

Ready to Do Business

The Business of Thought Leadership



Quick start guide

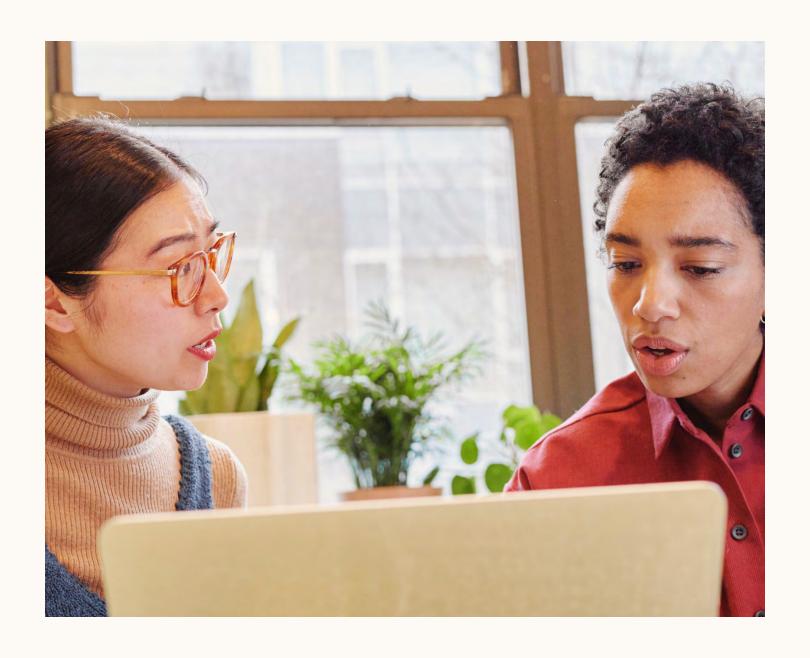
- The value in executive thought leadership
- Integrating executives, brand, and corporate communications

2 Foundations for a thought leader

5 Key takeaways & next steps

Building executive presence on LinkedIn





The value of executive thought leadership



Especially in B2B environments, executive branding is now considered a necessity.

Steve Olenski & Kent Huffman, Forbes

IPRA, "The Changing Face of Executive Reputation" 2019

Why bother with thought leadership?



Brand & reputation

Create and reinforce awareness in the market for who you are, what you do, and why you exist.



Market consideration

Showcase the unique perspectives and expertise from within your organization and help audiences understand "why you."



Demand generation

Connect with potential buyers for your products and services and introduce them into the sales cycle.



Talent attraction

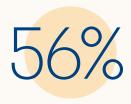
Find and recruit the best talent for your organization and show why and how you're the best fit for them.



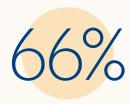
Employee engagement

Help your teams and talent stay plugged into the expertise and unique value in your organization.

Maintaining an active executive presence on social has a direct impact on the buyer's journey.



of professionals stated that a business executive's presence on social media positively influences their purchase decision



of professionals said they would be more likely to recommend a company or brand if they followed a company executive on social media



What works

Create something substantive

New perspectives are highly valued

Top characteristics of high-value Thought Leadership content, according to Decision Makers:

- Explores potential challenges or new opportunities I had not considered before
- Points out things that I had overlooked in thinking or strategizing
- Includes guidance on how to respond to the issues raised



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.

3 keys to compelling executive presence on LinkedIn



Find your whitespace

Where is the intersection of your expertise, your interests, and the interests of your community?



Have a perspective

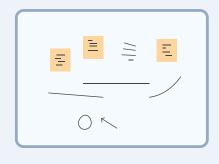
How can you help shape the conversations in the industry and offer a forward-thinking point of view?



Digital citizenship

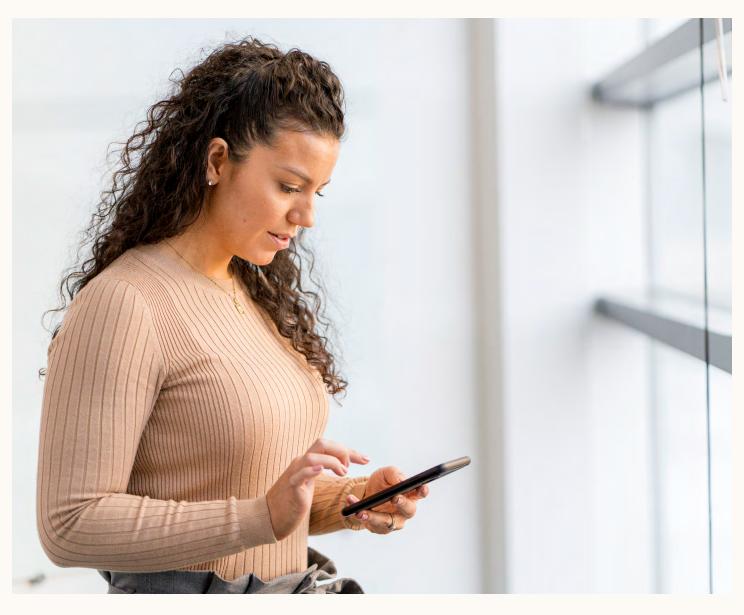
How are you participating in and contributing to the communities that you're part of online?







The art of whitespace



Identifying white space: content opportunities across topics

Engaging and Uncommon

These topics resonate well and are less common. This is a prime opportunity area for content creation.

