

# But it is work: My perspective on social media

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## Abstract

When I was asked to write about using social media for work and collaboration, one “professional” social media platform immediately sprang to mind – LinkedIn. This article discusses LinkedIn, one of many social media platforms in a prosperous market. The content of this article is about my personal experience of using LinkedIn to get noticed and get work over the last 10 years. I am not an expert. Nothing I have written is definitive. This article is intended to provoke thought. I hope what I have shared of my own experience is beneficial.

When I sat down to write this article, I realised there are so many more social media platforms out there. And there are platforms you can use to manage interactions with them. The global revenue from social media was €39 billion in 2019.<sup>1</sup> Social media is a key driver in the growth of content marketing. The content marketing market is set to grow by USD 269.24 billion during 2020–2024.<sup>2</sup> This growth is partly due to a greater demand for digital magazines among other things.

## There are many places to promote what you do

Facebook recorded c.2.8 billion active users per month in 2020 Q4 – over a third of the global population per month.<sup>3</sup> Businesses increasingly promote themselves on platforms thought of as “personal” social media sites (Table 1).

Yet, over 80% of lead generations are on LinkedIn.<sup>6</sup> LinkedIn is the most effective

platform for business-to-business (B2B) lead generation. Lead generation helps increase potential customer numbers and can result in paid work. So, keep in mind that the more profile views you receive the better. A few recruitment consultants have told me that attracting work is a numbers game.

## My history with LinkedIn

I opened my LinkedIn account in 2010 for professional networking, and I check it most days. I use my profile as my electronic CV or resume, I find it a great place to receive professional news, and I enjoy interacting with my network. My network has grown organically over the last 10 years. It is made up of people from various experiences I have had over my lifetime. I am even connected to people I was in kindergarten with. My network spans a wide community of interest.

As a freelance medical writer there is an ongoing discussion about the importance of setting up a website. When I set up my writing company, I learned a little about web development. I attended a Local Enterprise Office course where I live, and I decided not to set up a website early on. I wanted to apply what I learned to my online presence, things like search engine optimisation (SEO), post content development, target market definition, and to identify my preferred sites to follow and connect with.

I also took advice from Virginia Bautista. She is a LinkedIn marketing consultant and personal branding strategist. She posts content

on how to get noticed on LinkedIn. Her posts help people increase the quality and quantity of traffic to their profiles.

I am aware that LinkedIn has an option to create a company page that is connected to your profile, and I might use it in the future. Click on the “work” grid at the top right of your profile and scroll down to the bottom to see how to begin this process. I have thought about developing a more systematic posting activity but, as I am a freelance company of one, I don’t think it is necessary at this stage.

The following profiles give examples of where company pages and website links have or have not been used.

- Karandeep Singh Badwal is a medical device regulatory affairs and quality consultant. He uses his LinkedIn profile alone. He posts videos related to medical device quality and regulatory affairs on his profile. His posts are nuggets of gold and very topical as medical device companies transition to new industry regulations in Europe.
- Paul Palmer helps pharmaceutical quality directors achieve successful regulatory inspections by optimising processes. There is a link to his company page, Paul R Palmer, in his LinkedIn profile. Recently he authored a chapter in a best-selling book.
- Yan Kugel is a good manufacturing practice content architect and pharma podcast producer. His LinkedIn company page, Qualistery, is in his profile. From his company page there is a button linking to his Qualistery website.

## Attracting work is a numbers game.

**Table 1. Popular social media platforms that are increasingly used for marketing purposes.**<sup>4,5</sup>

Listed in no particular order.

1. Facebook	8. Tumblr	15. LinkedIn
2. YouTube	9. Qzone	16. Viber
3. WhatsApp	10. Tik Tok	17. Snapchat
4. Facebook Messenger	11. Sina Weibo	18. Pinterest
5. Weixin / WeChat	12. Twitter	19. Line
6. Instagram	13. Reddit	20. Telegram
7. QQ	14. Baidu Tieba	21. Medium



My posting activity is fairly organic. I post and share what is on my mind and what I think is beneficial to the health of the wider community from a professional perspective. I am connected to past, present, and future colleagues around the world who I want to keep safe and informed. I like to think they have enough confidence in me to pay attention to what I highlight.

