

The Secret Sauce

How LinkedIn Uses LinkedIn For Marketing



AN INSIDER'S GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE LINKEDIN CAMPAIGNS

At LinkedIn Marketing Solutions, we use our own products, we drink our own champagne and now we're ready to share a true insider's look into how we have found success. This guide is unlike any we have created before -- it brings together the minds of those on our content marketing team, the demand generation team, product marketing, and ad operations team to give you a holistic, tactical look at how we execute effective campaigns on LinkedIn. It's a guide for practitioners by practitioners, if you will.

Read on to get in the tactical trenches with these top minds in marketing!



Alex Rynne serves as the external voice of the LinkedIn Marketing Solutions brand across all channels, guiding content strategy as well as managing paid, owned and earned distribution and amplification.



Gaurav Nihalani promotes LinkedIn's products on LinkedIn's own platform. He is LinkedIn's resident targeting expert and supported external clients for three years prior to moving over to support LinkedIn's own efforts.



Cassandra Clark is on LinkedIn Marketing Solutions' demand generation team. She's a data-driven marketer who strives to build a cohesive strategy between marketing and sales. She's all about reaching the right target audience and nurturing prospects through the B2B sales funnel in order to bring qualified, sales-ready leads to the table and increase company revenue.



Adam Yinger has been at LinkedIn for three years as part of the Marketing Solutions team, partnering with advertisers to offer strategic guidance that helps ensure their goals and objectives are reflected in their accounts.



Iun Chen assists the operations and marketing teams in campaign testing for data points shared in this guide. She's LinkedIn's intern supporting the ad operations team focusing on LinkedIn's own ad efforts.

All photography was taken by LinkedIn's own Gordon Mak and Tony Chung.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART 01

why you need a marketing plan for LinkedIn

- The Most Effective Platform for Marketers to Engage Professionals
- Market to Who Matters
- Content is Key
- Why is All of This Content Engagement So Important?
- Content Strategy: Organic + Paid
- Meeting Your Objectives

PART 02

content & campaign best practices

- Campaign Naming
- How LinkedIn Marketing Solutions A/B Tests & Measures Results
- Bidding & Budget Management
- What We've Learned From Our Always-on Content Approach
- LinkedIn Sponsored Content Best Practices
- LinkedIn Sponsored InMail Best Practices
- LinkedIn Text Ads Best Practices
- LinkedIn Conversion Tracking

PART 03

how we use targeting

- Aligning Content & Targeting Strategies
- Driving Personalization
- Targeting by Titles & Skills

PART 04

your top LinkedIn advertising questions answered



A black and white photograph of two women sitting on modern, light-colored armchairs in a contemporary office or lounge. They are both using laptops. The woman on the left is looking towards the woman on the right, who is smiling. A small round table between them holds two mugs. The background features a wall with a repeating geometric pattern and a dark shelving unit. A large, semi-transparent purple circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, partially covering the woman on the left.

PART 01

WHY YOU NEED A MARKETING
PLAN FOR LINKEDIN

WHY YOU NEED A MARKETING PLAN FOR LINKEDIN

As you're planning your content marketing strategy, you'll be deciding what content to produce and distribute throughout your social channels. As part of that, you'll want to plan how you'll take advantage of the most powerful platform for B2B marketers: LinkedIn. We all know exemplary content creation falls flat without a solid distribution plan. And that's why it makes perfect sense to include LinkedIn in that plan. While people are spending time on other social channels, they're investing time on LinkedIn.

79% of B2B marketers believe social media is an effective marketing channel. Furthermore, a whopping 80% of B2B leads come from LinkedIn. And, according to HubSpot, 43% of marketers

say that they have sourced a customer from LinkedIn. If your content marketing plan doesn't include LinkedIn, you're missing out on massive opportunities.

What's Your Approach To Using LinkedIn?

LinkedIn presents a unique opportunity for brands. It's the first time in the history of media you can reach the world's professionals in one place. With LinkedIn, you're targeting a quality audience in a professional context. And, you can interact them in a very meaningful way: by sharing valuable content through products tailored to how professionals engage. By doing so, you become part of your audience's conversations and education on the platform.

PEOPLE SPEND
TIME ON
OTHER SOCIAL
NETWORKS,
BUT THEY
INVEST TIME
ON LINKEDIN.

92%

of B2B marketers
leverage LinkedIn
over all other
social platforms.

79%

of B2B marketers view
LinkedIn as an effective
source for generating
B2B leads.

46%

of social media traffic
coming to your company
site comes from LinkedIn.

THE MOST EFFECTIVE PLATFORM FOR MARKETERS TO ENGAGE PROFESSIONALS

Today companies across industries and around the world trust LinkedIn to help them achieve their goals and grow their businesses. At the core, we help them:

- Target the right professional audiences to create awareness early in the purchase process
- Engage audiences with content
- Drive quality leads and acquire new customers

Why are the world's professionals now gathering on LinkedIn? Because the people

you're looking to market to are just like you and me. As we all search for the right destinations to find the best information, there are fewer places where we're gathering in large numbers. Think Amazon for buying stuff, Google for finding information across the web, Facebook for connecting with friends and family, and YouTube for watching videos.

In the same way, the world's professionals are coming to LinkedIn specifically to connect to brands, opportunities and their networks, and engaging with high-quality content across the platform.

MARKET TO WHO MATTERS

achieving your marketing
goals on LinkedIn

The LinkedIn platform delivers value by:

- 1 Creating awareness of your brand and products early in the purchase process.
- 2 Positioning your brand as a thought leader, and engaging audiences more deeply with content as they're forming perceptions and decisions.
- 3 Driving the right audiences to take action -- generating quality leads and new business.

61M
senior-level influencers

22.8M
mass affluent

6.8M
c-level execs

450M
professionals on LinkedIn

40M
decision makers

10.7M
opinion leaders

4.1M
IT decision makers

CONTENT IS KEY

people come to LinkedIn to consume content

There is an incredible assortment of very high quality audiences on LinkedIn in really large numbers, but it's more than just the quality of the audience. It's also about the quality of the interaction and the quality of the behavior that they are performing on the LinkedIn platform. You may think of LinkedIn as primarily a site where people upload their digital résumé, network with other professionals and look for their next career role. But 9 billion content impressions per week are delivered in the LinkedIn feed -- more than 15 times the job postings in the feed. These stats reveal that LinkedIn has become a destination where professionals consume high-quality content from professional publishers like The Wall Street Journal and The Economist, and even from peers who are sharing content in the feed.

► **9B** content impressions per week are delivered in the LinkedIn feed.

These professionals are consuming knowledge from whitepapers and other long-form pieces of content published on LinkedIn. We now have over 500 influencers -- including business luminaries like Bill Gates and Richard Branson -- sharing their perspectives in long-form posts. And we have unlocked the ability for every LinkedIn member to publish in that format. You can now essentially publish a blog on the LinkedIn platform and generate significantly more views because of the more than 450 million professionals who have the potential to see it.

It's also important to note that this content interaction is increasingly mobile. **57% of all those who visit LinkedIn do so on a mobile device** and that number is only increasing. Our members are highly engaged in the mobile feed, so you want to make sure your content is always-on and looks great on small screens. Your website doesn't turn off when you sleep, and neither should your content marketing strategy. A steady stream of always-on content is key to staying top of mind with your prospects and customers.

YOUR WEBSITE
DOESN'T TURN
OFF WHEN
YOU SLEEP,
AND NEITHER
SHOULD YOUR
CONTENT
MARKETING
STRATEGY.

WHY IS ALL OF THIS CONTENT ENGAGEMENT SO IMPORTANT?

It's important because content is essential to influencing decisions. A study by Google shows that 10 pieces of content are consumed before a purchasing decision is made. As a marketer, you want to influence the outcome of the purchasing decision, and content is your best way to do that. Simply put, people are consuming content at every turn. They are self-educating much more now because of the incredible power of the devices in their pockets, their ability to access

information at anytime, anywhere, and because they can easily tap into their peer networks. They don't have to go directly to the brand anymore to find the information they are looking for. They can access their peers and a variety of content in the LinkedIn feed -- even on their mobile devices. And that's why content is so important in the marketer's toolkit.

- ▶ **10** pieces of content are consumed before a purchasing decision is made.



CONTENT STRATEGY

organic + paid

Based on the goals and metrics you'll use to gauge success of your programs -- and given how members engage on the platform-- you can take advantage of a mix of organic content and paid advertising opportunities.

Organic

You can build your brand and content presence on LinkedIn on your LinkedIn Company Page and specific Showcase Pages, through **long-form posts**, and by uploading content to LinkedIn SlideShare. These are free tools you can use to establish brand awareness and establish thought leadership with your prospects and customers.

▶ There are **7.2M** Company Pages on LinkedIn.

▶ LinkedIn SlideShare reaches **70M** unique visitors a month. The site is now among the top 100 most-visited websites in the world.

As you start building your organic presence, in parallel, you can begin investing in a range of paid opportunities to reach the right people on LinkedIn and engage them at scale:

- In the LinkedIn feed using LinkedIn Sponsored Content
- In the LinkedIn messenger with LinkedIn Sponsored InMail
- Early in the purchase process using Display Ads on the LinkedIn.com desktop site, including programmatic buying
- Through other native ad formats such as Dynamic Ads and Text Ads

LINKEDIN
SPONSORED
INMAIL ALLOWS
YOU TO REACH
ACTIVE MEMBERS
THROUGH
TAILORED AND
PERSONALIZED
MESSAGES.

CONTENT STRATEGY

organic + paid

Paid

Content plays a huge role in driving prospects from one stage to the next across the long purchase process. Here are the LinkedIn products you can use to set the foundation for your LinkedIn marketing strategy:

- **Sponsored Content** delivers your content directly into to your target audience in the LinkedIn feed, allowing you to essentially capture people's attention where they're most engaged – while consuming information shared with them by their professional network. Sponsored Content is foundational in that you can think of it as our most versatile product. You can design your program to serve upper-funnel branding and awareness objectives or lower-funnel, direct-response lead goals, depending on your content approach.
- **Sponsored InMail** is a game changer in terms of taking personalized messaging to the next level. This product is the most direct way to engage your prospects on LinkedIn. Our customers use Sponsored InMail to drive tangible metrics including

higher quality, lower cost leads, event registration, and pipeline. They do that by delivering targeted, personalized messages and content right into the LinkedIn messenger.

- LinkedIn **Display Ads** is a powerful way to make sure you're getting on the radar early and building brand with the right audiences -- in the premium context of the world's largest professional network. Through LinkedIn's programmatic buying option, you can reach the right customers in a brand-safe environment with highly visible Display Ads and accurate targeting using your preferred demand-side platform (DSP) or agency trading desk (ATD).
- LinkedIn **Dynamic Ads** empower you to accurately target your audiences with highly relevant and customizable creative on LinkedIn. Because this dynamically generated ad format leverages info from LinkedIn member profiles, it is highly engaging and very effective at driving traffic to your website or Company Page.



MEETING YOUR OBJECTIVES

brand awareness, thought leadership & lead generation

Content Marketing Institute found that 94% of all B2B marketers use LinkedIn to distribute content. We also conducted a B2B digital marketing study in the fall of 2015 and found that LinkedIn was the top-rated social network for lead generation.



