



Today in Startup Marketing:

# Accelerating Growth with LinkedIn

### A note from leadership

2021 has been a transcendent year for startups, as global venture funding is running at all-time highs. Investments have poured into new companies re-imagining work, life and work-life balance — the result of shifting paradigms and technological needs introduced by COVID-19.

# \$437B

Global venture capital funding for startups broke records worldwide<sup>1</sup>

# \$210B

Venture capital funding from the US alone<sup>1</sup>

# \$49B

Invested in early-stage startups globally<sup>2</sup>

As the world adjusts to new norms, B2B startups are racing to serve emerging business needs. Increasing demand for cloud computing, cybersecurity, collaboration software and fintech are creating opportunities for disruptors to scale rapidly. As startups operate in an increasingly competitive landscape, the need for go-to-market advantages is paramount

Once startups choose their growth strategy — hello to all the PLG companies in the Class of '21 — marketing becomes a crucial differentiator. As the world's largest and most trusted professional network, LinkedIn has unique perspective on the strategies and tactics B2B startup marketers are employing to drive demand and win category share.

To that point, we studied 269 startups within our customer base to understand how they address three emergent challenges:

1

Validating product market fit

2

Meeting investor expectations for earlier revenue

3

Capturing share in crowded markets

In examining the actions B2B startup marketers are taking — and the results they're achieving — we felt it worthwhile to share our learnings. May they spark some inspiration.



*Tom Eschbacher*

Tom Eschbacher

Senior Sales Manager I Startups  
LinkedIn Marketing Solutions





## CHALLENGE #1

# Validating product market fit

As they raise their Seed round, many startups have achieved a level of product market fit that points them on a path forward. Initial customer bases often comprise of first and second-degree connections of the founding team. While this is great for capturing feedback, startups that do this risk over-rotating to a small sample size. It quickly becomes important to test product market fit across a larger audience.

The sooner a startup can confidently determine its key buyer and company personas, the sooner it can begin building awareness, increasing consideration and generating demand.

However, with industry events pausing these past two years, companies face a gap in capturing market feedback. We've noticed enterprising startup marketers have begun to take their knowledge-gathering efforts online.



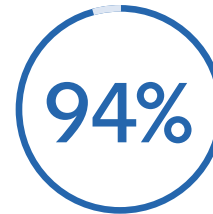
## Startups leverage LinkedIn audience insights to validate product market fit

### Startups sharpen their ideal customer profile using LinkedIn insights

Startups who deeply understand their ideal customer profile (ICP) can more effectively target high quality prospects who are best positioned to use their product. Using LinkedIn tools, such as the [Insight Tag](#) and [Website Demographics](#) helps startups unlock audience insights. We're seeing that by Series A, 92% of startups use the Insights Tags and 80% of startups use Website Demographics. Once startups understand exactly who they're trying to reach, they can better tailor their content to engage high value prospects.



of startups use LinkedIn Insight Tags by Series D



of startups use Website Demographics by Series D

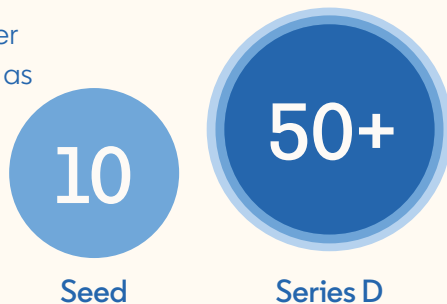
By Series D, nearly all startups rely on these features to collect audience insights that can accurately inform their ICP.

### Startups increase awareness through a robust organic presence

To build awareness among ideal prospects, startups should invest in growing their organic presence.

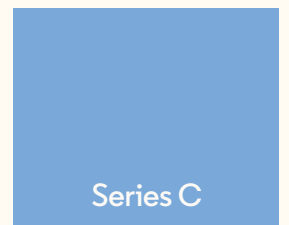
Unsurprisingly, we found that more frequent organic activity results in greater reach and a larger follower base. Looking at this by growth stage, our research details how LinkedIn Page posts increase as startups mature — with significant gains in follower bases. On average, startups increase their monthly LinkedIn Page posts from 10 to 50+ from Seed to Series D.