I am not bashful when it comes to connecting on LinkedIn, nor am I overly selective about who I connect with. One connection might move to a job that is outside my work focus, and this does not mean that I delete them from my network. And, within reason, I will connect to people outside my work focus, particularly if they send me an invitation, because you never know.

Connecting to people on LinkedIn has resulted in a phone call or video conference and from there, some work (See Figure 1). I have had work from immediate connections. Sometimes someone they know who knows someone else has offered me work! I think networking is about promoting trust as much as it is about promoting what you have to offer. I like networking in person, and a lot of what I might do in person can be done with a global community on LinkedIn.

### Learning about ways to get noticed

I have played around with my profile as my experience has grown over the last 10 years. LinkedIn has provided a space for my online CV

or resume. When you submit your CV or resume for a job, often it goes through an algorithm that picks up keywords. This helps your potential employer identify whose experience best matches a job description. Similarly this applies to LinkedIn where people actively look for jobs or job candidates based on keywords they use in their description or profile. If you want to do something that you haven't done before, consider describing how your experience fits with the expectations of what you want to do to help steer that type of work your way.

### Good copywriting tactics

A LinkedIn profile is sectioned. Sections include intro, about, featured, background, skills,

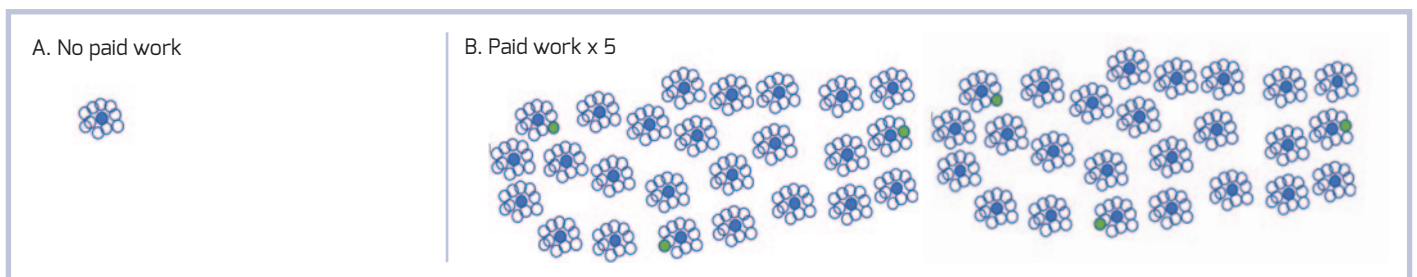


Figure 1. A schematic diagram showing that the greater the numbers of views you receive the greater the likelihood of paid work.

Blue dots = posts  
 White dots = generated leads  
 Green dots = paid work

A. No paid work denotes a low number of posts and generated leads.  
 B. Paid work x 5 denotes a high number of posts and generated leads.

Table 2. Results of my experiments with my LinkedIn profile.

POST SUBJECT		MY ACTIVITY*						
		Months ago	My post	Text only	Hyperlink original	Hashtags#	I liked	I shared
1	Community of experts	24	X	X	n/a	n/a	✓	X
2	Plastic-eating protein	24	X	X	n/a	n/a	✓	X
3	The Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult	24	X	X	n/a	n/a	✓	X
		...	...	...	...	...	...	...
4	EMWA Vienna 2019 attendee post DR	12	X	X	n/a	n/a	✓	X
5	Alfred Russel Wallace	12	X	X	n/a	n/a	✓	X
6	Medical Communications Day	12	✓	X	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
		...	...	...	...	...	...	...
7	Support businesses during Covid-19	4	X	X	n/a	n/a	X	X
8	COVID-19 clinical readouts	4	X	X	n/a	n/a	✓	X
9	COVID-19 hackathon	4	X	X	n/a	n/a	✓	✓
10	Where's Waldo (social distancing edition)	4	X	X	n/a	n/a	✓	✓
11	COVID-19 face covering or mask	4	✓	✓	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
		...	...	...	...	...	...	...
12	COVID-19 politics	2	X	X	n/a	n/a	✓	X
13	Employment search	2	X	X	n/a	n/a	✓	✓
14	COVID-19 science	2	X	X	n/a	n/a	✓	✓
		...	...	...	...	...	...	...
15	Biological drugs are not chemical drugs (3 min)	1	✓	X	X	2	X	X
16	Biological drugs are not chemical drugs (2 min)	Not in my LinkedIn activity feed? Although there is a comment referring to it. It is not my						
17	Biological drugs are not chemical drugs (15 secs)	0.5	✓	X	X	2	X	X
		...	...	...	...	...	...	...
18	Supply chain risk management article	0.25	✓	X	X	8	X	X
19	Should we call chemical drugs non-biologicals? article	0.25	✓	X	X	0	X	X
20	Pre-clinical testing article	0.25	✓	✓	✓	13	X	X
21	CER assessment template for notified bodies	0.25	✓	X	X	0	X	X
22	CER rough template	0.12	✓	X	X	1	X	X

