



The LinkedIn Creative Opportunity

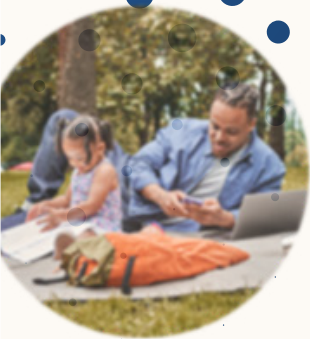


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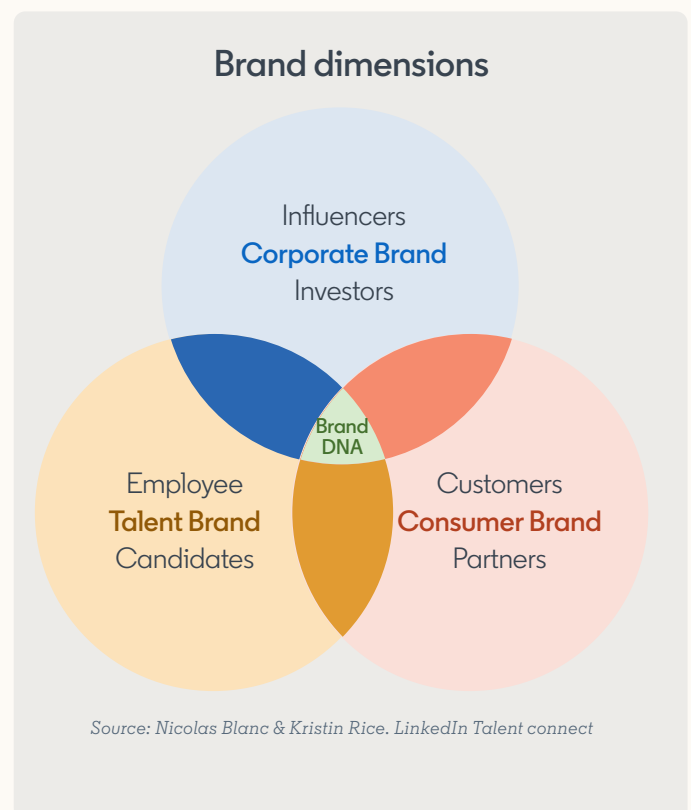
The Creative Opportunity on LinkedIn

What's the most valuable creative opportunity for your brand? How about the social media space where people feel most safe and most confident, in touch with positive, motivating emotions and open to new ideas? **That's the unique creative opportunity you find on LinkedIn.**

When members are engaged on LinkedIn, they feel ambitious, confident, purposeful and optimistic, tuned into becoming the person they want to be. They're more ready than at any other moment to translate those emotions into influential memories and practical action. They take on archetypal roles as ambitious heroes, purposeful decision-makers, visionary leaders, brand ambassadors, nurturing fathers and mothers, supportive allies. Because they have a sense of their story taking shape on LinkedIn, they're also ready to respond to what captures their attention: revisit their views, re-examine their ideas, and do something about it all.

On LinkedIn, all dimensions of a brand are in play, multiplying the impact of any campaign. Creativity drives value by engaging potential and existing customers but also potential and current employees, potential business partners, investors and all those with a stake and interest in how your brand behaves. On LinkedIn, creative ideas can command these audiences' attention and give them something to remember. They do this through a combination of creative formats that enable you to engage on multiple levels, simultaneously.

In this playbook, we'll explore the creative opportunity on LinkedIn in full: how to take advantage of the way that members show up on the platform, how to leverage different LinkedIn advertising formats for maximum creative impact, how to unlock the power of advocacy and elevate the voices of executives, employees and entrepreneurs. We'll also reveal how some of the world's most valuable brands are using the platform today.



Creative ideas' dream audience is on LinkedIn:

84%



say LinkedIn is the platform where they feel safest participating and posting, far ahead of every other social platform¹

49%



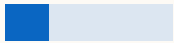
use LinkedIn to become the person they want to be, more than every other social platform and more than publishers like The Guardian²

26%



feel more confident after spending time on LinkedIn, more than any other social platform or publisher³

26%



feel more ambitious after spending time on LinkedIn, more than any other social platform or publisher⁴

51%



feel more optimistic about the future, more than every other social platform and more than publishers like The Guardian⁵

¹Business Insider Trust Report, 2019

²LinkedIn Meet the Member Research, September 2020

^{3,4,5}LinkedIn Meet the Member Research, September 2020

“The opportunity for real originality is greatest in B2B.”

