

# Executive Thought Leadership on LinkedIn



# Introduction: Why Thought Leadership Matters for Agency Executives

Thought leadership has become one of the most influential forms of modern B2B communication.

## 71%

of global decision-makers rely on thought leadership to stay informed on industry trends and emerging ideas.

For agency leaders, this presents a unique opportunity. Clients increasingly expect partners not only to execute campaigns, but to provide informed, strategic points of view.

As AI search and LLM-driven discovery become increasingly credibility-led, agency leaders have an opportunity to shape the content these AI systems surface. Executive thought leadership is one of the most effective ways to do this and is a foundational input, not a nice-to-have.

Thought leadership helps agencies:

- ✓ Build credibility in competitive categories
- ✓ Differentiate their expertise
- ✓ Influence client decision-making and elevate strategic conversations
- ✓ Demonstrate authority in emerging areas like AI, creative technology, data privacy, and integrated marketing

On LinkedIn specifically, thought leadership content has measurable business impact. Executive-led posts drive significant improvements in brand perception, trust, and lead quality.

Source: 2021 Edelman-LinkedIn B2B Thought Leadership Impact Study. Q1\_role: In my professional life, I use thought leadership mostly to? Select all those that apply. Data: % of Decision-Makers that selected Keep up-to-date with the latest thinking in my field or business sector.



# The Growing Role of Executive Voice

## People follow people.

Modern audiences want to hear directly from the leaders behind the work: their beliefs, expertise, lived experience, and perspectives on where the industry is going. AI search tools are also more likely to reference LinkedIn content that offers clear explanations, useful insights, and is published by consistently active, credible professionals.



59%

of professionals get updates from business leaders via social media feeds



56%

say an executive's presence on social media positively influences their buying decisions



66%

are more likely to recommend a brand if they follow an executive



59%

of LinkedIn citations in ChatGPT Search and Google AI Mode come from individual creators

Source: Qnary, The Changing Face of Executive Reputation / [Semrush](#)

## As an agency leader, this presents two opportunities:

### 1 Build your executive profile

- Positions you as a recognized expert and industry leader
- Strengthens your credibility with clients, prospects, and procurement teams
- Expands your influence in senior-level conversations
- Demonstrates strategic depth beyond delivery and execution
- Supports long-term career, board, and leadership opportunities

### 2 Increase agency credibility

- Increases trust and confidence with existing clients
- Attracts new clients by showing thinking beyond the portfolio
- Strengthens your employer brand and ability to attract top talent
- Clearly signals your agency's values and differentiation
- Enhances business value and acquisition readiness

# The Playbook: Building Executive Presence on LinkedIn

## 1 Find the whitespace

Clear differentiation builds credibility and relevance.

Identify the intersection between:

- What you care about
- What you know deeply
- What the audience wants or needs
- What the industry is not discussing clearly enough

Try using the  
Empathy Map  
to help



## 2 Have a point of view

A distinct point of view helps leaders cut through crowded feeds and earn attention.

Don't publish content that simply echoes the industry narrative. High-value thought leadership, according to decision-makers, delivers:

- New perspectives
- Unconsidered challenges or opportunities
- Clear guidance on implications

Agency leaders should help articulate a clear and differentiated stance.

**Source:** 2020 Edelman-LinkedIn B2B Thought Leadership Impact Study. Q11 ENGAGED: How frequently has the following occurred after you have engaged with a piece of thought leadership. Data: average % who responded sometimes, often or almost all of the time among Global decision-makers.

**Vikas Chawla** • 3rd+ + Follow ...  
Helping large consumer brands drive business outcomes via Di...  
[Visit my website](#)  
2w •

Stop paying creators based on follower counts. Here's how to predict impact before spending a single rupee.

Most brands still pick influencers by instinct. But with live APIs from Meta and Google, creator evaluation has changed completely.

Three things now matter:  
→ Audience truth - exact age, cities, income clusters, category behavior. Not vanity reach.  
→ Creative efficiency - which formats hold attention, which videos repeatedly break through.  
→ Tracking measurement - partnership ads that drive actual outcomes like visits, leads, and sales.

Creator marketing has quietly stopped being a guessing game. It's becoming a predictive system.

At [Influencer.in](#), we just launched AI Prompt Mode and AI-enabled competitive research with close to 1 Million creators already on board.

The future of influencer marketing isn't who you like. It's who the data already knows will convert.

### 3 Balance personal + brand voice

Audiences are more likely to trust and engage with leaders who feel credible and human at the same time.

Executives perform best when they are authentic and not overly polished.

