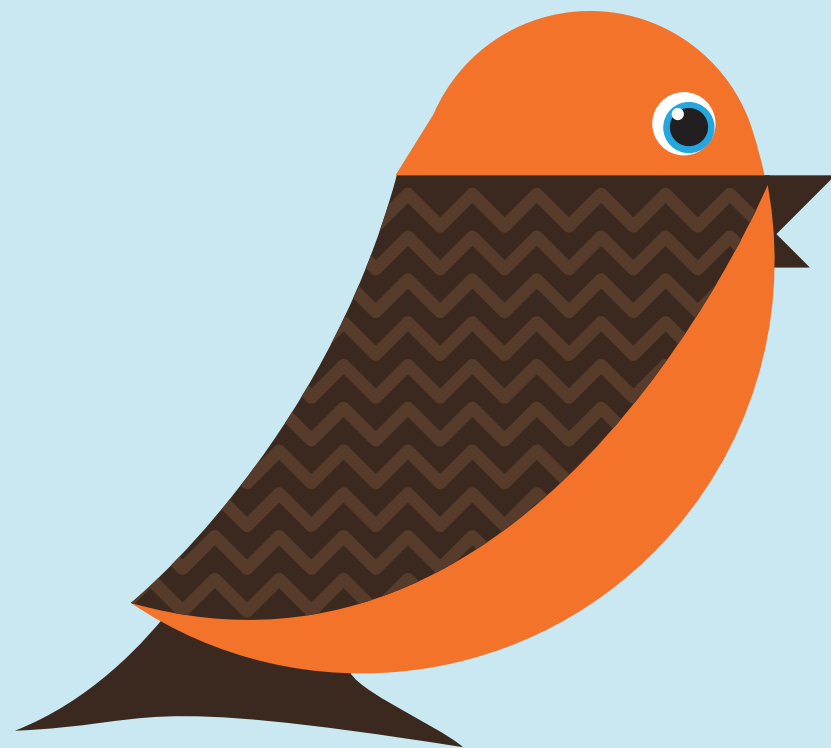


FOURTH DAY
PUBLIC RELATIONS



Influencing prospective clients using LinkedIn

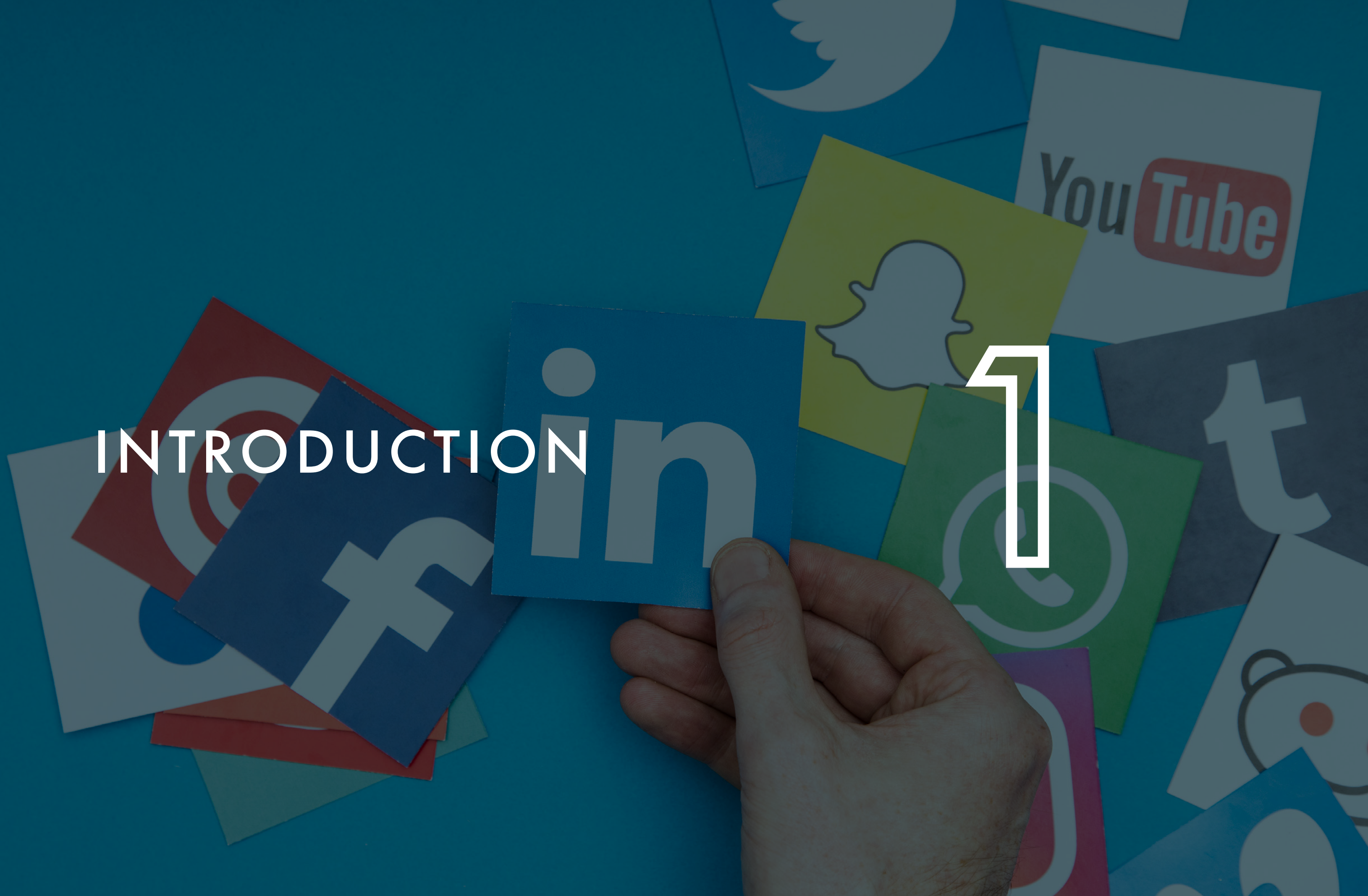
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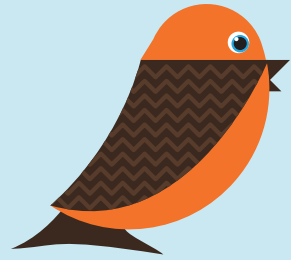


