

THE SOCIAL LEADER



How great leaders use **LinkedIn** to engage employees, build trust, and inspire success

JUDY SCHRAMM

THE SOCIAL LEADER



How Great Leaders Use **LinkedIn** to
Engage Employees, Build Trust,
and **Inspire Success**

JUDY SCHRAMM

© 2021 by Judy Schramm

All rights reserved.

This book is designed to provide accurate information and advice based on the experience of the author. No results are guaranteed because all results are dependent on the application, motivation, and work of each individual reader.

While the author has made every effort to provide accurate and up-to-date information, the ever-evolving nature of LinkedIn's platform and policies may result in changes in how to apply the information and tips. Neither the author nor the publisher assumes any responsibility for errors or changes that occur after publication. Further, neither the author nor the publisher has any control over and do not assume responsibility for third-party websites or their content.

LinkedIn, the LinkedIn logo, and the IN logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of LinkedIn Corporation and its affiliates in the United States and/or other countries. LinkedIn does not endorse any of the material contained herein.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Why Be Social?
- Build Your Executive Presence
- 3 Ways Spending Time on LinkedIn Saves You Time
- How to Delegate or Outsource Effectively

WHO THIS BOOK IS FOR...

You are a vice president of a Fortune 500 company, 20+ years into a successful career. Or you are a founder, planning to grow your business into a unicorn. Or you are new to management but planning to rise to the C-suite.

Your company has a strong social media presence, but you know, as a leader, that you also need to have your own presence.

You know social media is a powerful communication tool – one you need to deploy – but your time is fully taken up with work, your family, your friends, taking care of your health, and your other commitments. There's no time to spend hours in professional social media.

And even if there were, what are you supposed to be doing? How is putting time into social media going to help you as a leader?

Give me the next 30 minutes.

By the time you finish this book, you'll understand why a strong professional social media presence serves you and know how to think about your personal social media strategically.

I'm going to focus on LinkedIn – not that the other platforms don't have value. If your employees and customers are on Instagram or TikTok, you'll want to be there, too. But LinkedIn is the essential foundation for a professional social media presence. Start there, then expand.

Let's start with finding a reason for building out a strong personal presence. Realistically, if you don't have a compelling reason, you are never going to be able to find the time to do this.

The background of the image shows a person in a red and blue plaid shirt gesturing with their hands while speaking in what appears to be a meeting or presentation. The entire image is covered with a semi-transparent blue filter. A short, horizontal yellow line is positioned above the text.

WHY BE SOCIAL?

WHY BE SOCIAL?

As far back as 2010, when Weber Shandwick started studying CEOs who are active in social media, they discovered that **76% of the global executives they surveyed believed it was a good idea for CEOs to participate in social media.** They said their CEO's social media activity made them feel inspired, technologically advanced, and proud.

Further, the executives rated social CEOs higher than unsocial CEOs on eight out of nine leadership attributes, including:

- More forward-looking
- Better communicators
- More effective
- More open and accessible
- More inspiring
- More in touch

And 73% of the executives surveyed said they search to see what their CEOs are saying in social media.

It's even more true today. With Millennials the largest segment of the workforce, and Gen Z right behind, the people you manage are social media natives. They expect you to be found in social media, and they expect to see you active.

When you're not, you look outdated and irrelevant.

Especially now, with employee engagement at an all-time low because of the pandemic, and the challenges of re-invigorating your team as everyone heads back to the office (or not), if you haven't been active in social media before, this is the time to start.

Let's begin by looking at some of the things you can accomplish using LinkedIn.



HUMANIZE YOUR ROLE ---

The larger your company is, the fewer people there are who know you as an individual. They know your role, but often they see you as a title more than a human being.

LinkedIn gives you the perfect way to put a human face on your role.

You can share details about your day, show your sense of humor, and allow people to get a taste of your personality. When employees feel like they know you personally, they feel more connected to you and find it easier to trust you.



CONTROL THE WEATHER

As a leader, you are always on stage. Everything you say is analyzed and interpreted.

When your organization is going through change or challenging times - and who isn't right now - people look to you.

You can use LinkedIn as an informal way to let people see your mood. Show how you interpret the latest news and events. Let them see your excitement about their wins, and let them know the challenges are just bumps in the road.

When you are authentically positive and upbeat, your mood uplifts and inspires. You give people confidence in the future.



PRAISE PUBLICLY

Employees feel listened to and valued when they see you engage with their posts.

It doesn't take much – a comment welcoming a new employee who posts about their first day on the job, a compliment on a post from one of your direct reports, congratulations to a team member who won an award.