Common and Engaging

These topics resonate well but are common.

Uncommon and not Engaging

Engagement Index

These topics are not as engaging and are less common.

Common and less Engaging

These topics are common and not as engaging.

Average Number of Articles

Engagement Index

For each topic, calculated based on the number of engagements per article posted across LinkedIn; 100 is the maximum among topics plotted.

Number of Articles Index

For each topic, calculated based on number of articles posted across LinkedIn; 100 is the maximum among topics plotted.



Addressing the voice of the customer



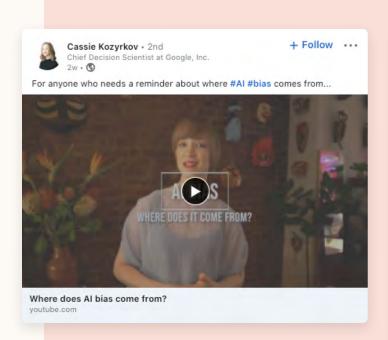




Cassie Kozyrkov

Chief Decision Scientist, Google

Joining the conversation with others in your field





Me: "What challenges are you tackling at the moment?"

Them: "It looks like I've been hired as Chief Data Scientist... at a company that has no data."

+ Follow · · ·

I don't know whether to laugh or to cry, but I do know that it's time to talk about data engineering! What is data engineering and should you learn it?

Includes 4 tips for ambitious data scientists asking pointed questions before accepting a new position:

Tip #1: Know what you're getting into - Before taking a data science job, always ask about the *who* of data engineering.

Tip #2: Remember that you're the customer - It's a bad sign if data engineers' attitude reminds you of museum curators, preserving data for its own sake.

Tip #3: See the bigger (organizational) picture - While it's true that you're a key customer for data engineering, you're probably not the only customer.

Tip #4: Insist on accountability - If there are no repercussions to shutting you out, your organization is unlikely to thrive.

If you've ever seen an organization hire data scientists before being ready to make use of them, do everyone a favor and reshare the article. Who knows, you might save someone's career from major disappointment. :)

(Superman cover image via Hamed ZITOUN.)



Data science... without any data?!

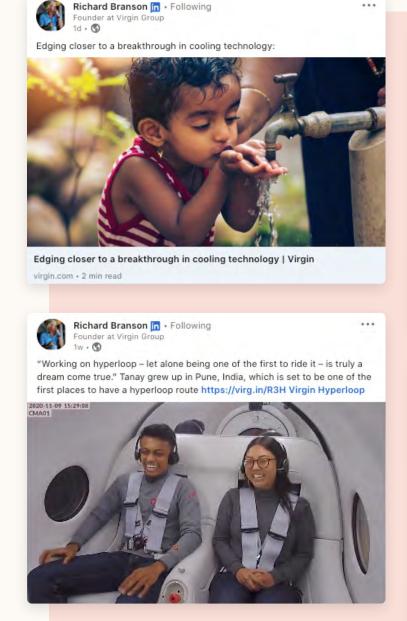
towardsdatascience.com • 5 min read

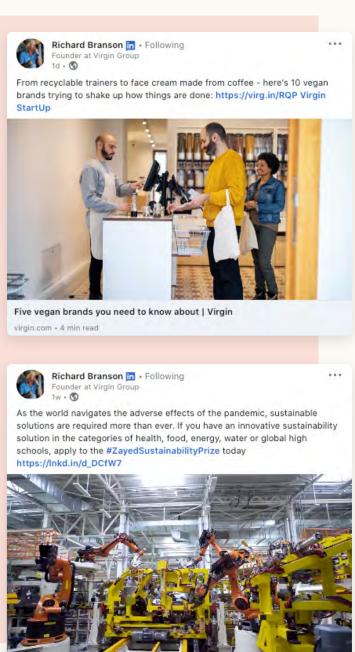


Richard Branson

Founder, Virgin Group

Perspectives on the future and innovations





The Empathy Map

Think & feel

What preoccupies this person? What's important to them? What are their desires and aspirations? What are their fears?

See

What's their environment like? What do they see and observe in their industry or among their peers? What's going on in their personal and professional worlds?

Hear

What influences this person? What media to they pay attention to? People? Voices? What resources do they rely on most to help shape their thinking?

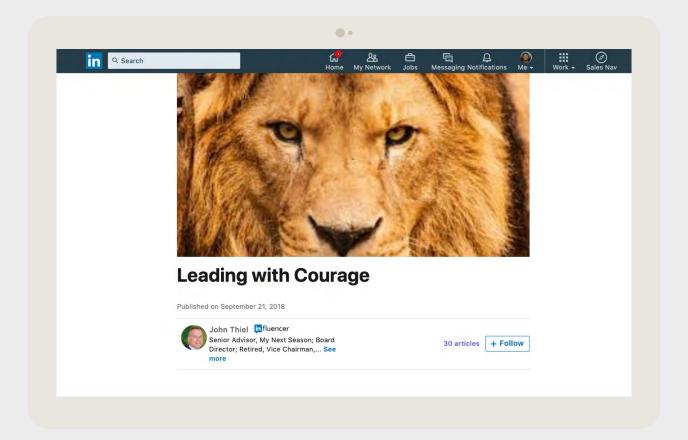
Say & do

How do they behave? How do they act in public? Is that different in private? How do they want to portray themselves outwardly? Are there contradictions between what they do and what they feel?