They should lean into:

- Personal storytelling
- Real-world experiences
- Values-led commentary
- A balance between personal insight and brand alignment

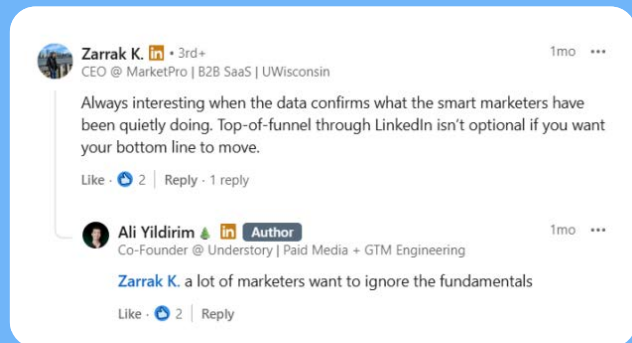


### 4 Engage the community

Consistent interaction strengthens relevance and reinforces leadership presence.

Thought leadership is built through collaboration and shared dialogue, not one-way messaging.

- Respond meaningfully to comments
- Engage with industry voices
- Join relevant conversations
- Acknowledge peers, clients, partners, and employees
- Curate content with added perspective



# Content That Converts: What Works on LinkedIn

Agency leaders should leverage LinkedIn's range of content formats to build a thought leadership strategy that drives consistent performance over time.

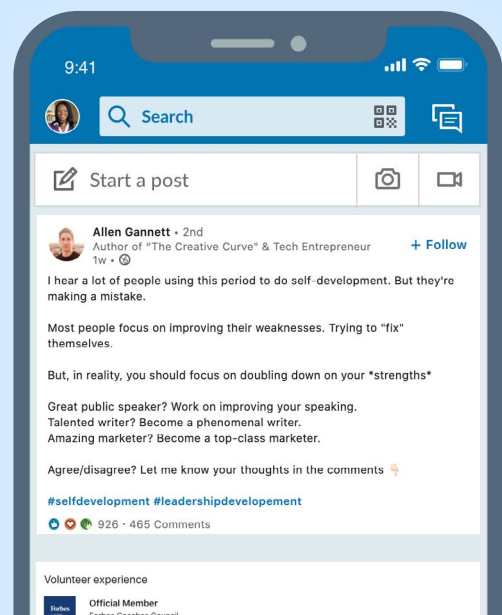
## Short-form content (Newsfeed posts)

Agency leaders can use short-form content to stay visible, spark dialogue, and engage meaningfully. Depth matters more than volume.

Common formats include:

- Reactions to industry news or trends
- Sharp POVs and leadership reflections
- Polls and lightweight engagement prompts
- Visual posts (images, short native video)
- Document posts (carousel PDFs)

**Quality > quantity:** comments and depth of conversation are the strongest KPIs

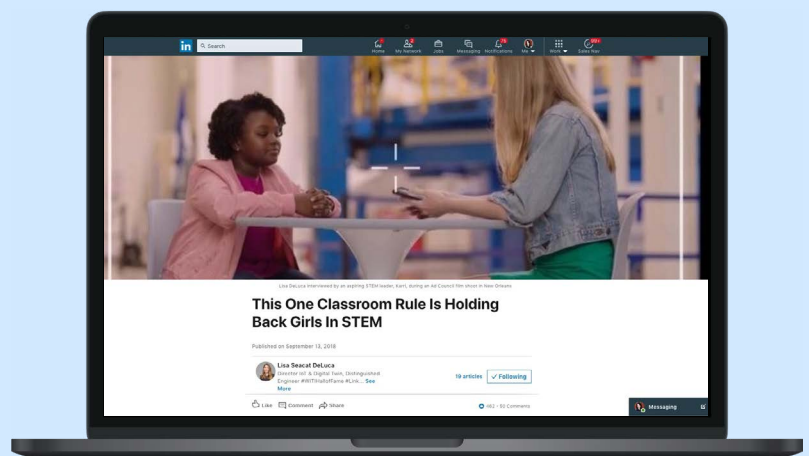


## Long-form content (Articles & Newsletters)

Agency leaders can use long-form content to demonstrate expertise, establish credibility, and reinforce a clear point of view through depth and substance, not just sound bites.

Common formats include:

- Trend analyses and industry predictions
- Case studies
- CEO or Founder letters



## Live & interactive content

Agency leaders can create real-time connection and engagement with their audience, demonstrate expertise in the moment, and build trust through conversation by using live and interactive content.

