



Creating Compelling Content that Unlocks the Power of LinkedIn



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Introduction

It is unlikely to come as any surprise to you that posting content on LinkedIn has many advantages. It can increase your visibility, enhance your credibility, promote your personal brand, bring in business and find you new employment. And that's just the beginning. The power of LinkedIn, when used well, is awe-inspiring and creating high-quality, unique content that your audience wants to read, hear and watch is an excellent way to unlock it.

Post formats – what's hot, what's not

On LinkedIn, posts come in a variety of formats: text only, image, video, document, poll, article and newsletter. From time to time the algorithm changes and posts are boosted or given an additional push by LinkedIn. This is often – but not always – the case when a format is new.

For example, for the early part of 2022 polls have been hugely popular, appearing regularly in our feeds and achieving high numbers of voters and excellent overall views. As of mid-year, this is no longer the case. Their power has diminished significantly and we're not only seeing fewer of them, fewer of us are using them because they're not getting the same votes or views. We're still able to use them, however, as they haven't been taken away which LinkedIn did with Stories not so long ago.

So, if they've declined, what's taking their place and performing well? Without a doubt document posts. These are slideshows or Powerpoint presentations put together specially for the LinkedIn audience. They have multiple pages, are often professionally designed, with colourful cover pages and attention-grabbing titles. They can also be e-books, and this e-book is an example. It originated as a webinar and has been repurposed and offered free to those interested via a document post.

Document posts often achieve tens of thousands of views although this can vary and it seems cyclical. Your posts might do very well for a week or two but then views fall away no matter what you do. It's swings and roundabouts – just don't give up!

The document posts we prepare for our clients also do well and they love them. As well, document posts on company pages seem to perform better than other post formats at present. And they look good in the page feed so do add them to your content plan for your page.

On the downside, document posts take time to put together, usually several hours, so don't expect to be creating them all the time unless you have the resources for this. I aim for one a week but you might find once a fortnight or every three weeks is a good idea.

We create ours in Canva but PowerPoint or Keynote would work adequately well.

Post style currently performing well

– Self-portrait posts

A self-portrait post is one in which your photo is added to images or slide decks but it can also include other components such as hashtags, text, call to action and links.

In May of this year (2022) I began noticing an increase in the number of self-portrait posts in my feed. Some were great, some not so much but they seemed to be getting good engagement. I decided to experiment despite the fact that image posts had never done well for me unless I put someone famous in them.

When looking at how others created theirs, I decided that if I was going to put my face on these – not something I was thrilled about – I was going to do them as professionally as possible. For me that meant making them useful where possible.

I put my first one up on a Sunday – not a day likely to attract great engagement – but it did unexpectedly well with 19,000 views. My previous ones were lucky to attract 1000. Since then I've added them consistently to my post mix and while they don't always do well, they often do. Sometimes exceedingly well.

Self-portrait posts are ideal for promoting your face as your brand – people immediately gravitate towards images with people in them. You become recognisable, which is a good thing because people want to see the real you. This is another way to show your true self.

You can also add your hashtag, name and website to the image although the latter won't be live.

Self-portrait Options

1. Single photo of you in odd / amusing / non-work situation

The first style of self-portrait post is a single and simple photo of yourself. Often these are taken in non-work situations but not always. They can be funny, cute, oddball or anything else you fancy but usually you're centre-stage, larger than life. The image is all about you.

2. Professional photo with text

The text might outline the post topic, be a call to action, share a quote or ask a question. The aim of all of these is to stop the scroll. When it shows up in feeds, you want the person seeing it to stop, read the text and then hopefully read the post as well. As someone who likes to add value I tend to make these useful in some way.

3. Add a link to your image

This is potentially an ideal solution for when you want to share a link in your post but don't want to put it in the text or the post comments. Of course, it won't be live so needs to be simple and easily copied.

4. Document post with photo + title on front

Another way to create a self-portrait post is to add your photo to the front of your document post. Again, this promotes your face as your brand and increases the likeability factor. All our document posts – even those on our company page – now have my face on them although I keep these much smaller than on image posts.