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INTRODUCTION

1





INTRODUCTION

1

If you're looking to influence prospective clients, partners or future employees, LinkedIn's a bit of a no-brainer.

With more than 100 million active users, it's much more than a careers site. It's a platform with the stated aim of wanting to help the world's professionals become 'more productive and successful'.

In trying to fulfil this aim, LinkedIn's creators have developed a social media network that will allow you to interact with, and influence your peers. That's why 94% of B2B marketing professionals actively use it.

It may be a cliché but people buy from people, and LinkedIn allows you to reach out to individuals. We regularly work with clients who do just this – helping to boost reputations, generate leads and land major customers in the process.

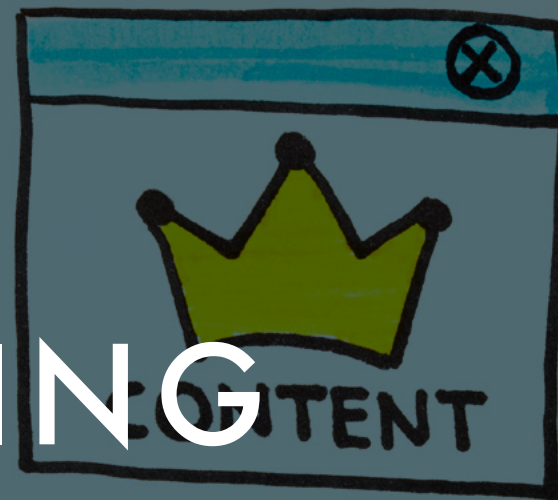
So, to help you to get the most out of the platform we've produced this handy guide to take you beyond the basics and enable you to start influencing on LinkedIn.

100M USERS.

94%

**B2B MARKETING
PROFESSIONALS
USE LINKEDIN.**

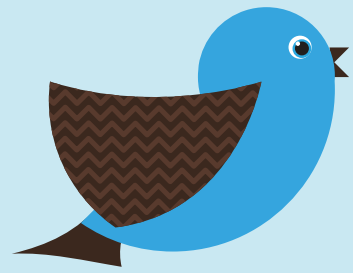
BEFORE GETTING
STARTED



2

MARKETING

PLAN



BEFORE GETTING STARTED

2

Before you get stuck in to LinkedIn, it's well worth considering your approach. You often see people engage in a short period of frenetic activity on LinkedIn only to disappear—presumably, after not getting the big immediate response they were hoping for. You have to be more patient than this and take a longer-term view.