Common formats include:

- LinkedIn Live
- Audio Events
- LinkedIn Live episodic series



## The Multi-Format Mix

Agency leaders can structure their executive presence using a Hero-Hub Ad Hoc approach to create consistency and flexibility:

### HERO:

Big, evergreen, high-value content (e.g., annual trends, thought pieces)

Theme #1

Theme #2

### HUB:

Recurring content (monthly letters, weekly insights, series)

LinkedIn newsletter

Podcast

Weekly newsfeed

### AD HOC:

Timely reactions, commentary, resharing with perspective

Newsfeed

Comments

Reactions

Sharing

# The Creative Archetypes of Executive Influence

Create a consistent presence by leaning into one or two archetypes.

1



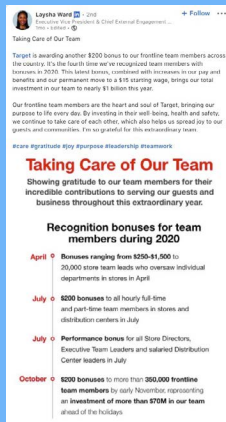
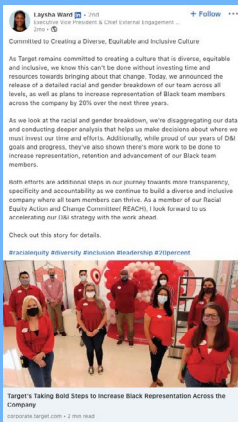
## Visionary — “Challenge Me”



**Sallie Krawcheck**  
CEO and Co-Founder of investment firm Ellevest

- ➔ Future-focused, industry-shaping
- ➔ Women’s wealth, financial equality

2



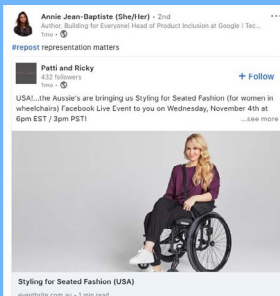
## Evangelist — “Inspire Me”



**Laysha Ward**  
EVP and Chief External Engagement Officer at Target

- ➔ Brand values, culture, social impact
- ➔ Equity, inclusion, community leadership

3



## Guide — “Teach Me”



**Annie Jean-Baptiste**  
Head of Product Inclusion at Google

- ➔ Product, technical, or category expertise
- ➔ Inclusive product design

4



## Mentor — “Advise Me”



**Ray Dalio**  
Founder and co-Chairman  
of Bridgewater Associates

- Leadership, career, personal growth
- Principles, organisational culture

## Worksheet Prompt for Agency Executives

Which archetype fits you best?

- ✓ What is your natural communication style?
- ✓ Which topics do you consistently speak about?
- ✓ What does your audience want?
- ✓ Can you embody more than one archetype? (most do)



# How to Activate Executive Presence with Paid Media

There is also an opportunity opportunity to integrate executive-led content into broader marketing programs.



## Promote High-Performing Organic Posts

Use Sponsored Content to boost top-performing thought leadership and extend its reach



## Retarget Engaged Audiences

Build remarketing audiences based on post views, content engagement, and executive profile visits



## Connect to Brand + Demand Campaigns

Send engaged audiences into brand awareness campaigns, product-focused Sponsored Content, lead-gen forms or thought leadership downloads

# Measurement and ROI for Agencies

Executive thought leadership builds personal credibility with real business outcomes. When agency leaders show up consistently with a clear point of view, their influence drives measurable impact across the agency.

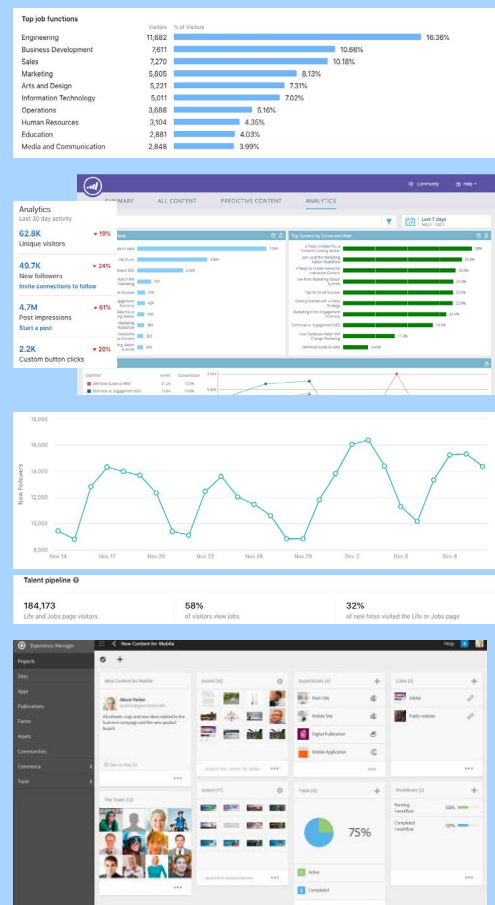
## Profile-Level Metrics

- Follower growth
- Post reach
- Profile views
- Search appearances
- Comments & conversation depth