Organic posts per month increases as startups grow



Followers increase dramatically as startups mature from Series B to C

+ 177%



13X unique reach with paid vs. organic alone

### Startups amplify reach through paid advertising

By advertising on LinkedIn, startups can expand their presence to precisely engage their ICP.

Our research shows that Series A startups running LinkedIn ads see 13x more unique reach than organic posts alone. This number climbs to 16x reach for later-stage startups. LinkedIn's targeting attributes and features enable startups to nurture high potential leads and better convert them into quality customers.



# KNOTCH

How [Knotch](#) promoted valuable content to drive high quality leads

Series B startup Knotch is a content intelligence platform that helps businesses measure the sentiment and engagement of the content they publish.



## Challenge

Expand lead-gen efforts through results-driven messaging.



## Solution

Using a curated list of potential leads, Knotch promoted high value content through a series of LinkedIn ads. The team relied on LinkedIn's targeting tools to define job titles and company sizes, ensuring a relevant audience would see the report offer.



## Results

Drove over 1,100 content downloads, with a high level of interest from quality leads.



# 1,100

content  
downloads



"We found that, not only were we getting large numbers of interested people, they were quality leads that turned into real opportunities."

**Liz Lowman**

Senior Director of Marketing, Knotch

## Put these insights into action

1

Leverage LinkedIn's free insight tools to validate your target audience.

2

Invest in growing your organic presence through active posting.

3

Amplify your reach with LinkedIn's targeted advertising.





## CHALLENGE #2

# Meeting investor expectations for earlier revenue

In the past few years, industry analysts have noted increasing investor expectations around revenue. [Wing](#) points out that startups are maturing earlier, and that around [77% of Series A companies are now generating revenue](#).

Rather than altering these expectations, the pandemic has added increasing pressure for companies with marketing and sales-led growth motions to replace in-person demand generation efforts.

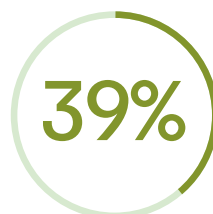
Digital has become the default, which we can see through a telling inflection in LinkedIn usage that speaks to when and how startups are focusing on demand generation.



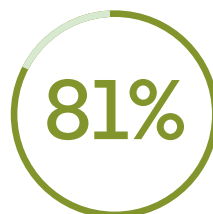
## Startups rely on LinkedIn's best-in-class lead generation capabilities to meet early revenue expectations

### Startups prioritize lead generation in order to drive fast conversion

Lead generation has earlier buy-in than all other campaign objectives, becoming the main priority for most startups at Seed stage. By the time they reach Series A, the majority of startups incorporate lead generation campaigns into their marketing strategies in order to see early conversion and immediate revenue impact. By tapping into LinkedIn's +750M database of professionals, startups can confidently drive leads with high conversion potential.



of Seed startups have at least one lead generation campaign



of Series A startups prioritize lead generation campaigns



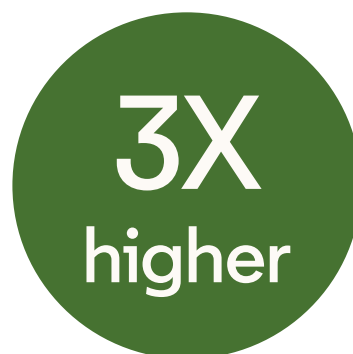
of LMS customers use LinkedIn Lead Gen forms



higher conversion rate using Lead Gen Forms over landing pages

### Startups maximize conversion by integrating LinkedIn lead generation features

Startups incorporate lead generation campaigns on LinkedIn in order to reach audiences that are active and ready to engage. By leveraging features such as Lead Gen Forms, startups meet prospective leads where they are without leading them off-site. Lead Gen Forms come pre-filled with accurate member profile data, simplifying lead capture for sales teams while minimizing barrier to entry for customers and resulting in higher conversion rates on LinkedIn compared to other platforms.



