

The 5 Pillars of Digital Trust Guide

Practical steps your brand can take to build trust



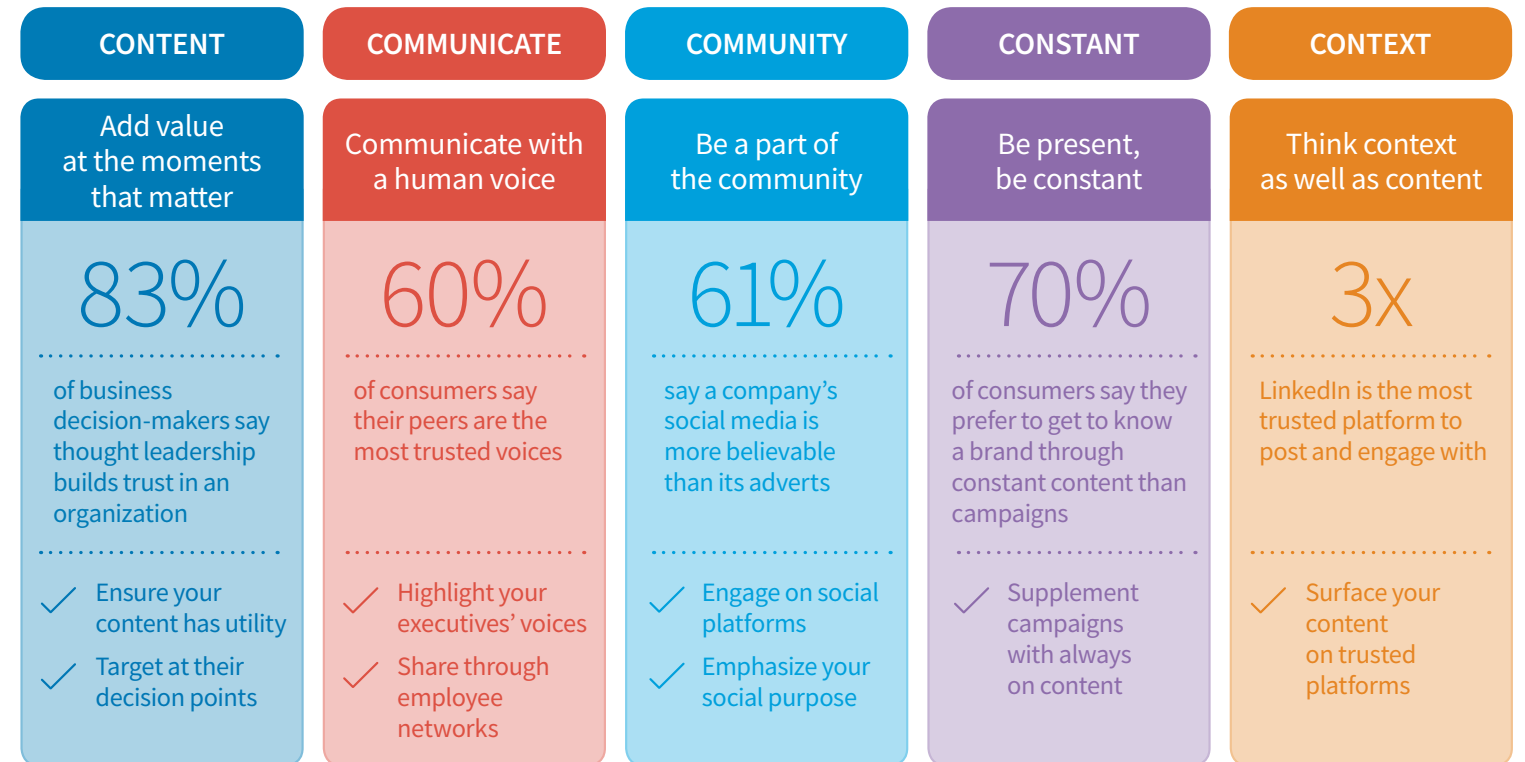
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The 5 Pillars of Digital Trust Guide

A summary

At LinkedIn, we have worked with thousands of brands as they seek to build trusted relationships with their audiences. **We've distilled our learnings into The 5 Pillars of Digital Trust.**

Trust is the most valuable currency for brands today. Yet it has never been such a scarce resource. For the first time in 17 years of research, the 2017 Edelman Trust Barometer¹ shows trust levels have plummeted globally across all institutions: business, government, media and NGOs. In this guide we share practical steps for all marketers to execute.



Step 1:

Add value at the moments that matter

83%

A strong content marketing operation is critical for trust. For 83% of business decision makers², thought leadership helps build trust in an organization.

Base your content strategy around the customer journey and add value at the ‘moments that matter’ in your customer’s business and personal lives.