Content creator archetypes



See the post \rightarrow



What surprised me the most [about publishing on LinkedIn] is that **me being me** is more popular than me being the head of Merrill Lynch Wealth Management.



John ThielFormer Vice Chairman, Merrill Lynch

We can think about our individual voices in 4 categories











Sallie Krawcheck

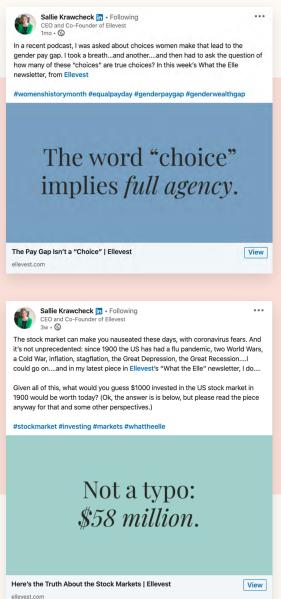
The Visionary • 2.5M followers

Sallie Krawcheck, the CEO and Co-Founder of investment firm, Ellevest, has a strong focus on women in her content.

She addresses topics like the gender wealth gap, the gender pay gap, investment strategies, and has several standing series/hashtags:

- #FinancialFeministFriday
- Ask Sallie (essentially an AMA that has turned into a weekly video series)





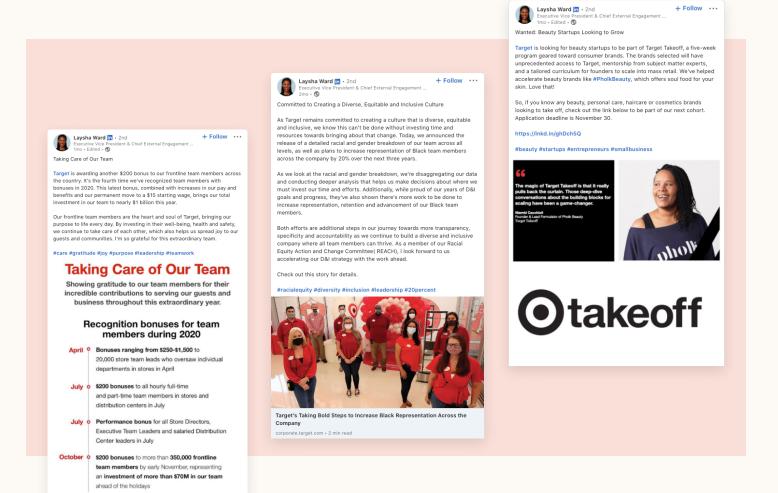


Laysha Ward

The Evangelist • 153k followers

Laysha Ward is the EVP and Chief External Engagement Officer at Target and focuses her conversations on women, people of color, and other underrepresented communities.

Laysha is very timely in the conversations she has on LinkedIn, addressing a variety of topics, including how Target is re-committing to their Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging efforts; supporting and backing entrepreneurs; focus on a safe shopping environment; and being transparent about what Target is doing to support front-line workers.



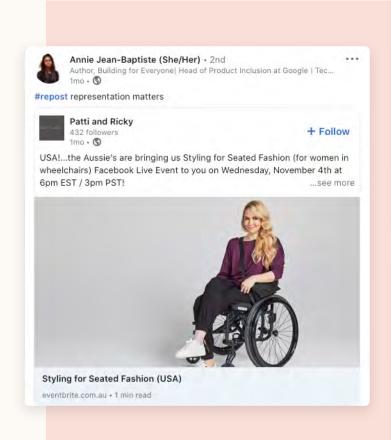


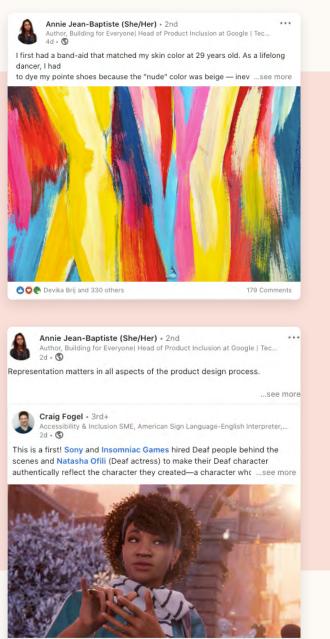
Annie Jean-Baptiste

The Guide • 6k followers

Annie Jean-Baptiste is the Head of Product Inclusion at Google and is the author of, Building For Everyone: Expand Your Market with Design Practices from Google's Product Inclusion Team.

Annie focuses her LinkedIn activity on inclusion: resharing what brands are doing to build inclusive products, providing her insight on why inclusiveness is such a key factor in product design, and how creatives can have an inclusive-first mindset.



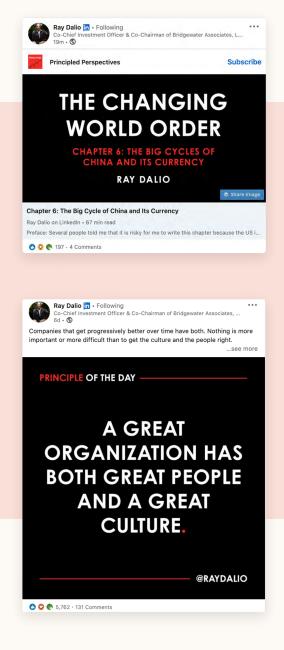


Meet the actress blazing a sign-language trail in new 'Spider-Man' video



Ray Dalio is the founder and co-Chairman of Bridgewater Associates, and his Principles – which are also the basis of his best-selling book – are the backbone of his presence on LinkedIn.

