

Maximising Engagement On LinkedIn

Overview

Many companies and individuals have noticed a recent dip in engagement on their LinkedIn profiles. The Lead Talent Brand team have done some digging and it would appear that LinkedIn has once again altered its algorithm's recently. Here's an insider's view on how to build and maximise engagement on your personal and company LinkedIn profile by following a few simple rules of engagement.

The LinkedIn Algorithm: Rules to Live by

1. **Comments are king.** They will provide you with more views than likes and shares. You need to react/respond to every comment, if you want to maximise reach.
2. **Golden Hour.** Engagement within the first 60 mins of posting is crucial for the success of your post.
3. **Hash it up.** Use a maximum of 3 hashtags.
4. **Tag, you're it.** Only ever tag a maximum of 5 users into your post and only tag people you are certain will respond.
5. **Hook that duck.** Begin posts with a hard to resist hook. Use easy to read, short sentences with lots of white space. The hook should highlight either a problem, significant change, announcement or credibility.
6. **Quality is king.** Focus on the quality and not the quantity of your posts. Measure engagement, not views.
7. **Question?** Try ending a post with a question.
8. **Less is way more.** If you must post more than once in a day, wait 3+ hours before posting a second post in one day.
9. **No links.** Don't add external web links into your post. It harms distribution.
10. **Don't Re-share.** Sadly, it's not worth doing. It is much better to copy the entire post into a new post and then give the author credit by tagging him/her.
11. **Pods.** LinkedIn has banned the use of pods because it considers them to be gaming the algorithm.
12. **Duplicate.** Don't post the same stuff on your personal and company page.

The Best Time To Post

Generally speaking, it's no surprise that the most reliable engagement on LinkedIn still occurs during the working week, **Tuesday through Friday, 8am - 2pm.**

More specifically:

- **Best times:**
 - Tuesday 8-2pm
 - Wednesday from 8-10am and noon
 - Thursday at 9am and 1-2pm
 - Friday 9am
 - **Best days:** Wednesday and Thursdays
 - **Worst day:** Sunday. Monday is also slightly lower on engagement, perhaps reflecting the rush to catch up post-weekend for the platform's professional audience.
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Questions?

Q. So how does the algorithm work?

It assigns a 'quality' score to your content before anyone sees it by judging the text, anything attached to the post and tries to predict how well it will be received by your intended audience (new connections, connections, followers, mutual hashtag followers, group members). It then pushes your post to a small sample of your audience (mainly connections, followers, fellow group members) and waits to see if they engage. Depending on how that first 'test' goes, it'll then decide whether to push it to more people and continue testing, or to stop showing it in the feed.

Q. Are likes, re-shares and comments equal?

No. The algorithm seemingly loves comments. LinkedIn wants and needs users to be on the platform, to keep coming back to it and to hang around for as long as possible. Comments provide more data than likes and re-shares, they also generate engagement. This is why it's **always worth ending a post with a question.** Generating a discussion is crucial for reach. It's smart to **respond or to react to every comment.** It's clear your work doesn't end with clicking 'publish', in fact...it's only just begun. Give a comment back to each comment you receive and you will notice up to 250% increase in views and engagement from others.

Q. Will posting too many times a day/week be punished by the algorithm?

Yes. Posting more than 20 times per month isn't going to help you, and posting way too much will hurt your distribution. Unless you are a celebrity or have a high-level of engagement with each and every post, don't annoy people with too many posts. **When you share more than one post a day, this has a negative impact on the views of all the posts shared that day.** Basically, because the algorithm wants to show the content of more members, instead of the content from a minority of "heavy-users". If someone shares a second post on the same day, the second post needs 3x more engagement to get the same views as the first and if you share 3 posts in one day, the third will be ignored by the algorithm. **Wait at least 3 hours before posting twice in a day,** the algorithm will then treat both posts equally.

Q. Will adding a link in the post body affect its distribution/performance?

The word on the street is that **adding an external link to the main body of your post will harm distribution.** Anything that takes the user away from LinkedIn is forbidden/discouraged. This is also why you can't add clickable URL's to your personal profile page.

Remember: Sharing a post with your own comments get an average 56% more clicks than those that simply share a link to an article.

Q. What is the best media to use in a post?

A post consisting of text and an image as the norm, equating to "100% reach", text plus document gets between +50% and +80% reach, native video (including Vimeo) between +20% and +70% and text-only, between +20% and +50%.

There has been a suggestion and evidence found to **support the potential decline of native video.** Not a very large sample but 10 frequent video posters, analyzed more than 200 videos and found that average video views/engagement had steadily fallen from Q2 2018-Q2 2019. It's hard to tell if this is related to the algorithm or was simply capturing audience sentiment, either way, it's important to keep in mind.

Q. Are LinkedIn articles dead?

For the time being, **yes**. Most users seem to have abandoned articles, the guess is **both authors and the audience prefer posts** (short, 1,300 character ‘updates’ as LinkedIn used to call them), because they’re easier to write and **easier to consume, especially if you’re mobile**.

BUT the one major difference between articles and posts is that **articles are indexed by search engines and posts currently aren’t**. So, when you’re writing a post, you’re creating content that never leaves LinkedIn’s walled garden, it won’t get any distribution by google, bing etc. Some of the most successful articles only became successful (widely read) because google shared them to the world at large. Research confirms the demise of articles and squarely pins the blame on the algorithm confirming that LinkedIn has stopped the article from being spread amongst networks in big numbers. LinkedIn articles used to be boosted by the algorithm back in 2014 and 2015 and whenever you published an article LinkedIn would send a “Notification” to your entire network” and it’s true that those audience building notifications have now dried up.