Source: ² ‘How Thought Leadership Supports B2B Demand Generation’; Edelman/LinkedIn, June 2017



1. Identify your target persona’s core needs

To add real utility to customers, you need to understand their core needs and then set about solving them with content. There are a number of ways to gain this insight:

- Speak to your front-line teams – they often have great qualitative insight into the topics front of mind for customers and prospects.
- Social listening can show the online discussions your customers and prospects are having.
- LinkedIn’s trending content can guide you in priority topics for different persona groups.



2. Differentiate your content

Cut through the noise by picking distinct topics or providing a unique perspective about a much discussed topic.



3. Add extra utility

Blogs, articles and videos are content staples. But you can add more value by thinking broader. Look at whether you can offer tools, templates or even maps to provide your target audiences with something to help them on their journey.

Step 2:

Communicate with a human voice

60%

According to the 2017 Edelman Trust Barometer, for 60% of individuals, ‘a person like yourself’ is as credible a source of information as an expert. In building trust, previously trusted brand and media voices are being overtaken by a person’s peers. Brands therefore need to respond by looking at who they communicate their messages to and how.



1. Get your senior executives to share their passion

Many big financial brands now recognize the value of having their senior executives share opinions on social media. The most successful are those who go beyond flexing their intellects and reveal some of their personality by connecting with audiences in a direct and human way.



2. Leverage your employee networks

Encourage your employees to share content they’ve created through their social networks. Consider a content sharing platform such as LinkedIn’s Elevate which can provide your employees with approved and compliant content that they can promote themselves.



Step 3:

Be part of the community

61%

Edelman's Trust Barometer also shows that 61% of consumers say that a company's social media is more believable than its advertising. Brands need to understand that the key to successful social media participation is based on two-way dialogue.



1. Join the conversation

Being part of your community demands a willingness to interact with customers, rather than talk at them. Perhaps it's for this reason that trust in the mainstream media, which lacks two-way channels, is in decline.



2. Show you have a stake in the future

Brand value is increasingly about trust and respect rather than simply price. Edelman found that customers' chief expectation of brands – rated above even keeping their families and data safe – is that they make a positive contribution to society.

Make sure your content and campaigns go beyond products to bring to life your broader social purpose.



Step 4:

Be present, be constant

70%

Trust can't be bought. It is the sum of many actions built over time. It has to be earned. Today's consumers, connected through smartphones, are 'always on' when it comes to their hunt for content. 70% of consumers³ say they prefer to get to know a brand through constant content than campaigns.

Source: ³ <https://kapost.com/content-marketing-facts/>, Discover and Share Valuable Industry Knowledge



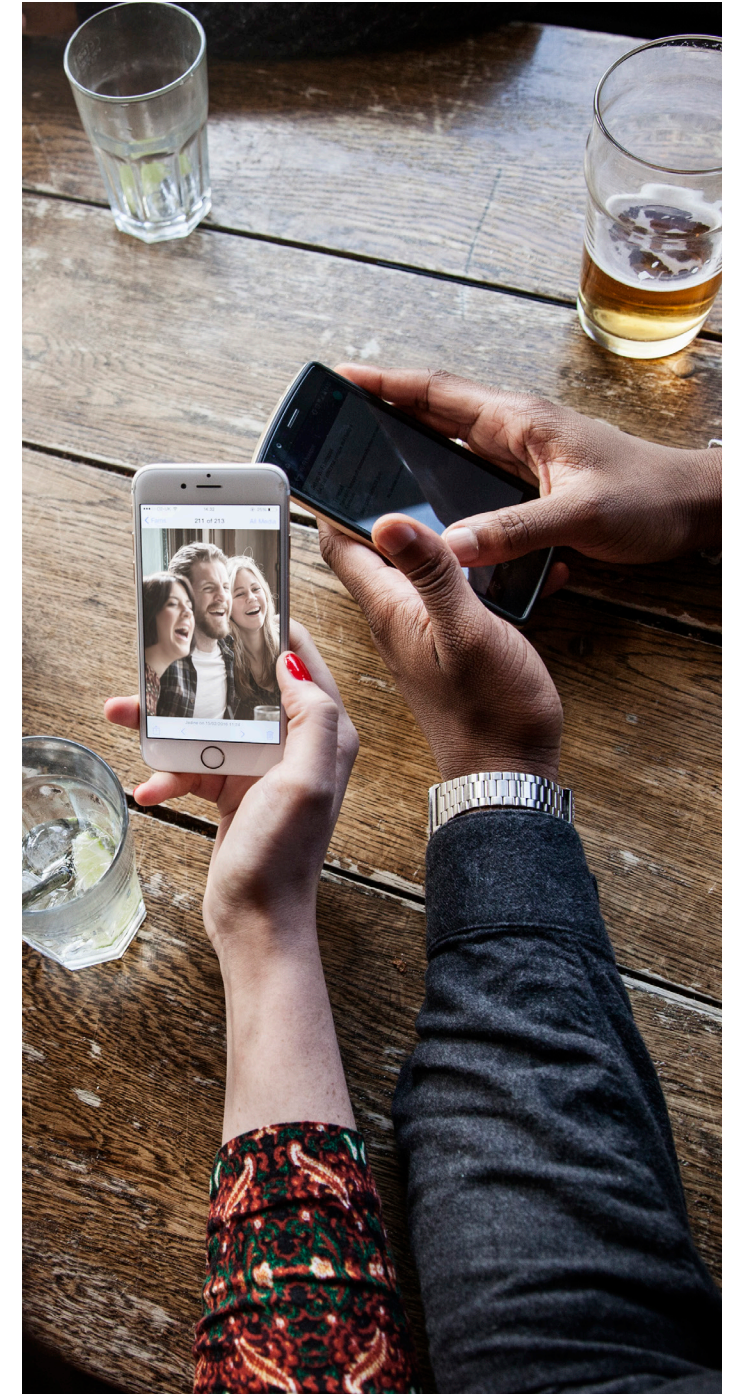
1. Supplement campaigns with 'always on' content

