

How to achieve a depth of attention on LinkedIn

LinkedIn is among the top platforms from a 'depth of attention standpoint', so said Gary Vaynerchuk, entrepreneur, best-selling author, and social media star recently. In his opinion, attention is currency and "businesses & brands must really understand this to fully take advantage of the opportunities in front of all of us!" As entrepreneurs and start-up team members we need that attention for our new ventures! How can we share in the riches of LinkedIn's currency?

Build a network you serve

LinkedIn is about connecting with people. It's about engaging them. It's not about us and our hungry egos. It's about our clients, our partners, our followers. People who do well on LinkedIn serve their network. In serving their network, they develop their brand voice and establish their brand positioning.

We can now communicate our message via a range of media on LinkedIn. You can write an article or share a post with photos, a video, a link or a document.

Here are some guidelines to help you keep your ego in check and your network

in mind whatever the media format you choose.

Sharing over showing

My friend Martin, an expert in public speaking, always publishes photos on his profile of talks he gives about public speaking. The visual message shows Martin the expert – photos of him in front of his slides, shots of the audience watching him – but he never shares any of his expertise with us.

Contrast that with Sara, who made a post about a talk she gave at a startup incubator on her entrepreneurial journey. There was one photo and then the ten learning points she shared from her entrepreneurial failures and successes.

Teaching over telling

Publishing an article on LinkedIn is a great place to share longer form content and to start a conversation. I've noticed articles that get traction are those that take a teaching approach. Teaching involves interpreting our own learning into easy-to-understand advice, or sharing insights from our area of expertise to help people see where they need to make changes for their business to succeed. By helping them understand the need to change, you have positioned yourself as an expert – possibly one they may call on for help.

Giving over taking

Corny, I know! But would you go to an event and only talk 'at' people rather than talking with people? Get involved in the conversations on the platform. Be generous with your time and comments. Share other people's content to help spread their message. Algorithms feed off interaction – be a giver and you will find people will start to check you out and comment on your content too.

Narrow over broad

Where do you want to focus your attention? Decide which conversations will maximise your exposure. Choose the hashtags that are relevant to your niche and add them to your content. On your homepage, pick your "Followed Hashtags". Even more so, on your Company Page, select your three hashtags with care. This is worth doing, as LinkedIn will invite you to comment as your brand on threads with these pre-selected hashtags – a great way to spread your company name.

Build an outward-looking profile

Think of your LinkedIn profile as your own mini website. There are three main areas of your profile that you need to focus on and they work in unison to help

you connect with your target audience. Your Headline is your hook; your About section is your pitch; and your Experience section underpins your pitch (or shall we say, gives your pitch credibility).

Your Headline – make it your hook

1. Remember your Headline shows up anywhere your name and photo show up on LinkedIn. Use it to hook people's attention.
2. Don't use your current position as your headline as it would be something like Founder@NewStartup which doesn't explain anything about what you have to offer potential clients and partners.
3. Consider using an explanatory phrase or tagline. Here's one I picked as an example which combines the person's keywords with a tagline:

Entrepreneur, Consultant, Coach & Mentor. Helping others generate an online income & financial freedom

Your About section – make it your pitch

1. Imagine you are sitting opposite someone from your target audience. Write what you'd say to them about your business, product or service.
2. Make it all about your reader and not yourself – you are no longer a job seeker, remember! Set out how you help your target audience resolve their issues with your product, service or expertise. That's the essence of a good pitch, right?
3. Enrich it with relevant media. You can incorporate photos, pdfs, videos and links to your About (and Experience) sections. This brings your profile to life and builds credibility; scanning a photo or watching a video of you is a quick way for your reader to check you out.

Your Experience section – gives your pitch credibility

1. When a potential investor or client is checking you out on LinkedIn, they want to know how credible you are. Explaining your professional path to entrepreneurship bolsters your profile; take time to explain your previous roles, responsibilities, achievements etc.
2. Whether you took the corporate route or are a serial entrepreneur, where you came from counts.

Build a profile with purpose

The question that logically precedes everything is: What is the purpose of my profile?

When I worked as a LinkedIn trainer, this question would always elicit a blank

stare from the profile owner. They'd never thought about the purpose of their profile, or at least, hadn't revisited the question since uploading CV-like content when the platform first launched.

When you can identify the purpose of your profile, you can identify your target audience.

As an entrepreneur, you are no longer looking for a job or to attract HR people, and yet many business owners' profiles still read as if they are.

The purpose of your profile is to showcase your product or service, to build credibility in your expertise and to position your (personal) brand on the market.

Who is your target audience? Investors, business partners, potential clients of your products or services, future employees, the media and possibly some other people like conference organisers or industry experts.

When you know whose attention you wish to attract, you can reverse engineer the writing of your profile so it 'speaks' to your target audience. Next, start inviting them to join your network.

We need to plan how we'll be trading in the 'currency of attention' on LinkedIn by keeping the best interests of our target audience in mind. Once we've understood that trading has always been about exchange, then we are ready to share in the 'opportunities that are in front of us all'!

Bridget Rooth is an entrepreneur, trainer, language buff and lifetime adventurer. She has worked all over the world, including 12-year stints in both France and China. Bridget recently retrained and combined her two loves of business & wellness in her company [MindSteadyGo](#). She now designs and delivers wellness workshops in organisations as well as running stress-busting retreats in the UK and abroad.

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