Rory Sutherland
Vice Chairman, Ogilvy UK



“I’ve never thought about B2B as not being creative. I never saw it as limiting, I never saw it as less than. The only limits that are on a category or an audience are the history that’s been created for them.”

Kathleen Hall
Chief Brand Officer, Microsoft



Section 1

Connecting the **Creative Dots** on LinkedIn

“Creativity,” said Steve Jobs, “is just connecting things.” And he was right. Inside many of the most creative ideas of all time, you’ll find a connection between ideas from one area of experience and possibilities in another – a connection that nobody else had seen before. It’s true in art. It’s true in music. It’s true in science and mathematics. And it’s especially true of advertising and marketing.

LinkedIn's contribution to the creative process starts with giving creative minds more of these connections to play with.

It's a space where communities come together to exchange ideas, where concepts cross siloes and boundaries and where thinking from one category can trigger disruptive innovation in another.

Creative minds use the platform as a space for sharing ideas and inspiration with their peers – but also for driving a deeper understanding of the audiences that they're seeking to engage and influence. In every connection, comment and carefully curated piece of content, there's an insight potentially waiting to illuminate a campaign. If you want to understand more about how an industry thinks, then LinkedIn is a great place to start.



Section 2

Where Creative Ideas can be **More**

The LinkedIn audience mindset brings together optimism and confidence with motivation, ambition and a sense of purpose. This combines with the LinkedIn advertising environment to produce a space where every creative idea works harder.

More impactful

through greater standout in an environment that never overloads its audience. Every element of the LinkedIn platform, from the feed to the messaging experience, enshrines the principle of 'Member First'. Frequency caps and quality scores ensure your creative appears in an environment where audiences are willing and able to give it their attention.

More emotive

thanks to the proximity of emotions associated with fulfilment, aspiration and actualisation. The unique levels of trust and openness on LinkedIn also unlock the potential of humor in a positive, safe space. Our research shows that, on average, brands that use humor and emotion outperform those that don't.

More engaging

through the level of engagement that you only get from the most trusted social media platform on the planet. LinkedIn is where thumb-stopping moments in the feed are more likely to translate to consideration, action and measurable value, where brand meets demand and where creativity can make a difference at every stage of the buyer journey.

More empathetic

with an audience open to learning and two-way dialogue, a strong sense of purpose and uniquely powerful opportunities to turn data into immediate creative impact through personalized ad formats.

More famous

through the opportunity to develop self-reinforcing brand DNA that multiplies impact and frequency whether people are engaging as potential customers, candidates or employees. The power of employee advocacy on the platform ensures creative ideas earn a share of voice that goes beyond the advertising budget.

More valuable

as creativity does its work throughout the funnel and delivers against more areas of business strategy. On LinkedIn, your ideas can drive awareness and customer acquisition, work with sales to deepen relationships and increase customer value, and build the employer brands that companies' futures depend on.

More responsive

thanks to interactive formats, live video events and powerful use of data for segmentation and nurturing content.



“ B2B isn’t just about lead generation. We need to think about how it helps business grow in the short term and the long term.”

Harjot Singh
Global Chief Strategy Officer,
McCann



“ I can’t just harvest I have to also sow for the future, and I can’t just transact I have to also build emotion, loyalty, longer term value – that’s what’s going to matter.”

Kathleen Hall
Chief Brand Officer, Microsoft



“ Advertising works in ways you could never predict... fame exposes you to upside opportunities.”

Rory Sutherland
Vice Chairman, Ogilvy UK



Section 3

A Framework for Creative Impact on LinkedIn

The creative opportunity on LinkedIn comes with a broad range of advertising formats, each with its own role to play in capturing attention and generating engagement. In this section we explore the creative canvas you have to play with – and the best practices that drive greatest value from them.

Attention please – anatomy of a thumb-stopping moment

Design your creative to work with the way attention flows on LinkedIn. Here's what happens in the crucial moments when audiences first encounter different advertising formats:

Video Ads

The opening frame of your video draws the eye first. You can specify which image acts as the opening frame and incorporate branding and on-screen copy to leverage the opportunity.

