

Roll up



# 6 B2B

## IDEAS

THAT WILL CHANGE THE WAY YOU  
THINK OF B2B MARKETING

LinkedIn



ROLL UP

ROLL UP

— TO THE —

GREATEST

SHOW

— ON —

EARTH

# Why Big Ideas need a book



Marketing is an industry brimming over with big ideas: the lightning rod issues that every influencer wants to talk about, the big themes that suddenly dominate the conversation, the new strategies that become buzzwords overnight.

The challenge we have as marketers is what actually to do with all of this challenging and disruptive thinking. Visit Cannes or Ad Week Europe and you can't help having your perspective on marketing broadened and your view of our industry challenged. But once the dust settles, how can you turn those new ideas into a game-plan that will deliver benefits to your brand and the bottom line?

We decided that what big ideas really need is a little book: a clear, concise and practical guide to how you should adjust your strategy and tactics in the light of them; a book that turns grand concepts and big questions into clear actions that you can start taking straight away.

The LinkedIn Marketing Solutions team sat down to focus on six big ideas that have been setting the agenda at industry festivals in 2016 - and ask what actions we could identify that would help marketers respond to those ideas in the coming weeks and months. This is the result: the guide to big marketing ideas - and how to apply those ideas on LinkedIn.



# The 6 Big Ideas we cover in this book



Purpose is the source of competitive advantage

Evidence is mounting that brands with a clear sense of purpose have a significant advantage over those without. How can you build a more purposeful brand – and what is the most effective strategy for communicating it?



B2B choices are more emotive than B2C choices

B2B marketing tends to put its faith in rational arguments, but our growing understanding of decision-makers and how they choose is changing that. How can B2B marketers appeal on an emotive level?



Marketing's use of technology needs to put the consumer first

Ad blocking is a reaction against the unrestrained use of technology in digital marketing. How can you put the right content in front of the right people while keeping your audience onside?



Brands need new ways of building trust

The simple act of advertising a brand on TV used to be enough to earn trust on the part of consumers. Not any more. With broadcast media no longer a badge of credibility, how can brands use personalised communications to build trust?



Marketers should focus less on producing content, more on measuring content

Producing ever-increasing amounts of content is become a dangerous de facto strategy for brands. We look at how putting measurement first can help them to be more restrained – and more relevant



Storytelling is becoming story curating

From JK Rowling to Vice, the world's top content creators are increasingly taking a curation-led approach, providing a 'story universe' and framework, and then inviting others to create content within it. What are the risks and opportunities for brands following their lead?



The logo features the word "IDEA" in a large, white, ornate serif font with decorative horizontal lines within the letters. To the right of "IDEA" is a smaller, white, stylized number "1" that also incorporates decorative horizontal lines. The entire logo is set against a background of radiating red lines of varying shades.

Purpose is the source of competitive advantage

# What's the Big Idea?

Brand purpose has been climbing the marketing agenda in the last 12 months – and with very good reason. Research points to the significant competitive advantages that accrue to purposeful brands. They differentiate themselves through building and delivering consistently better customer experiences. They command greater loyalty, become an automatic choice for many customers and consumers, enthuse employees and are able to recruit the most talented people.

The Insights2020 research from Millward Brown Vermeer, which was released earlier this year, found that 80% of successful customer-centric businesses link everything they do to a clear brand purpose<sup>1</sup> – it's the characteristic that consistently divides winning businesses from the rest. One of the most telling advantages that purposeful

brands enjoy is their ability to hire and retain the best talent. Recent research from both PwC and Deloitte shows that working for a brand they admire is a powerful motivating force for Millennials. According to Deloitte, 56 percent of Millennials have “ruled out ever working for a particular organisation because of its values or standard of conduct.”<sup>2</sup>

A sense of brand purpose, then, can give a business a clear and consistent strategic direction, align its organisation around delivering loyalty-driving customer experiences, and ensure it has the best talent available for keeping those customers happy and attracting new ones. The question is, as a marketer, how do you go about imbuing your business with a sense of purpose?

A circular infographic with a red border and a white center. The number '80%' is written in a large, bold, white font. The background of the entire page is a blurred image of a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard, with a dark red overlay on the right side.

80%

of successful customer-centric businesses link everything they do to a clear brand purpose<sup>1</sup>

A circular infographic with a red border and a white center. The number '56%' is written in a large, bold, white font.

