



How Standout Creative Content Boosts Performance

From B2Boring to B2Brilliant

Introduction

To win in B2B, marketers need to embrace creativity.

Mounting evidence points to creative effectiveness as essential for impactful B2B content marketing and advertising. Research for “The B2B Effectiveness Code” from the B2B Institute, WARC, and Lions found that while powerful creative can [generate 10-20x more sales](#), an astounding 75% of B2B creative is deemed ineffective.

The industry is reaching a [collective realization](#): brand-building campaigns aimed at increasing Share of Voice and Brand Salience are essential to sustainable and scalable growth. Breakthrough creative is instrumental in helping these campaigns meet their objectives and drive performance.

At the same time, B2B marketers are contending with a number of growing challenges when it comes to meeting the creative mandate: media fragmentation, content proliferation, and [economic conditions](#) among them.

Fortunately, LinkedIn offers the platform, tools, and audience to fully unleash the creative prowess required to meet these challenges. Not only that, but our marketing partner community features integrated solutions and service providers specializing in content and creative.

This guide will show you how to use proven creative and marketing best practices into your marketing on LinkedIn, and share how [LinkedIn Marketing Partners](#) can play a key role in your brand’s creative renaissance.

What’s ahead:

- Document your content strategy on LinkedIn
- Connect brand and demand for full-funnel success
- Stand out with impactful thought leadership
- Optimize your content for the LinkedIn feed
- Adopt tools for scalability and efficiency



48%

of B2B purchase decision makers find B2B advertising boring.

82%

wish B2B advertising had the format associated with B2C advertising ([WHM Survey](#), 2018).



Start with Documenting Your LinkedIn Content Strategy

One of the easiest ways to get a leg up on your competition is by making the commitment to document your content strategy. Research from Semrush's [“State of Content Marketing 2022”](#) report found that 40% of content marketers don't have a documented content strategy. Even fewer have documented their LinkedIn content strategy.

This guide will serve as a resource for your content direction on the platform. A LinkedIn content strategy should include objectives, tactics, and methods for measuring success. Your strategy should also account for the following components, which will be explored more deeply in the coming pages:

- Connecting brand and demand in a balanced and complementary way.
- Developing high-quality thought leadership that breaks through the noise and influences key decision makers.
- Consistently incorporating creative best practices to optimize each piece for feed visibility and user engagement.
- Speaking not only to prospective customers, but also prospective talent with a strong employer brand that attracts the best and brightest.

Value of a Content Audit

As you establish your content strategy, it can be helpful to take a step back and understand what you're working with. A content audit serves as a valuable inventory and analysis of the existing content assets, helping you understand where your strengths and gaps lie, and identify the best opportunities to reuse or repurpose content.

Approved marketing partners regularly perform audits with their clients to determine how existing content can be leveraged and repurposed, and to identify what new content needs to be created. For example, our [content and creative partners](#) specialize in identifying how existing assets can be used to develop creative advertising optimized for the LinkedIn feed, lengthening the shelf-life of your content.



“Audiences, messaging, search intent... these can all change over time, and in many cases the content marketing funnel needs to adapt to remain effective. Our content audits, using a suite of SEO tools and LinkedIn Whitespace Analysis, helps us situate a client's existing content, and their overall content strategy, in search engine and social engagement ecosystems.”

Gerald Jackson

Associate Director of Content Strategy, Scorch Agency



Future-proof Your Funnel: Connect Brand and Demand with Your Content

Did you know that...

- A [study](#) by the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising found that the optimal balance of brand and demand is a 60/40 split – 60% branding, 40% direct response.
- B2B audiences exposed to both branding and acquisition campaigns are [6x more likely](#) to convert than those only exposed to one or another.

At any given time

95%

of buyers in a given category are “out-market,” or not actively looking to purchase (the [95-5 rule](#)).

To marketers, this is all intuitive and fundamental: your brand can't skip steps to win customers to make a purchase decision when they have no idea who you are. Building mental brand associations within your category, even for those buyers not actively in the market (who greatly outnumber those that are at any given time), can turn prospects into leads once they are ready to make a purchase decision.





Create Content that Drives Positive Brand Association

So how do you build those mental brand associations? With creative campaigns that make an emotional impact and leave lasting impressions.

[LinkedIn research](#) found that:

Brands with creative advertising
that harnessed emotion acquired

198X

more followers on average than the
rest of the companies on LinkedIn.

Posts that fueled an
emotional response had a

44%

higher average click-through rate
compared to those that didn't.