That's why it's essential to nail down your high-level content strategy. Chances are your content marketing objectives fall into one of the following three categories:

- Brand Awareness
- Thought Leadership
- Lead Generation

Once you've defined your objective, you then need to identify who your target audience. We make it easy for you to segment and reach your audience by offering authentic first-party data. More on that in section 3.

With your objectives and audience in place, you can take advantage of LinkedIn to achieve your goals.

We keep our followers updated with product launches and feature enhancements. ▶



Brand Awareness

Build relationships with your audience by getting your brand's word out and actively engaging prospective customers on LinkedIn. Shape perception amongst your target audience to increase awareness of your brand, products and services.



◀ We encourage our own employees to share best practices and secrets to content marketing success on LinkedIn.

MEETING YOUR OBJECTIVES

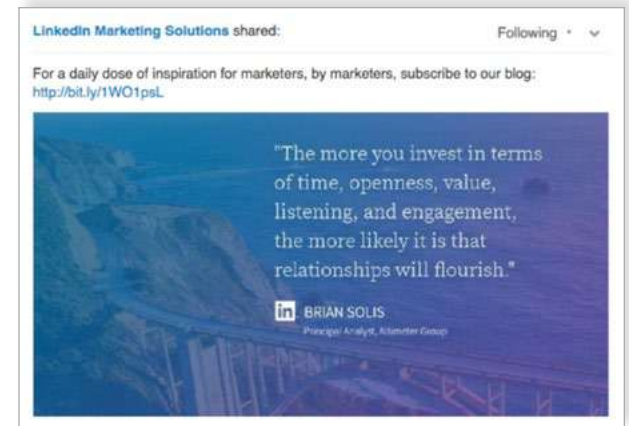
brand awareness, thought leadership & lead generation

Thought Leadership

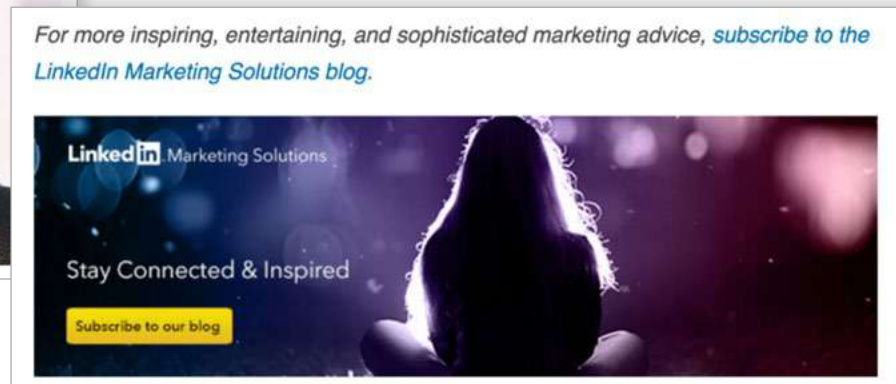
74%¹ of prospects choose the company that was first to help them along their buyer's journey. Share perspectives on industry news and trends, helpful product how-to's and articles which reflect your company's vision.

For example, we used LinkedIn to grow our audience on the **LinkedIn Marketing Solutions blog**.

We created a graphic with a quote featuring LinkedIn influencer, **Brian Solis**. Then we sponsored it and pinned it to the top of our LinkedIn Marketing Solutions Showcase Page. This Sponsored Content post drove 660 new blog subscriptions. (That's 3% of total conversions.) ▶




- ▶ We also sponsored a **top-performing blog post** and made sure the call to action banner at the bottom of the post directs people to subscribe to our blog. ▶



MEETING YOUR OBJECTIVES

brand awareness, thought leadership & lead generation

We sent a personal InMail message to raise awareness about the blog and drive subscribers. This Sponsored InMail drove 1,240 blog subscriptions. (That's 6% of total conversions.) ▶

**Jason Miller**

LinkedIn Marketing Blog

Dear Cassandra,

As 2016 approaches, you know the speed of change in marketing is only going to accelerate. How can you keep pace?

Here's one way: Subscribe to the LinkedIn Marketing Solutions blog.

Every day on the LinkedIn Marketing Solutions blog, we cover the new ways smart marketers are leveraging the opportunities offered by social media, mobile, search, email, and much more. It's a one-stop shop for everything a sophisticated marketer needs to get the most from their digital marketing arsenal.

Here's a sampling of the useful -- and entertaining -- posts that will have you thriving in 2016:

- [The George Costanza Approach to Content Marketing](#)
- [Introducing Your New LinkedIn Content Marketing Tactical Plan](#)
- [Infographic: The Content Marketing Top 50: High Tech Edition](#)

[Subscribe](#) to the blog today!

Here's to a prosperous 2016. Happy New Year!

Sincerely,
Jason Miller

[Subscribe](#)



LinkedIn Marketing Solutions

Inspiring marketers to succeed,
in business and in their careers

[Subscribe to the blog](#)

[About](#) [Feedback](#) [Privacy & Terms](#) ▶

LinkedIn LinkedIn Corp. © 2016

MEETING YOUR OBJECTIVES

brand awareness, thought leadership & lead generation

Lead Generation

Your LinkedIn Company Page followers are interested in your content and can easily convert to customers. To attract promising buyers and drive higher-quality leads, feature a good mix of genuinely helpful upper funnel and lower funnel content, including whitepapers, eBooks and case studies.

A Healthy Mix Of All Three

Here at LinkedIn Marketing Solutions, we recommend (and employ ourselves) a healthy

mix of brand awareness, thought leadership and lead generation.

Based on your objectives, you can test and find the optimal mix for your business. Organize your content portfolio to ensure a healthy balance that is helping you achieve your business goals. For example, smaller teams might want to focus on lead generation as a main goal and as the team expands, you can delve into more brand awareness and thought leadership campaigns.



- ◀ One of our evergreen pieces of content, **The Sophisticated Marketer's Guide to LinkedIn**, continues to generate the highest number of downloads and the highest number of marketing qualified leads.





CHOOSE
YOUR
adventure



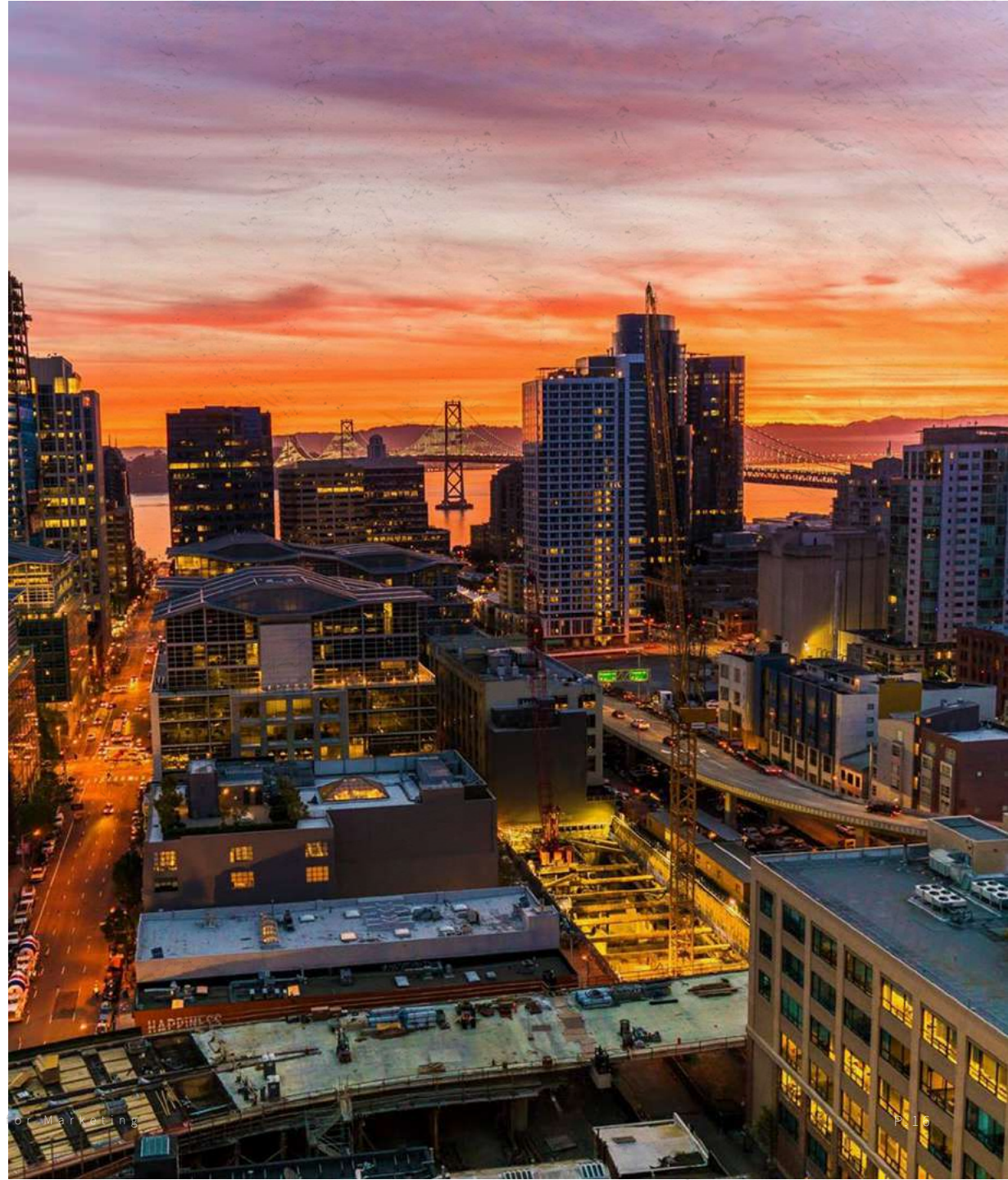
PART 02

CONTENT & CAMPAIGN
BEST PRACTICES

CONTENT & CAMPAIGN BEST PRACTICES

Ever wonder what sorts of operational strategies we use here at LinkedIn when setting up our campaigns? Below we have outlined a few tips and tricks to make your use of the LinkedIn ads platform more efficient and optimal for running your marketing campaigns.

Note that you can take advantage of our products to improve your content and campaigns in a variety of ways. To make it easy for you, we've mapped out opportunities to use LinkedIn products in different capacities.



CAMPAIGN NAMING

Campaign naming conventions can be highly useful when it comes to both searching for and reporting on campaigns in the LinkedIn ads platform. Put another way, when you name your campaigns descriptively, you can more easily organize and audit your audiences and content.

At LinkedIn we like to include the following in our campaign names:

- Business line/product
- Reference to the marketing campaign title
- Campaign type (i.e. Webinar, whitepaper etc.)
- Geo/region
- Industry/function if the campaign is vertical specific
- A unique campaign ID that matches with our other channels
- A date range for the campaign timeframe

These naming conventions allow us to quickly search by any of these attributes in the browser UI and show data specific to our interests. This helps our marketers in all regions/verticals quickly see only the campaigns relevant to them. It also makes it easier to filter in a spreadsheet and generate custom reports.