56%

of Millennials have “ruled out ever working for a particular organisation because of its values or standard of conduct.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Millennials at Work, Reshaping the Workplace  
<https://www.pwc.com/m1/en/services/consulting/documents/millennials-at-work.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> The 2016 Deloitte Millennial Survey, Winning over the next generation of leaders  
<https://business.linkedin.com/content/dam/business/marketing-solutions/regional/en-uk/Site%20Assets/PDFs/casestudies/Baume-Mercier-marketing-case-study.pdf>

# Making Big Ideas happen on LinkedIn

There's a common misconception that a brand's purpose must be centred on sustainability or corporate social responsibility – and that some brands are therefore inherently more purposeful than others. This isn't true. Any brand can develop a greater sense of purpose by attuning itself to the role it plays in its customers' lives – and building a brand strategy around it.

Here's your five-step plan for building a greater sense of brand purpose on LinkedIn:



## Listen to your audience

The sweet spot for brand purpose lies in the intersection between what motivates your audiences and the expertise that your brand brings to the table. LinkedIn tools such as Trending Content can help you to explore the key issues for your audiences and how these align with your business. Pay close attention to the comments that you generate from customers and potential customers through the content that you share on LinkedIn, and follow Influencers for your industry to pick up on the topics motivating your audiences – and how they respond to them.



## Be authentic

Your content strategy is often a good test of brand purpose. If it's a stretch to talk about your purpose then maybe it isn't as authentic to your brand as you would like. If it revolves around an issue where you have a range of experts with something to say, then you have an authentic purpose – and you are well positioned to take advantage of it.



## Leverage employees and internal experts

Leveraging employees and internal experts as content assets is a hugely effective strategy for communicating purpose on LinkedIn. It demonstrates that your purpose resonates with your people, building credibility amongst both potential customers and potential employees.

# Making Big Ideas happen on LinkedIn



## Apply your purpose consistently across touchpoints

There's no point engaging audiences with your sense of brand purpose at the top of the funnel, if that sense of purpose disappears once they click through to a landing page, reach out to a sales rep or turn to you for support with the products and solutions they've bought. Great B2B brands focus on delivering end-to-end customer experiences that reflect what people value most about their brand. The Insights2020 research shows that 64% of the most successful brands focus on driving consistency of brand purpose across all of the touchpoints where they encounter their audiences.

It helps if your brand purpose is naturally aligned to what your business does (if you've met the Authenticity test described above). As John Rudaizky of EY puts it: "A purpose must accurately reflect the organisation and not be akin to a statement of intent. At EY, for example, our purpose of 'building a better working world' is ambitious, but it relates to our role in building trust and confidence in the capital markets and supporting our clients' aim to drive sustainable growth."



## Close the loop through analytics

A sense of purpose helps to focus your use of data. It should align with your objectives as a business and help to inform which metrics you use to measure your success. Paying close attention to how your audiences respond to different types of content can also help to refine your sense of purpose, confirming the areas where what you do intersects with what matters to your audience.

## "Know your swim lanes"

As LinkedIn's Director of Global Marketing, Keith Richey, explained in a panel discussion at Advertising Week Europe, success in the world of real-time marketing comes down to knowing your brand purpose.

When an issue emerges that your brand can credibly address, and is relevant to your purpose, then it's in your 'swim lane'. Not only do you have permission to address it on platforms like LinkedIn and Twitter – but everyone involved will also have a very good idea of what the brand needs to say.

If an issue is outside your 'swim lane', then it's often best left alone. Purposeful brands aren't loudmouths on every issue – but they are authoritative and credible when the time is right.



# Big ideas in Action:

## How Dulux found the sense of purpose in paint

Listening to its audiences, and thinking imaginatively about the role of its brand, has helped Dulux to instill a business selling paint with a clear sense of purpose that now animates every aspect of the organisation.

Dulux picked up on research showing the impact that the colour of its paints had on how people felt. It translated this into a brand purpose leveraging colour to make people feel better – to improve situations and improve the quality of lives. “Let’s colour” runs through Dulux’s TV advertising, through its initiatives to repaint in bright colours hospital waiting rooms or under-privileged neighbourhoods in Brazil and Pakistan, to tap into the positive emotional impact of colour. It also runs through its approach to selling paint and the customer experiences it creates around it.