He authors a LinkedIn newsletter called Principle Perspectives, and uses articles, text updates with images, and actively participates in the comment streams on his posts to foster dialogue and build community around his ideas.





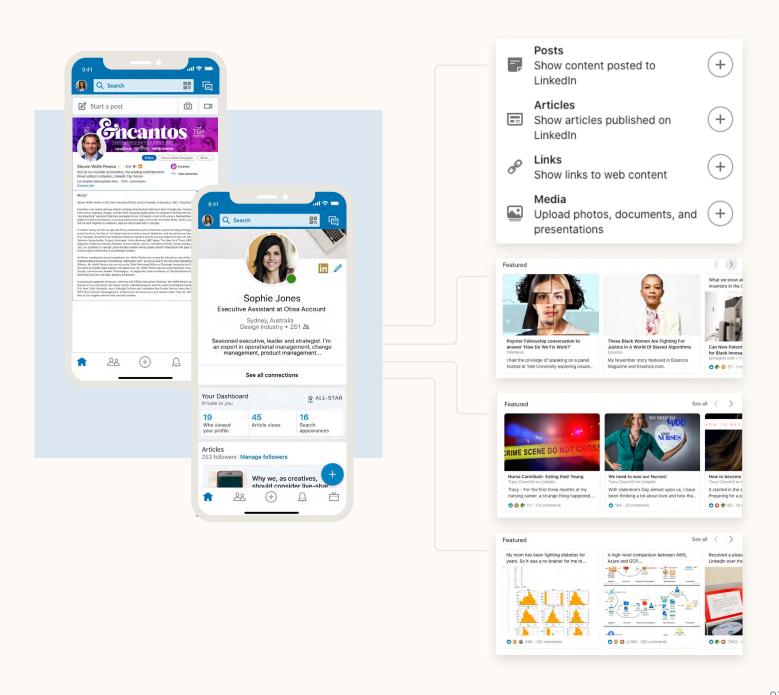


Executive presence on LinkedIn



Create a compelling and engaging profile

- Craft a great summary that captures both personality and expertise
- ✓ Include relevant experience and interests, including things outside of work
- ✓ Feature interesting and engaging content like videos, articles, or presentations
- Check communication preferences to minimize noise and keep connections highly relevant





Publishing

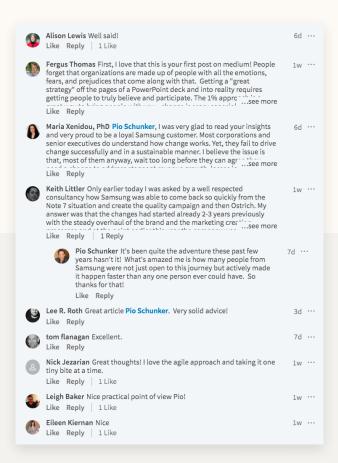
Prioritize engagement quality over quantity

Evaluating the comments your content drives is a better indicator of the quality and success of your content than total quantity of likes and shares.

Primary KPIs

Comments

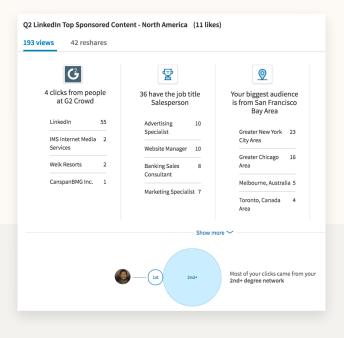
- Avg. # of comments
- Avg. word count per comment
- Qualitative feedback



Secondary KPIs

Engagement

- Views in the feed
- Likes/Shares
- Follower growth %

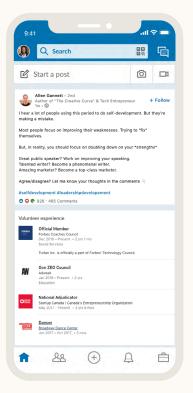


There are many ways to create content across LinkedIn

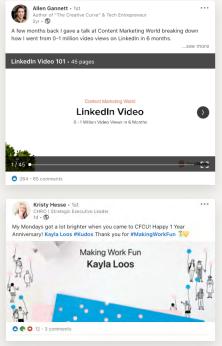
- Short form text posts are great for real-time thoughts and sharp insights or words of wisdom.
- Documents are a great way to share downloadable or longer-form content
- Videos & Stories can be dynamic content formats for those who prefer visuals to writing
- Polls can take the pulse of your audience and foster dialogue and discussion
- Articles are great for sharing more substantive thoughts on deeper topics

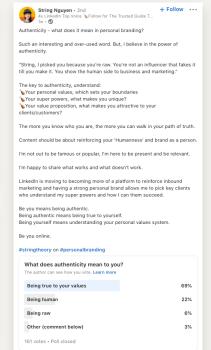


Utilize hashtags within your post to quickly signal what your content is about and increase discoverability







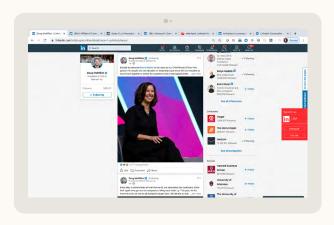




Doug McMillon

President & CEO, Walmart

- Showcases photos from various stores around the country
- Highlights employees (associates) and shares wins, awards, and other key moments

