



Gatorade sustains a thriving sports professional community with LinkedIn targeting and engagement tools



Location: Chicago, IL | No. of Employees: 10,000+
Industry: Food & Beverages



“Growing a community is a little unknown on some platforms. With LinkedIn, we know for a fact that we’re attracting the right people. And when we see the engagement, we know for a fact that it’s working.”

Michelle Martin
Director, Gatorade Partner Services



Challenge

- Gatorade is an internationally recognized food and beverage company that sustains a network of Sports Performance Professionals who benefit from industry-leading, science-based tools and resources fostering career development, professional performance, and community collaboration.
- To further grow its [Gatorade Performance Partner](#) community, Gatorade and their agency partners, [Adjective & Co.](#) and [OMD USA](#), sought to increase membership and engagement among athletic trainers, strength & conditioning coaches, registered dietitians, and other professionals important to its brand. To help achieve these goals, Gatorade and their partners teamed up with LinkedIn Marketing Solutions.
- Gatorade needed sound targeting and engagement tools to reach the right audience with the right messaging. “Really for me it’s the targeting capabilities,” says [Michelle Martin](#), Director, Gatorade Partner Services “We know unequivocally which people we want to reach—it’s just a matter of finding them.”



Solution

- Growing membership in the [Gatorade Performance Partner](#) network required reaching out to a diverse group of professionals. “We are a multidisciplinary community made up of various practitioners in the sports world,” explains Martin. Gatorade used LinkedIn’s custom targeting to identify prospects by job titles, professional interests, and member groups.
- To catch the attention of their target audience, Gatorade and their creative and strategic partners leveraged the versatility of Sponsored Content and its ample opportunities for customization. For the [Gatorade Performance Partner](#) community campaign, this mix consisted of static content, dynamic graphics, and video ads. “We were able to expand our presence on the platform and also incorporate several different tactics to see what really works for the brand, and supports growth,” says [Desiré Knorr](#), Associate Director for OMD USA.
- Testing provided new insights over the course of the Gatorade initiative, allowing for adjustments to better match messaging with respective prospect types. “On the whole,” says Martin, “LinkedIn offers such good opportunities to test and learn over the course of a campaign.”



Results

- Gatorade saw a 69% increase in [Gatorade Performance Partner](#) LinkedIn Followers from 2020 to present with a 53% increase in brand engagement during 2020 after implementing a new creative strategy.
- Given the success of its targeting and engagement campaigns, Gatorade is considering future business initiatives with LinkedIn for FY21. “The engagement that we’ve seen on the platform has continued to exceed our own benchmarks on both static and video engagement,” says Martin. “We will continue to test and learn on the platform.”

69%

increase in [Gatorade Performance Partner](#) LinkedIn Followers

53%

increase in brand engagement

Targeting professionals in a multidisciplinary community

- The ability to target people in diverse but related professions allowed Gatorade to connect with its full audience during the [Gatorade Performance Partner](#) community campaign. These cohorts included athletic trainers, strength & conditioning coaches, registered dietitians, coaches, and sports performance professionals serving in support roles with teams or schools.
- Access to a full spectrum of professionals allowed Gatorade to serve in a thought leadership role within its industry. “We are helping to make athletes better,” says Martin, “while also serving the greater health and sports performance community.”
- Bringing new professionals into the [Gatorade Performance Partner](#) community has in turn improved the network’s ability to positively impact the greater sports world. Each member adds to the overall expertise and reach of the group.

Brand visibility—and credibility—through content

- Benefits of well-planned campaigns go beyond visibility. [Michelle Martin](#), Director of Partner Services at Gatorade, notes the importance of maintaining credibility within an industry. Initiatives like the Gatorade Performance Partner campaign help with that. “People can trust the information and services we are providing,” Martin says.
- This credibility is not universal across platforms, according to Martin. “LinkedIn’s focus on career development and professional pathways aligns with so much of what we provide,” she says. “We are not only driving brand awareness but also the expertise of the Gatorade Performance Partner community we’re growing.”
- Knorr also adds that LinkedIn has helped Gatorade raise awareness and credibility for their breadth and depth of resources. “[Gatorade Performance Partner’s](#) resources not only help sports professionals further their career, but also assist in their everyday interactions with the athletes they work with. LinkedIn is a great way to reach those unique professionals in this space and build credibility with them.”

Leveraging LinkedIn assets

- Gatorade benefited from not only the customizable targeting and engagement technological abilities of the LinkedIn platform, but also its people. Assigned account experts brought client-specific expertise and insights to every meeting, status update, and strategy session.
- “The people at LinkedIn were great partners,” says Martin. “We will continue to use new and existing features and functionality on the platform, implementing those that are successful for us.”



“We have a unique organic community on LinkedIn, and we can leverage the platform to really make sure we are targeting the right people with the right content at the right time.”

Michelle Martin
Director, Gatorade Partner Services

Engage with the Gatorade Performance Partner community by visiting [linkedin.com/showcase/gatorade-performance-partner/](https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/gatorade-performance-partner/).