# IDEA 2

B2B choices are more emotive than B2C choices

# What's the Big Idea?

For a long time, it was assumed that, while we're happy to make emotional choices as consumers, we rigorously exclude emotion from any of the decisions we make in the workplace. As the Managing Director of Interprise, Laura Milsted explains that when you think about it logically this can't possibly be the case.

B2B choices affect the lives of those who make and influence them on every level. They shape their standing and reputation at work, their personal and professional credibility, their future job security and their income. In doing so, they have a big impact on people's ability to live the lives they want. Consumer choices are often described as 'aspirational' but professional choices are the primary means by which people fulfill their aspirations. As a result they bring a range of powerful emotions to the surface.

## an emotional rollercoaster

*"If you buy a pair of trainers and don't like them, you can always take them back. In B2B the implications are a lot bigger - and therefore the choice is a lot more emotional"*

**Laura Milsted,  
MD, Interprise**

# Making Big Ideas happen on LinkedIn

Once we accept that B2B buying choices aren't made by robots, we can quickly start to see how the insights of neuroscience are as relevant to B2B marketing as they are to B2C. Emotion shapes our professional choices and so do the heuristics and unconscious human biases that emotion helps to create: the status quo bias, for example, that tilts instincts away from changing the way things are done, despite the weight of rational arguments suggesting it's a good idea.

The increasing size and complexity of buying committees reinforces the role of emotion in B2B choices. The task of a B2B marketer is no longer just to address people who have an in-depth knowledge of their sector and their solutions; they must appeal to a broad range of other influencers who all have a valid say in the buying decision, but all approach that decision from different perspectives. A brand with genuine emotional appeal stands a far greater chance of appealing across different departments within a potential client business.

Here's a framework for building emotional appeal around B2B brands:



## Don't neglect the top of the funnel

B2B marketing has traditionally focused on activity that can be directly linked to leads and conversions, focusing attention on the middle and lower reaches of the funnel. However, the role of emotion in B2B choices rewards marketers that are prepared to invest in building brands. Be clear about the different roles played by brand-building and lead-generation content, set the right objectives and metrics for each, and use LinkedIn targeting to deliver awareness-building and thought leadership content to all those you need to influence.



## Humanise your brand through experts and influencers

Brands are built by people – and this is as true of B2B brands as it is of consumer-facing ones. Decision-makers who are investing a great deal personally in their buying choices need to be confident that the promises and values of your brand genuinely run throughout your organisation. Building the profile of relevant internal experts on LinkedIn's self-publishing platform is a powerful means of doing so – as is encouraging employees to amplify and comment on your content. Brands such as EY, Shell and Emirates have made highly effective use of these techniques.



## Don't be afraid to be funny

Humour evokes a powerful wave of emotions, catches our attention and influences us in powerful ways. Some of the best B2B marketers know this. They invest time and money in making people laugh on LinkedIn – and they get fantastic results in the process. Whether it's Intel's use of witty cartoons as Sponsored Content illustrations, Adobe's 'Do you know what your marketing is doing?' series of films or Lenovo's subversive infographics about IT decision-making – these brands prove that not only can you be funny in B2B marketing, but where possible you really should try.



# Big Ideas in Action:

## How Volvo Trucks put the soul into steering

Volvo Trucks' Cannes Lions Grand Prix-winning Live Test Series campaign proves the value of linking the product features that influence B2B buying choices to the emotions that all humans share. From the famous 'Epic Split' ad in which rugged action star Jean-Claude Van Damme reflected on life's ups and down whilst balanced between two precisely steering trucks, to the cute and funny remote-controlled test-drive of an indestructible truck by a four-year-old girl: by engaging emotion Volvo Trucks has succeeded in making the finer points of its vehicles' specs hugely memorable.



# IDEA 3

Marketing's use of technology needs to put the audience first

# What's the Big Idea?

The rise of ad blocking makes it clear that audiences won't tolerate brands interrupting and undermining their digital experiences. This demands a rethink in the way that brands target audiences online. If people aren't willing to be loaded down with pixels and cookies whilst navigating the web, marketers will need to find new ways to reach them that rely less on technology and more on relevance.

