

NatWest proves itself the champion of smaller business owners on LinkedIn



For small and medium-sized business owners, Covid-19 brought many different types of worry and uncertainty: around the virus itself, the health and safety of employees, the economic impact and the types of financial support available. NatWest Business and

VaynerMedia recognised the need to respond to these concerns in the moment, at first through much needed support and reassurance – and then through helping businesses to move forward. Doing both through LinkedIn delivered a 15-point increase in the attribute that NatWest Business provides expert advice, and an 11-point rise in the attribute that it supports UK business.

Challenge

- Communicate clearly and succinctly to reassure business customers
- Reduce the pressure on call centres and help customers get information quickly
- Move from a response phase to forward-looking content rooted in business owners' most pressing questions
- Demonstrate that NatWest is the bank to support UK businesses

Why LinkedIn?

- Power and flexibility of LinkedIn targeting: able to reach both existing customers and relevant SME owners at scale
- The platform business owners visit to find information and see how their peers are responding
- Proven environment for building brands through content

Solution

- Two-phase campaign using LinkedIn data to first target existing customers and then reach a wider SME audience
- Carousel Ads communicating NatWest Business's range of support services
- Adapting to the New Now video series, hosted by Steph McGovern, featuring interviews with SME owners on key topics
- Video content from NatWest Business Growth Enablers answering customer questions directly

Results

- 13M impressions in six months
- 2.5M video views with over 428,000 engagements
- 15-point increase in attribute that NatWest Business 'provides expert advice' among decision-makers on LinkedIn
- 11-point increase in attribute that the bank 'supports UK business'

Turning LinkedIn into a support platform for SMEs helped NatWest Business respond to the different phases of the pandemic, and drive double-digit percentage-point rises in key brand metrics.

“ When we first started to understand the impact that COVID-19 would have on our business customers, it was important for us to get content out to them quickly, that answered their most pressing questions, and also gave them insight into what their peers were doing. VaynerMedia helped us create the content that addressed those needs, despite all the restrictions of being in lockdown, and LinkedIn was the perfect channel to reach our customers. The engagement we achieved with our content and the impact on our brand metrics has exceeded our expectations and shown that this was the content our customers needed at the time when they needed, and through LinkedIn, a channel we trust.”

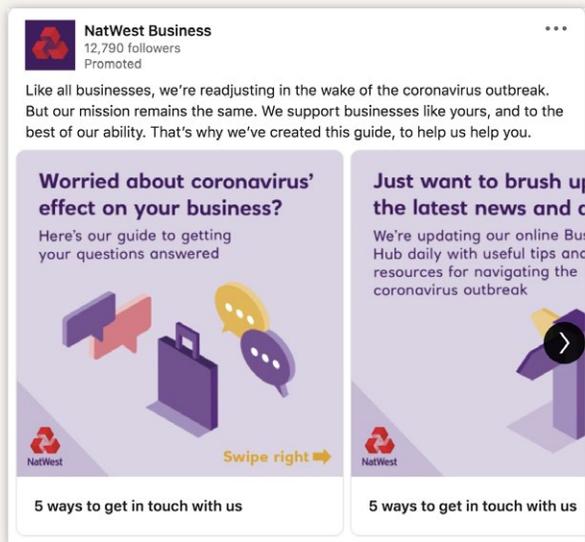
Linda Lo Castro

Marketing Lead for Business, NatWest



Responding in the moment

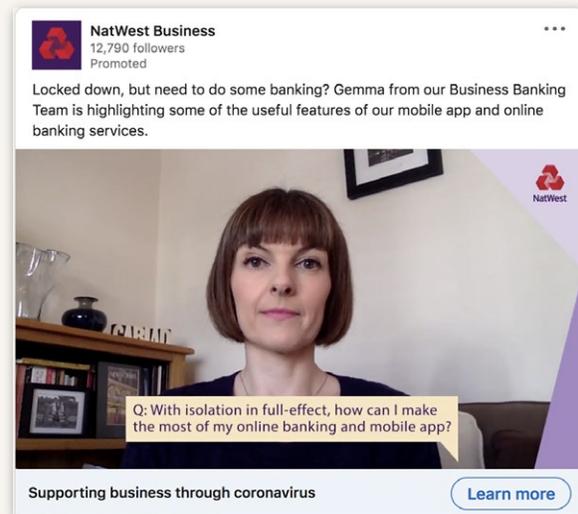
In the early days of the pandemic, NatWest Business and VaynerMedia recognised the importance of responding quickly with clear, succinct communication. This provided the reassurance and support that business owners were looking for without overloading call centres, and ensured that customers could get the information they needed quickly. LinkedIn Carousel Ads proved the ideal vehicle for communicating this information clearly, with a simple, illustrated style and focused messaging. The ability to target NatWest Business's existing customer list meant the team could be confident of getting the right message to the right people.



"This was about being in the moment rather than being perfect," says Helen Walker, Senior Account Manager at VaynerMedia. "Our focus was on signposting relevant articles for advice, warning about the increased risk of fraud and explaining the financial support for business owners and all of the best ways for getting in touch."

Owning the New Now with empathetic content

As the situation developed, the needs of smaller business owners were starting to change. "Plenty of people were talking about what was happening, but nobody was answering the questions businesses had about what they could do next," says Major Steadman, Strategy Director at VaynerMedia. "If any bank can champion SMEs in Britain it's NatWest, a bank that's owned by the British taxpayer. Empathy is one of our core values as an agency, and so we focused on identifying business owners' different needs and producing content that really spoke to them."



That content included Adapting to the New Now, a series of in-depth video interviews with SME owners hosted by the journalist and TV presenter Steph McGovern. Guests joined McGovern's studio set via video call, giving each half-hour show a professional, engaging feel as they tackled issues such as how to take smaller businesses online, making marketing more effective, and planning for recovery. Meanwhile, video content from NatWest's internal team of Business Growth Enablers answered customer questions directly, including on difficult issues such as surviving six months on limited cash flow and bankruptcies. Meanwhile Carousel Ads promoted valuable business support services such as NatWest Business Builder and MentorLive.

The combined campaign generated over 13 million impressions in the six months from March to the end of September, with over 2.5 million video views and more than 428,000 engagements. VaynerMedia knew that a content-led campaign on LinkedIn could have a significant impact on brand metrics – and a brand uplift study confirmed just how significant. Among decision-makers on LinkedIn agreement with the attribute that NatWest Business provides expert advice rose 15 percentage points, while agreement that it supports UK businesses increased 11 percentage points.

“ On LinkedIn, we knew we could reach the target audience we were going after with confidence. It's a platform where business owners want to know what their peers are saying and doing – and where content really works as a brand-building tactic. We've done brand lift studies on LinkedIn campaigns before and seen real success – but this is the most impressive result yet.”

Major Steadman
Strategy Director, VaynerMedia