Video Ads get 30% more comments than non-video ads in the LinkedIn feed.



Introductory text appears above the video and is where your audience will glance for context and commentary on what they're seeing.

Appearing below the video in bold, your headline functions as an exclamation point emphasizing your message. You can use it as a call to action as well.

CTA options reinforce next steps for your audience.

Sponsored Content

Your image acts as your headline in the LinkedIn feed – it's a virtual poster site with the opportunity to combine striking image and striking copy to get your message across, independent of other elements.



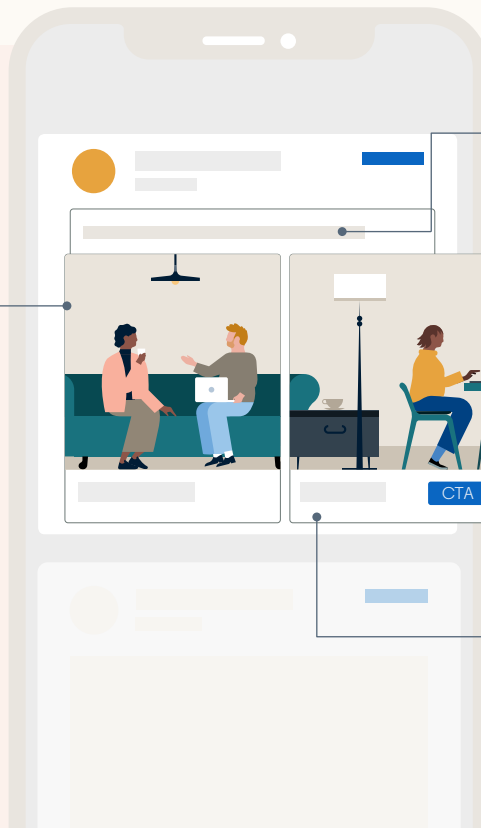
Introductory text appears above the image. It's where curiosity leads your audience once you have their attention.

Appearing below the image in bold, your headline functions as an exclamation point emphasizing your message. You can use it as a call to action as well.

CTA options reinforce next steps for your audience.

Carousel Ads

The image cards of Carousel Ads are your canvas for visual storytelling, with connected words and images over up to 10 cards.



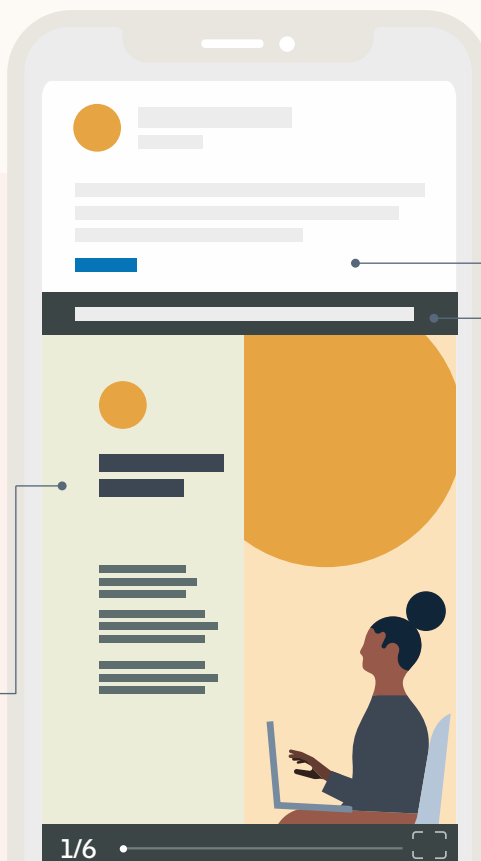
Introductory text acts as your story overview, previewing what to expect and providing a reason to keep clicking.

Headlines appear in bold below each card image – ideal for reinforcing your story’s narrative or landing key messages and calls to action.

Document Ads

Deliver in-depth content assets with immediate, visual impact in the LinkedIn feed, by designing cover images that stand out and capture attention.