Audiences' frustration at being pursued around the web by advertisers is leading to renewed interest in contextual advertising opportunities - where brands seek to become a valuable part of experiences that audience members are actively seeking.





# Making Big Ideas happen on LinkedIn

LinkedIn is becoming one of the most important and purposeful destinations in key audiences' digital lives.

Here's a framework for taking advantage of the unique context our platform creates:



## Target the right watering hole

Digital lives increasingly converge on very few big destinations, and LinkedIn is one of those destinations. It's where by far the largest number of professionals gather to stay connected and informed, advance their career and work smarter. It's a very busy watering hole – and in today's digital landscape that's both rare and hugely valuable.

Just as important though, is the unique behaviour that happens at the LinkedIn watering hole. Professionals arrive with a real sense of purpose, and it's here where the opportunity lies. These are people hungrily seeking out new ideas and opportunities that can help them to meet their professional aspirations – a unique mindset that engages the heart and brain in equal measure. In the context of LinkedIn, targeted brand content isn't interruptive at all – it's an important part of the experience.



## Use targeting to deliver tailored content experiences

Targeting works best in an environment where audiences expect content to be tailored to who they are and what they're interested in. The LinkedIn feed is just such an environment. A huge part of its value for members comes from the way in which its content is curated around their priorities. This is why LinkedIn members' interaction with content in their feed is growing at an exponential rate – 15 times more content impressions than job postings are served in the LinkedIn feed.



## Add value through content

Marketers make the most of this opportunity when they align their content and their targeting in a way that is designed to add value to professional lives. This could be through Sponsored Content in the LinkedIn feed, targeting particular audiences or particular points in the customer journey. It could equally come through Sponsored InMail, which can deliver highly personalised messages talking to individual audience members' particular priorities. Targeting isn't just an opportunity to put content in front of the right people – it's an opportunity to bring out the relevance of the content to those people as well.

# Big Ideas in Action:

## Targeting transformative moments in young lives

Baume & Mercier's Head of Communication and Media, Corinne Delli Gatti, explains how the luxury watchmaker used LinkedIn targeting to create valuable moments in the lives of its target audience.

Baume & Mercier used precisely targeted Sponsored InMail to invite young professionals to enjoy 'Extraordinary Moments' such as style workshops and personal shopping experiences.

## Results



The campaign generated an average click-through rate of 28%<sup>1</sup>



15% of those receiving InMail went on to attend a Baume & Mercier event<sup>1</sup>



**BAUME & MERCIER**  
MAISON D'HORLOGERIE GENEVE 1830

<sup>1</sup>Baume & Mercier Case Study, <https://business.linkedin.com/content/dam/business/marketing-solutions/regional/en-uk/Site%20Assets/PDFs/casestudies/Baume-Mercier-marketing-case-study.pdf>

## precision targeting

*"For our Classima Collection, which is built on innovative, affordable excellence, we needed to reach ambitious young people who had no prior knowledge of us. We needed to demonstrate why our watches mattered to a generation that had grown up checking the time on their iPhones. For that we needed a context that could bring out the relevance of our brand and products to young lives in a wholly new way.*

*Partnering with LinkedIn was a hugely important part of the campaign. It meant not only that we could reach the precise type of ambitious young professionals that we were interested in, but also that we could reach them at the point in their careers that matched these moments of success. Just as importantly we could reach them in the context they associate most closely with transforming their lives and fulfilling their ambitions."*

**Corinne Delli-Gatti,**  
Head of Communication and Media,  
Baume & Mercier

# IDEA 4

Brands need new ways of building trust



# What's the Big Idea?

Under the traditional model of advertising, brands could build trust amongst their audiences simply through the fact that they had invested in advertising on TV. Today though, broadcast media is no longer a shortcut to credibility – and marketers need new ways of building trust through relevant and personalised experiences.



# Making Big Ideas happen on LinkedIn

Trust increasingly depends upon a brand's credible personal relationships with its audience. This requires an understanding of the motivations of different people and the ability to contribute to their lives in a relevant way. Above all, it requires brands to be able to do this consistently over time.



## Monitor the conversation to respond to audiences' most relevant issues

The process of building trust through personalised engagement has to begin with a commitment to listening: understanding a given audience's most important issues and the role they want your brand to play in addressing them. LinkedIn provides a valuable range of such listening opportunities: following relevant Influencers for a given industry and paying close attention to the subjects that drive engagement, and the types of comments they generate; keeping a close eye on LinkedIn Pulse content; and working with LinkedIn's Trending Content tools to identify hot button issues for a particular audience.



