

## How to Make Social Media Work for You & Your Executive

In our fast paced daily lives there are many moving pieces and social media may be demanding your attention amongst a never ending to do list. The question must therefore be asked. How can we make social media work for ourselves and for our Executive?

In this article I'm going to unravel the potential complexity and 'overwhelm' you may be feeling about social media. I'll guide you through a series of questions that act as thinking frameworks for how you navigate social media. I'll also suggest some best practice approaches and show you some examples that you can share with your team.



### Choosing a Social Media Channel that Plays to Your Strengths

As someone with ambivert tendencies (meaning I sit in the middle of the introvert/extrovert scale) I don't necessarily like drawing attention to myself, but I do like helping others and I do like growing my business.

And this is why I've learnt to be comfortable with raising my online profile and establishing my thought leadership, by writing regularly in my area of expertise and being interviewed for business podcasts. You will also find my company and educational consultancy, Think Bespoke, on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#) and [YouTube](#).

There is no one size fits all when it comes to how you and your Executive engage with social media. For a digital marketing organisation you need to be across and on all channels. If you lead an organisation with a behind the scenes business to business (B2B)

focus, then it's more likely your community will expect to read your insights in journals and articles or blogs or you'll be interviewed for guest blogs or podcasts.

Importantly, spending time on social media does not necessarily mean you need to engage in self promotion. If you're thinking about being more strategic or purposeful with how you engage on social media, LinkedIn and Instagram are increasingly popular choices over Facebook and Twitter. However, what is suitable for you and your Executive will and must depend on your industry and client focus.



## Social Media Usage Usage Trends in Australia

Social media users in Australia are some of the most active in the world. Video is also a very popular medium in Australia with around 15M Australian visitors to the YouTube website every month. The July 2019 social media user statistics From Vivid Social report report the following:

- Facebook has 15M Monthly Active Australian Users (steady)
- Instagram has 9M Monthly Active Australian Users and this is growing
- WhatsApp has 7M Active Australian Users (with growth of 1M users in the last 12 mths)
- Snapchat has 6.4M Monthly Active Australian Users (Snapchat data)
- LinkedIn has 5.5M and Twitter has 5.3M Monthly Active Australian Users
- WeChat has an estimated 2.9M Monthly Active Australian users

## MAKING SOCIAL MEDIA WORK FOR YOU & YOUR EXECUTIVE



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### **LinkedIn Should Be on Your Radar as a Priority Platform**

As an educator, consultant and social media strategist, I believe LinkedIn is the place to be as it's where more medium and large organisations are active and where senior leaders and CEOs get their industry news and updates.

Many people have a LinkedIn Profile, may have a LinkedIn company page for their organisation but are not sure where to begin with maximising social media for their professional goals.

When was the last time you googled yourself? Your activities on social media are very searchable, and it's my hope you find your LinkedIn profile first!

Controlling the information people can find about you online is one of the key reasons I recommend you spend time tending to your LinkedIn garden and updating all the relevant elements of your LinkedIn Profile.

Because spending time on a platform like LinkedIn can help:

- You get found online (if that's what you want!)
- Continue professional face to face conversations that you've had at conferences like this
- Begin new conversations
- Create opportunities to add value to your community
- Keep you relevant and top of mind
- Share and comment on your organisation's company page updates
- Provide an online forum to share your insights and subject matter expertise AND
- Learn from other subject matter experts

## LinkedIn is the new Facebook



In a recent keynote given by Gary Vaynerchuk, the CEO of Vayner Media, LinkedIn got a very important mention. Gary believes LinkedIn is the new Facebook and that LinkedIn right now is going through a Facebook 2012 moment with the organic reach and consumption being remarkably high.

He's observing that reputation is getting built at scale on LinkedIn for B2B businesses, which have never really had a home for content like they do now.

Gary says "I implore you to dig into this hypothesis and get educated and remember, when you produce content you don't have to do video. You don't have to do audio. You don't have to do written word."

In fact, Gary says his highest over-indexing content on LinkedIn right now is his comic strips that he creates from the things he talks about in his feed. For Gary and his audience, this is what's working.

Gary does not judge how one wants to consume content . . . he says he just reacts to the truth. And in that truth in this moment – not next year, not last year – at this exact second he believes there is an opportunity for organic reach within LinkedIn.

Here are Australia's Top 20 LinkedIn Influencers in 2018. You may recognise some familiar faces here, including two of the sharks from Shark Tank. Read more about the top LinkedIn profiles Australia for 2018 [via this Business Insider article](#).