Here is an example of a campaign name:
“Product_CampaignName_CampaignType_Geo_UniqueID”

The LinkedIn Campaign Manager tool supports a maximum of 50 characters, so plan accordingly!



CAMPAIGN NAMING

A/B Testing

When it comes to A/B testing on LinkedIn, you can either test your targeting or creative approach.

Targeting

When you are trying to test whether you are reaching the right audience when choosing between two targets, you need to set up two separate campaigns. Other than changing the target audience, you should keep every other element the same, including the creative, bid, budget, run dates, etc. Now, bid prices do differ by audience and region, but the rule of thumb is to find a middle ground on a bid. In other words,

bid the exact same price on both campaigns without being too low or too high on either. We recommend you run all tests for a minimum of two weeks.

Creative

A/B testing creative is perhaps the most useful approach when determining how to best engage your audience because it allows you to figure out which visuals will get your audience to click. You can test more than one creative approach within the same campaign you set up in the LinkedIn Campaign Manager platform. Just be sure to set your campaign settings to “rotate variations evenly” as the system defaults to “optimize click through rate” when you set up any campaign

with multiple creatives. This option is available in your campaign settings once you launch your campaign.

Setting up creatives is easy but we recommend you create unique tracking parameters to get a clean read on post-click performance. And just as when testing your targeting, we advise you run all tests for a minimum of two weeks and only change one variable at a time when running A/B testing.

► For Sponsored Content, consider running at least 4 different creatives against one target audience to give your campaign more exposure and opportunity to optimize for highest performance.

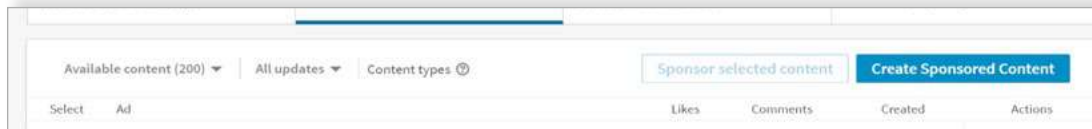
Ad rotation ?

- ☐ Optimize click-through rate - better performing ads appear more often (recommended)
- ☒ Allow ads to enter auction evenly

CAMPAIGN NAMING

Using Direct Sponsored Content (DSC) for testing

Ever wonder if you can sponsor a post without actually publishing it first to your Company Page? Well, with Direct Sponsored Content, it is not only possible but also encouraged as a way to A/B test on the LinkedIn platform. All you need to do is select “Create new Sponsored Content” when setting up your Sponsored Content ad creative:




COMPANY
PAGE ADMINS
AND OTHERS
WHO HAVE
BEEN GRANTED
PERMISSION CAN
CREATE DIRECT
SPONSORED
CONTENT.
LEARN MORE
ABOUT DIRECT
SPONSORED
CONTENT HERE.

CAMPAIGN NAMING

Then you simply insert your content copy and image in the pop-up creative build box:


Create Sponsored Content

Name your Sponsored Content?



LinkedIn Marketing Solutions

Enter in your landing page URL and add introductory text here. Keep it under 150 characters to display correctly across most devices.

150 

Tips

- Use an image size of 1200 x 627 for the best quality. [View ad specs.](#)
- Try creating multiple variations of the same update to see which image and copy gets the best results.
- Creating new Sponsored Content does not post to your Company Page. [Learn more.](#)

Please note that description text from sponsored articles or link shares will not display to members on the latest version of LinkedIn. [Learn more.](#)

CancelCreate

Your creative will then show up in the available content field, and you then select it as the update. This is a great way to A/B test content before deciding what to publish on your Company Page as an organic post to all your followers!



HOW LINKEDIN MARKETING SOLUTIONS A/B TESTS & MEASURES RESULTS

A/B testing is like putting together a puzzle: you need to test and iterate until you optimize every component of your campaign, including captions, images, CTAs, etc. And this is the process for each and every campaign we run. Oftentimes, tests reveal that the smallest tweaks can make the greatest performance impact. Plus, your gut might not always be right and while you may be confident in your hypothesis, testing may prove you wrong. It's happened more than once to us!

When we tested the impact of shorter character length, we saw more than an 18% boost in engagement rate.

When we tested an update with a statistic and without, we saw a 37% higher CTR and 162% more impressions for the former.

18% boost in engagement rate. ▼



LinkedIn Marketing Solutions It's time to take your content marketing to the next level, moving beyond theory to enlightened practice: <http://bit.ly/Hqxhg>



+37% CTR, and 162% more impressions. ▼



LinkedIn Marketing Solutions B2B buyers rely more on content to make purchasing decisions than ever before: <http://bit.ly/2gJK1CY>



HOW LINKEDIN MARKETING SOLUTIONS A/B TESTS & MEASURES RESULTS

Our test featuring an image of a person versus an object (keyboard and smartphone) proved that a photo of a person generates significantly better results.

We also tested the impact of switching out eBook vs guide to see which resonates best and guide won hands down.

+160% CTR, and +289% CVR ▼



LinkedIn Marketing Solutions Win Big With Content Marketing: Introducing your One-Stop Shop: <http://bit.ly/2ghkNyu>



+95% increase in CTR, and +50% impressions. ▼



LinkedIn Marketing Solutions Here's everything you need to know about content marketing. Download the eBook today: <http://bit.ly/2bJaxQj>



HOW LINKEDIN MARKETING SOLUTIONS A/B TESTS & MEASURES RESULTS

We test very similar images against each other to see which catches the attention of our audiences.

Through testing these two versions of this 'Executive Playbook' Sponsored Content post, we grew the CTR by 177%. Who wouldn't want 177% more clicks, site visitors and leads!

We urge you to give serious thought to your creative. Within this second image test, we have our marketer looking at the call to action button and looking away. The results speak for themselves.

This image saw a .332% CTR +32% Clicks. ▼



▲ This image saw a 0.36% CTR +13% clicks.

This image saw a CTR of 0.339%. (In other words, an 89% increase in click-throughs.) ▼



▲ This image saw a CTR of 0.179%.

HOW LINKEDIN MARKETING SOLUTIONS A/B TESTS & MEASURES RESULTS

In this example we wanted to test image headline, subheadline and the call to action verbiage. We found the one with “download the research” received more clicks and impressions than the one that read “download the eBook.”

Ad Impressions: 8,727, Ad Clicks: 33, CTR: 0.38% ▼



▲ Ad Impressions: 3,549, Ad Clicks: 6, CTR: 0.17%

This is just a small sample of the tests we have run on our team. And we continue to experiment every day. The moral of the story here is to keep testing and iterating until you find what copy and imagery resonates most with your audience.



BIDDING & BUDGET MANAGEMENT

How do you determine your daily budget?

Your daily budget will largely depend on your marketing objectives. For instance, if your goal is site traffic and your account's average cost per click (CPC) is \$10 and your goal is to generate 100 clicks a day, you would want to budget at least \$1,000 a day across all your campaigns.

$\$10 \times 100 = \1000 per day (Cost-per-click x Clicks per day = Daily budget)

If your goal is lead generation, you'd want to add an additional layer (conversion rate) to your calculation. Let's say you'd like to receive at least 2 new leads a day and you have an average conversion rate of 2% for your account and an average CPC of \$10, you'd want to budget at least \$1,000.

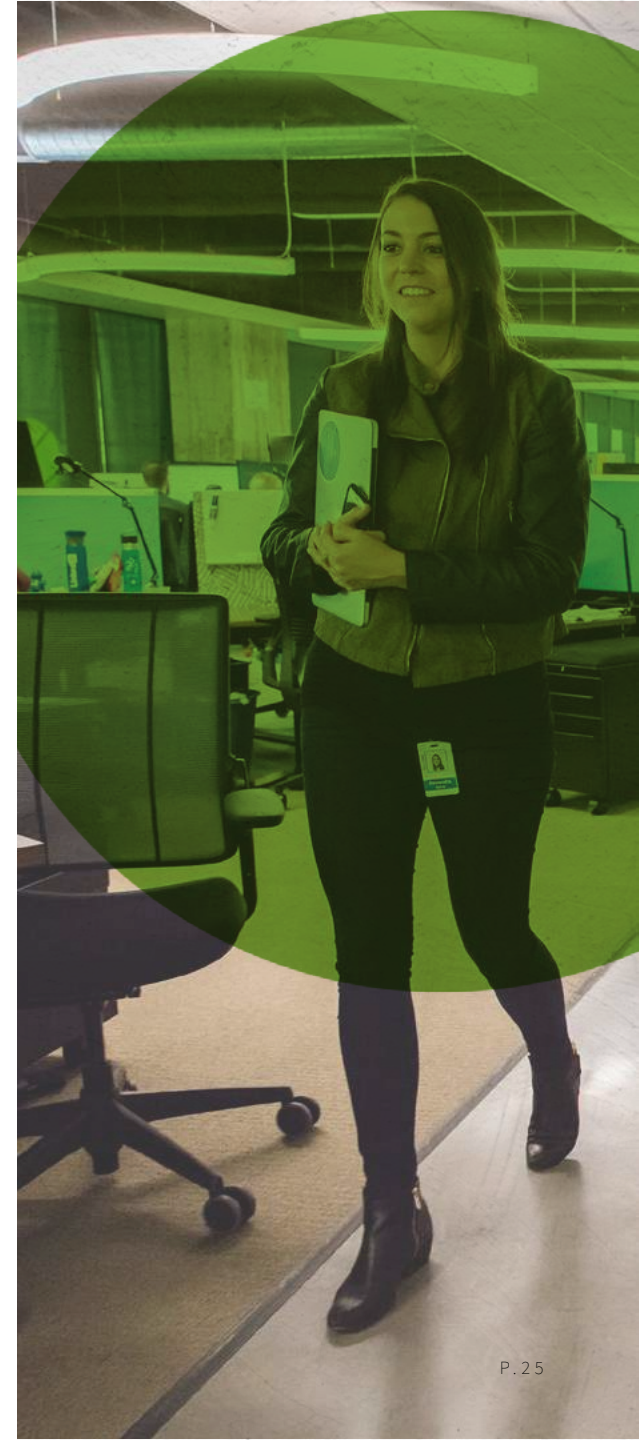
$\$1000 / \10 per click = 100 clicks per day ... 2% of 100 clicks = 2 leads

Bidding Above The Suggested Bidding Range

If CTR and conversions are your focus, a higher bid will help improve those results. When we set bids 10% higher than the maximum suggested bid for our own campaigns, we saw a 15% lift in CTR and 27% lift in conversions. Remember: If you win in the auction, you'll only end up paying the price of the second-highest bidder.

Bidding Within The Suggested Bidding Range

If you want the biggest bang for your buck, bidding within the suggested price range is your safest bet. We saw a 33% higher ROI on advertiser's campaigns when bidding within the suggested range. Bottom line: Your costs are lower and ROI is highest! The tradeoff: Bidding lower means it may take you longer to win an auction enough to deliver your budget in full. This is great if you want to pace your campaign slowly, but if your goal is to deliver your budget and generate a lot of engagement in a short window, bidding within or toward the bottom of the suggested range might not work for you.