Q. Are re-shares worth doing?

Apparently not. Experience shows that posts which are re-shared tend to have low views/engagement. People who spend a lot of time on the platform share this opinion. Re-shares pop up in your timeline now and then, but receive little to zero engagement. If you want to “share” a valuable post of one of your connections? For the algorithm, it is much better to **copy the entire post and then give the author credits by tagging him/her**.

Q. Should hashtags be part of my content strategy?

Absolutely. Hashtags are almost certainly one of the ‘attributes’ taken into account when pre-judging and pre-guessing the quality and potential popularity of a post. We know that **3 hashtags per post** is the max. If a connection uses a hashtag you also happen to follow, it gets an extra boost”. Using **‘network hashtags’** could potentially help your post get a higher ranking in someone’s feed depending on the hashtags they follow.

Q. Getting engagement early is important, why?

It’s crucial. You’ve got a **Golden Hour**. Research has shown that if no one reacts or comments to posts within **60 minutes of posting**, it will perform badly and get low engagement. If, on the other hand a post rapidly gets multiple likes and comments shortly after being published, we know that it will get good levels of engagement. **Nurturing your post, especially in the first 60 minutes** by reacting and responding to everyone who has taken the time to engage is essential if you want to reach the maximum possible audience. The algorithm will reward your responsiveness.

Q. Should I use a pod to boost my content?

Generally speaking, most experts would advise against it. Those who ran pods to experiment and being obliged to engage quickly/fully on content which may not be relevant/good was a tall order. LinkedIn has banned the use of pods because it considers them to be gaming the algorithm. The counterargument I often hear from pod users is how will LinkedIn know, if I'm part of a pod? Go ahead and game, see what happens.

Q. What's the secret to writing a popular post on LinkedIn?

Authenticity is key: all the tips above work out better when members talk about things they truly care about, in a way that's natural for them. Genuine conversation around real experiences spark better and deeper conversation. Better conversation, in turn, leads to stronger community and connection.

If you look at the type of content that is preferred by LinkedIn Editors, you'll detect some common traits: feel-good, work relevant, career related, helpful/valuable/sensible professional advice. Interspersed with heart-tugging, deeply personal or entertaining, social sharing content, which many people will recognize if you've spent any time on Facebook.

Q. What does a good post look like?

A LinkedIn user figured out that users liked posts which began with a hard to resist hook, were **easy to read with short sentences, lots of white space**. He said the hook should highlight either a problem, significant change, announcement or credibility. The hook method definitely works, getting engagement from a 1,300 character post is possible but you need to know your audience and you need to add value, get comments and be responsive. It's not just about the structure.

Q. Should I tag/mention others to seed engagement on my posts?

Only if you are confident that those you tag will respond. Content seems to suffer if people you tag don't respond, or if they remove their tag. We already know that the LinkedIn algorithm is sensitive to positive and negative signals, so it's not a stretch to think that the tagging response, including non-response, is being evaluated. **Use @mentions to pull other people you know into a conversation when you think they'll have something valuable to add.** Be thoughtful: only mention people that you think are likely to respond, **max five** is a good rule of thumb.

Q. Should I use my company page as part of my posting strategy?

Yes. Treat your company page as another channel for your content and mix it up, alternate between publishing posts from your personal account and to your company page but **don't post the same stuff in both channels**. The company page has decent analytical tools to help you keep track of followers and has SEO power, **search engines index your company page**, so you could attract more eyeballs from web traffic. The algorithm takes note every time a user follows your co page but if you want to maintain that relationship, you need to work it. **The average reach of a company page is about 4 – 6% of the followers**. But if you start following a company page, their posts will appear more frequently in your timeline **for the first week**. If you don't engage, you will not see any of their updates in your timeline again. If you do engage on one of them, the algorithm will keep favouring them for a longer period". It's similar to new followers, the algorithm favours them initially but **it's up to both parties to demonstrate that there is affinity**.

Q. How much information should I complete on my Profile?

Having a fully completed LinkedIn page may be beneficial. An 'All-Star' profile rating seems to have a positive impact on the views. It looks like LinkedIn is returning All-Star profiles a favour in the algorithm (members with "Intermediate" rating score about 30% less on views/ engagement).

Who we are.

Lead Talent is a highly experienced, people-focused Management Consultancy. We work with SME's in the UK and overseas, helping clients realise their commercial objectives, through sustainable, profitable growth.

Drawing on over **100 years of combined experience in the recruitment, training and brand** sectors at both Board and Senior Management level, Patrick and the Lead Talent team specialise in the three fundamental areas of any successful business: **Strategy, Talent and Brand**.

We offer a refreshing, **straight-talking and proactive approach** to business, working in partnership with our clients to understand "what's really going on under the surface" of their business, providing powerful and strategic solutions that deliver real and measurable results.

Our results speak for themselves. Lead Talent has helped clients realise their true business worth and **generate over £50m of additional profit over the past seven years**.

With over 30 year's leading agency and brand experience the Lead Talent brand team are perfectly positioned to ensure your proposition is **reaching the right people, at the right time, with the right message on the most relevant channels**.

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