Small gestures mean a lot.

When you engage with an employee's post, her friends, family, and her LinkedIn network see how much she is appreciated.

And when those people like or comment on the post, she looks good to their networks, too.

Your peers and senior leadership may see it, and it reflects well on you as her boss, as well as on her.



SHOWCASE YOUR CULTURE ---

You have been intentional about building your corporate culture. You should be just as intentional about making that culture visible outside your organization.

With a visible and compelling culture, you create a sustainable competitive advantage in recruiting.

Make your leadership style visible, too. In a highly competitive recruiting environment, like the one we have now, strong leaders attract the best candidates.



WALK THE FLOOR VIRTUALLY

The higher you rise in your career, the more insulated you become. You likely are surrounded by people like you, with similar backgrounds, experiences, and perceptions.

Even if your team isn't homogenous, people filter information before it gets to you, adding their own biases.

When you use social media as an information source, you step outside your bubble. You dip into the real world and get raw, unfiltered information that is current to the second.

It's the virtual equivalent of management by walking around. You can hear from frontline people – people who can be hard to encounter during your normal business day.

As Sam Walton said, visiting his stores and listening to his associates was one of the most valuable uses of his time as an executive. Through social media, you can access those insights without getting on a plane and jetting around the world.



PROMOTE DIVERSITY

Increasing diversity is such an important goal that it has become a KPI in many organizations, with bonuses and promotions tied to success.

If you have not had the results you want in diversifying your team, start by creating diversity in your own online world.

Identify diverse thought leaders, follow them on LinkedIn, and listen to what they have to say. You'll open yourself to new perspectives and learn how others think.

When you engage with diverse people on an ongoing basis, it shows you respect their opinion and appreciate the perspective they bring.

The more comfortable you get doing this, the easier it becomes to bring diverse people into your orbit and have greater success creating an inclusive environment for your team.



WALK THE TALK

Whatever your initiatives, when you use LinkedIn to visibly engage in the behaviors you want others to emulate, you increase the likelihood that they will follow your lead.

Perhaps you have launched an employee advocacy program. The success of the project is significantly greater when the leadership team participates.

Perhaps you are working to create greater diversity in your organization. When your employees see you engaging with diverse leaders, that makes it clear where your priorities lie.

Perhaps you are worried about burnout. Letting people see you left work early to coach a soccer game shows that you aren't just mouthing platitudes – you are setting the example.



TAKE A STAND

People expect you to take a stand on social issues, to speak to them and for them.

As recently as three or four years ago, many executives tried to stay outside the fray.

But that doesn't work anymore, and the younger your workforce, the more trouble you get into by not taking a stand. A leader who stays silent is perceived as hiding.

When you do speak up, your employees become more engaged, and many will trust you more.



ENGAGE UP & DOWN THE LADDER

When you like and comment on posts from senior management, you bring yourself to the attention of higher-ups and show them you have mastered the art of using social media effectively.

When you engage with posts from frontline employees and managers, you signal your appreciation of their efforts.

The visibility and relationships you build will open doors and grow your audience. And the larger the number of people paying attention to you, the more you can accomplish.



NURTURE YOUR PEER NETWORK

LinkedIn makes it easy to identify peers across your company and industry, introduce yourself, keep up with them, stay in touch, and learn from them.

Most of your opportunities will come from referrals, so maintaining mindshare with your peers has considerable value.

And, when you engage and post regularly, your peers can benefit from your insights and stay updated about your journey.



BECOME A SOURCE

When you want to be quoted in the media, interviewed on podcasts, or invited to speak at conferences, having a strong presence in social media tells people that you are respected, seen as an expert, and have valuable insights to contribute.

By sharing video clips of you being interviewed or doing keynotes in LinkedIn, you signal that you are a reliable source and attract even more opportunities.



SHOW YOU ARE READY FOR THE NEXT LEVEL

Whether your next career goal is a board role, a promotion, or a new job with more responsibility, you can use LinkedIn to show that you have the skills and abilities to take on the role you want.

Your LinkedIn profile can tell the story of what you have achieved, and “package” your expertise, so it’s easy for executive recruiters and other leaders to appreciate the value you bring to a board or your next role.

Your activity can show that you already have the perspective, understand the issues, are already functioning at that level, and will succeed in a larger arena.



BUILD YOUR EXECUTIVE PRESENCE

BUILD YOUR EXECUTIVE PRESENCE

Once you see the value in creating an active personal presence in social media, the next step is to think about the personal brand you need to accomplish your goals.