WHAT WE'VE LEARNED FROM OUR ALWAYS-ON APPROACH

At LinkedIn Marketing Solutions, we've spent the past couple of years mastering the always-on content approach. What does that entail? It means engaging our audience through conversations and nurturing relationships over time, rather than sending one-sided, short-term messages. It means consistently delivering relevant content.

As we map our success with always-on content --specifically how we achieved our goals-- we notice three recurring themes:

1. Test Everything

We never want our content to get stagnant, so we constantly try new things and, most importantly, make good use of **Company Page analytics** to see what has worked. Over the years, we have tested different times of day and frequencies of posting. We've tried creating serial, themed posts. We've even published posts without links, just to start a conversation. We've tried different headlines, post lengths, images, and content mixes. And we continue to change it up.



WHAT WE'VE LEARNED FROM OUR ALWAYS-ON APPROACH

Using Direct Sponsored Content, we A/B tested 'eBook' versus 'guide' to see which resonated better with our audience. 'Guide' saw a 100% increase in click-through rate.

Knowing that quotes and statistics both work well, we tested an image featuring a statistic versus an image featuring a quote. The image with the quote saw a 30% lift in CTR versus the stat image.

LinkedIn Marketing Solutions Here's everything you need to know about content marketing. Download the guide today: <http://bit.ly/2bJaxQj>



89%

of marketers said their primary high-level objective for investing in content marketing is to acquire new customers.

Source: Starfleet

LinkedIn

THE *Sophisticated* MARKETER'S Guide to CONTENT MARKETING

LinkedIn Marketing Solutions Here's everything you need to know about content marketing. Download the eBook today: <http://bit.ly/2bJaxQj>



89%

of marketers said their primary high-level objective for investing in content marketing is to acquire new customers.

Source: Starfleet

LinkedIn

THE *Sophisticated* MARKETER'S Guide to CONTENT MARKETING

"Guide"

VS

"eBook"

LinkedIn Marketing Solutions Holiday Inn Express used LinkedIn Sponsored Content to market to those who matter most. Get inspired: <http://bit.ly/1oGEwbB>




75%

Holiday Inn Express's Sponsored Content generated engagement rates that outperformed benchmarks by 75%

LinkedIn

LinkedIn Marketing Solutions Holiday Inn Express used LinkedIn Sponsored Content to market to those who matter most. Get inspired: <http://bit.ly/1oGEwbB>



"Our goals are to break through the clutter, differentiate our offering, and persuade to action."

LinkedIn STACY ARMISTEAD
Senior Search and Social Manager for Mindshare

"Stat"

VS

"Quote"

WHAT WE'VE LEARNED FROM OUR ALWAYS-ON APPROACH

2. Visual Is The New Headline

When we've added more visual interest to our content, we've gotten more attention. Every LinkedIn Sponsored Content post is accompanied by a photo (1200x627 pixels will render best on the LinkedIn platform). We try to sprinkle some eye-catching visuals throughout, like this cool cat.

We also use images that feature short stats and quotes lifted from larger pieces of content.

When we tested rich media versus a non-rich media post, we found time and time again that rich media performs better. In fact, CTR for rich media can be up to 4x the CTR of updates with text alone.

3. Organic Is Good. Paid Is Better

It's always great when your audience finds you, but with Sponsored Content, we choose our audience. We can pick the people who will appreciate our content most, and deliver it in a way that compels a click.



LinkedIn Marketing Solutions Monday Motivation: Think big. Don't listen to people who tell you it can't be done.



Rich media images have 38% higher CTR than linkshare updates with a thumbnail image preview. ▼



LinkedIn Marketing Solutions Millennials: Embark on your path to social leadership on LinkedIn <https://lnkd.in/LinkedinMP>



INSIDER TIP:

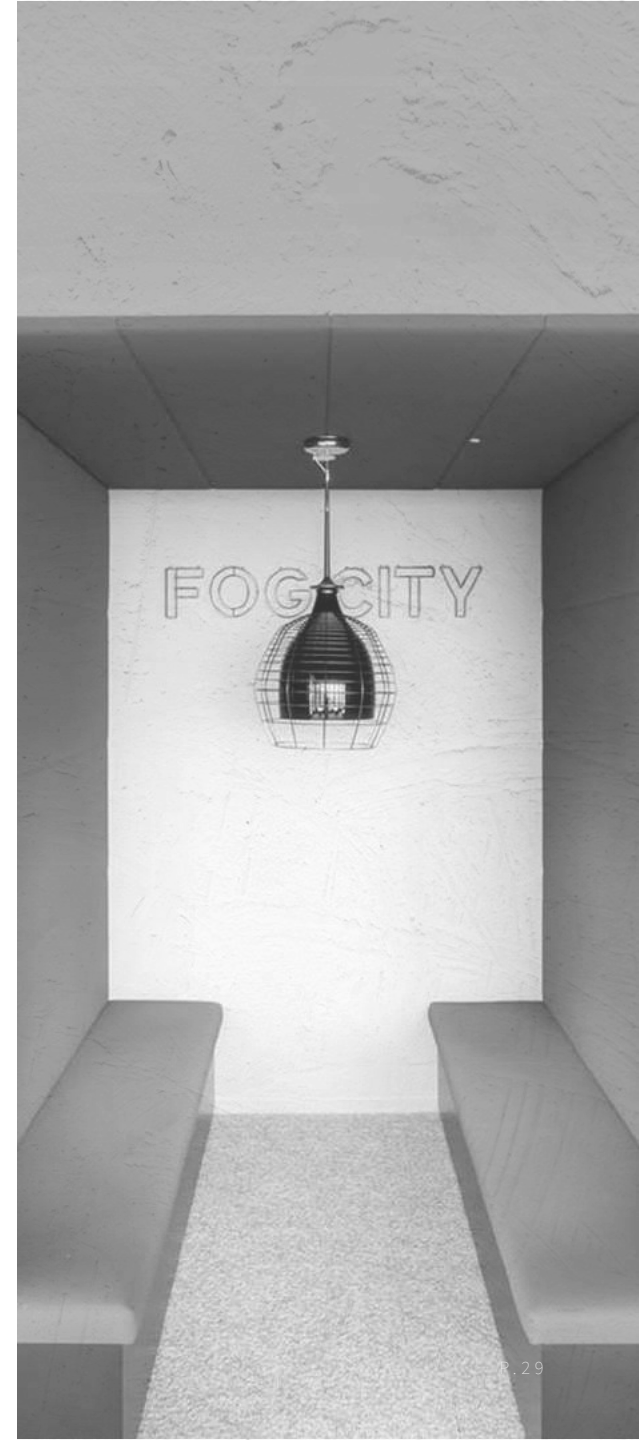
the case for using sponsored content and sponsored inmails together

If you use Sponsored Content alongside Sponsored InMail, will your campaign drive higher results? It's an important question to consider when you're deciding whether to execute just a Sponsored InMail campaign or a multi-product campaign.

For optimal results, consider using multiple LinkedIn media channels congruently for a marketing campaign. Running Sponsored Content and Sponsored InMails is one of the best ways to significantly boost your Sponsored InMail open and click-through rates. When we compared performance of our own campaigns with both channels running simultaneously

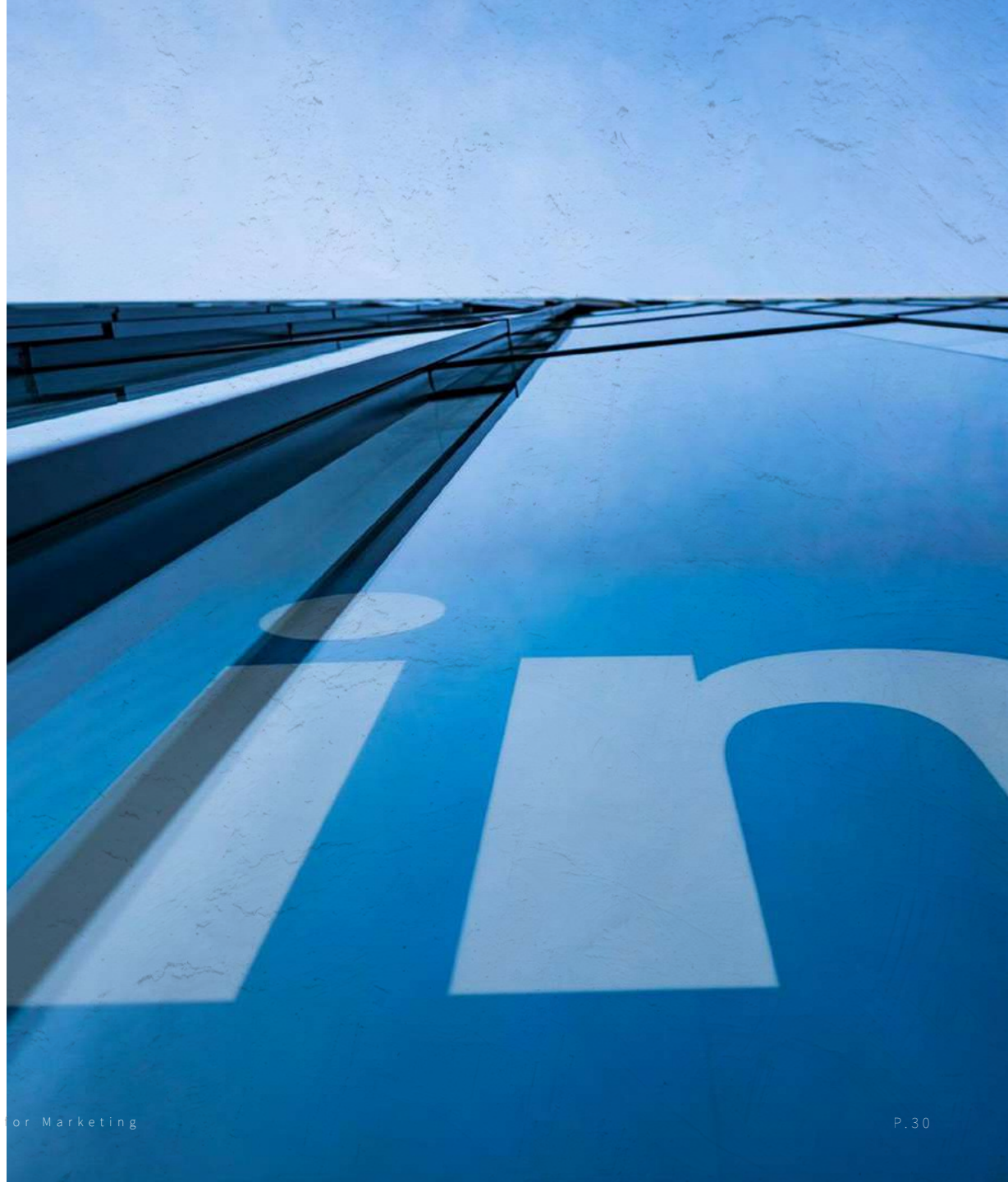
versus a Sponsored InMail-only campaign, we saw a 25% increase in Sponsored InMail open rates and a 95% increase in CTRs. This should come as no surprise: reaching your audience via multiple formats across the platform enables you to engage more of them and results in a better experience for them too.