Bridge Brand and Demand, with a Helping Hand

The real-life stories below illustrate how brands can benefit from the deep knowledge of vetted partners when it comes to developing robust, optimized ads and campaigns that address the full funnel in complementary ways.



Cisco optimized existing content to build awareness and generate leads

Seeking to harness a full-funnel strategy that connects brand and demand, software giant Cisco enlisted the help of [Scorch](#) to develop a data-driven piece of “big rock” thought leadership content to build brand awareness and generate more qualified leads. Scorch analyzed LinkedIn insights and interviewed Cisco SMEs to align the brand’s point-of-view and customer stories with resonant topics for their LinkedIn audience. The resulting asset on hyperconvergence became Cisco’s top-performing piece of content promoted on social and search, crushing benchmarks for CTR, engagement rate, and form completion.

IG bank developed creative stories for lead gen assets

Seeking to promote their new Turbo24 product with a creative brand-led approach, IG Bank worked with the agency [Transmission](#) to tap their expertise. Transmission audited the brand’s existing content in search of strong lead-gen assets, devised powerful creative visions for brand campaigns, and delivered a suite of LinkedIn ads optimized to the platform’s best practices. IG Bank was able to pull the storylines and creative thinking generated through working with Transmission forward, strengthening their current and future work.



Broadcast Your Vision: Keys to Impactful Thought Leadership on LinkedIn

Research from LinkedIn and Edelman found that, while B2B thought leadership content is more plentiful than ever in a post-COVID world, 71% of decision makers say that less than half of the thought leadership they consume gives them valuable insights. Understanding of the audience is a key disconnect here: 47% of buyers say that most thought leadership does not seem to be created with their specific needs in mind.

The stakes for breaking through with thought leadership content that resonates have been raised, and there's a massive incentive for B2B marketers that are ready to meet the challenge. Our research found some specific qualities that high-level decision makers are seeking out in thought leadership content:

- Both intellectually rigorous and fun to consume
- Strikes a more human, less formal tone
- Offers provocative ideas that challenge existing assumptions
- Features deep subject matter expertise on specialized topics
- Includes third-party insights from other trusted sources
- Focuses on current trends likely to affect the industry in question

64%

of high-level management professionals say thought leadership is a more trustworthy basis for assessing a vendor's capabilities and competency than marketing materials and product sheets. ([source](#))



Lead as a Visionary Brand, Guided by Insights

Thought leadership is emerging as a key point of competitive advantage. If you do it better than other companies in your space, you will earn more attention, credibility, and demand in the eyes of your audience. These customer stories show how experienced partners are able to help make both executive and brand thought leadership more impactful.

Mastercard elevated its CMO as a reputed thought leader

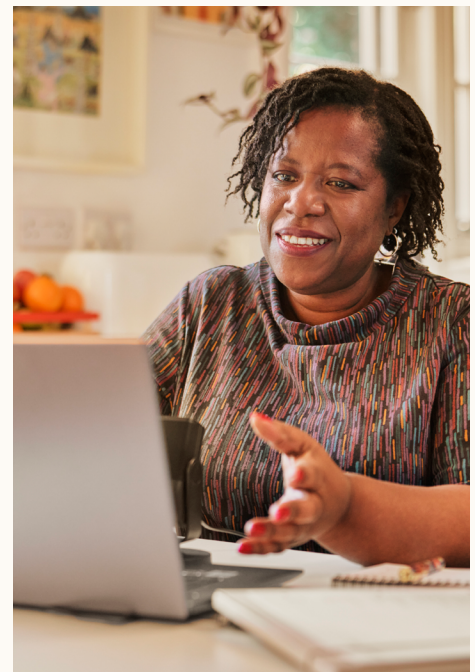
Mastercard aimed to elevate the thought leadership profile of its Chief Marketing Officer, Raja Rajamannar. Specifically, they hoped to move Rajamannar up on the Forbes List of Most Influential CMOs. [VaynerMedia](#) helped ramp up his LinkedIn presence through strategic, higher-frequency



posting via Newsletters, LinkedIn Live, and community engagement. In 12 months, Rajamannar saw a 98% increase in follower growth and a 223% increase in LinkedIn Newsletter subscriptions. He also climbed 14 on the Forbes list, all the way up to No. 4.

A big-name tech company gained traction with a hyper-relevant video series

A leading global technology company wanted to develop more brand-focused thought leadership content in order to complement a strategy that had leaned more product-centric. However, the company lacked sufficient resource bandwidth, as well as a clear understanding of how to make the content most effective. They partnered with [WIRED Consulting](#) to develop a video series, with internal SMEs interviewed by WIRED editors around topics defined by research around trending themes. The series smashed benchmarks for CTR, engagement rate, and cost efficiency.