Here are the six components we use to design an executive brand.

For most leaders, the sections you will want to focus on are Relevance; Know, Like, Trust; and Conversations. But your goals may require different priorities. The descriptions below explain each component in more detail.



Findability

Make it easier for the right people to find you online.

First Impressions

Wow the people who visit your LinkedIn profile.

Relevance

Align your social presence with your audience and your goals.

Know, Like, Trust

Let your personality show so people feel like they understand who you are and can trust you.

Thought Leadership

Make your thought leadership more visible online.

Conversations

Get people to engage with you and start a conversation.

FINDABILITY

When people search for you on Google, LinkedIn is typically one of the first search results. So whether people search for you on Google or using LinkedIn, they are likely to come to your LinkedIn profile.

A simple search is sufficient to locate most executives. If you have a common name, people might need to add your company name to the search terms, but you are probably relatively easy to find.

Who needs to think about findability?

Executives who want to be found as an expert on a particular topic. For example, if you want to be invited to speak or quoted as an expert in a particular aspect of cybersecurity, you will want to make sure you are findable using the terms someone might search on to locate a professional with your background and skills.

FINDABILITY - TIPS

In the free version of LinkedIn, which is what most people have, LinkedIn only shows you people who are within three degrees of relationship. The larger your LinkedIn network, the more people can find you.

Include keywords throughout your profile, especially in your headline and job descriptions.

When you comment on posts made by LinkedIn Influencers and others with a large following, you bring yourself to the attention of the people in their network.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

When people come to your LinkedIn profile, does what they see reflect who you are today? If your profile is empty or outdated, you look like you are out of touch and don't understand how much of business takes place online.

Your LinkedIn profile is your professional presence online. You need to put as much effort into crafting and maintaining it as you do your personal appearance.

Who needs to think about first impressions?

Everyone. You should update your LinkedIn profile quarterly to refresh the images, take advantage of new features on LinkedIn that help you tell your story, and add new accomplishments.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS - TIPS

Get a professional headshot. The quality of your headshot impresses people in the same way a well-made suit or an expensive pair of shoes does.

Add a custom header background graphic behind your headshot. Use a photo of you speaking, a company building, a cityscape, or a branded graphic created for your team.

Use the Featured section to highlight your latest interviews, podcasts, articles, or blog posts.

RELEVANCE

When did you last update your LinkedIn profile? If it was when you were looking for a job, you're not alone. That's when many executives focus on their profile.

But if that's the case, your profile is probably written to impress executive recruiters, not the people who matter to you today. Your profile should be written to the people who are visiting now. That might be people you want to hire; it might be the media; it might be partners, investors, or analysts.

Have you included the information they need to know about you?

Who needs to think about relevance?

The people who are most likely to come to your profile are those who are preparing to meet with you. What information do you want them to have before the conversation? If that isn't on your profile, you need to think about relevance.

RELEVANCE - TIPS

Align your profile with your current initiatives. For example, if you are recruiting, you'll want to include information about your culture, your leadership style, and your commitment to diversity. If you are in business development, include details about who you serve, what problems you solve, and what results your customers have achieved.

Use language that shows you understand their issues. It is fine to incorporate industry-specific buzzwords and acronyms because it tells your visitors they are in the right place.

Engage with content that is relevant to the concerns of the visitors you care about.

KNOW, LIKE, TRUST

People buy from those they know, like, and trust. That's also who they hire, promote, invite to speak, and partner with.

When you reveal some of your personality on LinkedIn, people feel like they know who you are outside the job and connect with you at a deeper level. Once they feel they know you, it becomes easier to appreciate how likeable you are.

Trust is the next step. Your title gives you credibility, but trust has to be earned. Usually, building trust takes time. But in social media, it's possible to see a history of your behavior and activities over time, with just a glance. You can give people signals that tell them you can be trusted.

When you get to trust faster, everything else speeds up, and you can accomplish significantly more in less time.

Who needs to think about know, like, trust?

Everyone! There isn't an executive on the planet who wouldn't benefit from building trust faster.

KNOW, LIKE, TRUST • TIPS

Share a story about your background that helps people understand why you do what you do.

Include a few quirky details, such as an unusual job, hobby, sport, or activity you participated in at college.

Show you give back by including volunteer work, charities, or causes you support.

Quantify your achievements, especially in prior job descriptions.