Given time, LinkedIn will allow you to:

- **Build familiarity and trust for both you and your organisation**
- **Raise awareness and belief in your expertise among prospects**
- **Establish credibility with potential collaborators**
- **Boost your company's reputation to help attract top talent**

But to do this you have to take a thoughtful approach regarding LinkedIn behaviour. You'll need to:

Know your target audience

Rather than thinking about what you personally can get out of LinkedIn, think about the needs of the people you are trying to influence first. You'll have a better chance of reaching your target audience if you are sharing posts they will find interesting or will help them get ahead.

Take an individual rather than company-based approach

You are limited in how much you can achieve as a company on LinkedIn. For instance, a company can't comment on an individual's post as they can on Twitter. It's also worth noting that on LinkedIn "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts."

BEFORE GETTING STARTED

Your company page may have a large number of followers, but the total sum of all your colleagues' connections is likely to be substantially higher. That's why it's important to encourage your colleagues to become micro-marketers on behalf of the brand.

Ensure employees know your core brand messages

Bearing that individual approach in mind, you should think about how your organisation comes across. An organisation's marketing team can't have 100% control over what their employees do on LinkedIn, but they can at least ensure they have a good understanding of the core brand messages so they can support these when an opportunity presents itself.

TOP TIP

It may be a touch fanciful to believe that everybody within your organisation will diligently share posts that are 'on message' on a regular basis. They may all start off with the best intentions but daily workloads can make it hard for even the most committed to be consistent.

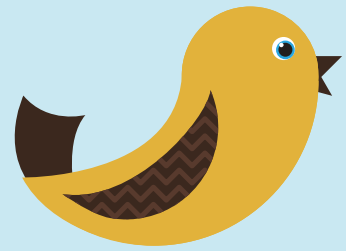
One way to tackle this problem is to identify key people who can be the human face of the business and act as brand ambassadors. You can then use your marketing resources to help these individuals remain as proactive as possible.



7 WAYS TO REACH YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

3





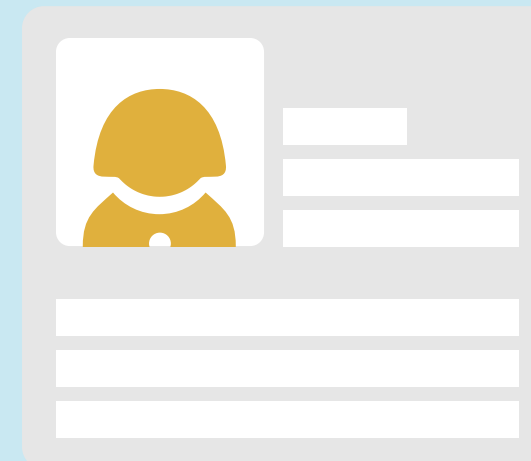
7 WAYS TO REACH YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

3

If you are going to start influencing people on LinkedIn, there are seven basic routes you can take. These include: your profile, connections, update posts, group posts, comments, Pulse posts and InMail. Let's just take a quick look at these before we discuss how we can influence people on LinkedIn.

1. Your profile

Admittedly, the profile section on LinkedIn isn't everyone's cup of tea - Observer journalist and academic John Naughton, for example, claims the endorsement feature annoyed him so much he decided to delete his account. But the more active you are on LinkedIn the more people will review your profile, so it's a basic step that needs to be covered off. If you want to make it easy for people to find you, there is also plenty of advice out there on how you can optimise your profile.



2. Connections

Another basic step is making connections. This is not to be neglected as having a broad network of first tier connections allows you to reach more people more easily. LinkedIn will help you build connections by allowing you to tap into your email connections.

TOP TIP

You could look at the connections of an established person within your industry to find people you would also like to connect with. A word of warning, however - if you try to connect with strangers you run the risk of being rejected. When LinkedIn asks them why they rejected you, they could click "I don't know this person" and this could lead LinkedIn to bar you from sending invitations to connect to other people via the platform.