Create immediate learning moments that are immediately accessible on mobile screens



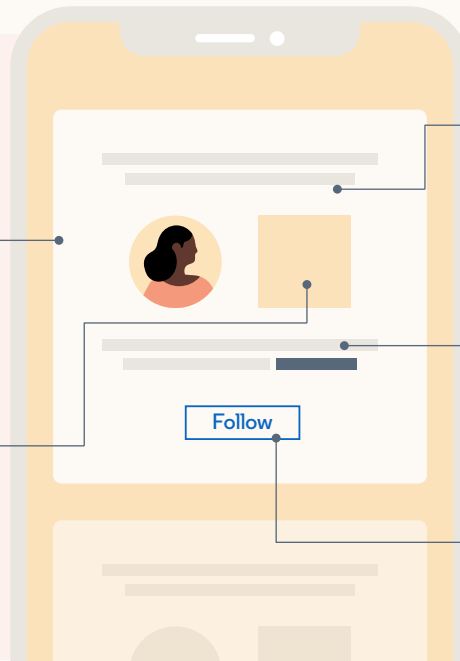
Introductory text sells the benefits of engaging in depth by consuming your content in the feed.

Headlines appear in bold above the document – ideal for prompting people to engage.

Dynamic Ads

Attention goes straight to the personalized image taken from your audience member's profile.

Create an instant, visual connection between your audience and your brand, either through brand logos or bespoke campaign visuals.



The secondary headline appears above the images and is ideal for asking intriguing questions and demonstrating audience empathy.

The primary headline appears below the image in larger, bold font. It's where you can land your campaign message or call to action.

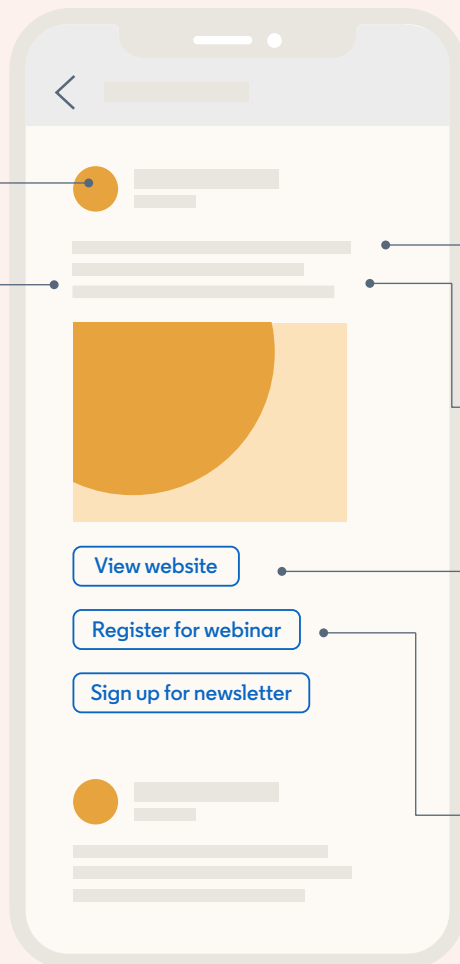
Button copy reinforces the call to action and leads your audience forward.

Message and Conversation Ads

Available outside of the European Union (EU)

The profile picture is the first contact with your message – choose the right sender and the right image.

Subject lines are the headlines of the messaging environment – establish a reason to engage in the first few words.



Humanize the tone and aim to establish empathy from the start.

Keep copy extremely concise and focused around a single message.

Conversation ad options build credibility when you leave room for honest responses.

Limit conversation ads to two or three layers – aim for a quick chat that's worth every second rather than leaving your audience feeling you've cornered them at a party.

Creating for impact – best practices for capturing attention on LinkedIn

The strongest performing LinkedIn ad campaigns apply the following creative principles:

#1 Brand early, strongly and imaginatively

Make sure people know that it's your brand they're hearing from. Engagement rate increases 16% when branding is introduced in the first two seconds of a video. Incorporate recognizable brand codes and characters but try to avoid opening with nothing onscreen but your brand logo. Click-through rate rises 50% when logos are positioned at the top of the screen rather than in the middle.⁶

#2 Always use an image – and always a good one

Visuals are fundamental to impact in the LinkedIn feed. They're not just the headline – they're the whole story. Human eye contact, compelling product shots, unexpected visuals and impactful stats all perform strongly. However, image choice is crucial. Undifferentiated stock pictures impact negatively on engagement, causing your ad to sink into a sea of sameness. If you don't have a genuinely compelling images, try using impactful text or organic polls as alternative routes to standing out.