Include awards, honors, patents, certifications, and associations.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

People are more likely to meet with you, support your initiatives, and follow you when they see you as a thought leader. LinkedIn provides an ideal platform for sharing the insights gained throughout your career. The latest version of LinkedIn gives everyone the ability to publish blog posts, videos, and updates with your ideas. Sharing them on LinkedIn maximizes their reach. Your posts are visible to your network and also to the networks of anyone who engages with your posts. That's a level of virality that you can never achieve with a post on your website or an email newsletter.

Who needs to think about thought leadership?

Any executive who wants to be seen as a thought leader in their industry, anyone who wants more speaking engagements, anyone who wants to be interviewed and quoted in the media, anyone who wants to be a guest on podcasts.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP - TIPS

Use the Featured section to showcase your latest articles, interviews, blog posts, videos, and podcasts. You can also include books you have written or TED Talks.

Use the Accomplishments section to aggregate awards, patents, committee assignments, and older articles about you.

If you have a high volume of materials, you can upload a few to each job.

Include all of your education, with the highest degree or most impressive school listed first. (You can drag and drop to order them.)

When you share links to interesting articles, the more obscure the topic, the more of an expert people assume you are.

CONVERSATIONS

Most executives who are active on LinkedIn already engage with the people in their network – peers, direct reports, customers, partners, former and current coworkers. You can gain considerable leverage from expanding your reach and engaging with people outside your current network.

Engage up and down the ladder at your company, with comments on posts by your CEO, senior leadership, peers, direct reports, and people who do not report directly to you. Engage with thought leaders and influencers in your industry.

An easy first step is to follow people who look interesting and are relevant to your goals. For example, if you want to be on a board, start following and engaging with people who are already on boards.

Who needs to think about conversations?

Executives who have goals that can be served by expanding their network or raising their visibility: people who want to receive invitations to serve on a board, job opportunities, promotions, speaking engagements, and media or podcast interviews. Of course, anyone involved in business development, the channel, or strategic partnerships.

CONVERSATIONS - TIPS

If you want people to contact you, put an email address in the contact info section or at the end of the About section.

Keep an eye on the people who view your profile and invite those who look relevant to connect. Send them a welcome message with a simple question designed to get a conversation started.

When you post, end with a question that encourages people to add their thoughts. Tag several people for whom the topic might be relevant.

Like and reply to their comment. If they look relevant, invite them to connect.

Take advantage of conversations started by others, especially LinkedIn Influencers and people in your industry with a large following. Make thoughtful comments on their posts and ask questions designed to bring their followers into the conversation.



3 WAYS SPENDING TIME ON LINKEDIN SAVES YOU TIME

3 WAYS SPENDING TIME ON LINKEDIN SAVES YOU TIME

There is a misconception that the time you spend in social media is wasted. That's not true for professional social media. We estimate that every hour you spend on LinkedIn pays you back at least two hours. Here's why:

1 People who meet with you are better prepared.

Many people who prepare to meet with you will research you online before the meeting. They may Google you or search on LinkedIn. As we have said earlier, Google will direct them to LinkedIn, so either way they come to your profile.

When you use your LinkedIn profile to aggregate the information you want them to discover and consume before the meeting, they come to the meeting better prepared.

You spend less time educating them, demonstrating expertise, and building credibility. Instead, you are able to quickly get down to business and have a more productive conversation.

It is easier to build rapport, because you have fed them some quirky details they can ask about or resonate with.

By sharing your initiatives and values, it is easier for them to bring you relevant opportunities.

The result is that your meetings become substantially more productive.

2 You build trust faster.

Stephen M. R. Covey described trust as the combination of competence and character. LinkedIn is the ideal place to demonstrate both.

Your LinkedIn profile has dozens of places where you can tell the story of your career trajectory and achievements. Everyone wants to do business with people who are successful, and it's easy to show that on LinkedIn.

You can also show character. You can explain your “why” and your vision, you can show that you give back to your industry and your community, you can make people feel like they know you. Your activity shows how respected you are, how kind you are, what type of a boss you are.

The combination allows people to quickly gain confidence that you are someone they can trust.

When you create a faster path to trust, you can accomplish so much more.

3 You can keep more business relationships alive with less effort.

When you meet someone interesting at a conference and exchange cards, you may have a conversation afterwards, but unless you see them regularly the relationship withers.

When you meet someone and connect on LinkedIn, you are able to stay in touch easily.

If they move to a new job, you can still find them. And LinkedIn will alert you, so you can congratulate them and get a conversation started.

Without putting any effort into writing emails, texting, or talking on the phone, you can keep them up to date with your current activities, responsibilities, initiatives, and goals simply by posting regularly on LinkedIn.

You will be amazed, if you have not been already, by how many people see what you post on LinkedIn.

