

CHEATSHEET: THINK TANK PRODUCTS



FORMAT	TARGET GROUP	PURPOSE/ GOAL	TIME & EFFORT	SUCCESS METRIC	EXAMPLE/ TOOL
POLICY BRIEF	Policymakers, Advisors	Inform policy decisions	Medium	Policy citation, feedback	Brookings briefs
MEMO	Internal staff, Partners	Share insights, recommend actions	Low–medium	Implementation, response	Google Docs
WORKING PAPER	Researchers, Funders	Share early-stage research	High	Citations, peer feedback	SSRN
BACKGROUND BRIEF	Media, policymakers	Provide in-depth background information & analysis	Low–medium	Implementation, response	Google Docs
OP-ED	General public, Media, Policymakers	Influence opinion	Medium	Shares, reprints, responses	NYT, Guardian, Medium
PODCAST	General public, Experts	Share perspectives, reach new audiences	High	Listens, reviews, shares	“Power Corrupts,” “Talk Policy to Me”
WIKI	Internal teams, Open collaborators	Collect knowledge, evolving resources	Medium–high (initial)	Contribution, reuse	PolicyToolbox wiki (GitHub)
INFOGRAPHIC	Policymakers, Media, Public	Communicate data simply	Medium	Shares, reposts, understanding	Canva, Flourish, Pictochart; EPRS Infographics
NEWSLETTER	Stakeholders, Subscribers	Updates, analysis, calls to action	Low–medium	Opens, clicks, replies	Substack, Mailchimp

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SCENARIO DECK	Strategic foresight teams, Planners	Explore futures, provoke thinking	High	Use in planning, feedback	Futures Toolkit
INTERACTIVE DASHBOARD	Policymakers, Analysts	Visualize and explore data	High	Engagement, use in reports	Tableau, Datawrapper
VISUAL ESSAY	Public, Creative policy communities	Tell a story, engage emotively	High	Views, emotional resonance	Medium, exhibitions
OPEN LETTER	Public, Political figures	Signal position, provoke response	Medium	Public discourse, response	OpenDemocracy, Avaaz campaigns
STUDY	Policy Makers, Advisors, Researchers, Experts	Inform in detail on an issue	High	Policy citation, feedback	SWP Study
ONE PAGER/ EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	Policy Makers, Advisors, Media	Give a concise overview of an issue for people with very little time	low	Implementation, response, policy citations	iste.org (guide to One Pagers), Brookings One Pagers
INTERACTIVE MAP	Researchers, Advisors	Allow for global, national, regional or local overviews and comparisons	High	Traffic, citations	European Regional Democracy Map (ERDM)
ONLINE REPOSITORY	Internal teams, Open collaborators, Researchers	Collect all info available on an issue	High	Traffic, citations	Think Tank Directory
INFO VIDEO	General public, Experts	Inform an audience that is not easily reached through written products	High	Views, shares	"Kurz gesagt" videos: https://kurzgesagt.org/what-we-do?visit=videos , tools: Synthesia, Pictory

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ANIMATED VIDEO	General Public, Students, Schools	Inform an audience that is not easily reached through written products	High	Views, shares	Animaker, Powtoon
COMIC	General Public, Schools	Inform an audience in a playful way; trigger emotional response	High	Views, shares	https://www.eki.de/en/news/beacon-comic/
JOURNALS / BOOKS FOR CHILDREN	Schools, children	Inform an audience in a playful way; trigger emotional response	High	Views / sales	
GAME	Students, General Public, experts	Inform an audience in a playful way; trigger emotional response	medium/high	Sales, response	Election board game
INTERACTIVE THEATRE PLAY	General Public	Inform an audience in a playful way; trigger emotional response, engage people in an issue	medium/high	Participants	
INSTA STORY	General public, Experts	Generate broad public interest in an issue	low	Views, engagement	Profiletree
INFO VISUALS (POSTERS, FLYERS, HANDOUTS)	General Public, Experts, Advisors, Policy Makers	Convey information on an issue in a clear, concise & direct way in public spaces & at events	low	Distribution numbers	Canva, Adobe Express
ROUNDTABLES	Experts, Researchers, Policy Makers, Advisors	Bring together key stakeholders on an issue and gather new information	Medium	Participation, follow-up	
CONFERENCES	Experts, Researchers, Policy Makers, Advisors	Networking, gaining new insights & perspectives	High	Participation, network building	

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EXPERT BRIEF	Policy Makers, Advisors, Politicians, Media	Inform key stakeholders in detail in a private setup	low	Policy citation, implementation	
PANEL DISCUSSION	Experts, Researchers, Policy Makers, Advisors	Exchange views by experts & keys stakeholders & trigger discussion on an issue	Medium	Participation, follow-up, network building	
ONE-ON-ONE BACKGROUND BRIEF	Policy Makers, Politicians	Inform a key stakeholder / political figure in detail in a private setup	Low	Policy citation, implementation	
ONLINE MORNING BRIEF	Experts, Researchers, Policy Makers, Advisors	Inform key stakeholders in an informal setting on new developments in a specific field of research	Low	Participation, citation	DGAP Morning Briefings
STUDY TRIP	Experts, researchers, policymakers	Explore an issue with others & inform key stakeholders	Medium	Participants, follow-up	