\*My LinkedIn activity data was collected on July 28, 2020 and collected again on \*\*November 14, 2020.

accomplishments, additional information, and supported languages. When writing your profile, it makes sense to use words that your target audience is likely to use. You can optimise your profile keywords by paying attention to the number of suggested terms you get when you input words in your profile search bar. The higher the number of suggestions the greater the number of hits that word will receive. If you use that word in your profile copy, your profile will be among those hits.

In my opinion, keyword optimisation is intuitive to anybody who opens a LinkedIn account. They already have a professional persona, and they know

where they are and where they want to be in the short- to mid-term.

Aside from creating an online CV, there are other activities that raise your LinkedIn profile. I did some research and experimented on this while writing this article.

**Search engine optimisation (SEO) tactics**

SEO is about increasing the quantity and quality of traffic to your website or profile.<sup>7</sup> Quantity relates to the “footfall” through your profile. This can be seen in the “who viewed your profile” record.

Quality relates to how likely the “footfall” wants what you offer. This can be determined by

I like networking in person, and a lot of what I might do in person can be done with a global community on LinkedIn.

reviewing who has looked at your profile and assessing if they are part of your target audience. I’ve received profile views since I set up my profile. Since experimenting with increasing “footfall” to my profile, I have noted that my profile views have increased as well as the number of my connections.

**Conversion copywriting tactics**

Conversion copywriting is about getting someone to read your profile and buy in to your service or what you are saying.<sup>8</sup> If you post on LinkedIn it is important to maintain the same thread in your posts. Try to make your message consistent with your profile and the services you provide.

Virginia Bautista categorises some of the best ways people can interact on LinkedIn to get

MY ACTIVITY INTERACTIONS							
I commented	Degree of connection	Connection liked	Connections commented	Connections shared	Views of my activity	Views of my activity c. 4 months later**	
X	2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
X	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
X	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
X	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
X	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
X	n/a	6	n/a	û	580	582	
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
X	n/a	5	1	û	778	783	
X	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
X	2	3	0	0	230	233	
X	n/a	5	0	0	195	199	
✓	n/a	4	0	0	427	435	
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
✓	1	4	0	0	n/a	n/a	
X	1	9	2	0	817	823	
X	not connected	2	0	0	269	274	
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
✓	n/a	12	1	1	879	885	
imagination that it was there once.							
✓	n/a	10	2	0	211	221	
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
✓	n/a	9	2	0	818	852	
✓	n/a	1	3	0	353	386	
✓	n/a	0	0	0	163	228	
✓	n/a	Initially 7, after 4 months 8	3	0	672	750	
✓	n/a	Initially 19; after 4 months 23	3	0	951	1566	

noticed.<sup>9</sup> Each interaction converts your content into likes and shares and maybe even jobs:

- **Content creators** publish original content to help their network succeed.
- **Content curators** share useful third-party content with their network.
- **Engagement champions** like, comment or share what is useful.
- **Super connectors** introduce connections to each other to help them get an opportunity.
- **Community builders** foster mutually beneficial relationships to help each other grow.
- **Influencers, motivators and inspirers** get people to act by sharing their content.