## Agency-Level Metrics

- Company Page follower growth
- Page engagement
- Traffic driven to website or landing pages
- Industry and seniority breakdowns of visitors



# Cross-Functional Collaboration

To get the best out of their thought leadership, agency leaders can also work with other stakeholders, including:



## Executive Comms

Define the executive narrative and guardrails

- Identify who should show up and when
- Set core themes and POV
- Enable sustainable workflows and cadence



## Brand

Align the executive voice to the agency's brand

- Anchor posts in brand narratives
- Ensure tone, look, and identity align
- Flag campaigns or moments to amplify



## Corporate Comms

Protect reputation and external perception

- Evaluate reputational and regulatory risk
- Align executive messaging to corporate priorities
- Advise on sensitive topics and moments



## Content & Digital Teams

Turn executive ideas into scalable content

- Translate themes into proven formats
- Optimize channels, distribution, and amplification
- Balance executive POVs with broader content strategy



## Marketing Operations

Measure impact and scale what works

- Define individual and company success metrics
- Track performance across profiles and campaigns
- Inform program optimization and growth

## This ensures:

- ✓ Message consistency
- ✓ Risk mitigation
- ✓ Capitalization on major brand campaigns
- ✓ Better integration with paid and organic content

# Crawl-Walk-Run Framework for Agency Leaders



## **CRAWL:** Establish your presence

- Complete your profile
- Turn on “Follow” as your default
- Define 3–5 thought leadership lanes
- Publish 1–2 posts/month
- Start commenting on relevant conversations
- Share select agency updates with a personal POV

## **WALK:** Develop consistency

- Publish weekly
- Mix content formats (short posts, articles, documents, video)
- Add unique perspective when sharing market news
- Share client wins, lessons learned, leadership reflections
- Build a recognizable tone or content style

## **RUN:** Lead conversations in your category

- Publish multiple times per week
- Introduce original frameworks or insights
- Host LinkedIn Lives, POV series, or recurring commentary
- Collaborate with other leaders (events, content, conversations)
- Drive meaningful discussion in comments
- Become a reference point for your domain expertise

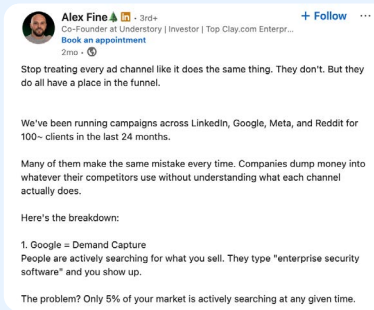
# Case Studies: Agency Leaders Doing It Right



## Alex Fine

Practical marketing, no fluff

Executive-led insights that turn everyday B2B marketing challenges into clear, usable guidance

[in/theclayguy](#)



Alex Fine  • 3rd+  
Co-Founder at Understory | Investor | Top Clay.com Enterpr...  
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Stop treating every ad channel like it does the same thing. They don't. But they do all have a place in the funnel.

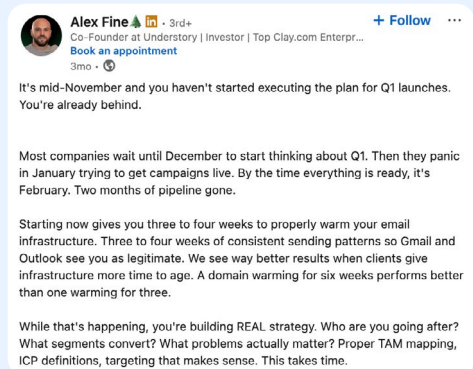
We've been running campaigns across LinkedIn, Google, Meta, and Reddit for 100+ clients in the last 24 months.



Many of them make the same mistake every time. Companies dump money into whatever their competitors use without understanding what each channel actually does.

Here's the breakdown:

1. Google = Demand Capture  
People are actively searching for what you sell. They type "enterprise security software" and you show up.

The problem? Only 5% of your market is actively searching at any given time.