## Australia's Top 20 LinkedIn Influencers 2018

I encourage you to check out these influencers and look out for LinkedIn's Top 10 Company Pages of 2019.

There must be joint responsibility for managing your organisation's social media presence and how you and your Executive show up on social media should be approached with a strategic lens and allocated the resources it deserves. Organisations who wish to be part of the online conversation and engage meaningfully with their stakeholders must embrace a strategic content framework. This means the development of a well thought out and managed plan for all online activities, with the benefit of social media moving from being a to do list item to a tool that is leveraged as part of an overall communication and branding strategy.

The goal is to help you achieve your commercial goals and build trust with your organisation and its leaders.



**The idea of building trust is an extremely important element of your social media strategy.**

The 2019 Edelman Trust Barometer revealed that trust has changed profoundly in the past year — people have shifted their trust to the relationships within their control, most notably their employers. Employees are ready and willing to trust their employers,

but the trust must be earned through more than ‘business as usual’. In 2018 Edelman reported that employee’s expectation that prospective employers will join them in taking action on societal issues (67%) was nearly as high as their expectations for personal empowerment (74%) and job opportunity (80%).

In addition, 71% of employees in the 2018 research said they believe it’s critically important for “my CEO” to respond to challenging times.

Why am I sharing these statistics with you?

Because they demonstrate how the role of the Executive is moving beyond the requirement to just lead an organisation. As leaders of business and industry, there is an increasing expectation that they will also play a role in humanising the organisation’s brand and assisting in improving the organisation’s social license, meaning - the level of acceptance or approval by local communities and stakeholders of your organisation and your operations.

For some of you, this may not be on your Executive’s radar, for others, this may be a key area you are currently focusing on. . . . and how you and your Executive navigate social media can also influence these considerations.

The 2019 Edelman Trust Barometer reported that employers that work to build trust will be rewarded; Australian employees who have trust in their employer demonstrate greater advocacy (80%), loyalty (71%), engagement (69%) and commitment (87%).

And it is with this lens that we must consider how you and your Executive can comfortably and strategically engage on the relevant social media platforms to build trust with the communities you serve and transact with.

## The Elements You Need to Consider Before Being More Active on Social Media



Firstly, use the common sense wand. Consider what is your capacity and appetite for spending more time online? Then decide whether you'd prefer a more public or private presence with your online interactions.

A public presence means being more visible in terms of the content you like and comment on and the content you share or post, including:

- Photos from events
- Links with commentary
- LinkedIn Articles or blogs and
- Video updates

A more private approach, that may be preferred by individuals less comfortable with social media, is using your online profile as a tool to research other people and companies, staying informed by following other thought leaders in your industry and watching how they navigate social media, building connections on LinkedIn and messaging people privately.

You must also give some thought to the preference to write, have a podcast, or provide video updates. Or all of these!

Questions to ask include:

- What's your capacity?
- What are your comfort levels?
- Can you outsource / delegate?
- What are your goals for spending time online?
- Which platforms play to your strengths? If your preference is video - consider a YouTube channel or Facebook Live updates. For those who prefer the written word, industry trends and opinions, LinkedIn's newsfeed and articles will be suitable. If you have more of a lean to photography, and this is relevant for your industry, then Instagram may be suitable. For news and opinions, Twitter is the first choice of many politicians and government bodies.

## Make Sure What You Post Online is Relevant to the Communities You Serve



In the 2019 Edelman B2B LinkedIn Thought Leadership Impact Study, 82% of decision-makers said thought leadership being shared by someone they know and respect is a critical factor in getting them to engage.

For business accounts, each social media platform provides detailed analytics about your followers and how

they engage with your content and posts. These should be a key reference point for benchmarking and assessing your effectiveness with social media.

Some of the metrics I suggest you track are:

- Reach
- Engagement
- Clicks to website
- Conversion to goals (follows, sign up to newsletters, email enquiries, phone enquiries)
- Shares

It's also worth considering the role of a social media coach or mentor to help cultivate the mindset of what I call A Social Media Thought Leader. This is someone who:

- Knows who they want to influence online
- Has a very well developed ideal client profile/s
- Is disciplined with conversation starter rituals
- Understands the power of 'how can I add value' versus ' what can I get'

I encourage you to consider the role of either an external consultant or an internal resource experienced in communications and PR to guide you in these areas.