#3 Break the sound barrier

Over three quarters (79%) of LinkedIn videos are watched with the sound off – which is your invitation to tell visual stories through facial expressions, quick cuts, slow motion and imaginative graphics. Click-through rate increases 19% for videos with four or more scene changes in the first three seconds. Ensure accessibility and impact with subtitles – and if you want to engage your audience's ears as well, embrace the creative challenge of persuading them to unmute your ad.⁷

“There is no room for emotion in the conventional view of B2B. That's a problem we need to fight with creativity.”

Harjot Singh
Global Chief Strategy Officer,
McCann



“There's a massive opportunity for B2B advertisers to make more effective work and actually outperform the competition.”

Jon Evans
Chief Marketing Officer,
System1Group



^{6,7} VidMob LinkedIn Analysis, 2020

“Emotion in advertising is important because it helps to get - and hold - a buyer’s attention, making it more likely the buyer remembers the ad and, crucially, remembers the brand. And of course, the brand that gets remembered is the brand that gets bought.”

Jon Lombardo
Head of Research,
The B2B Institute



#4 Use all ad elements to tell your story

Micro stories told through videos of 15 seconds or fewer are some of the strongest performing content on LinkedIn. Videos under 15 seconds get a 43% lift in Engagement Rate and those under 5 seconds get a 52% increase⁸. Use intro copy and headlines to help communicate the narrative – and don’t leave the video to do all the work. Similarly, Carousel Ads are often most effective when image cards and copy work together.

#5 Add interactive layers to creative ideas

Interactivity is a proven driver of engagement on LinkedIn, whether audiences are clicking on the response buttons in a Conversation Ad or joining the chat stream on a LinkedIn Live event. Creating a LinkedIn Live event to launch your new ad can be an effective tactic – and the same approach works well for new products and new fashion lines.

#6 Design for engagement and share-ability

The LinkedIn algorithm has no cap on organic reach – and so content that drives engagement and shares can multiply its impact dramatically. Design for engagement and share-ability by leveraging formats that drive clicks: organic polls, LinkedIn Live and Carousel Ads are great examples.

#7 Personalize for immediate impact

Sponsored Content and Video Ads that call out a target audience in headlines get significantly higher engagement rates than those that don’t. The personalized images on Dynamic Ads are a proven driver of clicks. The robust, real-time nature of LinkedIn data means that you can personalize creative with confidence – and it’s often worth doing so.

⁸VidMob LinkedIn Analysis, 2020

Creative considerations – the experiences that LinkedIn audiences respond to

Creative best practices will help you to capture attention on LinkedIn. There's also an opportunity to increase creative effectiveness by aligning with the elements of the LinkedIn experience that audiences value most.

Embrace inclusion to engage every audience more profoundly

In System1 Group's analysis of advertising effectiveness, ads with a diverse cast score 52% higher in audience response than those without. It's not just underrepresented groups that respond more positively when they see themselves included in ads – all other audiences do as well. This is particularly true on LinkedIn, where audiences attach great value to diversity and inclusion.

Get closer to your audience through learning and support

People come to LinkedIn with a learning mindset and a community outlook. They're open to advice when given in the right spirit, and optimistic about the value they'll get from engaging with your brand and its employees. Engagement rate increases 53% for ads that incorporate 'growth' messaging around themes of self-improvement⁹. Approachable, expert voices can be a powerful creative asset, while LinkedIn Pages and LinkedIn Events act as magnetic hubs for communities with a common interest.

⁹VidMob LinkedIn Analysis, 2020

Use brand characters to combine familiarity and humor

Brand characters are one of the most under-utilized creative opportunities on LinkedIn, bringing together recognizable brand codes with the positive, inclusive humor that audiences value. Campaigns featuring brand characters are often among LinkedIn's strongest performers.



Deploy creative thinking throughout the buyer journey

On LinkedIn, creativity doesn't apply just to brand campaigns. From Video Ads to Conversation Ads and Sponsored Content to LinkedIn Live, creative approaches are able to drive results and demonstrate Return on Investment (ROI) at every stage of the funnel. There's no reason to force B2B buyers and influencers to engage only with traditional product sheets and white papers. They're an audience of human beings with the same appreciation of creative thinking as any other.