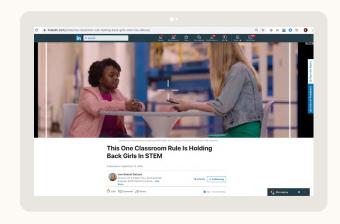




Lisa Seacat DeLuca

Director of IoT & Digital Twin, IBM

- · Shares how technology impacts every-day life
- Posted a series around #SheCanSTEM
- Focuses on gender in tech/STEM

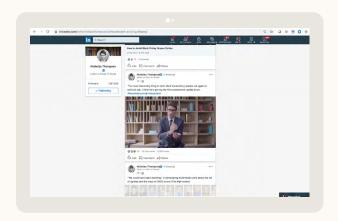




Nicholas Thompson

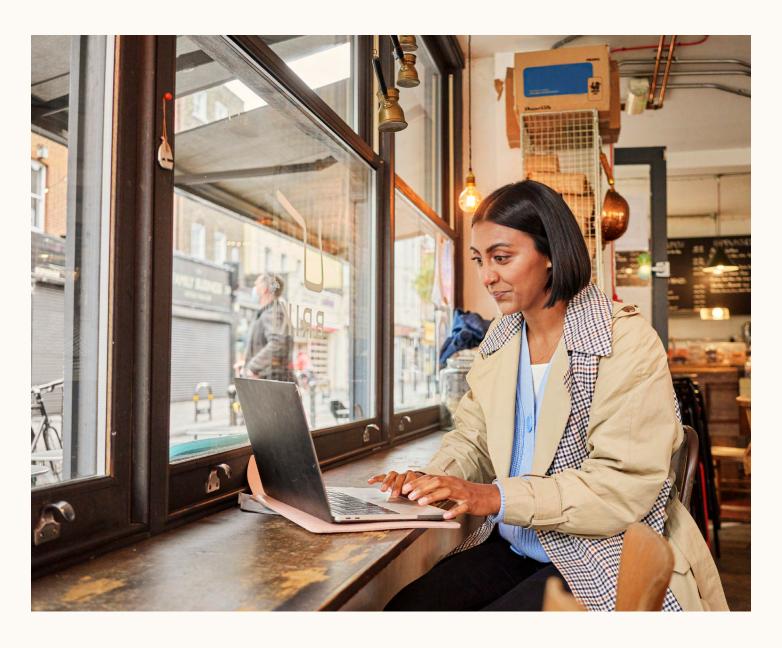
CEO, The Atlantic

- Films α series highlighting the most interesting thing in tech
- Posts consistently, often multiple times per day
- Simple, but quality, filmography usually in a conference room, office, or mailroom



Source

Digital citizenship



Building a strong community

Find and follow relevant voices to learn from others, foster dialogue and discussion, and get inspiration for future content that the broader community might be interested in.

Follow relevant industry hashtags and industry colleagues to stay on top of realtime conversations How can you help shape the conversations in the industry and offer a forward-thinking point of view?

Check out LinkedIn
Top Voices and
Influencers to find
great examples of
people doing it well
and to gain great
cross-industry insights





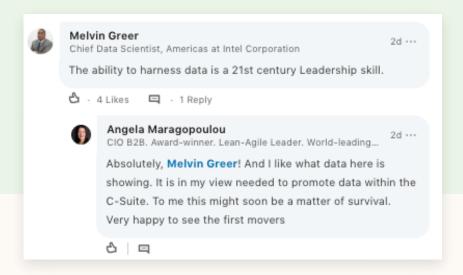


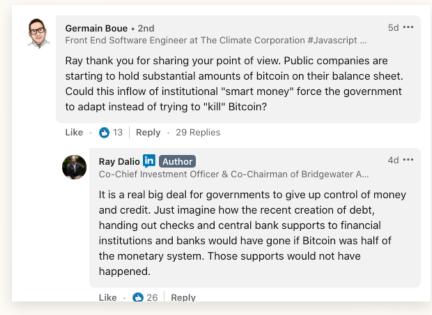
Commenting & dialogue

Comments are a great way to engage with employees and peers.

You don't have to start from scratch to make an impact. Comment on posts you find interesting and continue to participate in those conversations.

- Add a unique perspective to a peer's post.
- Ask questions or pose a different point of view
- Remember: LinkedIn is a professional network, so keep that in mind when you're interacting with the community







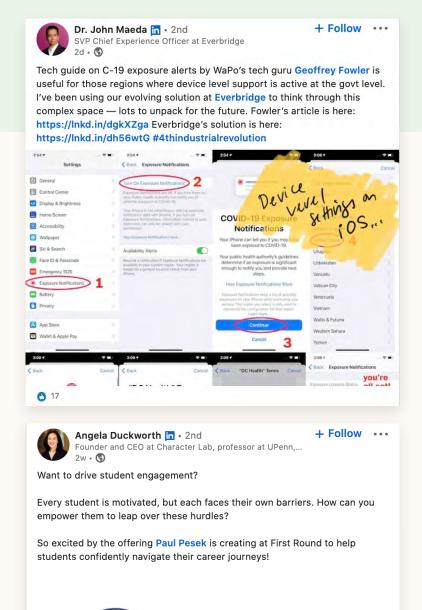
Content curation

Don't want to create content? You can still offer perspectives on key industry trends and happenings and share great work that's relevant to your executives' networks.

- Share your POV and perspective, even if you respectfully disagree.
- Aim to start dialogue, not just share information.
- Focus on credible, high-quality sources that are well aligned with your company values and reputation.

