

In terms of influence, LinkedIn is still the boss - here's how to win on the professional network

It's easy to take LinkedIn for granted. Unlike other popular social networks, which have experienced periods of hype, rapid user growth or controversy, LinkedIn has consistently and reassuringly always - or so it seems - been there for us.

Temps de lecture : minute

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But to assume it hasn't evolved over the years would be a mistake. From its humble beginnings as an online CV and job search platform, when it launched back in 2002, to today, with one billion worldwide members, LinkedIn is one of the most resilient, adaptable and innovative social networks.

Many journalists and experts have argued that during the pandemic, LinkedIn really came into its own - as we know, WFH became the norm, the lines between work and life blurred, and staying professionally connected online took on a whole new importance.

During this period and beyond, the way in which other social channels emerged has also contributed to LinkedIn's popularity - the likes of TikTok and Instagram were always more focused on providing entertaining and engaging content than facilitating social connections and X has become rife with fake news and divided opinions.

LinkedIn filled the void for people and businesses looking to connect and share thoughts, content and news about life and work in an insightful,

measured and supportive manner.

The professional networking platform hasn't just stood the test of time, it's moved with it, alongside our changing attitudes to work, ambitions and values. To capitalise on its growth and influence, the following areas should be considered.

Understand the importance of the 'relationship economy'

Recently at Cannes Lions, LinkedIn's chief economist, Karin Kimbrough, spoke about how, with the rapid adoption of AI, the 'knowledge economy' is now giving way to the '*relationship economy*'. Kimbrough emphasised that while knowledge remains crucial, the growing importance of human relationships is undeniable and underpins everything we do.

LinkedIn as a platform is the embodiment of this. The company has invested heavily in AI - as one would expect of a Microsoft-owned business - to provide a range of tools to help its users increase productivity and growth. But the technology is ultimately focussed on aiding and encouraging human connections, which is firmly at the core of LinkedIn's mission.

We'd all do well to remember this - although the tech bells and whistles are revolutionising the way we operate, it should be a means to an end - nothing moves the needle quite like genuine human relationships and interaction.

Focus on the desire to 'connect' and 'learn'

As the company itself acknowledges - people join LinkedIn for two key reasons: to connect and to learn. Whereas other social channels seem obsessed with brevity and capturing user attention as quickly as possible,

LinkedIn feels like somewhere you can take your time, engage with interesting topics and people, and join balanced discussions.

It's also a level playing field - it's previously been noted how creative communities have flocked to LinkedIn in recent years. Indeed, there aren't many places where you can find a Marketing Director for a major agency or brand debating the merits of a particular campaign with a Gen Z intern from an indie outfit.

As a platform, LinkedIn facilitates and encourages thought-provoking, insightful and often long-form content on the topics that are making us all tick. So whether you're posting via the platform's newsletter, video, carousel or article functions, or simply standard posts - those who leverage the core desires of connecting and learning are likely to get the most out of the experience.

Some of the best content on the platform recognises the learning process as a two-way street - in terms of both paying it forward and passing on knowledge, while at the same time opening the door for further discussion, opinion and questions.

Be authentic, open and honest (but avoid oversharing)

On the subject of learning, LinkedIn has become an indispensable platform for companies and individuals, not only looking to share their successes, but via which they can also talk about the difficulties - failures, mistakes and hard decisions that come with working in or running a business. And this is certainly to be applauded - a more open and authentic dialogue encourages us to talk about areas which inevitably impact on brands, leaders and employees alike, in order to address and solve these issues - including mental and physical health, stress and balancing family life with work.

This topic has recently been written about in relation to startup companies - the founders of which are finding it cathartic for themselves, as well as hopefully helpful to others, to discuss areas such as shutting shop, having to let employees go, pivoting or starting over. It's admirable to open up about shortcomings with a view to moving forward, but be mindful of oversharing, as this playful article highlights.

LinkedIn is far more than a company directory or CV repository, it's a hugely influential hub that encourages a genuine community driven mindset, placing the importance of connection and collective knowledge-sharing front and centre. These are elements we should not only prioritise when engaging via the platform itself, but they will also enhance our everyday interactions in the wider world of business and industry.

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