5. Events – Lives and Audio

When you set up an event – a live or an audio event – LinkedIn requires you to have an image. This is where you add your photo so that every time the event link is shared, your photo goes with it. Again, my image is on every one of these. When I have a guest, their image is added, too.

Self-portraits can be an excellent addition to your posting lineup but there are some fishhooks to beware of. The first is that not everyone likes them (or potentially you) and they may skip past what might otherwise be a useful post to them. However, I perceive that risk to be low and those people are not likely to be your tribe anyway.

The second potential problem is over-use. People can very quickly tire of seeing the same old thing. We don't use them more than once a week as image posts because my face also appears on events and document posts. Another solution is to change the photo so it is not always the same one. Tip: when having professional photos taken, ask for a variety of poses and wear different outfits to give you the most post options.

The third issue is boredom. People like variety, but they also like familiarity, so change the components. Have your photo on the left in one, then on the right in the next. Change the design elements or the main colours (although always keeping within your branding) to keep



Common Posting Mistakes



We not only create a lot of posts for our clients, we also see a lot of LinkedIn posts. Overall, the quality of posts has improved a great deal in the past few years. Partly that's because people have become more experienced with them so they're no longer making the mistakes they might have once done. But also, they're seeing better quality posts in their feeds and are being led by example. As well, there are people like me sharing what works and what doesn't, helping teach LinkedIn members/creators to improve their posts.

But we often see mistakes. Sometimes that's because people are new to the platform and don't know what's best practice and sometimes it's because what wasn't a mistake last week is a mistake today. The platform changes very quickly.

Mistake 1: Ending your post with an explicit call to action or request for comment

Dutch social seller Richard van der Blom is the world's expert on the algorithm. He produces an annual report that helps us all get better results from the time we spend on LinkedIn. During research for his 2022 report he's spotted that the algorithm is now penalising posts requesting engagement.

Here are the examples he noted:

- Put yes in the comments to receive my free tip sheet
- Please comment below
- Click on [link] to see more
- Share your thoughts below
- Visit our website at [link]

Most of us ask for this kind of engagement routinely so what can we do instead to generate the same engagement result?

We can:

- Invite sharing of opinions on specific topics without specifically asking for a comment
- Add our call to action to an image or slide deck
- Send posts to connections off LinkedIn instead of via LinkedIn DM (so the algorithm doesn't spot you asking for a comment)
- Write a post that naturally inspires engagement

In my opinion the best way to encourage engagement is this last idea, writing a post that people want to engage on. Easier said than done, of course, but if, like me, you've had a post that's attracted an unusual number of high-quality comments without any of the usual prompts, see if you can determine what made it so comment-worthy. Then try to recreate it.

Mistake 2: Writing one line of text followed by multiple blank lines

Another mistake I've been seen more of recently is the post with a headline or first sentence and then nothing more until the See more button is triggered. This is an attempt to game the algorithm because clicking See more tells it that the person is interested in the post and it is therefore useful and should consequently be dispersed to a wider audience. Which the algorithm then duly does. It's entirely possible that LinkedIn is onto this and has adjusted the algorithm to downgrade such posts.

I'm not a fan of how this type of post looks in my feed and unless the headline or first sentence is highly riveting I'm not likely to be inclined to take the time to look at it.

Mistake 3: Not including hashtags

It is widely understood that posts without hashtags have restricted reach. We choose a mix of high performing general hashtags, industry-related hashtags and a personal one. 3 to 5 hashtags per post is generally considered optimal.

Some people turn keywords in their posts into hashtags but there is no evidence this helps with reach and they can detract from your message. We generally steer clear of them except in specific circumstances such as wanting to mention the company page in a post from a profile.



Mistake 4: Insufficient text to trigger See more

This is a variant on mistake 2 about one line of text only. In this situation there might be two lines but it's clear there's nothing more to see as See more does not display.

