

University of Texas Leverages Linkage's *Thought Leader Series* to Develop New Educational Opportunities

CHALLENGE

The department of Continuing and Innovative Education (CIE) at the University of Texas at Austin has a 100-year history of extending the resources of the university to anyone with a desire to learn. University leaders wanted to commemorate a century's worth of educational contributions, while maintaining their focus on creating innovative learning opportunities for the future. Another key strategic priority was to use the centennial celebrations to help increase the overall revenue stream of the department of Continuing and Innovative Education.

SOLUTION

CIE first launched a 100-day storytelling blog to inform the public of the depth, breadth, and impact of CIE's programs on individuals in Austin and around the world. Simultaneously, the leaders found the perfect complement to the celebration with Linkage's *Thought Leader Series*, a unique offering which includes live video broadcasts featuring some of the world's greatest thinkers. Each broadcast is comprised of a 60-minute segment followed by a live question and answer session with the featured presenter.

To kick off the initiative, participants, which included a diverse population of university staff and external business professionals, viewed Marshall Goldsmith's broadcast on *The Positive Actions Leaders Must Take to Start Winning Again*, followed by Malcolm Gladwell's presentation on *Why People are Successful*.

To reinforce the key messages in the broadcasts, CIE's team planned interactive activities for the participants to engage in immediately following each broadcast. The follow-up activities were extremely well received. And the overall concept aligned itself perfectly with CIE's mission to develop new opportunities for students of all ages and interests.

RESULTS

CIE benefited from the opportunity to market and brand their association with world-renowned leadership development thought leaders without having to do any of the legwork associated with scheduling the live presentations. This opportunity also allowed participants to learn more about timely and relevant subjects and to engage in professional learning outside of a regular work environment with their colleagues and peers. And finally, the broadcasts helped reinforce CIE's mission of inspiring people to learn and provided practical approaches and ideas that are making positive change a reality.