Give new thinking the creative canvas it deserves

LinkedIn is an established thought leadership platform – and giving new ideas a more creative treatment can supercharge engagement. Adopting TV video formats like game shows or quizzes, using provocative visuals and slogans to get an idea across: amazing things happen when you go beyond long-form posts and train different creative formats on a topic.

Leverage cultural and visual trends

Tapping into cultural conversations is a powerful driver of engagement on LinkedIn, with references to current hot topics increasing Engagement Rate 31%¹⁰. Use hashtags to associate your ads and content with existing conversations in areas such as the work environment, social progress, mental health, sustainability and entrepreneurship.

¹⁰VidMob LinkedIn Analysis, 2020

“The more I feel about something the more likely I am to buy.”

Jon Evans
Chief Marketing Officer,
System1Group



“LinkedIn's mesh of verified personal identity, professional identity and career-pathing data uniquely positions LinkedIn as the only platform that marketers can use to reach all the current and future buyers in any B2B category.”

Mimi Turner
Head of B2B Institute,
EMEA and Latam



Section 4

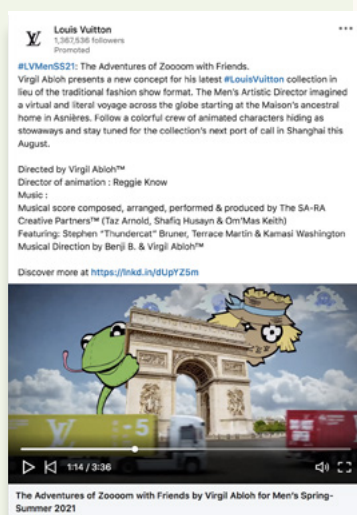
What happens when creative thinking meets LinkedIn

Explore the top-performing campaigns making
creative thinking count on LinkedIn.

Going visual for ‘Wow’ moments in the feed

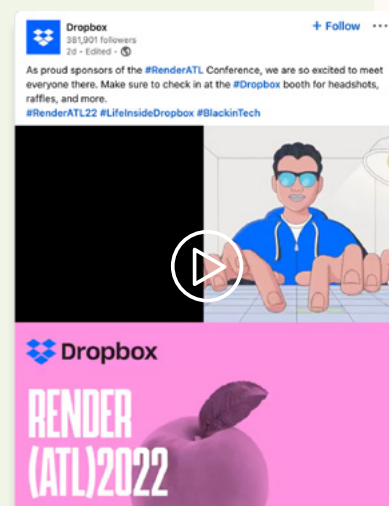
LOUIS VUITTON

Louis Vuitton generated a view-through rate (VTR) of 50% with its video preview of the Shanghai launch of its Virgil Abloh men's collection, mixing animation with real footage of the show.



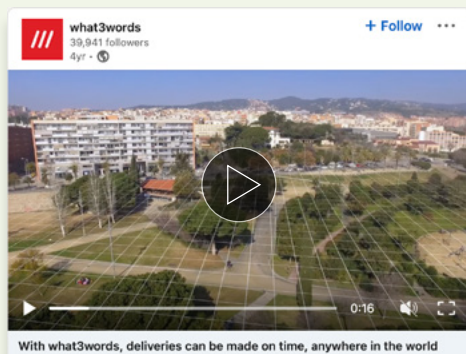
Dropbox

Dropbox uses striking colors and a distinctive illustrative style to establish brand recognition and stand-out in the feed.



what3words

What3Words used swooping footage and innovative motion graphics to bring its proposition to life through visual storytelling.



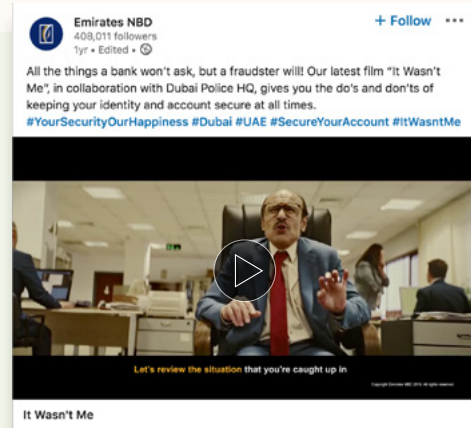
It took **Bayer** just six seconds to engage LinkedIn audiences with stories of people whose lives could be transformed by medical technology, planting emotive ideas through on-screen graphics and powerful, visual performances.