## Select the most relevant audiences - and personalise content to them

The sweet spot for content marketing lies where the issues that an audience cares about intersect with the expertise and unique perspective that a brand is able to bring to the table. By definition, this sweet spot moves depending on whom you are talking to - and marketers need way to apply their expertise in different ways to demonstrate that they are genuinely audience-centric in their approach. On LinkedIn, marketers can align their content with their targeting, selecting the most relevant audiences for a given campaign or content asset, and using Direct Sponsored Content to deliver it only in the feed of those audiences.

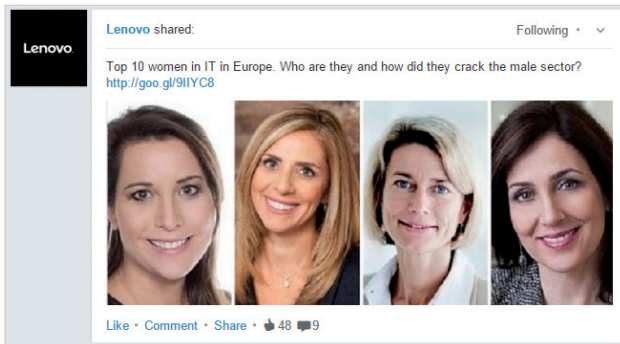


# Making Big Ideas happen on LinkedIn



**Use employees to demonstrate how your values apply throughout the business**

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## Why B2B audiences demand personalisation

Brands such as Amazon and Netflix have reset people's expectations of personalisation, using advanced algorithms to deliver tailored experiences that feel wholly intuitive and wholly individual. There's still a huge gap between what these giant technology companies can do with data and personalisation, and the capabilities available to most B2B marketers. However, there are quick wins available when it comes to closing this gap – and it's important to take advantage of them. By using Direct Sponsored Content, you can start to create personalised content experiences immediately by calling out your specific audience in headlines, intro copy and images.

*"Great experiences – whether they be on Amazon or Uber – are setting a different bar for us as B2B marketers, and we have to think about this in very, very different terms"*

**Linda Boff,**  
VP and CMO,  
General Electric

# IDEA 5

Audiences don't want more content -  
they want more relevant content

# What's the Big Idea?

Content marketing can feel like an arms race, with brands rushing to produce more content, more frequently, and own any potential topic or conversation as it emerges. The problem is that audiences don't need or want more content – they're hungry for more relevant content where a brand has genuine value to add through its perspective. This sometimes requires marketers to take a step back and adopt a more strategic

approach – and that strategic approach needs to start with a clear set of objectives and a framework for measurement.

The evidence of content overload is clear to see in the Content Marketing Institute's 2016 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends report. It found that 89% of organisations in the UK were using content marketing – but only 34% agreed that

it was effective. Interestingly, there was a big difference in priorities for effective and non-effective content marketers. Most marketers (70%) say that producing engaging content is their top priority. However amongst the most effective, the top priority (61%) is understanding which content is actually effective – and which isn't. A strategy based on measurement makes a big difference to how content meets your objectives.





# Making Big Ideas happen on LinkedIn

LinkedIn generates a valuable range of real-time metrics that enable more meaningful analytics. Building your content strategy around such metrics won't just enable you to measure effectiveness – it will help you to plan and learn strategically, ensuring content that is relevant to both the audience and your objectives.



## Be clear on the role of each piece of content

All brand content should have a purpose. If you're simply producing content for the sake of it then you are well on your way to swamping and irritating your audiences – and expending resources with no clear path to ROI. Jesse Noyes of Kahuna calls such approaches 'Random Acts of Content Marketing' and they can quickly undermine an effective content marketing strategy.

However, just because all brand content needs a purpose doesn't mean that it has to have the same purpose. Rather like the baseball players in Brad Pitt's Moneyball squad, it's important to be clear about the role that each piece of content has – and to set their objectives and measure them accordingly.



## Set specific objectives for the upper and lower funnel

One of the most important distinctions to make when measuring content is between reaching prospects in the upper funnel – and nurturing relationships in the lower funnel.

