More than a million books are published each year and more than 500 million tweets are sent each day, according to Dorie Clark, so how do you make your ideas stand out?

It's a question she had to ask herself while considering a topic for her second book. And her answer was simple: by writing a book that would help others stand out.

Clark identified 50 top “thought leaders” in fields as diverse as urban planning, biology and genomics, and interviewed them about what they did to stand out. She will discuss the results of her interviews, which became the basis for her second book, during the Special Webinar Series webinar, “Stand Out: How to Find Your Breakthrough Idea and Build a Following Around It.” To register, click here.

“Stand Out is intended for people who have found the place where they want to make their mark,” Clark says, “but who need to develop strategies to make sure their ideas are heard. I tried to reverse-engineer the process by which thought leaders became known.”

She interviewed well-known thinkers like best-selling authors Seth Godin and Daniel Pink, along with not-so-famous people who also succeeded in standing out, such as content marketer Michael Waxenberg and Miranda Aisling Hynes, an author, artist, singer and songwriter.

**Standing Out**

Through her interviews, she identified the following common themes and strategies for standing out.

**Start with an idea.**

The first step in making a breakthrough idea stand out, of course, is having a breakthrough idea. The idea has to be high quality, and it has to get noticed and gain traction.

“No matter how brilliant your idea is, it’s not going to do any good if no one knows about it,” she says. “Similarly, if your idea isn’t good, getting it noticed is not going to do any good.”
Attack a big problem.
It’s not enough to make an existing product a half inch wider, Clark says. As an example of someone who attacked a big problem, she cites Rita McGrath of Columbia Business School.

“We all know that the pace of innovation is speeding up,” Clark says, “but what do you do about it?”

McGrath recognized that the faster pace of innovation was ending companies’ competitive advantage, so she came up with ideas for how companies should respond. For example, given the pace of change, she recommended that businesses develop budgets quarterly instead of annually.

Identify a niche.
It may seem contradictory, but, according to Clark, “if you can go deep in a particular aspect of something, it will enable you to move out beyond it.”

She interviewed political strategist Sophal Ear, a refugee from Cambodia who wanted to focus his studies on his native country.

“He is a recognized expert on foreign aid, public health and pandemics,” she says. “He’s done a TED talk on criminal justice and the Khmer Rouge tribunals—all as a result of his initial immersion into studying Cambodia. He’s been incredibly successful, because of his deep knowledge, and he’s managed to be very strategic in finding ways to leverage that depth.”

Combine ideas.
While he started his career as a mathematician and computer scientist, Eric Schadt has since made his mark as a scientist by learning how to leverage the use of big data for scientific research.

Create original research.
Creating original research may sound daunting, according to Clark, but doesn’t have to be.

“In the Internet era, opinions are cheap,” she says. “It’s a lot harder to come by data—facts. If you are the person taking the time to get those facts—crunching numbers to get stats, immersing yourself in a particular realm and writing reviews about particular products, it positions you as an expert in a way other people are not.”

Waxenberg was looking to buy a home in New York City for his family, so he started going to open houses to evaluate properties. He went to more than 1,000 open houses and wrote very detailed reviews for StreetEasy, a real estate website.

“He established himself as an expert in real estate in Manhattan,” according to Clark. “People asked him to represent them, even though he wasn’t a Realtor. A Realtor called him and started working with him. Because of his reviews, he doesn’t have to work hard to get clients.”

Create a framework.
While people have been writing about influence and persuasion for many years, Robert Cialdini was able to develop a new framework for explaining how people are influenced, which he described in his book, Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion, a New York Times bestseller.

The six factors he identified that people can use to influence others are: reciprocity, commitment, social proof, liking, authority, and scarcity.

“Creating a new framework is something you might think isn’t possible these days, but it is,” according to Clark. “A lot of fields do not have their basic tenets laid out. If you can be the one to articulate something new, you can make a massive contribution.”

A Three-Step Process
Clark sees standing out as a three-step process:

- **One-to-one idea transmission.** Sharing ideas with a small group of trusted friends and advisors, getting feedback, making revisions and building early support.
- **One-to-many idea transmission.** Share ideas more broadly, using public relations, social media and other marketing tools.
- **Many-to-many idea transmission.** As an idea catches on, others become ambassadors and help spread your idea.

“I wanted to create a toolkit to enable other people to bring their best ideas forward—something that can have an exponential effect,” Clark says. “If I can help readers get their ideas out into the world, we’ll have access as a society to a lot more people’s best thinking.”

Click here to register for Stand Out: How to Find Your Breakthrough Idea and Build a Following Around It
12:30 to 1:30 p.m.
Wednesday, September 16, 2015