7 WAYS TO REACH YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE



3. Update posts

The easiest way to start increasing your visibility on LinkedIn is through your update posts. If you post interesting updates or share news articles and blogs relevant to your profession, your connections will begin to associate you with a particular field of expertise.

4. Group posts

Groups used to be a fantastic place to interact with your peers but the reality is they are not as popular as they once were. Beleaguered by spammers, LinkedIn attempted to resolve the issue but may have inadvertently killed off groups that had previously been an effective place for engagement. Some groups remain active, kept alive by diligent group moderators, but they now seem to be few and far between.

TOP TIP

If you want to share a link, add a photo rather than relying on the image LinkedIn automatically generates as it will appear bigger in people's news feeds. LinkedIn's news feed is ephemeral in nature but the more visual you make your posts the more chance people will have of noticing them.

TOP TIP

Although largely inactive, many groups have thousands of members who you are still able to freely InMail (at the time of writing) without having to pay for a Premium LinkedIn account.

7 WAYS TO REACH YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

5. Pulse

With Pulse, LinkedIn has managed to combine two of the top three tactics employed by marketers according to research from the [Content Marketing Institute](#). These are social media and blogging – the third being eNewsletters. Pulse posts were only introduced for all members in 2014 but they have already become a key method of influencing people. You can read more on how to get the most out this blogging platform later in the guide.

6. Comments

By commenting on people's posts and updates you can start to build a rapport with your connections. You'll also be visible to that person's connections – in other words, your second-tier connections.

7. InMail

InMail is LinkedIn's direct messaging service. Once you've established your reputation on LinkedIn, you may want to move towards direct engagement via this route. You are restricted, however, to only InMailing your connections (and fellow group members). But if you are willing to pay to become a Premium LinkedIn member, your options do increase.

A QUICK NOTE ON PREMIUM ACCOUNTS

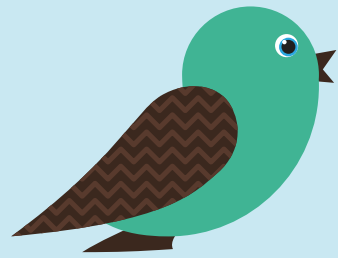
You can upgrade to one of four Premium accounts via the platform for a price. These options are called Career, Business Plus, Sales Navigator and Recruiter Lite. Premium accounts allow you to send up to 15-30 extra InMail's per month, conduct unlimited profile searches, see everyone who's viewed your profile and make it easier for people to InMail you.

HOW TO INFLUENCE PEOPLE ON LINKEDIN



4





HOW TO INFLUENCE PEOPLE ON LINKEDIN

4

Contacting individuals directly

The most obvious way to influence someone is to contact them directly, through InMail or by commenting on their posts or updates. Whether you should be so forward as to InMail depends on how well you know the person and what you have to say. There does need to be an element of tact in this type of approach as you don't want to be perceived as a spammer or irritant.

Before you do this, you may want to boost your own credibility by becoming more active on the network using your own updates and Pulse posts. As with any social media platform, the more active you are, the more visible and familiar you will become to others. This will increase the chances of prospects being receptive to your future activity!

Become more visible

Research shows that most people tend to be active on LinkedIn just before or after traditional working hours. With around half of users now accessing [LinkedIn on their smartphones](#), the chances are many of them are jumping on to the platform during their morning commute - reviewing their feed to monitor industry news and see what their connections are up to.

By sharing stories, publishing posts or commenting on others' updates, you can become part of that daily news feed. This will increase visibility which helps you achieve a greater level of familiarity with potential prospects, partners and employees.

TOP TIP

Mix up your posts. LinkedIn may not be Facebook but it's still a social network – so you don't have to be 100% 'on message' all the time. It's no bad thing to reveal your human side from time to time.

HOW TO INFLUENCE PEOPLE ON LINKEDIN

Influence a purchasing decision

Word of mouth from your peers is one of the most influential factors when it comes to B2B purchasing decisions. And there are few better places to seek your peers’ opinions than on LinkedIn.

Granted, groups are no longer as active as they once were, so these conversations are not as frequent as they used to be, but you can still comment on updates and Pulse posts. And with the majority of [B2B buying research](#) now taking place online, LinkedIn remains a key source of information for buyers.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR B2B PURCHASING.

When considering a large business-to-business purchase, how valuable do you find the following sources of information in determining which vendors you will ultimately select?