Upper funnel objectives might include building awareness, shifting perceptions and driving interest and consideration; lower funnel objectives focus on areas such as number of leads generated, the rate at which those leads convert, and the revenue that those conversions generate.

As a starting point, here's a quick checklist of some different (and equally valid) roles that content can play throughout the funnel:

- ✓ Thought leadership to build awareness and credibility
- ✓ Newsjacking to drive traffic to a blog and increase exposure
- ✓ Editorial to demonstrate your sector expertise
- ✓ Influencer-aligned content to help expand your network and amplify your reach
- ✓ General best practices to add value and demonstrate expertise
- ✓ Event marketing to drive registrations and create opportunities
- ✓ Lead generation
- ✓ Product 'How to' guides to support customers and provide info in the closing stages of the buying journey

# Making Big Ideas happen on LinkedIn



## Choose the right mix of metrics

You don't have to overcomplicate your use of metrics to run an effective content strategy. Keep things simple by defining your goals on LinkedIn, setting the objectives for your content and the tactics that you'll use to meet them, picking the most obviously relevant metrics for each type of content, and then optimising and refining against them. Wash and repeat – and watch your effectiveness increase as the metrics help identify content that fits the sweet spot for your audience.

In the past, B2B marketing has sometimes been guilty of focusing a disproportionate amount of attention on certain lower funnel metrics, which are often the easiest to measure (the amount of leads generated through people filling in data capture forms, for example). This can lead to a dangerously lopsided approach –

bombarding people with requests for details whilst neglecting the content that can persuade them why sharing such details are worthwhile in the first place. It can also lead to a strained relationship with sales if you're focusing too much on the quantity of leads you can generate – and not enough on the quality.

Taking a more open-minded view of the most relevant metrics can help you to track the contribution of content throughout the funnel. Use LinkedIn metrics as a foundation, and integrate your own analysis for a full understanding of the impact of different types of content at different points in the journey.

For example, engagement on LinkedIn in the form of shares, likes and comments shows how your content is resonating with different

audiences – and how its reach is being extended organically through sharing and interaction.

You'll get further insight into upper funnel objectives such as brand awareness and interest when you analyse the traffic to your website that content generates, the bounce rate, page views and time spent with your content, and uplifts in important related areas such as branded search. In the lower reaches of the funnel, you'll be able to calculate the completion rate for data capture forms and the cost per lead that you generate through LinkedIn activity. These metrics take on even greater value when you integrate an understanding of the rate at which leads generate into sales and the revenue those sales deliver.

# Making Big Ideas happen on LinkedIn



## Tackle the attribution question for a full-funnel view

Any marketer looking to build a meaningful framework for measuring their content must tackle the attribution challenge. It's always been tempting to apportion more credit for achieving marketing's ultimate goals (leads, conversions and revenue) to the last few touchpoints in the buyer's journey. However, a strategic approach to content marketing requires you to recognise the equally important contribution of content that those buyers have already consumed.

This is why it's important to develop meaningful metrics for the upper funnel that have as much credibility as the more obvious metrics further down. It's a natural human bias (so the neuroscientists tell us) to assume something that's easily quantifiable is more valuable than something that isn't. Putting meaningful metrics in place for the top of the funnel is a big step forward towards a more balanced content approach.



## Access quick wins to boost content effectiveness in real-time

The benefits of more detailed content measurement are often immediate. We recommend that marketers running Sponsored Content activity on LinkedIn follow a policy of A/B testing or 'always be testing' as we like to call it. Testing different variations of headlines, images and Sponsored Content copy enables you to quickly optimise your efforts around the approach that delivers the greatest engagement – and it delivers immediate benefits in terms of content effectiveness.



## Build a strategic framework that you can optimise around

A commitment to measuring the contribution of content links your decisions about which content to produce and when, back to the overall marketing strategy and objectives. A proper framework for measuring content also puts more focus on finding the sweet spots where your objectives and expertise intersect with genuine audience interest.

Just as importantly, clear metrics and attribution throughout the funnel will generate a wealth of insights about the characteristics of content that make the greatest contribution to your goals. Optimising your content on this basis will help to refine your strategy and increase ROI.

# Making Big Ideas happen on LinkedIn:

## HSBC uses measurement to guide content strategy

Real-time feedback on engagement levels is enabling HSBC to optimise its approach to the topics that generate greatest interest amongst each audience.