LinkedIn's lead conversion rates are 3X higher than other major ad platforms<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Source: HubSpot, 2016

# MainStreet

How [MainStreet](#) generated high quality leads to achieve growth

Series A startup MainStreet helps high-growth startups file and claim tax credits.



## Challenge

Needed to widen bottom-funnel reach while maintaining a narrow ICP and working around tax laws.



## Solution

Used LinkedIn's powerful targeting tools and seamless lead generation integration to target the right audience with the right messaging.



## Results

Scaled their ARR by 400% using LMS lead generation tactics.

**+ 400%** Annual  
Recurring  
Revenue



"The biggest thing I would say with LinkedIn is that frequency of quality is the highest. And that's super important for companies that are trying to scale and scale reliably with a paid acquisition channel."

**Rohun Vora**

Growth Marketing, MainStreet

## Put these insights into action

1

Use your ICP as your targeting guide to convert high-potential prospects.

2

Develop an action-oriented offer to engage and convert your audience.

3

Use lead generation forms to drive seamless leads and achieve higher completion rates.





## CHALLENGE #3

# Capturing share in crowded markets

For startups, the influx of venture capital means more funding available. Seed funding rounds increased 10% in 2020 to an average of \$4.6M<sup>1</sup>; this trend continues to be seen across growth stages.

The flip side of the coin is more competition. Where startups once focused on unseating legacy firms, they now have to consider how to position themselves relative to other disruptors in their category.

For example, high-profile data breaches and the prevalence of remote work has accelerated the demand for cybersecurity solutions. Through November of 2021, there have been 183 funding rounds for US cybersecurity startups in addition to 234 in 2020.

Cybersecurity is just one example of a crowded, nuanced category. Across a range of industries, startups are realizing they need to differentiate before the demo if they hope to capture market share.

<sup>1</sup> Source: [Crunchbase](#), 2021



## Startups capitalize on LinkedIn's engaged community to capture share in crowded markets

### Startups build credibility with brand campaigns

Once startups have established baseline demand generation levels in Seed stage, they begin to prioritize brand awareness as they grow to Series A. Startups that use advertising to drive brand awareness are able to cast a wide net for potential customers and begin building trust early on.

As they grow, startups drastically increase their use of brand campaigns

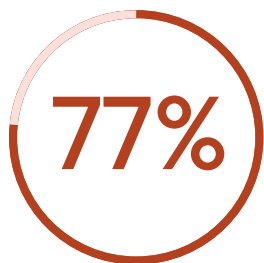
**+ 185%**



Seed

Series A

By the time they reach Series B, the majority of startups use thought leadership content to build brand credibility and audience engagement through industry expertise.



of companies have sponsored white paper content by Series B



### Startups connect with key decision-makers through content

As high demand categories become increasingly crowded, startups have to consider how to differentiate from their competitors. Luckily for startups entering these categories, existing demand creates an opportunity for them to build brand recognition with an active audience. On LinkedIn, decision-makers actively seek category leadership and perspective in order to sift through the noise—startups that meet this need can more effectively build brand trust and ultimately capture greater market share in the long run.

This is particularly true for cybersecurity for example, where early startups are entering a competitive market. Cybersecurity startups have the opportunity to directly connect with their target audience through content, as there is already a high demand for content that supports buyer decision-making.

**+ 95%**

user engagement with cybersecurity content this year

## DEEPPGRAM

How [Deepgram](#) drove engagement with content to accelerate growth

Series B startup Deepgram is an end-to-end, AI speech recognition platform.



### Challenge

Needed to engage the right audience early on.



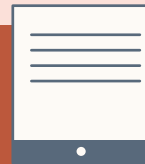
### Solution

Promoted brand level content on LinkedIn to encourage site visits and drive awareness.



### Results

Saw consistent engagement for eBooks, market reports, and white papers.



“We want people to find our content and come to our site. The bigger the funnel we build up of people who know us, the more likely they are to reach out when they are ready or give us their information when they are in market.”