Source: Blanc and Otus

HOW TO INFLUENCE PEOPLE ON LINKEDIN

Offer up professional advice

LinkedIn is a network of people who want to improve as professionals and advance their careers. They are active on the platform because they want to stay on top of current trends and find ways to help their business progress. As such, they are on the lookout for advice from experts. Helping people do their job better will also build awareness for you and your organisation. In the process of doing this you'll also be able to develop a bond of trust and loyalty, whether you realise it or not.

TOP TIP

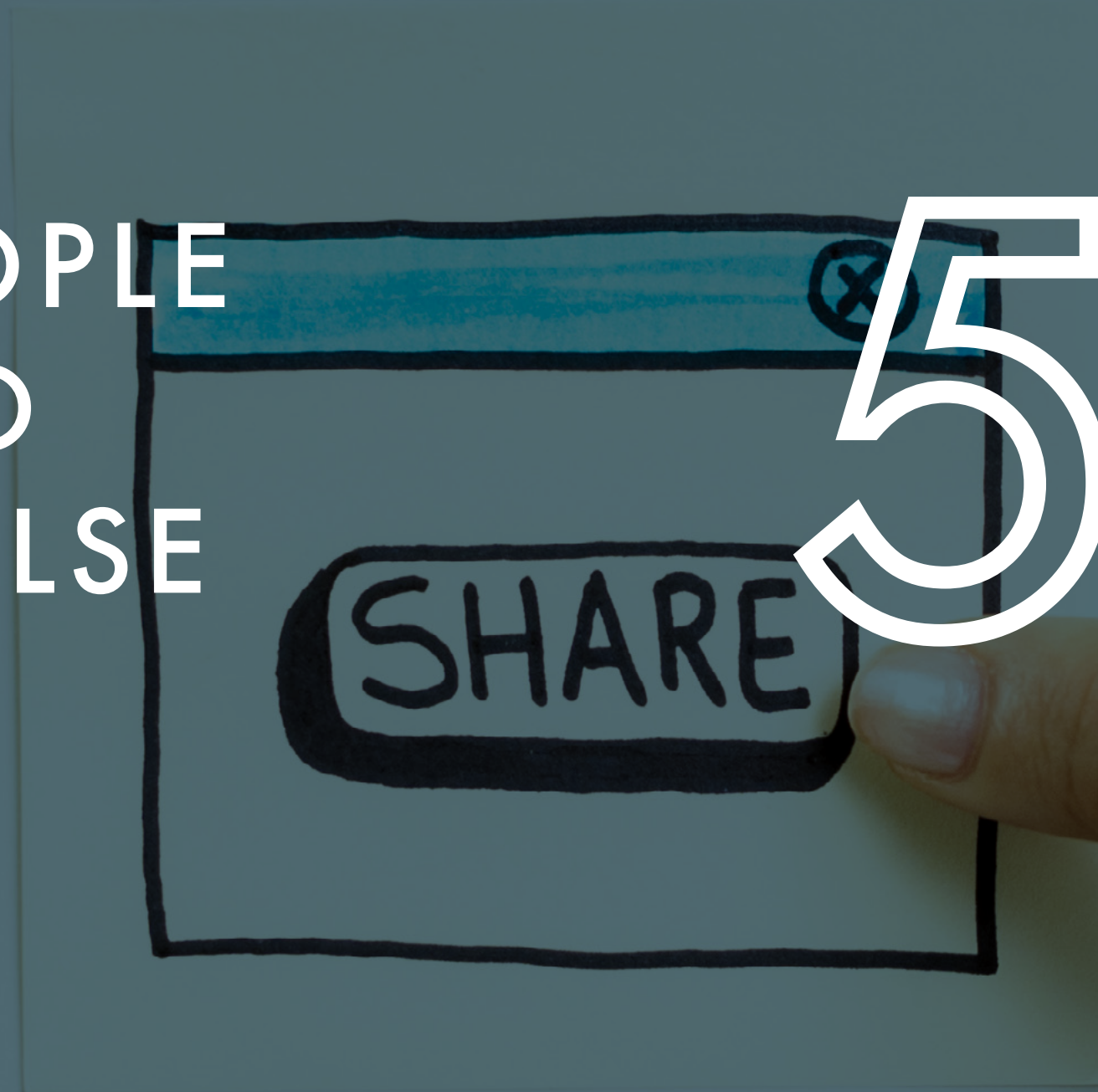
It's important to remember that people will be on the look-out for solutions for work challenges or for professional development. If you can be empathetic and show you understand the problems people face, you can start to establish your credibility as an advisor – one they can trust to guide them in the right direction.

