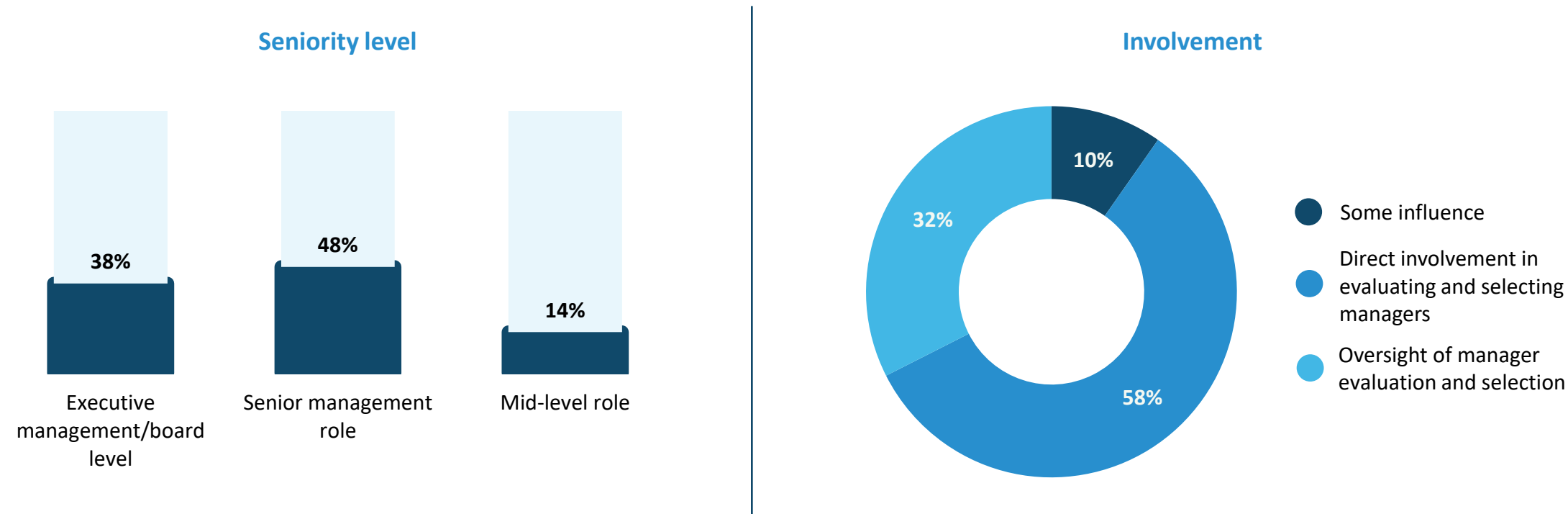
- We surveyed 154 investment professionals from CoreData’s proprietary asset owner panel during Q2 2025, representing nearly \$5 trillion in cumulative AUM.



Data may not sum to 100% due to rounding

SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

- 90% of respondents have direct involvement or oversight of manager selection.



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KEY FINDINGS SUMMARY

1

Thought leadership plays a critical role in investor decision making

2

Quality insights inspire further engagement and build brand equity

3

Strong link between thought leadership quality and brand strength

4

Thought leadership is crucial to honing brand identity

5

Investors value unique insights, forward-thinking analysis, and practical application



