

Seen and Remembered: Using Research to Stay on Your Prospect's Radar

A practical guide for agency leaders and expert providers who want the right people to encounter their expertise — more than once, and in the right moments.



Why the Right People Still Aren't Finding You

**You've built something good. Your clients get results. Your team is strong.
And yet your pipeline still feels quiet, inconsistent, or misaligned
with the kinds of clients you want more of.**

If you already know the work is strong, the more useful question becomes this: Where are the right people actually encountering your thinking — if at all?

Where Visibility Breaks Down

Often, the issue isn't that prospects are ignoring you. It's that they haven't encountered your expertise in a way that helps them recognize why you're the right choice.

Accurate but generic messaging doesn't give people anything to remember or repeat.

Referrals help — but only when there's a clear point of view attached to them.

And showing up more often doesn't help if the message doesn't clearly reflect what your audience cares about most.

What changes the dynamic is not more activity, but more relevant insight — used consistently over time.

The Research Advantage

Audience-focused research gives you insight you can keep using, which allows you to:

- Understand the real pain points your best-fit clients are navigating
- Show up in places and formats they already trust — more than once
- Share ideas that build confidence over time, not just initial awareness
- Create content that reflects how your audience thinks and decides, not just how marketing sounds

When your insight keeps showing up in places your audience already trusts, attention builds naturally — without chasing it.

A Real-World Example

Sutherland/Weston

This Maine agency has specialized in helping organizations connect with Maine residents, visitors, and business decision-makers for decades. They had great case studies, but their leads were lagging.

How could they demonstrate that they understood Maine — and “Mainers” — better than any other agency?

We helped them conduct the first-ever attitudinal study of Maine residents, Mindsets of Maine, and found something extraordinary: Mainers have very different perspectives about the state (and their fellow Mainers) than virtually every marketer assumed. And they don’t all agree. In fact, we found three distinct mindsets among Maine residents.

And most brands were talking to Mainers as if they were a monolithic group.

Which meant that much of the time, brands were resonating with one-third of their total audience, at best.

Sutherland/Weston thought the insights from their research were so important for brands doing business in Maine that they built a conference around it: Maine-Stay. Its purpose was to educate brands and businesses operating in Maine about having better conversations with, and more impact on, the audiences they serve.

Attendees started asking about how the agency could help their organizations. Cold leads started referencing the research in sales calls. Newsletter subscribers started forwarding their content. And the agency began to get referrals from people who’d never actually hired them.

Why? Because people kept encountering the agency’s insight — in talks, content, and conversations — and began to see them as the expert on how Maine buyers think, act, and decide.

That’s the expert’s advantage — and it’s built through visibility that compounds, not one-time exposure.

Today, Sutherland/Weston’s Maine Insights Lab leverages its ongoing research, experience, and client work across the state to give Maine’s businesses and community leaders clarity about their audiences.

“Our research study instantly set us apart from every other agency when it came to expertise about Maine buyers. It launched into a whole new level of conversations and opportunities, and recharged our sales pipeline like nothing else had.”

*Elizabeth Sutherland
Sutherland/Weston*

A Visibility Reality Check

Before investing energy in more activity, it's worth checking whether your expertise is actually showing up in the places your right-fit prospects already trust.

This exercise helps you pinpoint where visibility is breaking down — without judgment — so you can decide where focus will matter most.

Step 1: Picture one right-fit prospect

Think about a specific person you would love to have more of as a client.

Ask yourself:

- Where do they go to get smarter?
- Whose perspective do they trust?
- What kind of content do they slow down for?

Write down two or three places or formats they regularly engage with.

Step 2: Look at where you're showing up today

List the places your expertise currently appears:

- Website
- LinkedIn
- Email or newsletter
- Speaking or guest appearances
- Referrals

Now notice the overlap — or lack of it — between this list and the one above.

Step 3: Check the message, not just the channel

Pick one place where you *are* visible.

Ask:

- Does this reflect a real audience concern?
- Would a right-fit prospect immediately feel, “This is for me”?
- Or does it sound broadly competent but interchangeable?

Step 4: Choose one small visibility move

Identify one audience insight that matters right now and commit to sharing it in one place your audience already trusts.

Visibility grows when relevance comes first.

How Else Can We Help?

At Audience Audit, we help agency leaders, consultants, and other experts use original research as a foundation they can keep building on — to stay visible, relevant, and trusted over time.

It's not magic. It's a method that keeps working when it's used well.

Let's talk about what original research could unlock for you.

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