Posts without sufficient text score low on the algorithm dwell-time scale, reducing reach. They can be read in an instant and scrolling resumed. Posts like this often don't get the expected reach or engagement because there's simply not enough for people to get their teeth into.

It also doesn't help your credibility or showcase your expertise. The exception is of course if there is an accompanying document post which contains all the pertinent information.

Mistake 5: Poor-quality content

We still regularly see posts of poor quality. This could be because all they are trying to do is to sell, the formatting is poor, they are filled with mistakes, they are plain boring to read or no emojis have been used to give it some visual impact.

When creating your posts always put yourself in the shoes of your audience. What do they want to read? What do they want to know about? How can you help solve their problems (without pitching)? Ask yourself if you would read your own post? If not, then you have work to do.

Ways to gain visibility and traction on your posts

Given all of the above, how do you stand out in the feed with your posts?

One option is to **vary your posts**, particularly the format. There will need to be some common elements because familiarity is important. Equally, you need to post consistently so people get used to seeing you in the feed.

But if you want to truly stand out, **being controversial** is a winner. You will have to defend your stance, of course, so be prepared. However, don't do this for the shock value. That rarely works and often backfires. Also, keep away from political or religious content unless you work in either of these fields.

Being topical is slightly different – less risky and shows you know what's going on in the world. An example is the number of posts we've seen in recent weeks on the US Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe vs Wade and to publicly state that it's gunning for other long-held human rights. This is indeed topical and deserves airing because of its potential impact on everyone, not just women. The same could be said of climate crisis topics. These also impact our work lives and are worthy of discussion on LinkedIn.

Reporting something new in your industry or area of expertise will also gain you a good following. This is something I do a lot of – sharing new LinkedIn features and techniques. Not only does this help others who might not otherwise hear about them but I'm cementing my reputation as someone who knows about LinkedIn and can therefore help others wanting to understand it.

Telling a story is a post style we're seeing a lot more of. People are sharing things that happen to them, usually work-related but often personal. For instance, over the past two years there's been a significant rise in the number of posts about mental health. And when men share about this their posts tend to do well.

This has its detractors of course, those who see LinkedIn as becoming too like Facebook. However, if your story is work-related then it's worth trying this form of post. Certainly, posts like this are the ones that often go viral.

Allied to this is sharing **personal news**. Certainly a new job, but often a milestone or an event you've participated in – often for charity – all make good LinkedIn posts. If you have a new job though, don't use the preformatted posts LinkedIn offers for this as they get almost zero reach.

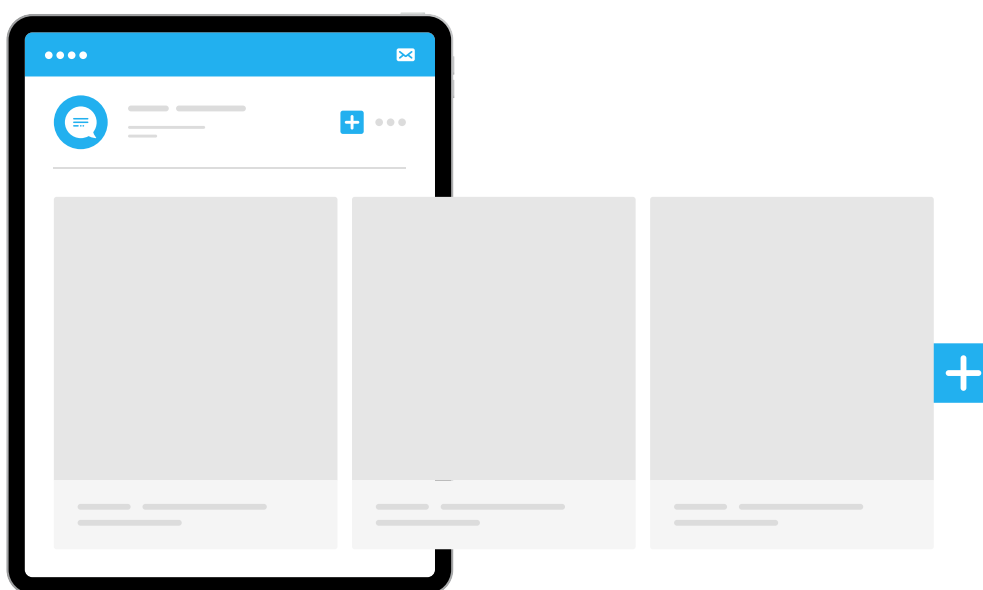
The final way to get traction on your posts is to **engage on other people's posts**. This has been found time and again to positively affect the reach of your own posts sometimes by quite a significant margin. The rule of reciprocity is also at play here as the more you give, the more you gain.