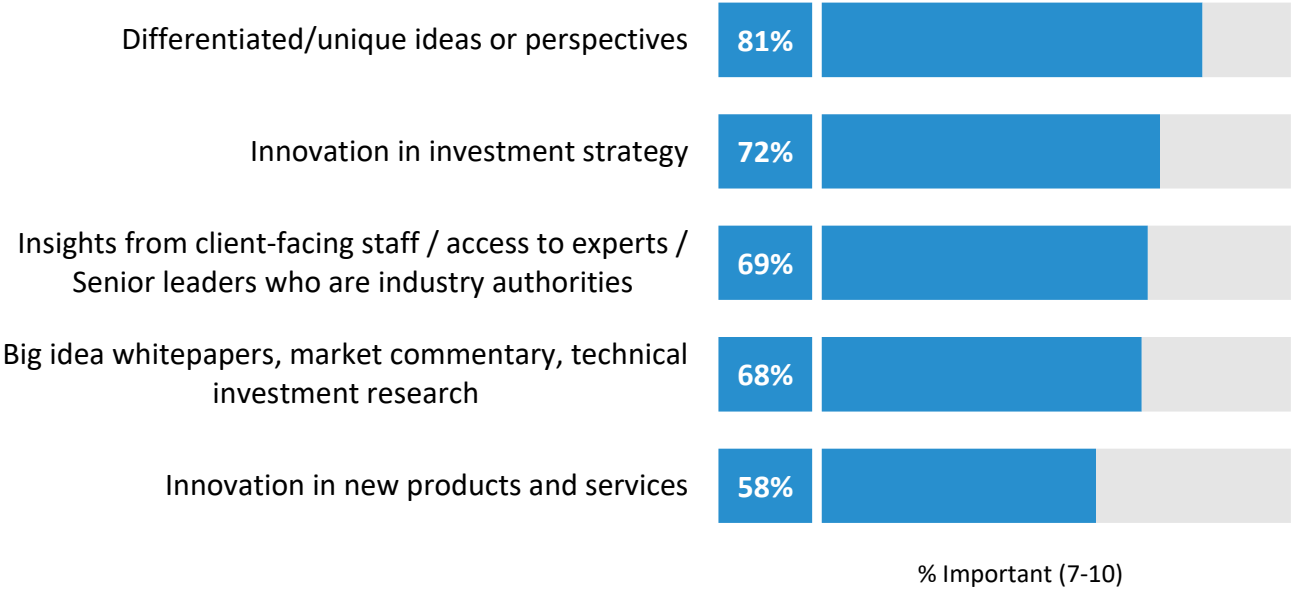
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THOUGHT LEADERSHIP AND BRAND

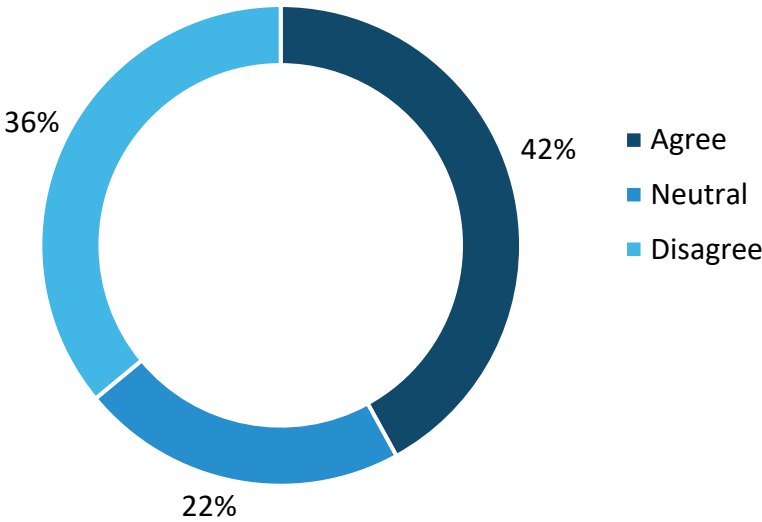
UNIQUE IDEAS ARE MOST IMPORTANT FACET FOR BUILDING THOUGHT LEADERSHIP BRAND EQUITY

- But differentiated **doesn't necessarily mean provocative or contrarian** – just 42% agree that thought leadership needs those traits to stand out, suggesting that efforts which **advance the industry dialogue or go deeper on a trend** can be as effective as going against the consensus.
- Beyond unique perspectives, demonstrating innovation in investment strategy, providing insight through client-facing staff and experts, and publishing whitepapers and technical research are also seen as important to moving the needle.

How important are these areas in establishing a 'thought leader'?



Thought leadership content needs to be provocative or contrarian to effectively stand out among the noise.