**My social media experimental methods**

While writing this article I decided to take the

opportunity to look at my activity history (Table 2; Rows 1–14) and to consciously play in LinkedIn to see what works for me (Table 2; Rows 15–22). My posts were set up with increased and decreased video content, a hyper-link, and hashtags (Table 2; Rows 15–22).

I also followed guidance from my Twitter account, which I use to a lesser extent compared to LinkedIn. For example, Twitter allows a 280 maximum character count per post in my region. You can include up to four photos or a video with a maximum duration of two minutes, although 15 seconds is recommended. If you follow the most restrictive posting guidance from a number of social media sites, you can use the same post in multiple places without needing to modify your post in any way.

Sometimes less is more.

**Increased and decreased video content**

I have an informative animation called “*Biological drugs are not chemical drugs. It is important to consider how these molecules differ during their manufacture and distribution*” (Table 2; lines 15, 16 and 17). It features at three minutes in LinkedIn (June 24, 2020). I shortened the animation to two minutes for LinkedIn and Twitter (July 6, 2020). Then I shortened it to 15 seconds and posted it on LinkedIn and Twitter (July 14, 2020) keeping the original captions and hashtags the same.

The three-minute post accumulated 885 views, the two-minute post seemed to disappear, and the 15-second post accumulated 221 views about four months after posting them. Perhaps if I had posted the 15 second animation first it would have received 885 views. In this case, it does not seem that less is more.



### Posts with links

At the time of writing this article, apparently less is often more in a LinkedIn post. Text posts without links will go further as the LinkedIn algorithm holds back posts that contain a link.<sup>9</sup> I tried it out and saw my text-only post received 189 views on day one. Using the same text, I added a link and saw the post received 101 views on day one. So, it could have been held back. Equally, my connections might not have been as interested in seeing the same post a second time, albeit with a link.

### Using hashtags

Hashtags help to identify messages on a particular subject and can help your post reach a more defined audience (Table 2; Rows 15–22). I have not consistently applied hashtags to my posts. However, I have learned the importance of making sure the hashtag I want to use exists in LinkedIn.<sup>10</sup> Select “add #hashtag” when you are posting something and start writing #<whatever comes to mind>. There is a list of the most popular LinkedIn hashtags that you might like to use,<sup>11</sup> a list that might help you to create your own.

Once I select my hashtags, I check the content of each hashtag to make sure it is consistent with my message and that it has a reasonable number of followers (one hashtag might have three followers while another hashtag has thousands of followers). And just because you think a hashtag represents your audience of choice, your assumption is not always correct.

As I tuned in to my writing inspirations, I gained clearer focus on how to project myself and my service consistently. I remain a fan of meeting people face-to-face, which can be done by video conferencing using Zoom, Facetime, WhatsApp and whatever other platform you have at your fingertips.

### Conclusion

I think the greatest measure of the success of a post is in line with engagement – how many shares, comments, likes, and views it receives. My medical device clinical evaluation report rough template post received more views compared to any of my other posts. This post provided something useful to the community. At the same time, the numbers of views my posts receive are small considering there is potential for a post to receive thousands of views on day one. Clearly, there is more that I could do to develop my own



LinkedIn activity. I am not a social media expert, and I am open to hearing what tweaks (not Tweets) I can make to my own LinkedIn profile.

I take everything I read about getting noticed on LinkedIn with a pinch of salt. There are strategies to make your post go further. Yet, I do think the message that is being conveyed is more important. If your negative post receives a lot of views, maybe you should start watching your back.

I try to be clear about what I offer. I support pharmaceutical and medical device industries as far as LinkedIn is concerned. I do not support drug and device services. I don't want those unversed in the pharmaceutical and medical device industries to be confused about what I offer.

The discussion in this article is fairly loose but should help you hone how to use your LinkedIn account if you are inclined to do so. LinkedIn is a firm favourite of mine and is likely to remain that way for some time to come.

### Disclaimers

The opinions expressed in this article are the author's own and not necessarily shared by her employer or EMWA.

### Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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