POV is key

Create an additive, personal layer to the content you share with your network.



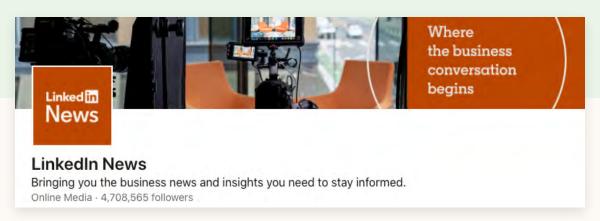




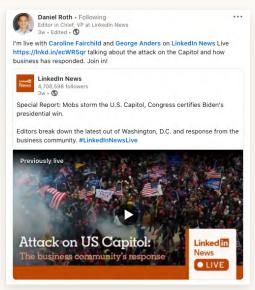
Understanding editorial at LinkedIn

LinkedIn News brings business and professional insights to members via our team of 75+ editors across 15 countries. The team covers every industry and business from health care and frontline workers to venture capital, financial services and tech to small business owners.

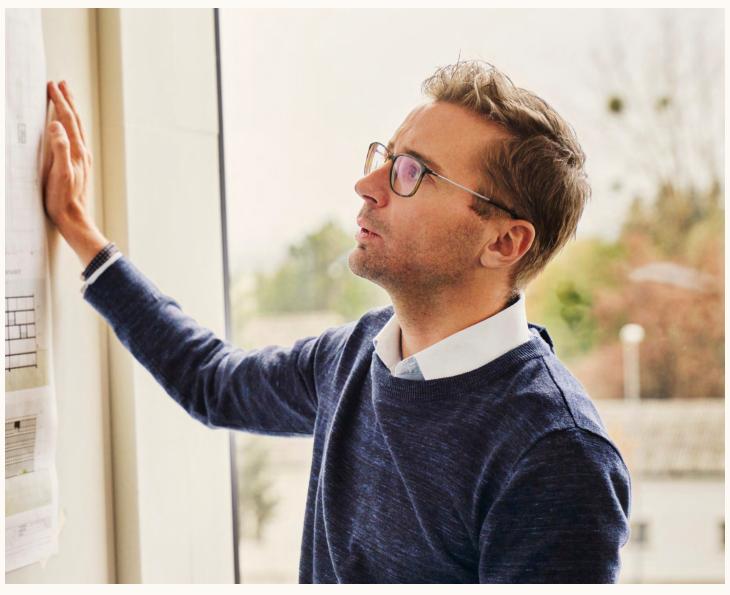
- LinkedIn Top Voices is curated annually by the Editorial team and highlights creators across geographies, verticals and professions
- LinkedIn Influencer is an invite-only group focused on executives who run large organizations — CEOs of Fortune 100 companies (or local equivalent), large startups or well-known brands — as well as recognizable leaders and industry experts.
- Programs do not accept applications but can be great points of reference for shaping your own executive communication strategy. You don't need to have a badge to be an influencer!







Make your plan



Build an executive content framework to focus and organize efforts



Content aligns with brand level content initiatives and editorial calendars.

Get various teams involved in executive presence strategies to maximize impact and align on narratives and priorities.



Exec comms

- · Who should be involved
- Content themes
- Workflows and production
- Measuring impact



Brand

- Core brand narratives to reflect in exec comms
- Look, feel, and identity
- Existing campaigns to piggyback on



Corporate comms

- Reputational risks and opportunities
- Media relationships and opportunities
- Integrating corpoporate comms priorities in exec messaging



Content & digital teams

- Intersection of exec themes and other content narratives
- Channel and distribution strategy, including paid and organic media



Marketing operations

- Available data points to track and measure
- Illustrating impact and designing program analysis

What to focus on

Organic profile metrics

Depending on your goals for each executive, it can be worthwhile to focus on three core metrics:



Audience growth

Growing overall "eyeballs" for content means a larger ability to reach broad audiences that may bridge across several interest or focus areas.



Content views

Reach isn't just a vanity metric. It's important to create the largest relevant pool of viewers, since B2B buying committees are broader and more diverse than ever before.



Profile views

It's valuable to understand both **how many** people are viewing a profile – an indicator of overall reach – but also **who is viewing** to understand if there are useful insights about companies, job titles, or geographies.

What to focus on

Organic Company Page metrics

Executive Profiles can help drive complementary awareness for the brand itself.



Company page followers growth

Growing the overall audience for organic content on the company page helps raise visibility, reach, and awareness across the LinkedIn landscape, and exec thought leadership can contribute.