Q17. Please rate the importance of the following areas in establishing an asset manager as a thought leader.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP THAT STANDS OUT



WHITEPAPERS / TECHNICAL RESEARCH

- Schrodgers' reports
- BNP Paribas' Sustainability research
- Aegon Asset Management's Investments under the new Dutch pension system
- Templeton: Paradoxical trinity of defense
- SSGA on portfolio allocations / private assets
- UBS's reports e.g., tariffs analysis
- Wellington's Evolution of Climate Investing
- Charles Gave, The General Theory of Portfolio Construction
- Nordea's ESG research
- J.P. Morgan's The end of dollar dominance?
- J.P. Morgan's Eye on the Market: Heliocentrism
- Goldman Sachs' Crypto: A New Asset Class?
- Blackstone's "Private Credit: The New Core Allocation."
- J.P. Morgan's Annual Energy Paper
- J.P. Morgan's Long-Term Capital Market Assumptions
- Allianz's Grassroots Research
- Nuveen's fixed income research



SPOKESPEOPLE / INSTITUTES



- JPMorganChase Center for Geopolitics
- David Kelly
- BlackRock Investment Institute
- Henry McVey
- Paul Krugman
- Tim Toohey
- Howard Marks
- Paul Donovan
- Rick Rieder
- Jeffrey Gundlach

- BlackRock's equity market overview and global outlooks
- Morgan Stanley's "Thoughts on the Market"
- J.P. Morgan's Guide to the Markets
- Charles Schwab's Market Perspective
- J.P. Morgan's Market Insights
- Bridgewater's Daily Observations
- Fisher's Equities Outlook
- Neuberger Berman on Private Markets

MARKET COMMENTARY



QUAL INSIGHTS – WHO’S STANDING OUT AND WHY

“Bridgewater is a standout with their out of the box thinking and transparency. They share their ideas and encourage their clients to apply it back to their portfolios. And you can pick up the phone and talk to the portfolio strategists. They’ll challenge your thinking and assumptions. It’s an exceptional model.”

CIO, UK public pension

“Franklin Templeton has reached escape velocity in terms of their CIO is super present, you see him everywhere, and then there are materials from him or their portfolio managers that support that. The best thought leaders show a clear, well-orchestrated strategy, a combination between reading and hearing and seeing.”

Investment Director, US pension

“a couple of years ago, Substacks and blogs felt innovative but now it’s really saturated, and so it’s become a lot of noise. I think going back to the tried and true like Oaktree monthly Howard Marks letter model stands out again because it has a little bit more gravitas and meat to it.”

Board member, US Foundation and Family Office

“Brookfield has webinars and conferences and a tremendous amount of content around all of that – it shows their connectivity and awareness function in that niche, and then being able to put it into digestible little nuggets of Intel for the market alongside great returns made selecting them a no-brainer.”

Portfolio Manager, UK private pension

“The most prominent thought leaders have created Portfolio Solutions teams, like PIMCO and PGIM... they’re able to marry up the best thinking from the firm with the allocator mindset and produce actionable insights that are tailored to your portfolio or program.”

CIO, US pension

IN-DEMAND TOPICS





2

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP INDEX

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP INDEX SCORE METHODOLOGY

- The average importance rating of each thought leadership dimension was used to determine the weighting of each factor in the index. Since all factors average between 6.8 and 7.8, there is a marginal difference in the weights.
- Asset managers were rated across the five dimensions of thought leadership on a scale of 1-10, which determines the points allocation. Each firm's category scores are averaged and summed to calculate the overall score.

Thought Leadership Areas	Importance Rating	Weighting
Differentiated/unique ideas or perspectives	7.8	21.6%
Innovation in investment strategy	7.3	20.3%
Insights from client-facing staff / access to experts / Senior leaders who are industry authorities	7.2	19.9%
Big idea whitepapers, market commentary, technical investment research	7.0	19.4%
Innovation in new products and services	6.8	18.8%

Firm Rating	Points allocation
1	0%
2	0%
3	0%
4	40%
5	50%
6	60%
7	70%
8	100%
9	100%
10	100%



CORE | DATA
research