The people in your network can bring you so many opportunities and resources! When you are able to maintain more relationships and obtain greater mindshare with those individuals, you can accomplish so much more.

HOW TO DELEGATE OR OUTSOURCE EFFECTIVELY

Your next challenge is finding time to invest in social media. Once you have a good reason to be active, it's easier to justify the time.

And it doesn't have to be that much time – if you delegate effectively. You can have a strong presence in as little as 15 minutes a week.

Let's talk about how you can leverage your time and achieve the results you want.

WHAT CAN YOU DELEGATE OR OUTSOURCE?

These are the components of your social media presence that you can delegate effectively.

1 Writing

You may love to write, but it's still hard to sit down with a blank page and start writing. Let a ghostwriter help you. Talk to them about the topic, explain your ideas, let them do the first draft. They can write blogs and updates for you.

2 Graphics

The more interesting your images are, the more attention you can capture. Have someone else create compelling and copyright-safe images for you.

3 Video production

You can capture your thoughts using your phone or Zoom. Then ship the footage to someone who can crop out the part where you reached out to turn the camera off and on, fix sound problems, and add captions.

4 Research

Searching for the people you want to follow or connect with can be time-consuming. Let a LinkedIn search expert build lists for you.

5 Monitoring

Have someone monitor the people, organizations, and topics you care about and alert you when there is an announcement or post you can engage with.

6 Posting (maybe)

LinkedIn doesn't like you to share your login with anyone. It is a violation of the LinkedIn user agreement. While many executives do it anyway, there is risk involved. LinkedIn is increasingly requiring two-factor authentication and is particularly touchy about people accessing an account from multiple countries.

If you are comfortable with the risk, you can have someone update your LinkedIn profile, publish your blog posts and videos, publish status updates, like comments made on your posts, send thanks for commenting, invite relevant people to connect, send welcome messages to people who accept, and more.

You will get the best results if you set rules about what they are allowed to do without permission and what they need to bring to you.

Request weekly reports about what was done that week, what worked well, and what isn't working.

You should also meet regularly (weekly or monthly), so they stay aligned with your current opportunities and initiatives.

WHAT CAN'T YOU DELEGATE OR OUTSOURCE?

You can save a considerable amount of time every week by delegating some of the work involved in maintaining an active LinkedIn presence, but it is a mistake to delegate these areas:

1 Strategy

You need to participate in the development of your strategy. You define your goals, articulate your vision, and explain how you want to be seen. You can work with a strategist who will translate that into a specific plan, workflow, and metrics.

2 Everything

While it is possible to simply turn over your LinkedIn account and tell someone else to manage without bothering you, you will be missing a great deal of the value.

Your presence won't feel authentic to the people you are interacting with. No matter how good your assistant is at capturing your voice, they are never going to have your expertise and insights. They can't add your secret sauce.

You also lose the opportunity to learn from what you are seeing. It's like working with a personal trainer and having them lift the weights. You're not going to build any muscle. You won't get a social media presence that truly serves you.

CONCLUSION

I hope this book has helped you appreciate the value of having a strong social media presence and the power of using LinkedIn.

Most executives only see a fraction of what is possible online and take advantage of even less.

When you step into using LinkedIn as a management and leadership tool, you open the door to vastly more opportunities.

Raise your visibility, maximize your impact. The sky's the limit!

NEXT STEPS

Ready to take your social media presence to the next level?

ProResource is an agency that builds strong personal brands for executives on LinkedIn.

We will write your LinkedIn profile for you, develop a personal social media strategy that allows you to make faster progress on your goals, and provide the support you need to be successful on LinkedIn.

To learn more, schedule a free 15-minute discovery call.

THE SOCIAL LEADER

How great leaders use LinkedIn to engage employees, build trust, and inspire success

Chances are your company already has a strong presence on social media, but if you are a leader, especially a CEO, you need your own professional presence.

Why? Because all your stakeholders — customers, employees, partners, the media, and investors — are there and looking for you. Even your silence impacts their perception of you and the company.

By the time you finish this book, you'll understand why a strong professional social media presence serves you, and you will know how to think about your personal social media strategically. And, you'll have practical steps for putting LinkedIn to work for you — without investing a lot of your time.



JUDY SCHRAMM

Judy Schramm is the CEO of ProResource, a social media agency that creates strong personal brands for CEOs and their leadership teams. Judy's network includes more than 21,000 followers on LinkedIn and 4,500 on Twitter. She has been named a Top 10 LinkedIn Marketing Superstar; she blogs and speaks often at industry events.