We'll shed more light on each of these three major themes as we outline our content and campaign best practices.



LINKEDIN PRODUCT BEST PRACTICES

You'll find many similarities in best practices across our products, but we wanted to provide a deep dive into each for optimal clarity. Our hope is that you can adapt these checklists to your strategy to optimize campaign effectiveness.



LINKEDIN SPONSORED CONTENT BEST PRACTICES

- 1 Let's Get Visual
- 2 Keep It Short And Sweet
- 3 Snackable Stats Work Wonders
- 4 Variety Is The Spice Of Life

Let's Get Visual

To truly capture your audience's attention in an increasingly noisy space, you'll need to select rich, eye-catching imagery that matches the messaging of your content. You also want to keep the text on your imagery to a minimum. Keep in mind that 75% of Sponsored Content engagement happens on mobile devices so make sure your content looks great on small screens.

At LinkedIn Marketing Solutions, we think of 'stock photos' as a dirty word. Get more creative with your imagery by moving beyond your average photo of someone's hands on a keyboard. We did this by having a photoshoot with our team – real marketers at LinkedIn!

Just remember: creativity doesn't have to be a costly venture. Sites like Canva are great free resources. If you have a little more budget, Photoshop and platforms like Visage are great tools to find and edit compelling images.

THE OPTIMAL
IMAGE SIZE FOR
A SPONSORED
CONTENT POST
IS 1200X627.
TO ENSURE THE
TEXT ON YOUR
IMAGE ISN'T CUT
OFF, MAKE SURE
IT'S WITHIN
THE TEXT SAFE
AREA, WHICH IS
100X586.

LINKEDIN SPONSORED CONTENT BEST PRACTICES

Free Creative Tools

Haiku Deck: Killer presos—no designer required. If you haven't discovered this one yet, get ready to breathe a sigh of relief. Imagine a tool that teaches you how to create great presentations, and then actually helps you put that knowledge into practice. Haiku Deck is terrific because, let's be frank, no designer we've met ever jumped at the chance to put together a PowerPoint. For the rest of us who know what we want to say but need help putting it all together, Haiku Deck is an absolute gift.

Piktochart: A designer's library, at your disposal. No matter how well crafted your content, its chance of being consumed depends in large part on how well you present it visually. That's where Piktochart comes in. For infographics, charts, graphs and maps, or banners, it's our tool of choice. Its huge library of images and templates, along with color and text manipulation features, help make short work of creating high-impact visuals.

What's that? You want more free resources?

- Pexels and Pixabay for sourcing high-quality images
- Pixlr for image editing online
- Wix.com for creating a beautiful website
- Splashthat for an awesome registration page



LINKEDIN SPONSORED CONTENT BEST PRACTICES

Keep It Short And Sweet

We've found that shorter updates -- meaning 150 characters or fewer -- tend to perform best. Within that short update, focus on how your target audience would benefit by clicking on the link. You can always give it the "Would I click this?" test. If the answer is no, consider spicing up the text with a stat or an unexpected point of view.

Below is an example of a top-performing sponsored post we published driving traffic to our LinkedIn Marketing Solutions landing page. As you can see, the image features a stat pulled from LinkedIn data. The accompanying caption is short and clearly spells out why the audience should click.

- ▼ Deliver the right content to the right people and boost quality leads on LinkedIn.



LINKEDIN SPONSORED CONTENT BEST PRACTICES

Snackable Stats Work Wonders

We've found that lifting short stats and quotes out of our larger content assets makes for really engaging Sponsored Content posts. A numbered list or surprising stats or figures are both attention grabbing tactics. And everyone is more likely to share content that makes them appear more knowledgeable.

For example, we pulled stats out of **The Sophisticated Guide to Content Marketing**. We highlighted a compelling stat and posed an interesting question to pull in our audience. This worked because it tapped into companies' desires to be the first and best solution to their audience's needs and they saw our guide as a way to help them achieve their goals.



LINKEDIN SPONSORED CONTENT BEST PRACTICES

Variety Is The Spice Of Life

Creating a variety of content is a good way to avoid creative fatigue and allows for multiple A/B tests and also speaks to your audience's different consumption preferences. The LinkedIn Marketing Solutions team is always testing content, whether it's background color, branded versus unbranded or the specific verbiage used. (For example, referring to an eBook as an eBook versus a guide.) A bit later in this guide, we'll deep dive into the tests that we've conducted and the results we've seen, but we typically create and test 10 sponsored content images per campaign so we can optimize as we go and learn from every single campaign. We typically break those 10 images into 5 stats and 5 quotes as a standard for any product or large eBook launch. As mentioned before, you don't have to break the bank to create a variety of images. You can take advantage of **plenty of free tools**. And if you don't think that you have enough content from which to pull multiple images, start by pulling from your company website.

For example, below are two top performing images we published when we launched our eBook entitled, "Three Types of Thought Leadership: Selecting the Optimal Mix of Thought Leadership on LinkedIn." These worked

because they tapped into companies' desires to be the first and best solution to their audience's needs and they saw our guide as a way to help them achieve their goals.



We often include thought leaders in our imagery and eBooks because it creates goodwill and establishes our brand as a trusted source. Plus, these influencers are then more likely to share our content with their own personal networks. ▼



LINKEDIN SPONSORED INMAIL BEST PRACTICES

- 1 Be conversational and concise
- 2 Put your audience at the center of your message
- 3 Use Sponsored InMail to reach your highest valued audiences
- 4 Set up A/B tests to learn what resonates best
- 5 Use a clear CTA and add a relevant body hyperlink

Be Conversational

Rather than inundate your audience with yet another generic email, use LinkedIn Sponsored InMail to send personalized messages aimed at triggering engagement.

Here is some fresh content to work with:

- [Getting Started with Sponsored InMail Checklist](#)
- [Step-by-Step Onboarding Guide](#)
- [Sponsored InMail Best Practices and Gallery of Examples](#)

Keep Your Message Concise

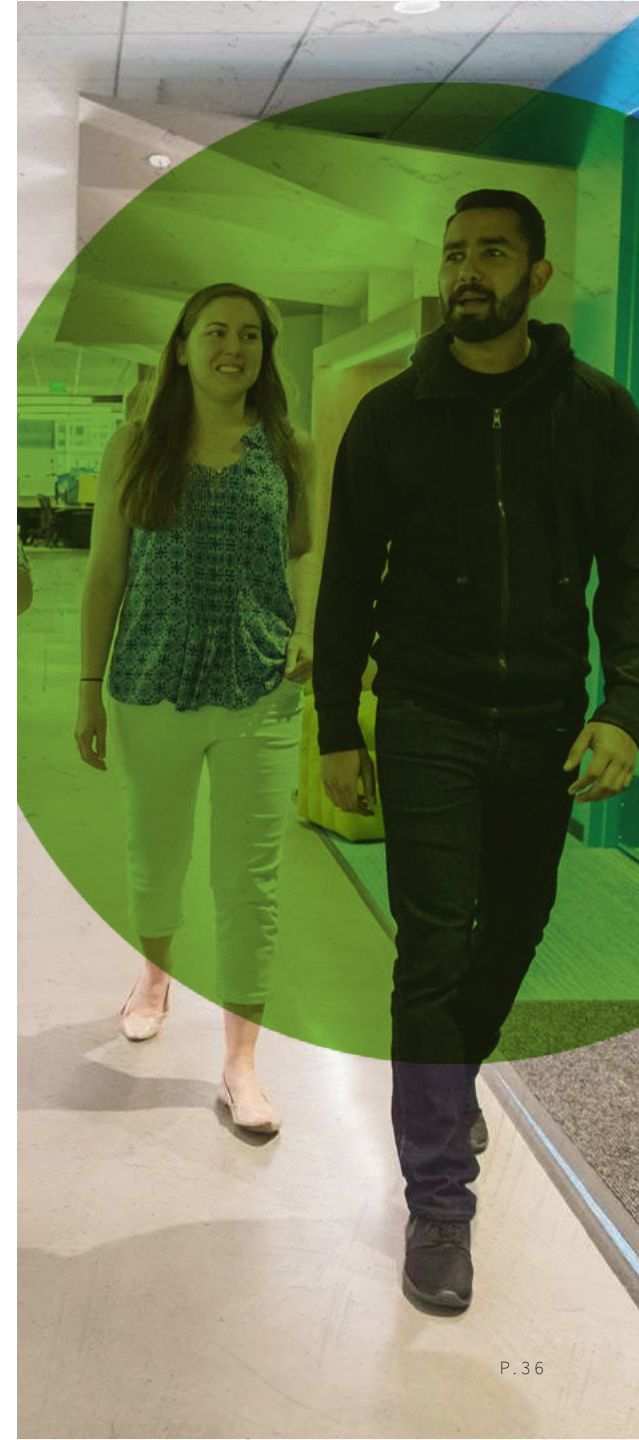
The best Sponsored InMails are brief, relevant, and conversational because your content is part of the LinkedIn member's messaging experience. Keep your message copy under 1,000 characters.

In the same vein, keep subject lines short for high impact. Subject lines with a clear value or opportunity to connect work best. Consider wording such as "Exclusive invitation," "Opportunities," and "Connect."

Put Your Audience At The Center Of Your Message

Ways to customize your Sponsored InMail:

- Use a dynamic macro to pull in the member's name in the greeting
- Tie your audience's experience to the context of your message
- Spell out why your message is relevant to the recipient and what the next step for engagement is



LINKEDIN SPONSORED INMAIL BEST PRACTICES

Use Sponsored Inmail For High-Value Audiences

Sponsored InMail allows for a one:one conversation with executives. Our tests of InMails aimed at executives have resulted in open rates as high as 58%.