This is a skill set. Different social mediums require you to show up differently and you need to be broadly aware of the etiquette for each platform.



In terms of sales and marketing, it's very important to remember that an organisation owns two key online assets. The company website and the company email list, which for some organisations, may also be part of your customer database or customer relationship management system.



Social media is a third party platform that your organisation does not own, so it is essential that you leverage the features offered but try to drive traffic back to the assets you own and can control.

If you are hoping to get direct sales from social media you may be disappointed unless you are a

product based business and have virtual shop fronts integrated into your Facebook and Instagram business accounts.

I believe social media should be viewed as a tool to amplify your organisation's sales and marketing strategy. Do not overlook the value of in real life and more traditional activities that may be relevant for your business. Social media should complement these efforts and provides one of a number of key touch points for potential clients and customers to assess and engage with your business. Social media shouldn't necessarily be the only channel with which your community engages with your organisation.

From a sales perspective, Instagram and Facebook certainly lead the way with sales features for consumer focused and product based organisations. For organisations targeting other organisations and their decision makers, LinkedIn and the Sales Navigator and Premium membership features offer sales staff the opportunity to track and reach out to potential clients. The company page and ad features available on LinkedIn are also increasing in their effectiveness with the integration of website retargeting and lead generation form paid options.

From a Business to Business perspective here are some interesting facts:

- A HubSpot study in 2016 found that LinkedIn generated 3x more conversions than Twitter and Facebook
- 59% of B2B marketers say LinkedIn is effective at generating leads for their brand
- 71% of B2B marketers include LinkedIn as part of their advertising strategy
- 65% of B2B companies have gained a customer by using LinkedIn



Amplifying your organisations sales and marketing strategy means considering all of the pieces on the social media chess board available to you and deciding which ones you'll move when.

Here are the elements you need to consider:

- Branding your organisation with Company or Business Pages
- Branding your Executive with LinkedIn & Individual Social Media profiles based on the priority platforms you have chosen

You then need to develop a Strategic Content Framework that considers:

- Tone & Key Messages
- Content Pillars
- Curated article sources
- An agreed mix of content types
- Agreed frequency
- Community management

If you have a low follower base you also need to map out your follower strategy, and consider:

- What is the promise? (why follow this social media account)
- Where are the social media channels communicated? (e.g. website, email newsletter, email signature, etc)
- Explore targeted LinkedIn and Social Media advertising and job ad positing options

Consider the content themes and topics you and your Executive focus on when you share content online. Importantly, these themes may change over time. When thinking about your topics and focus areas you can also follow relevant hashtags on LinkedIn and Facebook, relevant companies and global thought leaders. I also encourage you to set up Google Alerts for articles written about these topics emailed to you daily or weekly.



What you and your Executive talk about and where you choose to show up online should be based on who you wish to influence, and what content they need from you in

relation to your areas of expertise. Think about how you can add value to the problems they are facing right now.

This is a great way to help you stay ahead of the news cycle and control perception.

### **Adopt a Best Practice Approach to Social Media Management**

A best practice approach to managing your social media presence is assigning roles for your social media accounts. Some organisations engage a digital partner and others resource this internally.

Social Media and LinkedIn have many crossovers between HR, Sales and Marketing. Ongoing management of social media counts involves checking and responding to notifications (manual), posting content (manually or via a scheduler) and reviewing the analytics. Some of the roles you need to consider include:

- Social Media Manager (to manage stakeholder,s approve content plan, curate and post content)
- Admins on the Company and Business pages (2+ is essential)
- Community Manager? (to like/comment)
- Content Creator (to create visual and written content)
- Who approves the content plan?

You also need to determine:

- who's responsible for posting job ads
- what role the Executive can play in amplifying this via their social media channels
- what content is being posted to engage staff
- how can the Executive play a bigger / better role in this



## Social Media as a Staff Engagement & Hiring Tool

Insights provided by LinkedIn from over 5,000 talent professionals on the top trends that are shaping the recruitment industry report that the greatest impact on the recruitment and HR industry in 2019 and beyond are soft skills, work flexibility, anti-harassment, and pay transparency.

Adam Gregory, Senior Director APAC Talent Solutions at LinkedIn believes “the relationship between employers and employees is evolving - with professionals wanting more transparency, more accountability, and more trust.”

LinkedIn and Facebook provide a variety of tools to enable your current and potential employees to engage with and learn about your organisation. Strategic marketers have positioned the role of employee amplification as being a critical touchpoint for organisation’s wishing to become an employer of choice.