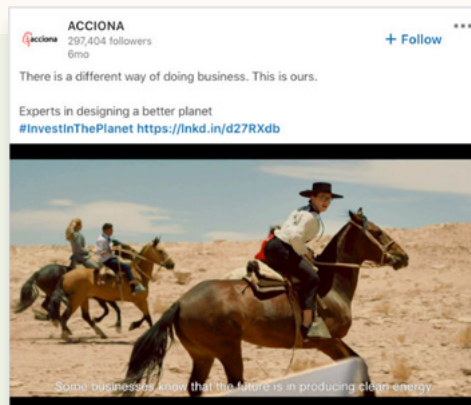
Leveraging the LinkedIn sense of humour



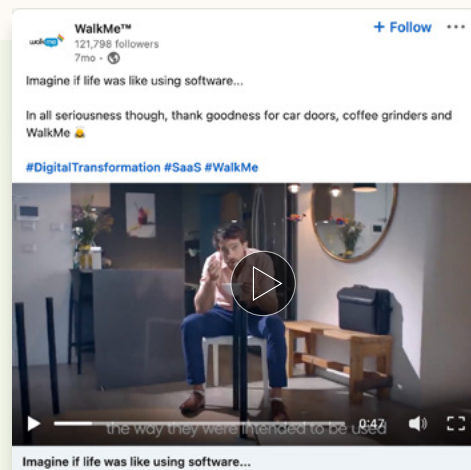
Emirates NBD's video pastiche of Shaggy's 'It Wasn't Me' turned fraud prevention advice into a hilarious earworm. A LinkedIn Live launch for the video added interactive buzz.



Acciona's quirky tour of carbon-cutting investment opportunities proved that purpose-led marketing doesn't have to feel worthy. The confused facial expressions of Wall Street types being transported around the globe ensured viewers didn't tune out.



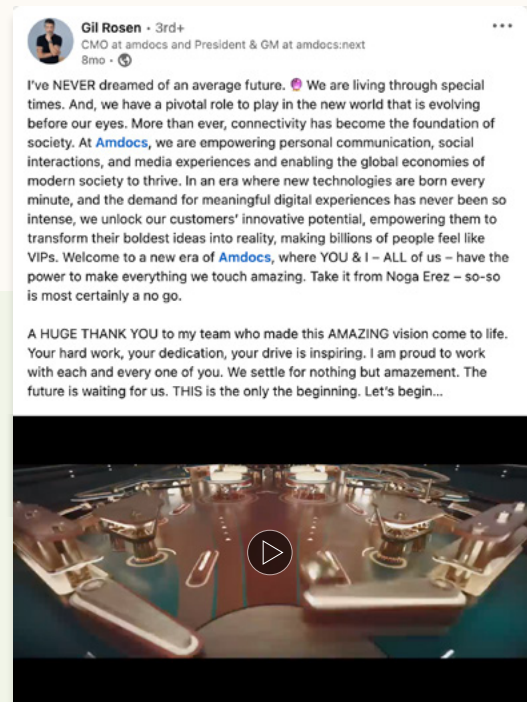
WalkMe's exaggerated video vignettes cut through by combining humor with honesty – this is how people really feel about the frustrations of adopting new software platforms.



Deploying a cast of thousands for advocacy at scale



The original song and video that Israeli artist Noga Erez created for **Amdocs** 'Make it Amazing' brand relaunch commanded attention whenever it appeared in the LinkedIn feed. Enlisting Amdocs' employee base to share the video simultaneously ensured that it took over that feed for many of the brand's most important audiences. It turned a highly creative campaign into a cultural event on LinkedIn.