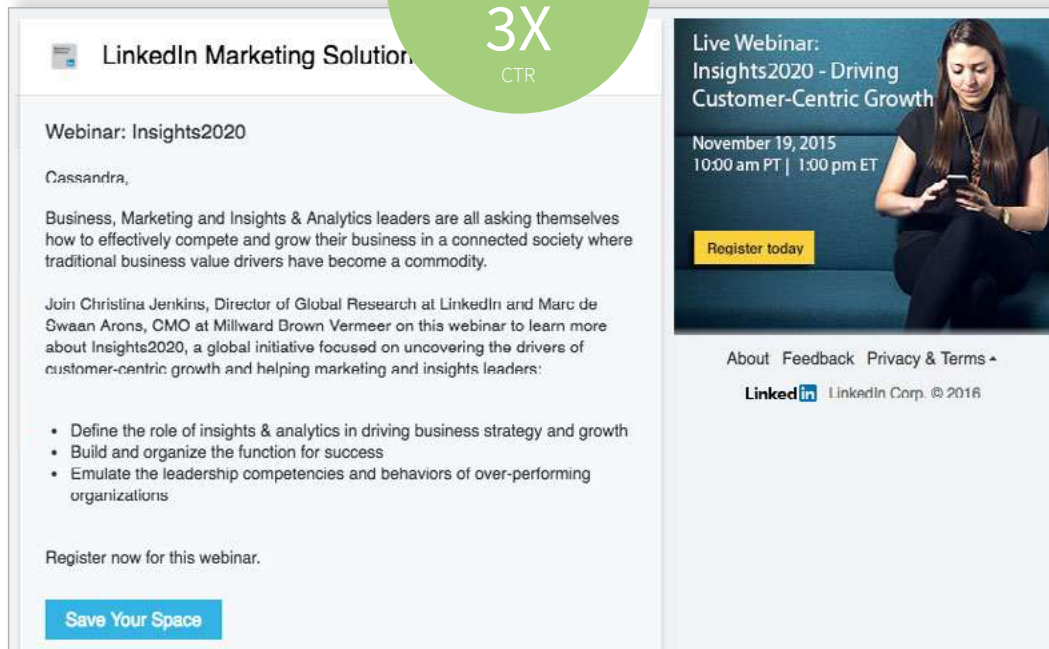
The Targeting Included:

- Function: Marketing, Media & Communication
- Company Size: 50+
- Seniority: Director, VP, CXO

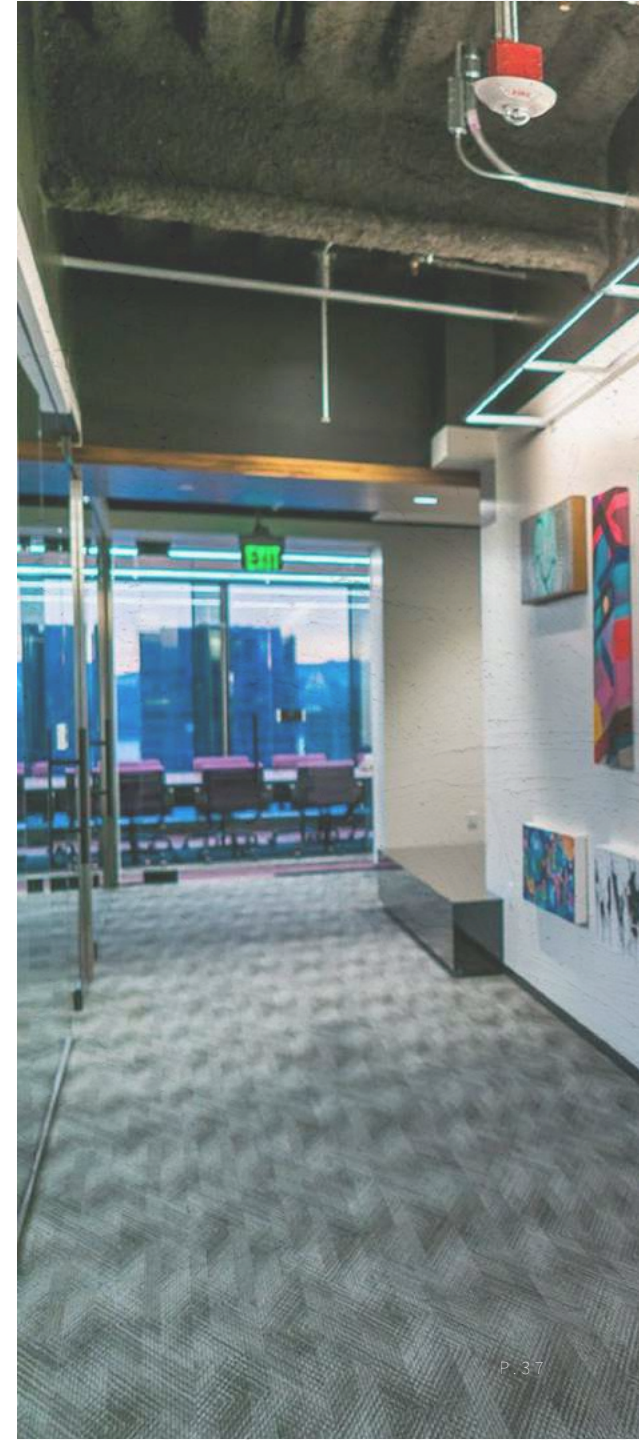
55%
open rate

3X
CTR

Trying to get executives to open email -- let alone attend a webinar -- is a challenge. This InMail saw a 55% open rate and 3x CTR compared to email. ▼



The screenshot shows a LinkedIn Sponsored InMail. At the top, it says "LinkedIn Marketing Solution". Below that, the subject is "Webinar: Insights2020". The recipient is "Cassandra,". The main text reads: "Business, Marketing and Insights & Analytics leaders are all asking themselves how to effectively compete and grow their business in a connected society where traditional business value drivers have become a commodity." It then invites the recipient to join Christina Jenkins, Director of Global Research at LinkedIn, and Marc de Swaan Arons, CMO at Millward Brown Vermeer, for a webinar to learn about Insights2020. A list of topics includes: "Define the role of insights & analytics in driving business strategy and growth", "Build and organize the function for success", and "Emulate the leadership competencies and behaviors of over-performing organizations". At the bottom, it says "Register now for this webinar." and has a blue button that says "Save Your Space". On the right side of the InMail, there is a promotional image for the "Live Webinar: Insights2020 - Driving Customer-Centric Growth" on November 19, 2015, from 10:00 am PT to 1:00 pm ET. The image shows a woman sitting and looking at her phone. Below the image are links for "About", "Feedback", "Privacy & Terms", and the LinkedIn logo with "© 2016".



LINKEDIN SPONSORED INMAIL BEST PRACTICES

Set Up A/B Tests To Learn What Resonates

Test your message across at least two target audiences. A/B test to track which subject lines, calls to action (CTA), and target audiences yield the best results -- and optimize over time.

The best way to see which verbiage resonates best with your audience (and to see a higher open rate), is to A/B test your subject line and your sender. It's important to test your message with a few different target audiences to see what type of click and post-click engagement you get. Sponsored InMail is a high consideration product with long form content, so the click is not equal compared to other media products.

► INSIDER TIP:

The optimal image size for LinkedIn Sponsored InMail is 300x250, with a call to action button included.

Use A Clear CTA And Add A Relevant Body Hyperlink

A clear CTA gets clicks and conversions. Include top-performing, action-oriented words in your CTAs like "Try," "Register," "Reserve," and "Join." When relevant, add urgency with wording such as "Save your space." And always make sure to include a 300x250 companion banner with your InMail.



LINKEDIN TEXT ADS BEST PRACTICES

- 1 Determine exactly who you are trying to target
- 2 Create focused targeting criteria
- 3 Set an aggressive maximum bid
- 4 Always include an image
- 5 Use a strong call to action
- 6 Create multiple ad variations for each campaign
- 7 Address your audience directly
- 8 Keep your ads and targeting relevant
- 9 Turn off low-performing ads
- 10 Minor changes can have a big impact

Determine Exactly Who You Are Trying To Target

If you have multiple target audiences, separate them into different “buckets” and create campaigns tailored to reach each specific audience.

Create Focused Targeting Criteria

When creating campaigns, use only a few targeting options at a time. Most successful campaigns have an audience range between 60K - 400K.

Suggestions for types of campaigns:

- Target by Geography/Industry/Seniority (e.g., UK/High-Tech/Manager)
- Target by Geography/Specific Skills (e.g., France/PPC, SEM)
- Target by Geography/Type of LinkedIn Group (e.g., AUS/Recruiting, HR)

Set An Aggressive Maximum Bid

Give your campaigns a higher chance of success by ensuring that you have a competitive bid.



LINKEDIN TEXT ADS BEST PRACTICES

Always Include An Image

Clear, bright images of business professionals make your ads more personal and appealing to potential clients.

Use A Strong Call To Action

Ads with a strong call to action, such as “Register Now!” or “Sign-up Today!”, perform better.

The image displays the LinkedIn Ads creation interface and a live ad example. The top section, titled "Create 2015 Lower Funnel CXO campaign", guides the user through building an ad. It prompts the user to "Let's start building your ad" by crafting a headline, uploading an image, and previewing the creation. The interface includes a "Where should members go when they click your ad?" section with options for "My Page on LinkedIn" (with a "Select a page" dropdown) and "My Website" (with a text input field containing "http://www.fxdex.com"). Below this is a section to "Add a catchy headline, image and copy", showing a preview of an ad with the headline "Deeper Customer Relationships" and the text "Take connections with customers to the next level with FxDex. Call today!". A "Preview" section on the right shows the ad in different formats: Square, Tall, Horizontal, and Long. The bottom of the interface features a "Cancel" button and a "Save" button. The background shows a LinkedIn profile for Justin Chase, Project Manager at Vivaly Communications, and a list of articles under the heading "Stories you can't miss today on LinkedIn Pulse". A sidebar on the right lists "Ads You May Be Interested In" with three recommendations: "Deeper Customer Relationships", "Simple Prototyping", and "Propel Your Job Search - Fast!".

LINKEDIN TEXT ADS BEST PRACTICES

Create Multiple Ad Variations For Each Campaign

Use 2-3 active ad variations per campaign to show variety to your audience while also allowing you to see which strategy is most successful (A/B testing).

Address Your Audience Directly

Grab their attention by calling out to your audience in the headline (e.g., “Attn: High-Tech Managers” or “Are You an IT Director?”).

Keep Your Ads And Targeting Relevant

Our system serves relevant ads more often and limits ads that rarely get clicks.

Turn Off Low-Performing Ads

Active ads with a low CTR can weigh down a campaign and lead to a drop in impressions.

Minor Changes Can Have A Big Impact

Even simple changes, such as adjusting targeting, raising bids, and refreshing/creating ad variations, can increase your performance.

Ads You May Be Interested In

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  Deeper Customer Relationships Take connections with customers to the next level with FixDex Custom Solutions. |  Simple Prototyping Create realistic animations and bring your designs to life as interactive prototypes. |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Ads You May Be Interested In

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  Deeper Customer Relationships Take connections with customers to the next level with FixDex Custom Solutions. |  Simple Prototyping Create realistic animations and bring your designs to life as interactive prototypes. |
|  Propel Your Job Search – Fast! On the job hunt? Get your work in front of the right people and let top tier companies compete | |



LINKEDIN CONVERSION TRACKING

Easily measure and optimize the business impact of your LinkedIn Sponsored Content and Text Ads

LinkedIn **Conversion Tracking**, a set of capabilities built directly into LinkedIn Campaign Manager enables you to easily measure leads, sign-ups, content downloads, purchases, and other desired actions on your LinkedIn Sponsored Content and Text Ads campaigns. With conversion tracking, you can understand more about the specific ads and even the unique LinkedIn audiences that are driving your conversions. LinkedIn Conversion Tracking allows you to identify the seniority, industry, job function, location and company size of the people who are becoming leads.

With LinkedIn conversion tracking, you can:

- Track the metrics that matter most: track website conversions from your LinkedIn programs directly in Campaign Manager. At a glance, you can understand your LinkedIn advertising ROI, conversion count, cost-per-conversion, conversion rate, and return on ad spend. You can even track which audience segments are driving the most conversions
- Record every conversion, every time: track conversions on your website from desktop and mobile, whether members converted after clicking on — or even after just viewing — one of your ads.

- Optimize your campaigns to drive even better performance: Monitor the specific campaigns, ads, and the nature of the audiences that are driving conversions. Then use this information to improve your Sponsored Content and Text Ads targeting, creative, and maximize the downstream impact of lead and opportunity pipeline goals.