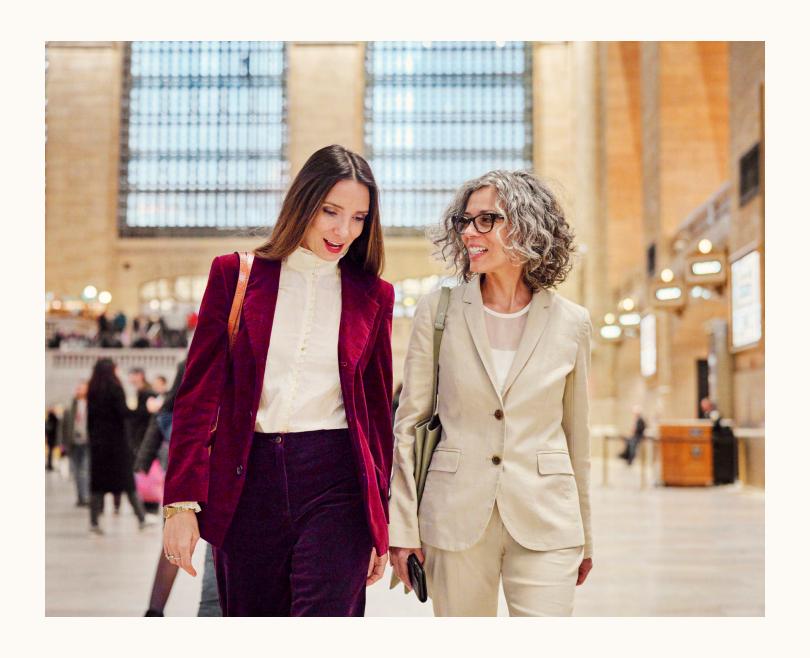
Page visitors & follower insights

LinkedIn can help you understand the industries, job functions, and seniorities of people visiting your company page so you can shape exec content to serve those audiences.



Page update performance

Knowing what organic page updates are resonating with your audience can help you tie them into both executive thought leadership content themes and related paid campaigns to emphasize key topics and messages.



Integrating brand, executives, and corporate communication The power of Linkedln is how it drives holistic growth, and executive voices have an important role to play.





Reach untapped markets

Engage

Enhance both personal brand and company reputation.

Perspectives on industry, trends, important topics and real-time events.



Build winning teams

Recruit

Connect and discover the best talent.

Help professionals get a taste for the leadership and values of the organization.



Deepen customer relationships

Nurture

Deepen relationships with the communities that drive the business.

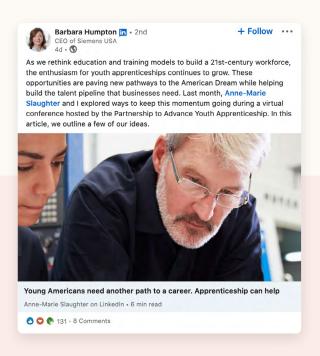
Show new and existing customers why your brand and leadership set the company apart.



Siemens

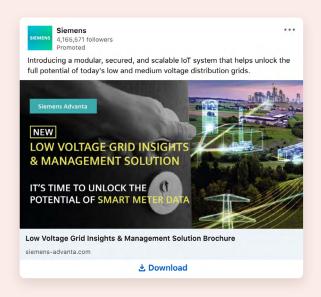
Industrial Automation • 4,422,899 followers

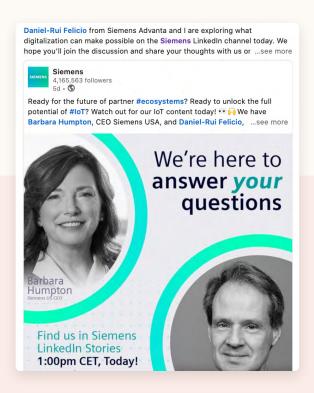
Align brand, executive, and voice



Executive Voice

- Personal passions
- Professional experience





Leadership Alignment

- Thought leadership topics
- Industry initiatives

Brand Voice

- Content franchises
- Employer brand
- Campaign messages

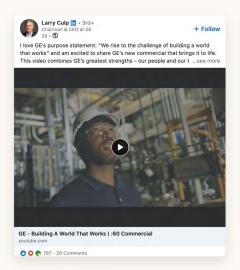




Mechanical or Industrial Engineering • 4,134,843 followers

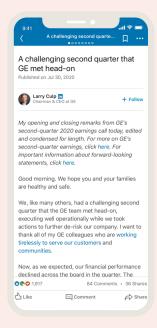
The power of community leadership

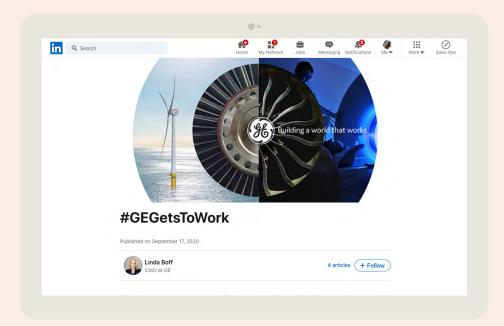
Taking a holistic approach to treating GE's leadership team not just as individuals but as an expert "bench" means that the brand can behave as air cover for all of the thought leadership but benefit from the extended reach of executives and their professional networks.













Bridgewater Associates

Investment Management • 165,427 followers

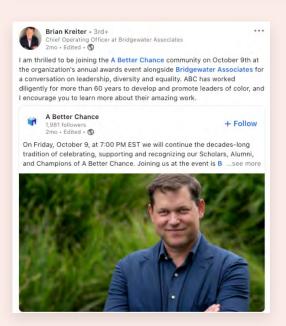
It's ok to have executive voices overlap

Several executives and senior leaders at Bridgewater Associates discuss diversity, equality, and social change.



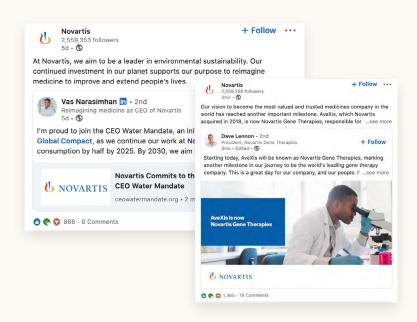








The power of exponential audiences



Tie executive perspectives to brand values and content themes in company posts.