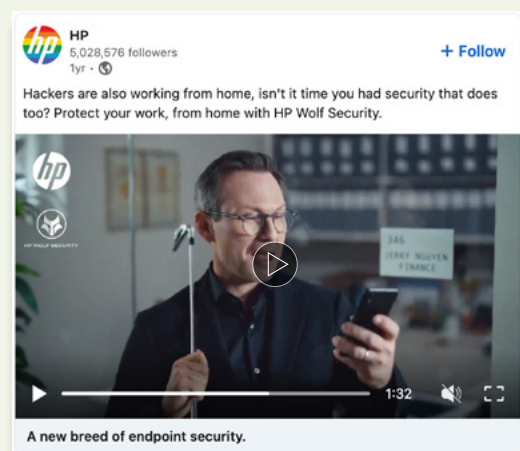
Encouraging audiences to act on emotion



A forest menacingly closes around an unsuspecting trucker. An office worker finds herself trapped in an elevator that is no longer travelling between the usual floors. Mysterious objects start to appear in warehouses. Disconnected, the dystopian thriller that launched **Maersk's** 'Connect the World in New Ways' campaign captured the emotions that many in logistics were feeling – and stressed the value of a new approach. It drove more than 150 million clicks on the campaign microsite. Branding a mood through colors and lighting helped connect this brand activity to follow-up content and product messaging.



Christian Slater's charismatic lead performance as 'The Wolf' helped **HP** intrigue all those with a stake in printer security, which effectively means every employee of a business with networked printers. IT security information has never felt so entertaining – or so motivating.



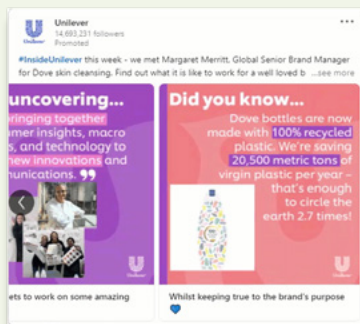
Building famous brand DNA



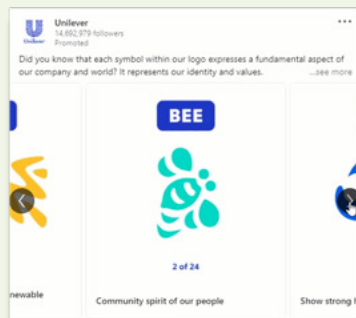
Unilever

Unilever speaks to its brand purpose, “Better Business. Better World. Better you” with absolute consistency whether addressing potential customers, potential employees or corporate audiences. This multiplies the frequency, reach and impact of its core brand messaging.

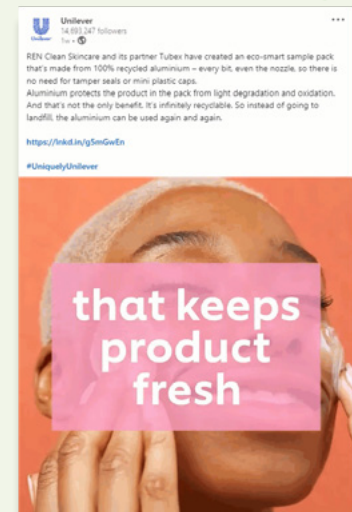
Talent Brand



Corporate Brand



Consumer Brand



“ These are world class brands and they are not doing boring advertising. They are using their marketing to convey a lot of vitality, a lot of energy and a lot of humanity.”

Amy Fuller

Former Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, Accenture



Conclusion

Bringing your existing creative ideas to life on LinkedIn

Creative ideas don't have to be designed specifically for LinkedIn in order to benefit from the LinkedIn Creative Opportunity. If they speak to the motivations of LinkedIn members, offering value through cleverness, creativity and community, then you're got a powerful asset to play with.

As we've shown in this Playbook, the most effective creative on LinkedIn is creative that's inspired by the LinkedIn Creative Opportunity and designed to take fullest advantage of it. Integrating LinkedIn into creative briefs ensures that the big ideas you have can get maximum value from the platform. Engaging with the LinkedIn opportunity is itself a powerful source of creative inspiration.

LinkedIn is where creative ideas can do more. Give yours that opportunity.

“For years, B2B has been an often-overlooked part of the advertising landscape. But now, it seems like creativity in B2B is finally getting its moment.”

Paul Hirsch
CCO, Doremus, President Jury
Cannes B2B Lion 2022



“There's no greater opportunity than to inspire and excite a business audience.”

Kathleen Hall
Chief Brand Officer, Microsoft



“Distinctiveness and fame always change the rules.”

Rory Sutherland
Vice Chairman, Ogilvy UK



About LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network with more than 830 million members in more than 200 countries and territories worldwide. LinkedIn has a vision to create economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce and a mission to connect the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful.