Brands need to shift thinking from a 'campaign only' approach to an 'always on' program. This means maintaining an ongoing presence on their audience's preferred channels.



2. Stay consistent

An 'always on' approach means that when an unexpected event occurs – whether that's a consumer's personal emergency or a threat to the brand reputation – the groundwork of the relationship provides a platform for responding. It's important in these times to stay true to brand values and behaviors.



Step 5:

Think context as well as content

3x

Business Insider Intelligence⁴ has found LinkedIn to be the ‘most trusted social platform’ due to our commitment to privacy, trusted content and adverts which don’t annoy. When it comes to trust, the medium is as important as the message.

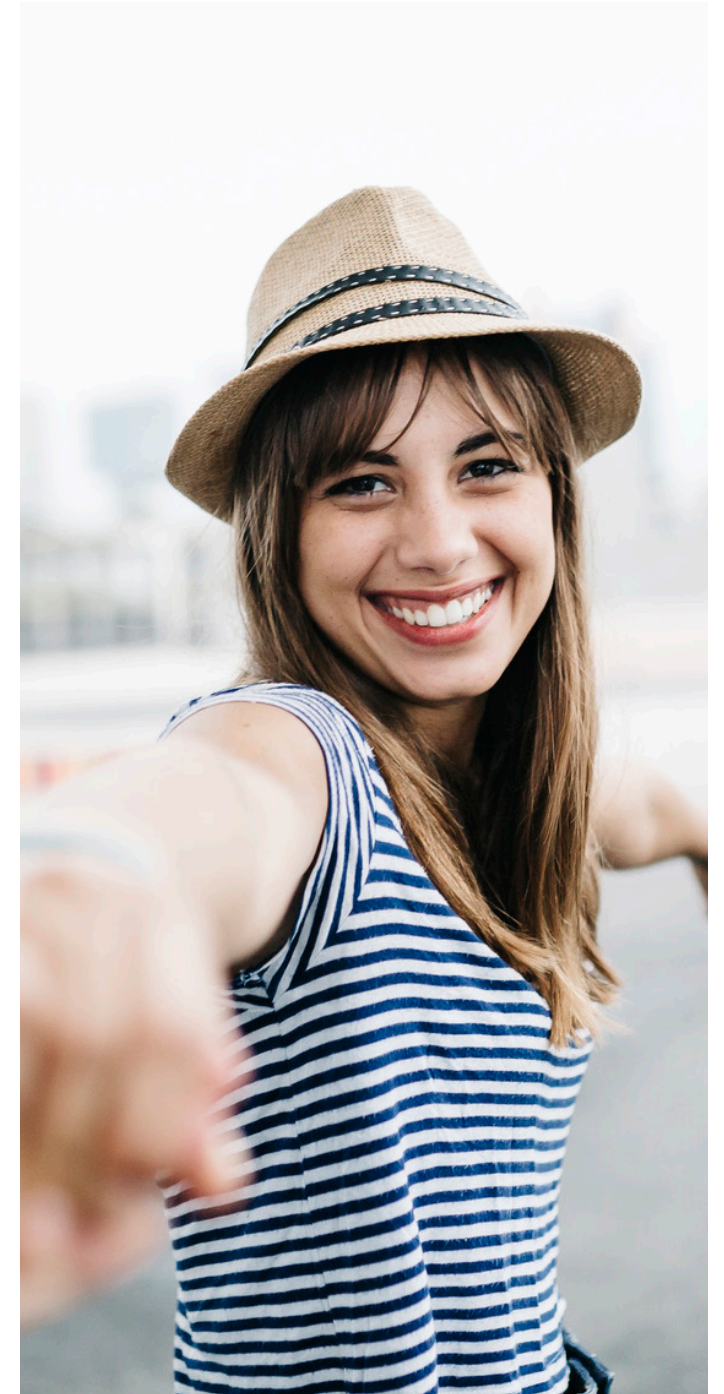
Source: ⁴ Business Insider Intelligence ‘Digital Trust Report’, June 2017