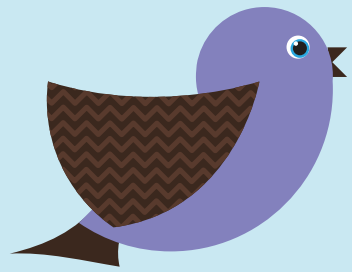
Demonstrate your expertise

The emergence of LinkedIn's blogging platform, Pulse, has provided a credible avenue to demonstrate your expertise and encourage interaction. Brand spokespeople can use this platform to raise awareness of their businesses, educate the market and actively influence decision making.

Pulse posts also provide a more permanent and impressive portfolio of thought leadership, compared to a fleeting update post. As Pulse is a genuine publishing platform, your posts have the potential to be found on search engines, such as Google, through enquiries relevant to the subject matter.

3 THINGS PEOPLE
WANT YOU TO
SHARE ON PULSE





3 THINGS PEOPLE WANT YOU TO SHARE ON PULSE

5

If you want to influence people on LinkedIn, Pulse posts are an essential. As mentioned above, these posts form a permanent portfolio of your opinions so you don't want to write a load of drivel. But what do you write about?

Often, when people sit down to write a blog they tend to think, "what can I write that will convince people they need to buy from me." Or at least something along those lines.

We all want to generate sales but this shouldn't be your leading thought when writing a blog. Rather than thinking about how you can sell yourself, it's better to think about people's challenges – and in what way your expertise can help them overcome these.

If you can provide this, you give people a chance to build a level of trust and rapport with you before you start selling.

This is all easier said than done but if you consider what people are looking for it becomes more straightforward. Ask yourself, if you can provide advice that will help someone understand one of these three things.

Pulse post



3 THINGS PEOPLE WANT YOU TO SHARE ON PULSE

 30,000
 1,681

How to develop as a person

When you look through some of the [most read Pulse posts](#), it can feel like you're reviewing the self-help shelf in Waterstones. This is because personal development is one of the main reasons people are active on LinkedIn.

We've seen clients have great success with this approach. And by being selfless in their approach they have been rewarded with their Pulse posts being shared, sometimes hundreds of times.

One post from one of our clients about taking a break from your smartphone, for example, reached over 30,000 views and received a huge number of likes and comments. Although the post wasn't necessarily about their business, it helped achieve visibility and increased awareness of the brand.



How to be valued within their organisation or industry

By empathising with a person's problems, you can begin to start looking at the solution. Businesses are constantly hitting brick walls which can hinder progress. If you know what challenges they are facing and have the answer, offer some thought leadership.

Give people the tools to win an internal argument. Help them earn the respect of their colleagues or peers by showing them a new way forward. Whatever your niche you will be able to find an issue that enables you to engage with your peers.

3 THINGS PEOPLE WANT YOU TO SHARE ON PULSE

How to be valued within their organisation or industry

B2B marketers have, and still do, use whitepapers to tackle sector-specific issues. Quite often this is done badly and they come across as a thinly veiled sales pitch. Pulse posts allow you to do this in a more abbreviated and genuine way and gain quality feedback from your peers in the process.

Why aren't people getting fired for the way they choose their IoT SIM provider?