▷ With conversion tracking, you can:

1. Track leads from your LinkedIn ad campaigns
2. Understand the ROI of your spend
3. Optimize for the results that matter most



LINKEDIN CONVERSION TRACKING

Easily measure and optimize the business impact of your LinkedIn Sponsored Content and Text Ads

How we think about LinkedIn Conversion Tracking metrics

Here at LinkedIn we use conversion tracking to measure campaigns through the bottom of the funnel. When looking at conversion tracking metrics we look beyond just the conversion count in order to understand the whole story of the campaign's performance. We feel that true optimization happens when you look beyond click-through rate or conversion count. Our 'true north' conversion metrics are conversion rate and cost per conversion. These are the metrics we look at to isolate top or bottom performers. Cost per conversion is the dollar amount you spend in order to acquire a conversion on that campaigns. The lower that number, the better.

OPTIMIZATION BY TOP FUNNEL METRICS VS BOTTOM FUNNEL METRICS

Top Funnel

Opens
Open Rate
Clicks
Click-through Rate
Engagement Rate
Cost-per-click

Bottom Funnel

Conversions
Conversion Rate
Cost Per Conversion
Conversion Value
Return on Ad-Spend

| Conversions | Post-click conversions | View through conversions | Conversion rate | Cost per conversion | Total conv. value | Return on ad spend |
|-------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 3,691 | 1,168 | 2,523 | 3.975% | \$10.53 | \$148,880.00 | 700.871% |

▲ LinkedIn Conversion Tracking helps us understand how impressionable our ads are.

We'll also look at post-click conversion to help us optimize creative. This is a really important metric to us. It allows us to understand if our creative, messaging and landing page are all working together. For those of you that are tracking conversions in a CRM system, this post-click conversion numbers usually lines up with the conversions you're seeing in your CRM from your LinkedIn campaign.

View-through conversions reveal what people are doing after they see your ad. We can track, for example, if someone sees our ad, and then comes back within 30 days to our landing page and converts. This helps us understand how impressionable our ads are. Are they convincing enough to stick out in someone's mind and

◀ These are the metrics we look at to isolate top or bottom performers.

come back to our site to convert? Is your content influential and creating enough awareness to get people to come back and engage with your brand or convert into a new customer?

How we optimize campaigns by top metrics vs bottom funnel metrics

When deciding which metrics to use to measure our campaigns, we first define our objective. If the objective is to drive new visitors to the website, we would look at metrics like clicks, click-through rate and cost-per-click to understand campaign performance. If our goal is to drive leads for our sales team we are going to look at metrics like conversion rate and cost-per-conversion.

LINKEDIN CONVERSION TRACKING

Easily measure and optimize the business impact of your LinkedIn Sponsored Content and Text Ads

How we optimize campaigns by top metrics vs bottom funnel metrics

When deciding which metrics to use to optimize our campaigns, we first define our objective. If the objective is to drive new visitors to the website, we would look at metrics like clicks, click-through rate and cost-per-click to understand campaign performance. If our goal is to drive leads for our sales team we are going to look at metrics like conversions, conversion rate and cost-per-conversion.

Below are two examples that illustrate the importance of aligning your objectives to the appropriate campaign metrics. In both of these examples our objective was to drive leads for the sales team.

In the first example, the metrics defined are only top funnel metrics (click-through rate, engagement rate, cost-per-click, etc). If we were optimizing on these metrics, it would be very clear that our Content Distribution eBook campaign is the winner. It is getting a much higher click-through rate and engagement rate as well as a lower cost-per-click.

| Campaigns | Performance | | Leads | Conversions | Social Actions | | Budget |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------|-------------|----------------|------------|-----------|
| | Status | Impressions | Clicks | Avg. CTR | Social | Total eng. | Avg. eng. |
| LMS_RC_ContentDistributionCheck Sponsored Content | Active | 122,827 | 660 | 0.537% | 171 | 779 | 0.634% |
| Campaigns | Performance | | Leads | Conversions | Social Actions | | Budget |
| | Status | Impressions | Clicks | Avg. CTR | Social | Total eng. | Avg. eng. |
| LMS_Solving_for_ROI_ebook_NAMI Sponsored Content | Active | 231,478 | 593 | 0.256% | 108 | 663 | 0.286% |



LINKEDIN CONVERSION TRACKING

Easily measure and optimize the business impact of your LinkedIn Sponsored Content and Text Ads

In this second example, we look at those same campaigns through the lens of our conversion metrics (on the Conversions tab). This changes the perception of a top performing campaign. The 'LMS_Solving_for_ROI_ebook' has higher conversions, conversion rate, significantly lower cost-per-conversion and much higher return on ad spend.

So remember, the key to effective measurement is understanding your objective from step one. Some campaigns are better served for specific metrics and you shouldn't define success in the same way for all campaign objectives.

| | | Performance | | Leads | Conversions | Social Actions | Budget | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Campaigns | Status | Conversions | Post-click conversions | View through conversions | Conversion rate | Cost per conversion | Total conv. value | Return on ad spend |
| LMS_Solving_for_ROI_ebook Sponsored Content Show conversion breakdown | Active ▼ | 249 | 62 | 187 | 41.99% | \$11.21 | \$7,719.00 | 276.592% |
| | | Performance | | Leads | Conversions | Social Actions | Budget | |
| Campaigns | Status | Conversions | Post-click conversions | View through conversions | Conversion rate | Cost per conversion | Total conv. value | Return on ad spend |
| LMS_RC_ContentDistributor Sponsored Content Show conversion breakdown | Active ▼ | 223 | 91 | 132 | 33.788% | \$14.03 | \$6,913.00 | 221.004% |

Learn more on how to [get started with conversion tracking on LinkedIn](#).





PART 03

HOW WE USE
TARGETING

HOW WE USE TARGETING

How Do You Approach Targeting?

When it comes to targeting, the most helpful tip we can offer is around reach and delivery. If you target an extremely niche audience, you may see amazing click-through rates (CTRs) and conversion rates (CVRs) but your reach will be minimal. If you target a broad but relevant audience, you will likely see a high volume of delivery and conversions but perhaps not as high CTR and CVR. Therefore, you need to determine if your campaign goal is to drive a ton of conversions or to simply drive a smaller, more select group of folks to engage and respond.

We take that to heart with our own marketing. People come to LinkedIn to invest time, seeking to engage with like-minded professionals and brands as they search for information, ideas, and inspiration. Meeting that need is the main goal of the content we produce on our Showcase Page. When we amplify the reach of that content beyond our followers, it's vital that we get our targeting right. After all, whether on LinkedIn or within the larger LinkedIn content ecosystem, targeting is one of the biggest determinants of success with Sponsored Content.

Lucky for you, LinkedIn offers a unique way to reach professional audiences that mean the most to your business. Here is a snapshot of all the targeting capabilities at hand on LinkedIn:

- Rich demographic data our members include in their LinkedIn profiles (Title, Company, Industry, Seniority, etc.)
- Interest-based targeting (e.g., Group membership, skills, etc.)
- Member Persona targeting. These audiences are unique to LinkedIn: (Job Searchers, Opinion Leaders, Mass Affluent, Business Travelers, and more.)
- Integration of your first-party audience data (e.g., targeted account lists to support Account Based Marketing) to identify these high-value audiences on LinkedIn.

Our LinkedIn Marketing Solutions team uses a wide variety of these targeting features in order to best engage our audience. In other words, we use whatever targeting option(s) will help us deliver the right content to the right person at the right time. Here are just a few examples.



HOW WE USE TARGETING

Our total addressable audience for the LinkedIn Marketing Solutions Showcase Page is basically any member who is in a marketing or media/communication job function. That's who we want to be having conversations with on the platform. However, we often layer on different targeting features to zero in on parts of that audience that matter most to us, whether that is decision makers, marketers in a specific industry or those with a specific job title. These targeting features allow us to focus on audiences that will

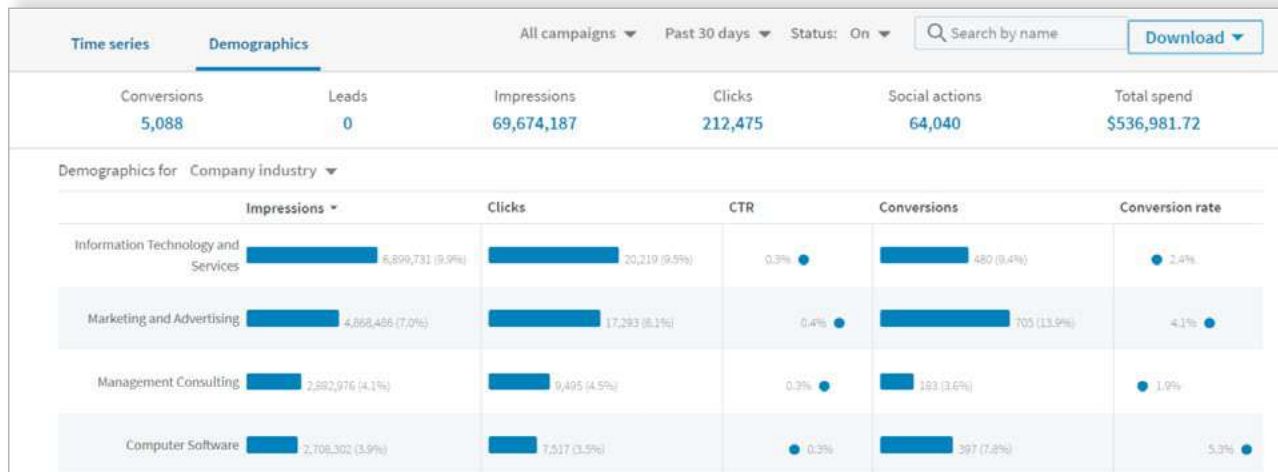
find the most value in our Sponsored Content and, if we're doing our jobs right, make them want to engage further with us by becoming a Showcase Page follower.

Audience Expansion

Niche vs. expanded, wide-net approach

If brand awareness is your goal and you are trying to reach a broad audience, you can use the audience expansion tool in LinkedIn Campaign Manager. Once you've identified

the audience you are trying to reach, simply click the audience expansion button and the tool will identify similar audiences on LinkedIn. You can start a campaign with broad targeting and then using insights from the Click Demographics tab, fine tune your targeting by the audiences engaging most with your content and use **Audience Expansion** to identify similar audiences.



Example of Click Demographic ▲

ALIGNING CONTENT & TARGETING STRATEGIES

When you're thinking about your targeting strategy on LinkedIn, remember why people are on LinkedIn in the first place. As we've discussed, they're coming to consume content for their professional development. A good content marketing strategy is one that aims to be useful to the audience. So provide content that will somehow serve your audience that addresses their professional goals or wants/needs. Don't be self-serving by only talking about your brand and its offerings and urging the audience to get in touch with your company. While there is a time and place for that type of content, it's not on the LinkedIn platform. If you do ask the audience to do something for you (e.g., fill out a form), give them valuable content in return.

Here are two examples of Sponsored Content that do extremely well for us. The example to the right is an eBook we did in partnership with HubSpot called the **Marketing Skills Handbook**, which outlines the marketing skills you need to be successful.