Cross-pollinate posts between executive profiles and paid and organic Company Page content.





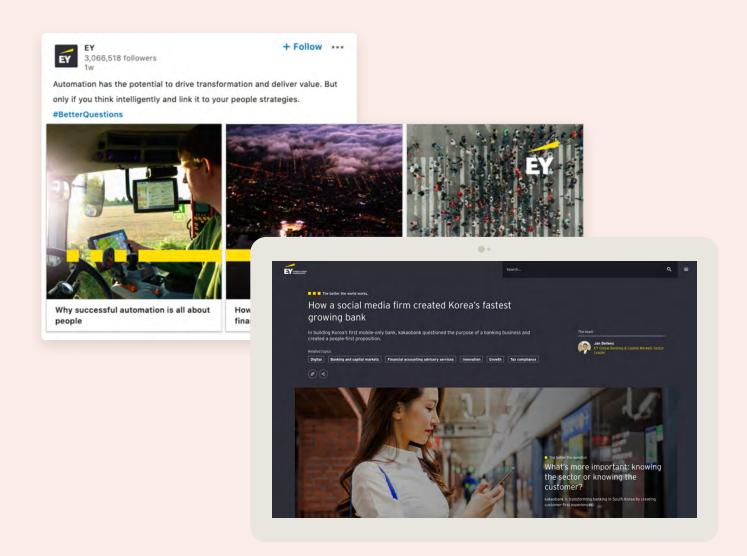


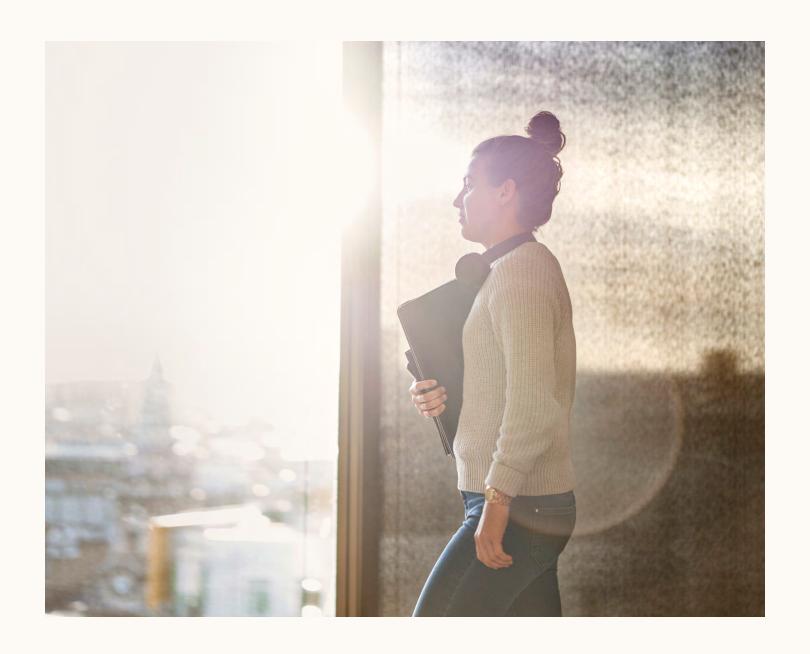


Accounting • 4,961,994 followers

Integrate executive perspectives

- #BetterQuestions aim to help executives help answer the challenging questions digital disruption is causing for them
- Utilize multi-format approach, but with highly consistent imagery and copy
- Consistency and clarity





Next steps and takeaways

Progress your LinkedIn presence over time



CrawlEstablishing a presence

- Have a complete profile
- Turn on the "follow" as the default profile option.
- Follow relevant colleagues, peers, and publications. Try LinkedIn's Top Voices for 2020 as a start.
- Brainstorm the topics you might like to publish about in the next 6 months. Think about:
 - Passion projects
 - Professional Expertise
 - Industry trends
 - Company vision & values



Progress your LinkedIn presence over time



Walk

Developing consistency

- Focus on a <u>content persona</u> and establish your initial content whitespace.
- Create an <u>empathy map</u> for each of your focus audiences.
- Establish an initial publishing cadence that you can keep consistently (at least monthly).
- Experiment with different post formats:
 - Passion projects
 - Professional expertise
 - Industry trends
 - Company vision & values
- Share relevant content from within your network and add personal perspective.



Progress your LinkedIn presence over time



Run Leading in thought & provoking dialogue

- Post consistently at least lx/week.
- Establish an ideal content mix of more than one format (ie 2x/weekly newsfeed posts with 1x/monthly long form article or newsletter issue).
- Participate in comment threads and dialogue on your content or others' content.
- Use <u>LinkedIn Live</u> to engage with your audiences in real-time.
- Share company & brand content with personal POV and perspectives.
- Integrate executive content into paid media campaigns on relevant company pages.



About LinkedIn

LinkedIn operates the world's largest professional network on the Internet with more than 700 million members in over 200 countries and territories. This represents the largest group anywhere of influential, affluent, and educated people.

Relationships matter

With LinkedIn Marketing Solutions, brands build relationships with the world's professionals by using accurate targeting to deliver relevant content and communications. As today's connected professionals seek out ideas and insights from the people and brands they trust, marketers use LinkedIn to target advertising and publish relevant content in a professional context. Brands extend reach through the social sharing that occurs naturally on LinkedIn.