Published on May 27, 2016

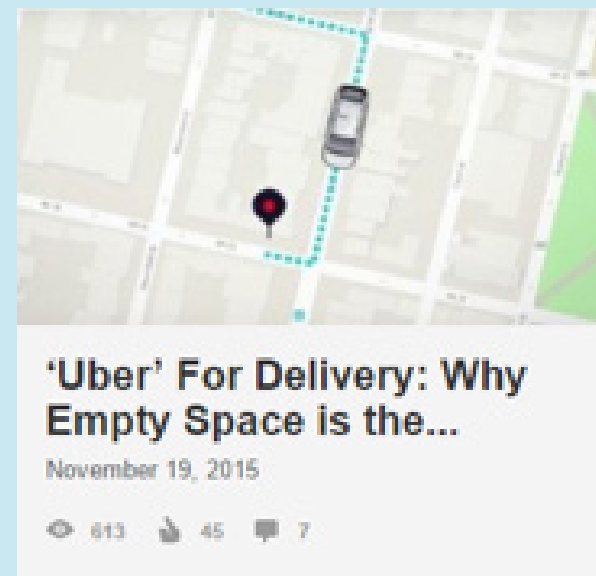


“WHATEVER YOUR
NICHE YOU WILL
BE ABLE TO FIND
AN ISSUE THAT
ENABLES YOU TO
ENGAGE WITH
YOUR PEERS.”

3 THINGS PEOPLE WANT YOU TO SHARE ON PULSE

How industry trends will affect them

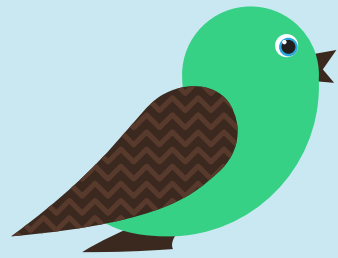
The news is a fantastic source of Pulse post stimuli, so it's well worth reviewing topical issues to see how these will affect your industry. If you believe a trend could have an impact on your niche, then it's worth sharing your thoughts on the matter. For example, we had a client that looked at what the emergence of Uber could mean for their industry; retail logistics.



What may seem obvious to you may not be as clear to others. But you can use your Pulse post to start a debate and see what others are thinking. This will give you an opportunity to demonstrate thought leadership in an interesting and thought provoking way.

HOW TO INCREASE THE SUCCESS OF YOUR POST





HOW TO INCREASE THE SUCCESS OF YOUR POST



There are three things to consider if you want to increase your chances of creating a successful Pulse post: the tone, the style and the title.

The tone

The tone should be one that's genuinely helpful. From the reader's perspective, it's all about self-interest - if it's not helping them, they won't bother to read it. Make sure that advice also speaks directly to the individual and is based around your expertise or experiences. This will make it easier to write and help you maintain credibility.

The style

The look and feel of a blog is important. People who read a lot of blogs can easily click on over a hundred a month. But just because they click, does not mean they read. If it looks boring, uninspiring or is plain hard work then they may not persevere.

What will make people more likely to read your blog? The first step will be to make the blog very easy to scan read. That means lots of sub-heads that break up the text and make it clear what each short section contains. This is why listicles and interview style blogs are popular. Imagery can also help tell your story and adds an appealing visual aid.

HOW TO INCREASE THE SUCCESS OF YOUR POST

The title

You'll often see people struggling with the title of their blog before they have even written a word of the content. In fact, it's much better to work backwards. The title may be the first thing you see on a blog but it should be the last thing you write. If you want people to share or comment on a post, the content is all-important. But if you want people to read your post, the title has to entice people to click. You can't have a title that looks like something people have read a thousand times before. But neither can it be click bait that bears no relation to the content, which will just result in people bouncing straight off the blog. At the same time, it would be helpful if the title contained language likely to be used by anyone conducting a search around this subject matter.

It's not easy to pick a good title but it's worth getting it right.

“THE TITLE
SHOULD BE
THE LAST
THING YOU
WRITE.”

IN SUMMARY



LIKE

SHARE

CLICK

7

IN SUMMARY



LinkedIn has developed a great platform that allows you to engage with other professionals and offer thought leadership. In so doing, it's providing you with an opportunity to build relationships and influence potential prospects, partners and employees.

This doesn't replace the need to participate in conversations away from LinkedIn or act as a substitute for face-to-face networking, but it's a valuable addition that supplements these activities. A presence on LinkedIn will help you to informally nurture relationships with contacts prior to a conference or event where you'll both be present, for instance.

To develop a strong presence on LinkedIn, however, you'll need to remain visible by staying active and regularly sharing posts relevant to your target audience. Just make sure you know what your targets want you to share, and the messages you want to get across in the process.

**“BUILD
RELATIONSHIPS
AND INFLUENCE
POTENTIAL
PROSPECTS,
PARTNERS AND
EMPLOYEES.”**

FOURTH DAY
PUBLIC RELATIONS



We hope you found
this guide useful.

Please get in touch if we can help
you develop your LinkedIn.