1. Surface your content on trusted platforms

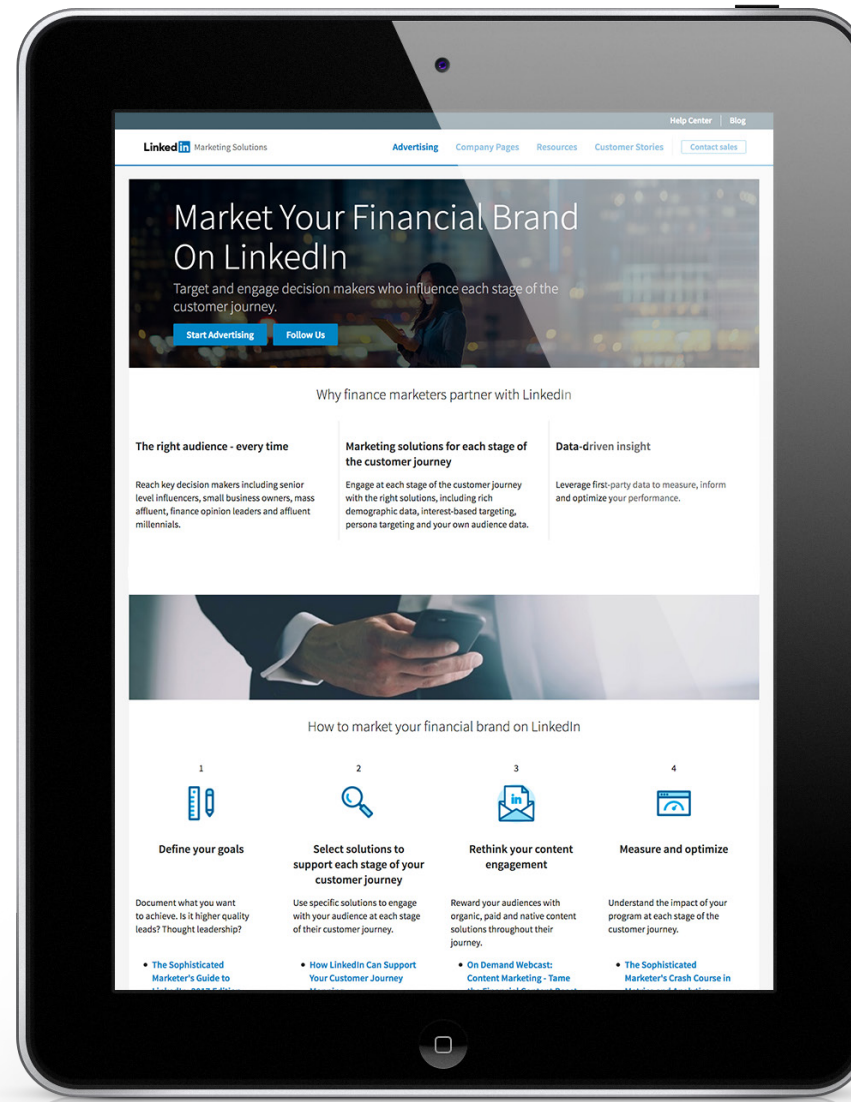
Fake news and brand safety are pressing issues for today’s marketers and in selecting where they engage customers brands must consider the content they will be appearing alongside.

Brands who appear on LinkedIn can therefore leverage our trustworthiness by association.



HOW LINKEDIN MARKETING SOLUTIONS CAN HELP YOU

Use our marketing products to build trust with your consumers. For more information, visit our [Marketing Solutions page](#).



At LinkedIn Marketing Solutions: Services we aim to partner with brands to help them rethink their customer journeys.

We can do this through:

- **Our Platform:** Offering scale as well as granularity to provide deep insight into your clients and their life journeys.
- **Marketing Solutions:** Driving deeper engagement with personalized, compelling and ‘always on’ content matched to each stage of your customers’ journey.

Visit <https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/linkedin-currency-of-trust> to find out more about how LinkedIn Marketing Solutions: Services can help you rethink your own organization’s customer journey and connect you to the audiences and issues that matter most.

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Find out how LinkedIn can help you build sustainable brand advantage.

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