The **Executive Playbook** on the right is one of our top revenue-driving pieces of content. We all want to target decision makers, but how do we get them to download the content and consume it? It's certainly not by just asking them to fill out a form so that our sales team can follow up. No, it's by sharing our expertise -- information they can put to use in their professional lives.



DRIVING PERSONALIZATION

Now let's explore how we use Direct Sponsored Content to drive personalization.

Targeting By Industry

Targeting by industry works well when your product is specific to one industry. If your product can serve many industries then it makes sense to leave this attribute out of your targeting. We say this because typically products are tailored for specific functions rather than industries (e.g. accounting software is not used by all employees at an accounting firm but it is used by all accountants regardless of industry). Therefore, it is best to only use industry targeting when promoting a product specific to that industry and regardless of the different functions.

While we have targeted by industry for some time, as we continue to optimize our content strategy, we have adopted an even more targeted, personalized approach in our messaging and advertising. We're doing this because the future of marketing is about shifting from one-to-many conversations to one-to-one conversations. Even without a huge content engine pumping out industry-specific content, you can use Direct Sponsored Content to directly speak to those industries -- or to any other audience you want to engage. That's because you can personalize, test, and improve your company's messages to improve the performance of your content for a targeted audience without cluttering the Company Page.

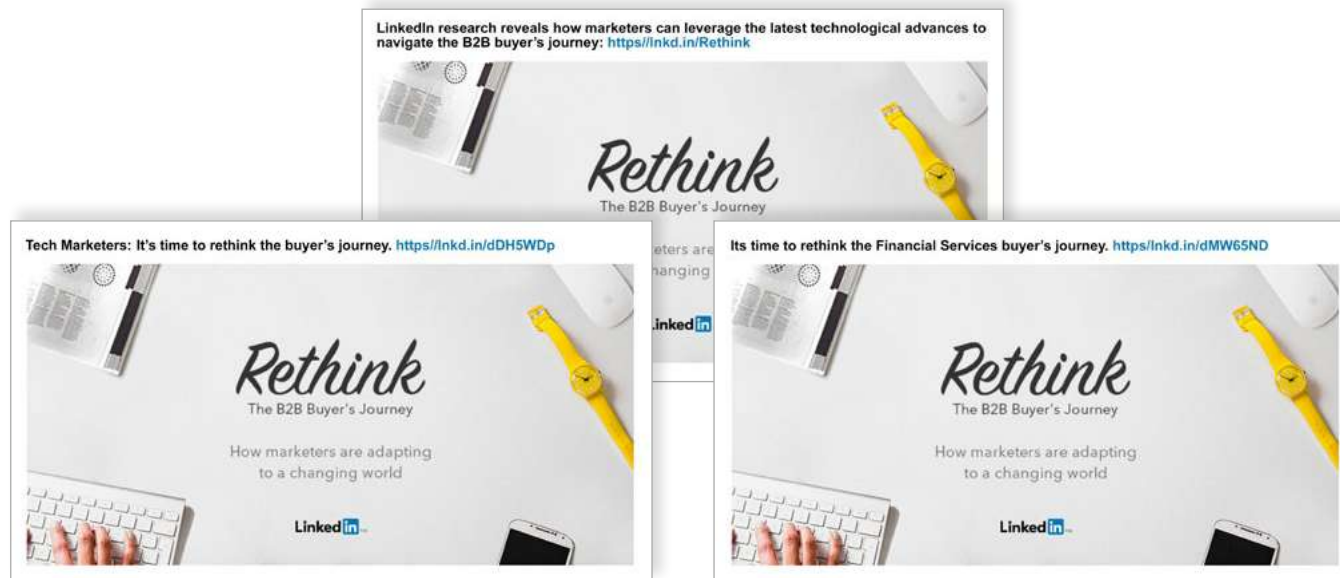


DRIVING PERSONALIZATION

We ran the campaign below for the launch of our 2016 B2B research. While the research itself is relevant to a wide group of marketers, we wanted to address specific audiences within that wider audience because we knew this research would resonate with them. With this in mind, one version of the creative was generic; we targeted this to a pretty broad audience. We also produced two creatives targeted to two different industries: tech and finance.

It probably comes as no surprise that we saw much higher performance from the more targeted and personalized creatives. The tech creative drove a 185% higher engagement rate than the generic version. You could argue that these marketers would have clicked on the generic version if they hadn't been presented an industry-specific version. But it's the ability to

use targeting and engage in 1:1 conversations in the LinkedIn feed with specific professionals that is so valuable in today's world. And it is this kind of personalization that has helped us build a relationship with our audience on LinkedIn.



TARGETING BY TITLES & SKILLS

We recognize that marketers assume many different roles and responsibilities and that, in turn, they are focused on different goals. With that in mind, our content team has identified subsets of our target audience by title and skills and we use our LinkedIn targeting to reach those specific groups.

The example to the left is a guide our team wrote on how to use LinkedIn for Demand Gen and on the right is a similar offer aimed at marketers focused on branding. We aimed these guides at those we consider to have the top job titles and skills for demand gen and brand marketing. On the slide here are some examples of some of the titles we used to reach these audiences with this highly specialized content.

Targeting by age can be a great way to capture audiences of different generations. For example, if your campaign's message is intended to resonate with millennials then this may be a good option. However, do know that our age targeting is based off of a member's graduation year and therefore since many members have not listed their graduation year this way of targeting can diminish the overall size of your audience.

Job Title = Demand Generation Manager, Digital Marketing, Acquisition Marketing, SEO Marketing, Search Engine Marketing, Marketing Automation Manager, etc. ▼



▲ Job Title = Brand Manager, Brand Marketing Manager, Global Marketing Manager, Director Brand Marketing, etc.

TARGETING BY TITLES & SKILLS

We recommend that you rather target by years of experience when going after a specific age group as years of experience is based off the number of years someone has been employed. This data is far more complete on the majority of member profiles and will therefore give you a much larger and more active audience.

Here's what we found when testing targeting of different segments against targeting by age:

- Targeting by Seniority vs. age targeting. If you're targeting executives, targeting by age diminishes audience size by 70%.
- When targeting Healthcare Career Starters by age, audience size diminished by 92% (914,000 for age targeting vs. 9.4 million for seniority targeting).
- When targeting High-Tech Career Starters (Training/Entry/Sr) by age, audience size diminished by 91% (7.8 million for age targeting vs. 674,000 for seniority targeting).
- When targeting EDU Career Starters by age, audience size diminished by 89% (860,000 for age targeting vs. 7.5 million for seniority targeting).

Targeting Best Practices

- Don't hyper-target
- Align your content and targeting strategy
- Don't be afraid to experiment
- Try audience expansion





PART 04

YOUR TOP LINKEDIN ADVERTISING
QUESTIONS ANSWERED

YOUR TOP LINKEDIN ADVERTISING QUESTIONS ANSWERED

From far and wide -- conferences, webinars, and customer events -- we compiled a list of your most burning LinkedIn Advertising questions and answers from the experts. We hope this helps you in your pursuit of LinkedIn Advertising domination.

Q U E S T I O N

When you're testing different copy images or audiences with Direct Sponsored Content, are you setting up wholly separate campaigns and testing each campaign against the other or are you testing different pieces of content within a single campaign?

It depends on our goals. If we're trying to check the impact of our campaigns on engagement or clicks, we'll run the tests within the same campaigns. However, if we want to track conversions (or marketing qualified leads we're turning over to sales), we'll run them separately because we need to enter two separate URLs in Salesforce. For example, we use UTM parameters.

Q U E S T I O N

My campaign has gotten a lot of impressions, but the click-through rate is still kind of low. How can I raise the click-through rate?

You can try a few things. First, make sure that your posts include some kind of visual or image. Uploading a larger piece of rich media is a proven way to capture a member's attention in the news feed and drive higher engagement rates. We've found the best size is 1200 pixels by 627 pixels. If your image includes any text, we recommend that you center the text with a little bit of margin on all sides. Next, ask yourself if the message of your content matches the interest of your target audience. Say you're targeting marketing directors at companies in the software industry and are promoting a guide on how to boost SaaS sales. This audience likely wouldn't be interested in a guide that explores ways to set up a sales team, but probably would be interested in a guide showcasing effective marketing campaigns for SaaS offerings.

Another tactic is to post three to five organic updates to your LinkedIn Company Page and monitor those posts for one or two weeks to see which posts are driving the most engagement. Then sponsor the highest-performing ones. You can actually sponsor a piece of content directly from your LinkedIn Company Page if you're a company page admin or you can visit [linkedin.com/ads](https://www.linkedin.com/ads) to start a new sponsored content campaign. From there, you can select posts from your page to sponsor.

YOUR TOP LINKEDIN ADVERTISING QUESTIONS ANSWERED

QUESTION

How long would you let a piece of creative run in a campaign before refreshing the campaign with new content?

We keep a very close eye on performance both from a conversion rate and an engagement rate perspective. We sponsored one post for almost a year and it did extremely well. But when it finally tapered off in performance, we knew it was time to make a change. When you've exhausted a piece of content, you can either: 1) Refresh the creative and the headline copy to try to boost engagement or 2) Pull it completely and replace it with another offer.

QUESTION

How can smaller businesses with small content budgets create content to sponsor on LinkedIn? What are some ideas for getting and/or producing content cost effectively?

We see content opportunities everywhere. Your company website is a great place to start since company news, blog posts and recent case studies are all shareable. We've also mastered

the art of repurposing. If you can invest in producing one large content asset (which we refer to as a "Big Rock") like an eBook that covers a topic or a question top of mind with your audience, you can then promote that through multiple Sponsored Content posts. In fact, we've sponsored some of our own eBook updates over three, six, nine or more months. Then -- like us -- you can carve that eBook up into blog posts, webinars, SlideShares, infographics, podcasts, etc. For example, you could publish a separate blog post covering each chapter or even covering sub-topics within the eBook.

If you're not sure where to start with your Big Rock, start with the keyword you want to rank for or conduct social listening to see what pressing issues your target audience is discussing. Then produce a piece of content that establishes your company as the most useful resource on that topic, and you boost the likelihood of prospects thinking of you first when it comes time to make a purchase.

QUESTION

What's a good audience size for advertising on LinkedIn?

When you create a Sponsored Content campaign, a forecasting tool shows you how many members your target audience contains and your highest potential reach. While a good rule of thumb is to target at minimum 300,000 LinkedIn members, aim for 500,000 or more if you can. Remember: the more niche your audience, the harder it will be generating a solid ROI.

A good strategy is to adopt a test-and-learn approach: start with a broad target, see which audience segments are engaging and then narrow it down from there. Specifically, start with a broad target audience and then use the analytics and Campaign Manager tools within LinkedIn Advertising to identify the kinds of members and audience segments that are most engaged with your content. Then refine your targeting to focus on those types of members and those audience segments.



MARKET TO WHO MATTERS

Ready to effectively engage the world's
largest network of business professionals
and influencers?

GET STARTED

Learn about LinkedIn
Marketing Solutions.

Stay on the cutting
edge with our blog.

Follow us
on LinkedIn.

Follow us on
@LinkedInMKTG.