Marketing on LinkedIn also allows HSBC to develop and validate a content strategy to use to target its business audience.



## precision targeting

*"This kind of insight is invaluable in our mission to become more customer-centric,"*

*"Sponsored Content is enabling us to deliver timely updates to influential professionals, and stimulate debate and interaction."*

**Amanda Rendle**  
Global Head of Marketing,  
Commercial Banking and Global  
Banking and Markets,  
HSBC

# IDEA 6

Storytelling increasingly involves story curating



# What's the Big Idea?

From childhood we're taught to tell stories 'in your own words'. However, in the age of social media, storytellers of all types are taking a more collaborative approach. From JK Rowling working with Harry Potter communities to Vice's commitment to content produced by millennials and Gen Z, the world's top content creators increasingly take a curation-led approach. They provide the story framework and create a universe in which audiences and collaborators are empowered to express themselves. In return they gain crucial credibility whilst encouraging people to take ownership of the content they consume. Adopting a similar approach will enable brands to build communities of their own, deepen engagement and consistently deliver relevant content.



# Making Big Ideas happen on LinkedIn

Like the proverbial genie in a bottle, collaborating with an audience and co-creating content can be immensely powerful – but it's important that you have the ability to direct that power in the right way. Co-creation strategies with vague objectives around raising awareness or generating 'engagement' around a concept can leave you regretting you weren't more careful what you wished for.

The most successful examples of content co-creation focus on first building a community with a clear and relevant relationship with a brand, who share many of the same interests and priorities. This provides a great foundation for creating content with an informed, interested group who buy into what you are doing – and why you are doing it.

Perhaps one of the most famous recent examples of co-creation failed to follow this strategy – and created a media sensation as a result. When the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) in the UK launched a month-long social media competition to name its new research vessel,

they asked any and everybody to get superficially involved with a project that they had little real connection to. The UK public didn't know much about polar research, they weren't particularly engaged with what this boat would do and why it mattered, but they do know a funny name and an opportunity for a giant practical joke when they see one. Which is why they voted for the ship to be called 'Boaty McBoatface'.

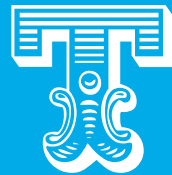
Contrast this with the success of Adobe's #AdobeRemix project, promoted across LinkedIn and other channels, which invited the creative community to express that creativity to reinvent the brand's logo. It felt risky, for a brand accustomed to controlling the fine detail of how it appeared, but Adobe also knew that it was putting its brand in the hands of a community that were deeply invested in it – and had a real appetite for taking more meaningful ownership of it as well.

LinkedIn provides a wealth of opportunities for building such communities, sharing content within them, and inviting community members to help curate and create it. It's a capacity that the

UK Government's Business is GREAT campaign put to powerful use through its Showcase Page, sharing stories of entrepreneurs who had found success through exporting, and encouraging others to share their own experiences. As Jo Simmons, Head of Campaigns for the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, explained at the time: *"Most SMB owners don't want to hear business advice from the government. They'd far rather hear from other businesses like theirs, and so we knew that peer-to-peer recommendation was going to be our strongest suit in this campaign."*

Co-creation with an actively engaged community demonstrates authenticity, builds credibility and opens up valuable new sources of expert content. It's not just a powerful content marketing strategy; it's a powerful business strategy.

# Ready to make big ideas happen?



Today, LinkedIn members number more than **450 million** professionals. That's over three-quarters of the **600 million** professionals on the planet, representing the largest group anywhere of influential, affluent and educated people.

It's a fantastic platform for putting the latest marketing thinking into action.

For more information, visit  
[emea.marketing.linkedin.com](http://emea.marketing.linkedin.com)  
or visit our blog  
<http://lnkd.in/emea-marketing-blog>

## Market to who matters

For the first time in the history of media, you can reach the world's professionals—all in one place. More than **450M** people worldwide gather on LinkedIn to stay connected and informed, advance their careers, and work smarter. Together they comprise the largest global community of business professionals. These are the decision-makers, influencers, and the leaders of today and tomorrow—precisely the people you want to target.

For more information, visit [emea.marketing.linkedin.com](http://emea.marketing.linkedin.com)