Some of you may know this as employee advocacy, which is the promotion of your company by the people who work for it. People advocate for their employers on social media all the time. A Facebook post like, “Just had a great catered lunch at work. Thanks, [Name of Employer!]” counts as employee advocacy. So does sharing the latest post from the company blog on your LinkedIn feed.

By happy employees engaging with the organisation’s content or playing the role of online ambassadors for their organisation, by sharing, liking or creating positive content about

their workplace, they are providing a form of social proof to their communities that this is a great place to work.

If we consider the importance of a Google or Facebook review for a brand or restaurant . . . employee advocacy works in the same way.

If you and your Executive can encourage a culture of your teams becoming advocates for what it's like to work at your organisation, you are leveraging social media in a very positive and constructive way to attract great talent to your organisation.

If your organisation supports the local community with charitable or social issues and campaigns, your social media plan also needs to consider how your Executive and organisation showcases this as a tool to raise the profile of your organisation and provide insight into your Executive's moral compass.

Some of the statistics provided by Katie Levinson, LinkedIn's former Senior Product Marketing Manager for LinkedIn Elevate around employee advocacy are quite compelling. Marketing: content shared by employees has 2x higher engagement versus when shared by a company. Sales: Sales people who regularly share content are 45% more likely to exceed quota.

Facebook now provides 'Facebook Workplace' and LinkedIn provides the 'LinkedIn Elevate' program. Facebook Workplace is a dedicated and secure space for companies to connect, communicate and collaborate. Organisations of all sizes can use familiar Facebook features such as news feed, groups, messages and events to get things done. LinkedIn Elevate is a paid employee advocacy platform that makes it easy for employees to become social professionals and share tailored content to their connections.

Levinson advises that an employee advocacy program should be:

- **Strategic:** Implemented with goals in mind and metrics in place to measure progress toward those goals.
- **Sustainable:** Designed to last, with support from management and a plan for keeping enthusiasm up.
- **Organic:** Participation should be voluntary and out of genuine interest. You're inspiring advocacy, not mandating it.

My advice is BEWARE! If employee advocacy is forced on employees - it will have the opposite effect. Ask for volunteers and brand ambassadors. Have your Executive lead by example and acknowledge that even within this cohort there will be some reluctance.

And that's okay - because some people are inherently private and it is their personal right to engage online in a way that is comfortable for them and consistent with their personal brand.

## Using Social Media for Job Ads & Hiring

For staff hiring, Job Ads can now be posted via both Facebook and LinkedIn. LinkedIn offers organisations that recruit regularly the option to access the Recruiter or Recruiter Lite membership, providing additional paid job ad, applicant, company page follower and LinkedIn member features.

You can also post job ads from traditional job search sites to your Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn pages and ask your teams to share these updates. If your organisation has an Instagram presence, you can also post an update and story to your Instagram account to let your followers know you are hiring and leverage the hashtag feature to get more views to your Instagram account.

## And what about if things don't go to plan and your organisation is facing a crisis?

John Ridley AM, is the Principal of Clifton Communications and a specialist in Crisis Management. John's also a client, and so I sought his perspective on crisis management.

He believes that any business of scale should make the time to prepare its own crisis plan in advance. It's too late to be thinking about managing a crisis when you are already in one!

It's essential to be on the front foot, keep internal control, communicate very promptly and comprehensively . . . .

“Tell it first, tell it all, tell it yourself.”



John suggests you must ensure close management of communications so that ‘volunteers’ or worse, rumour mongers in your enterprise, don’t get to misinform the stakeholders. John recommends you have a very clear definition of stakeholders, preferably a list.

The key elements of a crisis management plan are:

- What is a crisis for this organisation and who decides if the events constitute a crisis
- Who will be in control? This should be the most senior executive possible supported by a small team.
- Who will be the spokesperson - this person should also be the spokesperson for the organisation . A specific person should be identified and prepared - the most senior person available, preferably the CEO.

I believe the social media platform you then choose to amplify this message from will depend on the priority platform your Executive uses. The traditional press release can be shared via your website as news to Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. It can also be shared as a PDF document via LinkedIn. The role of video and Live stream features can also be considered.

Thank you for reading my insights. It is my hope that you now have a much stronger sense of how you and your Executive will engage with social media to make it work for you. To read more of my articles, please visit [thinkbespoke.com.au](http://thinkbespoke.com.au) and to get my e-insights delivered to your inbox, please [sign up to my email newsletter](#).



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