Alex Fine  • 3rd+  
Co-Founder at Understory | Investor | Top Clay.com Enterpr...  
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It's mid-November and you haven't started executing the plan for Q1 launches. You're already behind.

Most companies wait until December to start thinking about Q1. Then they panic in January trying to get campaigns live. By the time everything is ready, it's February. Two months of pipeline gone.

Starting now gives you three to four weeks to properly warm your email infrastructure. Three to four weeks of consistent sending patterns so Gmail and Outlook see you as legitimate. We see way better results when clients give infrastructure more time to age. A domain warming for six weeks performs better than one warming for three.

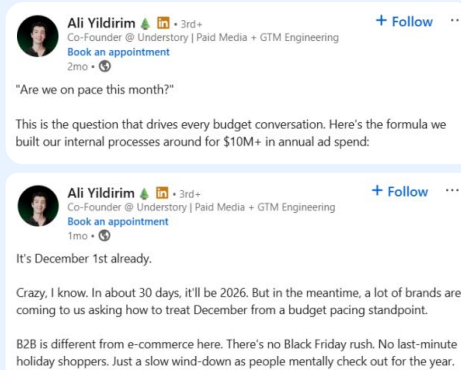
While that's happening, you're building REAL strategy. Who are you going after? What segments convert? What problems actually matter? Proper TAM mapping, ICP definitions, targeting that makes sense. This takes time.



## Ali Yildirim

Momentum-driven marketing leadership

Real-time marketing performance insights and data-anchored reflections that help teams stay focused on what actually works

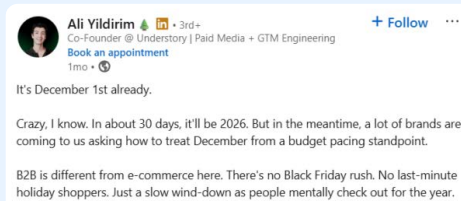
[in/aayildirim](#)





Ali Yildirim  • 3rd+  
Co-Founder @ Understory | Paid Media + GTM Engineering  
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"Are we on pace this month?"

This is the question that drives every budget conversation. Here's the formula we built our internal processes around for \$10M+ in annual ad spend:



Ali Yildirim  • 3rd+  
Co-Founder @ Understory | Paid Media + GTM Engineering  
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It's December 1st already.

Crazy, I know. In about 30 days, it'll be 2026. But in the meantime, a lot of brands are coming to us asking how to treat December from a budget pacing standpoint.

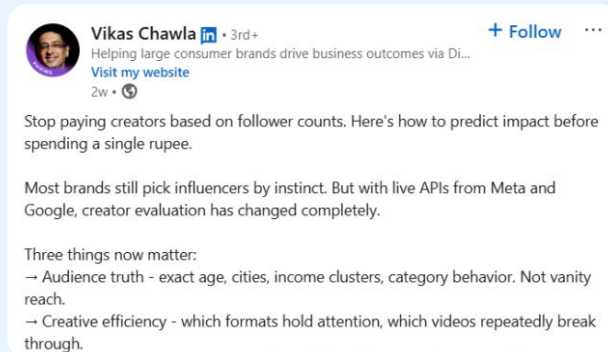
B2B is different from e-commerce here. There's no Black Friday rush. No last-minute holiday shoppers. Just a slow wind-down as people mentally check out for the year.



## Vikas Chawla

Rethinking what really drives impact

Executive-led perspectives that challenge accepted thinking and refocus teams on outcomes that matter

[in/vikaschawla](#)



Vikas Chawla  • 3rd+  
Helping large consumer brands drive business outcomes via Di...  
[Visit my website](#)  
2w • 

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- Audience truth - exact age, cities, income clusters, category behavior. Not vanity reach.
- Creative efficiency - which formats hold attention, which videos repeatedly break through.



Each of these cases demonstrates how powerful executive voice can be when its strategic and authentic.

# Executive Thought Leadership Action Plan



## 1 Define the whitespace

- Use the Empathy Map to understand audience needs and leader expertise



## 2 Choose an archetype

- Visionary, Evangelist, Guide, or Mentor



## 3 Build the content system

- Hero–Hub–Ad Hoc format
- Multi-format mix
- Clear publishing cadence



## 4 Activate the community

- Engage, respond, tag, share, and join industry conversations



## 5 Integrate paid media

- Boost top-performing content
- Retarget engaged audiences
- Connect to brand campaigns



## 6 Measure and optimize

- Track profile, company, and marketing metrics
- Refine content based on performance

Build executive influence  
that drives real impact for you  
and your agency on LinkedIn

Get started!



LinkedIn Ads