New Carousel post

A new form of post is wending its way towards us. As of July 2022, only a select few people have this but by the end of the year it could well be available to us all.

This is currently being called a carousel post (although this may change) which is not to be confused with multiple image posts or document posts, both often referred to as carousels. This is a composite of video, text, gifs, graphics, music and potentially other media types. They play like a video although can be clicked forwards and backwards just like document posts.

This new format will significantly increase our ability to be relevant, visual and entertaining, but for the tech-averse among us there'll be challenges in putting these together. However, no doubt Canva will have templates available very quickly for us to experiment with.



Turning events into posts and content

Content or posts don't have to be created in isolation and a post format we're seeing more of is the repurposing of previously used material such as from events. This e-book is an example. For a number of reasons – time, audience, resources – repurposing event content makes great sense.

1. Audio Events:

These are now widely rolled out, especially to those with Creator mode on and tend to be a conversation rather than a presentation, so are more informal than say a LinkedIn Live like this.

Based on the Clubhouse format, Audio Events are where people gather in what's known as a room and have a live discussion. The host can invite people from the audience to speak and gives access to those wishing to do so – known as coming up on stage.

These have only started to become widely available in the past few weeks but will likely quickly gain wide popularity.

These are not yet available on pages and have a few downsides, most notably no replay and no in-event comments. This makes them hard to turn into posts at this stage, but once that facility comes on-stream these could be a great source of content.



2. LinkedIn Lives:

LinkedIn Lives make a great source of post content and we regularly turn these monthly webinars into different forms of content such as text posts, e-books, short videos, newsletter items and quote image posts. You could also turn the audio into a video post, albeit minus the pictures.

If you've not yet jumped on the Live bandwagon we highly recommend them for reaching a wider audience. They're not as simple to do as we think Audio Events are, but they are well worth the effort.

However, new challenges are emerging such as the comments of the event being 'bombed' by bad actors attempting to divert your attendees to false links and LinkedIn's truncated links being hacked and diverting people to a bogus page where credit card details are requested. (For the record, all our webinars are FREE and will continue to remain so.)



Type of Content from Events

1. Cut the full event up into shorter videos.

If you download the Live file as an MP4, you can cut it into sections, top and tail it with an intro and outro, and create new content to which you text post. Videos on LinkedIn should be short, from 30 seconds to 2 minutes.

2. Create posts

An event gives you plenty of post content to work with. Before the event you can promote it, talk about the topics that will be discussed, introduce your guest speaker and set the scene. After the event, you can use text from any transcription you have done for multiple posts that you share over time. This gives you an opportunity to talk in more detail about the material you presented, which is great for building your reputation as an expert.

3. Turn event text into an e-book.

Our webinars are transcribed afterwards so we can reuse the content. Rev.com is a good option and costs around \$100 for an hour of talk. From there you can edit the text, add subheadings and have it set out nicely by a designer. These give you the opportunity to add promotional material or direct people to a website.

4. Add to your newsletter

Adding your event to your newsletter extends its reach. Ahead of the event you can promote it in your newsletter. Afterwards, people who may not have heard about the event can catch up with the replay or you can take some of the content and feature it in the newsletter.

