LinkedIn + **GitHub**

Github drove nearly 1,000 registrations for their flagship series with LinkedIn Event Ads

About GitHub

GitHub (NYSE: MSFT) is the world's leading platform for software development and version control using Git, a free and open-source software. Millions of developers worldwide build, ship, and maintain their software on GitHub and learn from GitHub Education bundles. As of November 2021, **GitHub is the world's largest development platform, with over 73 million developers contributing to and maintaining over 200 million GitHub repositories** (including 28 million open-source repositories). In 2018, GitHub was acquired by Microsoft, which had used it to host numerous open-source projects and tools.

> "Other platforms don't allow us to generate leads and carry them to the business in the way LinkedIn does. The value of that is inarguable."
>
> Fletcher Helle
> Senior Social Media Manager, GitHub

Challenge

GitHub launched a new enterprise flagship event in March 2021 called InFocus. Each one of the three-week virtual event series was themed: Developer Experience Week, DevOps Week, and Security Week. The event objectives were to increase revenue and pipeline from the enterprise developer audience through a global and regionalized white-glove approach.

The digital marketing team was tasked with **driving event attendance and engagement from Enterprise developers, and increasing sales pipeline through direct leads.** Historically, the marketing team had relied on Twitter and Twitch to promote events, but GitHub decided not to rely on those channels for this initiative. The team needed to take a more innovative approach. While they knew LinkedIn was home to their enterprise audience, they hadn't yet explored it as an events promotion platform.
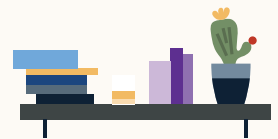
Solution

In addition to Sponsored Content and Message Ad campaigns, GitHub tested out LinkedIn Event Ads, a product that was still in Beta at the time. Event ads allow you to promote LinkedIn Events from your Page to a defined audience. The team set up **individual event pages on Linkedin for each of the keynotes and breakout sessions, so they were able to precisely target each campaign based on the topic relevance.** Better yet, audiences were able to auto-populate their registration information on the form-fills within each LinkedIn event page.

GitHub also boosted organic LinkedIn posts around the event. Fletcher Helle, Senior Manager of Social Media at GitHub, described one of his favorite features of LinkedIn Events: "From a promotional perspective, I love being able to add the event speakers as hosts, so they can promote it from their own profiles and feed. When they tell people, 'You should attend this event, it's going to be really interesting,' it carries a lot more weight than GitHub saying the same thing."

From an execution standpoint, the team was thrilled by the agility and customization of the tool. "We were able to put this together without having to engage our web team or marketing operations," said Fletcher. He continued, "We had this hammered out largely over the course of an hour-long meeting because we could customize the event landing pages directly."

As the team explored all available features for this event, they also decided to use **LinkedIn Live streaming to maximize viewership for their signature session.** The hand-raising functionality inside the streams allowed viewers to convert in real-time, and the team followed up with Inmail campaigns to nurture event attendees who hadn't immediately signed up for a meeting.

"This event represented a transformative moment in global social media at GitHub," said Fletcher. "We really started to look at LinkedIn more holistically, and had a cascade of realizations: 1). Our LinkedIn audience is growing very fast. 2). 25% of our LinkedIn audience are in the specific markets we're targeting. We also realized all of the available features [on LinkedIn] and how they tie in together. Other platforms don't allow us to generate leads and carry them to the business in the way LinkedIn does."

Results

The engagement was astounding. GitHub generated **840 event registrations via LinkedIn event ads,** representing 15% of all InFocus registrations. LinkedIn was the second-largest driver of event registrations (after email invitations).

They achieved a **22% registration rate using Event Ads,** compared to their 4% conversion rate benchmark for typical sponsored content ads that drive leads from ads to the GitHub website. That's a **5.5x increase above benchmark!**

The Message Ad campaigns that invited current customers to more exclusive events also performed tremendously. During the three-week event series, GitHub saw **Inmail open rates as high as 75%.**

When asked to what they attribute this success, Director of Digital Marketing Kate Pate said, "The maintained platform experience is a huge component of the success we've seen. The fact that the form is pre-populated from your profile has a significant impact." She continued, "I also believe user expectations of the value they'll get from LinkedIn events is higher than other platforms, since they associate it with business content and consumption."

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event registrations

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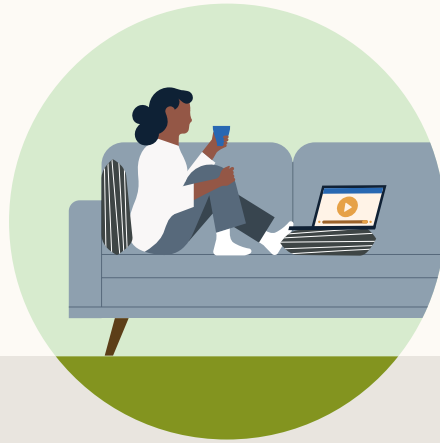
22%
registration rate

for LinkedIn Event Ads, compared to 4% for typical sponsored content ads

75%
Inmail open rates

for Message Ad campaigns that ran during the 3-week event series

Tap into a unique enterprise audience

GitHub had initially assumed there would be some overlap between their audiences across social media channels. But while promoting InFocus, they discovered that their **LinkedIn followers are a separate, distinct group.** Product Manager, AJ Jimenez, explained, *"Each platform has its own culture and uniqueness. And it turns out there isn't a huge overlap in the audience that consumes our content on LinkedIn vs. other platforms."*

By more deeply understanding their enterprise developer audience on LinkedIn, GitHub is able to reach them with **highly relevant messaging.** AJ continued, *"Once we found our enterprise audience [on LinkedIn], we've really enjoyed the consistency and engagement we're seeing."*

Make signups effortless

For Github, convenience is key to event registrations (and really any type of paid promotion). **Event Ads enabled the team to easily notify LinkedIn followers of live virtual events** they may be interested in (in real time!). AJ said, *"With LinkedIn, the level of engagement with an individual on the platform is changing. Members can immediately share, experience, and interact with what's going on. Catching people on the platform is so valuable. You're not trying to pull someone's attention away from somewhere else."*

The GitHub team found the real-time alert feature incredibly helpful in its unobtrusiveness. Fletcher added, "From a user experience standpoint, the most ideal scenario is to be able to drop in and to not have to worry about registering— to have no gateway whatsoever, to just be able to jump in and start consuming media."

Create community and social proof

The team at Github continues to explore how to foster community– such as jumpstarting dialogue among event attendees on their Event Pages (rather than having GitHub directly lead the conversation). *"That's one of the best ways to drive awareness of different sessions. People share with each other which keynotes they're excited about or speakers they've heard before,"* said Fletcher.

They've since expanded their LinkedIn Live and Events usage, running Demo Days as a Livestream every Friday as well as launching breakout events on the platform.

GitHub's success with Event Ads, LinkedIn Live, and Message Ads for their InFocus event made them rethink their assumptions about what works for social. **GitHub now sees LinkedIn Events as a primary channel for capturing new leads and driving revenue for their business.**

Linked in