**Claudia Ring**

Head of Growth, Deepgram

## Put these insights into action

1

Use ad formats that will optimize brand awareness impact, such as Sponsored Content, Video ads, etc.

2

Engage the right audience by providing industry-relevant content.

3

Retarget those that engaged with content to strengthen engagement.



# Today's startups accelerate growth on LinkedIn

Startups are known for their adaptability, which is why it's no surprise that they've effectively pivoted in response to changing market and environmental dynamics. We've observed that venture-backed companies are leaning heavily into digital marketing, incorporating LinkedIn's capabilities to address challenges around product market fit, revenue expectations and category share. By leveraging the platform's powerful analytics tools, ad features and active professional network, today's startups are accelerating growth on LinkedIn.



Put the insights you've learned into action and dive deeper with these LinkedIn resources:

### Reach and engage your target audience

1. Leverage LinkedIn's free insight tools to validate your target audience.
2. Invest in growing your organic presence through active posting.
3. Amplify your reach with LinkedIn's targeted advertising.

[Download Action Plan](#)[Watch On-Demand Webinar](#)

### Convert high value customers with ease

4. Use your ICP as your targeting guide to generate high potential leads.
5. Develop an action-oriented offer to engage and convert your audience.
6. Use lead generation forms to drive seamless leads and achieve higher completion rates.

[Download Playbook](#)[Watch Video](#)

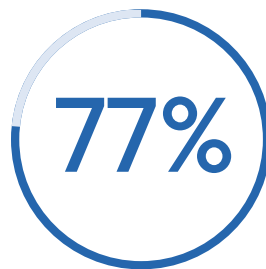
### Connect with key decision-makers

7. Use ad formats that will optimize brand awareness impact, such as Sponsored Content, Video ads, etc.
8. Engage the right audience by providing industry-relevant content.
9. Retarget based on content engagement.

[Download Guide](#)[Watch On-Demand Webinar](#)

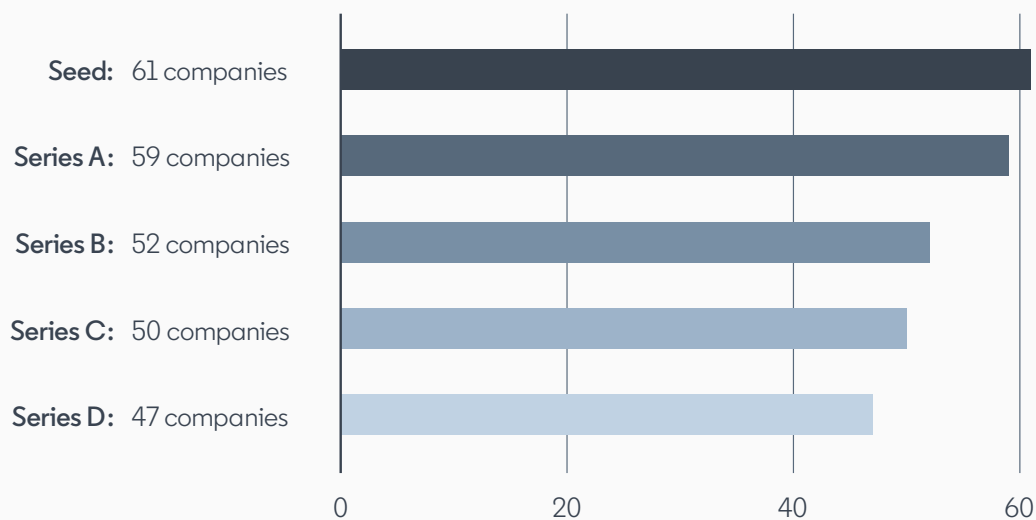
This report has been produced by LinkedIn Marketing Solutions.

We analyzed the behavior of 269 B2B startups identified as existing LinkedIn Marketing Solutions customers from 1/1/2021 through 7/31/2021. We refer to 'growth' based on funding level.



of startups analyzed  
are tech companies

These startups are labeled by funding series, as of July 31st, 2021.



Funding stage  
is based on  
Crunchbase data