Smart Experimentation: Creative Best Practices to Guide Your Content

Your brand's creativity and thought leadership can't make an impact if the content isn't getting noticed or engaged with on the LinkedIn feed. This is where you can organize your creative efforts within a set of consistent, clearly defined best practices to maximize your content's reach and influence. It's also a key area where the experience and platform-specific expertise of LinkedIn Marketing Partners can make a big difference.

Here are some data-driven best practices to guide your content strategy:

- **Use big, bold imagery.** Content with larger, high-res visuals can drive up to [38% higher CTR](#). Avoid using stock images and try to feature actual people or cues that your audience can relate to.
- **Touch on the pulse of your industry.** Ads on LinkedIn that reference current hot topics get [31% higher engagement rates](#) than non-topical ads. Unique insights from LinkedIn and its partners can help you understand the competitive landscape and pinpoint content that resonates with your customers.
- **Prioritize diversity and inclusion.** Diverse and inclusive LinkedIn ads score [52% higher audience response rates](#) than ads targeted toward just one group or another.
- **Incorporate video content.** Video Ads earn [30% more](#) comments per impression than static images in the LinkedIn newsfeed.
- **Make that video content accessible with subtitles.** LinkedIn users watch [79% of in-feed videos](#) with the sound off.

Partner with Experts Who Understand LinkedIn

One of the biggest benefits of working with approved partners is that they are intimately familiar with the LinkedIn platform and how to best use it for marketing and advertising. These examples illustrate how a deep understanding of feed optimization can make a dramatic difference in results, even with pre-existing content.



Investment firm skyrocketed campaign performance with animation

A global investment management firm knew they had good thought leadership content to promote its ETF offering, but hadn't seen strong results in past ad campaigns. They enlisted the expertise of [VidMob](#), hoping to get better performance out of their existing assets. The marketing partner brought the firm's whitepaper content to life as short animated videos that adhered to both brand guidelines and data-informed platform best practices. This creative went on to outperform the account average for static and video traffic campaigns by 305 percent.

Financial services company unlocked optimizations to boost engagement

Recognizing the power of employer brand for attracting talent, a major financial services firm wanted to promote its company culture and employee benefits on LinkedIn. However, they lacked the internal and existing agency resources to make it happen. Through the LinkedIn Marketing Partner program, the firm connected with [Theorem](#), which helped develop feed-optimized content tailored to roles such as marketing, tech, and HR – with an emphasis on attracting diverse candidates. Thanks to pre-flight and mid-flight optimizations, the campaign exceeded LinkedIn's engagement rate benchmark by 222% overall.





Making Creativity Efficient and Manageable

Now that we have a clear idea of what effective content looks like on LinkedIn – it’s creative, demonstrates thought leadership, and is optimized for the feed – let’s reckon with the challenges faced by marketers: it can feel difficult to adequately invest in these things, especially during challenging economic conditions.

Creative marketing, by definition, is about experimentation. How can practical marketers balance that with the need to be efficient and show results? This is where LinkedIn’s platform and partners can bring a lot of value.

Repurposing Content. You don’t always have to build something new to reach your objectives. Most brands have a wealth of existing content that can be remixed and repurposed on LinkedIn, and even across different LinkedIn formats. A content audit will help you identify these assets. You can learn more about best practices for repurposing content on LinkedIn in the Marketing Labs course, [Using LinkedIn for Brand Awareness](#).

A/B Testing. Bring reliable data backing to your experimentation efforts by using A/B testing methodologies to evaluate what’s connecting with your audience. Use this technique to enable optimizations on the fly and continually inform your greater content strategy.

Measuring Creativity: The ability of brands to measure and optimize for creative impact is becoming more sophisticated. For example, [VidMob](#) offers a Brand Governance tool that helps you understand whether creative is meeting social best practices. Meanwhile, their Creative Intelligence tool helps you discover how creative decisions are affecting campaign performance and turn insight into action.



Make Your Brand the One That's Remembered

According to [2022 research](#) from the Content Marketing Institute, more large companies are outsourcing now than in 2019 (75% vs. 71%). They cite their top challenge as finding partners with adequate topical expertise (65%).

The LinkedIn Marketing Partner community helps solve for this problem with purpose-built integrations, services, and consultancy you can trust. We invite you to explore our many partner solutions in the [Content & Creative](#) category and beyond as you strive to unleash your team's creativity and marketing impact.

The brand that's remembered is the brand that's bought. Make your brand famous on LinkedIn, and reap the long-term rewards.