5. Create an article for LinkedIn or your blog

Repurposing content for articles – on or off LinkedIn – or blog posts is another great use of your event content. Placing it on your website may give you more reach via Google SEO than you'd get on LinkedIn. But articles seem to be increasing in view numbers on LinkedIn on the back of newsletters, certainly for us.

6. Turn into a document post

You can turn the main points of your presentation into a document post. As you've already got them into presentation format, this is very simple and easy to do. Just add an introduction to give it context.

7. Create a podcast

Podcasts are an increasingly popular form of marketing and our co-author of Business Gold, Michelle J Raymond, routinely turns her Lives into podcasts and broadcasts them on Spotify and other channels. This is an excellent extension of event content reach into entirely new audiences.

Summary

There are some tricks to doing content well on LinkedIn. Making use of current best practice will ensure better results as will eliminating mistakes. However, don't be afraid to try something new.

If you spot a post you like or that is doing well, see if you can work out why and then create one of your own using the same technique. If it works, use it a few more times before deciding whether to add it to your regular post lineup. If it doesn't, move on.

Not all formats will work all the time. But keep in mind that you will build a following if you consistently post high-quality material over time. Don't give up. Most of us start out with very little engagement and few views. Follow the ideas in this e-book and it will make a difference to the success of your posting.

Credits:

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- Fanny Dunagan
- Richard van der Blom
- Michelle J Raymond

About the Author

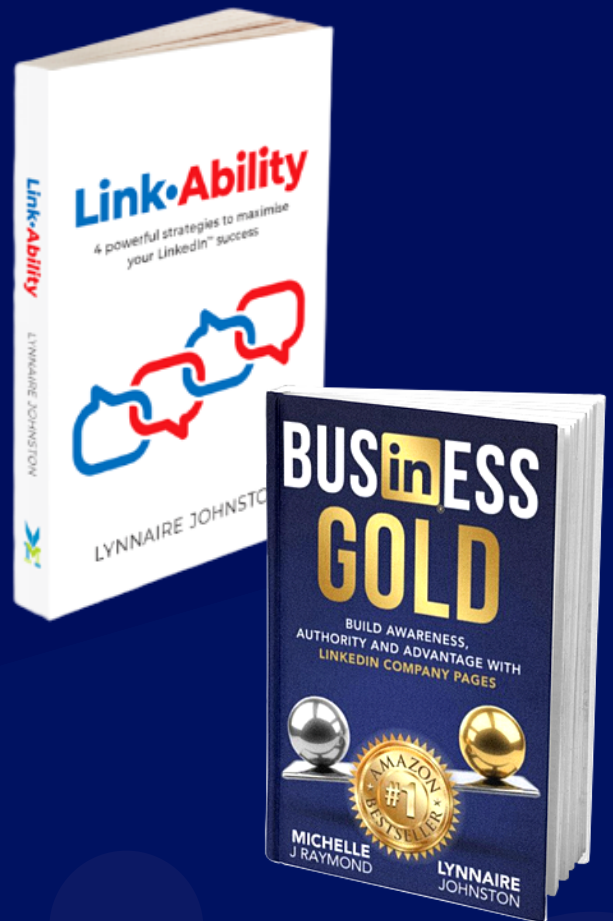
Lynnaire Johnston is an internationally recognised LinkedIn strategist and trainer based in New Zealand. She is a former broadcaster and editor, and author of *Link·Ability, 4 powerful strategies to maximise your LinkedIn success*. She is also the co-author of *Business Gold – Building Awareness, Authority and Advantage with LinkedIn Company Pages*.

Lynnaire works with individuals and businesses internationally to help them achieve their professional goals using LinkedIn. She does this through done-for-you profile makeovers, training and coaching of teams and individuals, and creating LinkedIn strategies for businesses, coaches, consultants, founders and other professionals.

Her Link·Ability members site provides a wealth of information for those who are serious about LinkedIn. She is a popular podcast guest and hosts free monthly LinkedIn Live webinars that attract hundreds of attendees.

On LinkedIn she consistently publishes posts, articles and newsletters that help her connections and followers to crack the LinkedIn code

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