

LINKEDIN OR LINKEDOUT: HOW BUILDING SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE  
AMPLIFIES THE SAVVY RECRUITER

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by

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# ABSTRACT

Beginning the early 2000's, LinkedIn has transitioned from a social media website where users can build their professional network to a tool that can bring both the unemployed and the employer closer to their professional goals. This thesis focuses on the professional goal of a recruiter: to find and attract quality candidates to work for his or her company. As the recruitment world expands into targeting candidates who are not actively job searching, also known as "passive candidates", this thesis suggests a new strategy to the savvy and forward-thinking recruiter. Based off research of social media use, the LinkedIn platform, consumer psychology, marketing strategy, and social media influencers' practices, this thesis argues that recruiters will benefit from adopting the online principles of a social media influencer. Two requirements of being a social media influencer are building credibility and having a niche audience. If a recruiter puts forth effort towards being a social media influencer through meeting these requirements on LinkedIn, practicing strategic posting tactics, and hosting attractive profile characteristics, they are setting themselves up for: more candidates seeing their job postings, better branding of their company, and bigger strides made towards their overall professional goal. This research acknowledges limitations and suggests further research documents the outcomes of recruiters that follow these guidelines.

Keywords: LinkedIn, social media, recruiting, influencers, marketing

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# INTRODUCTION

The hiring world is an intricate one. Companies have not grown weary of hiring. Instead, the way they find their next employee has hastily developed. Companies have realized that the success of their organization relies largely on the performance of the people who work there, causing a war-like scenario where companies are competitively fighting for the best talent. Company recruiters are no longer able to sit back and wait for top employees to come their way by posting job openings, then choosing from the group of contenders that found the post and applied (called active candidates). Now, recruiters are tasked with finding the talented employees at other companies who are not in the process of job hunting and leading them towards their company's job opening (called passive candidates).

As social media use continues to grow, a new type of marketing has spread called influencer marketing. This type of marketing uses people with a strong social media presence and online following to influence their followers to buy-in to a particular product or brand through the influencers' posts. Although this marketing tactic happens on various social media platforms, it is uncommon to see this tactic used on the LinkedIn website. Since LinkedIn is a career-oriented website, it is instead primarily used by both jobseekers and headhunters to set up online profiles, post/apply to jobs, and share creative content with their online network.

This thesis proposes that adopting the online practices of social media influencers and exercising these on the LinkedIn social media platform is a new method that will bring recruiter's closer to their professional goals of having a large number of qualified applicants to their job postings. To propose this, the following research is structured to:

give an overview of recruiting, social media, LinkedIn, and social media influencers; discuss how the four topics tie together; and establish tips and guidelines on how a recruiter can effectively implement these new strategies using their LinkedIn account.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## What is recruitment?

A recruiter is in charge of finding talented people to work at their company. However, recruiters have not always existed at companies, nor has their job always involved the act of “finding”. In the 1900’s, Deering recalls how jobs were simply posted in newspapers and candidate databases looked more like a manager pulling a name out of his or her Rolodex. Instead of internet storage and advertising, there was: typewriters, trade journals, paper resume collection, stacks of business cards, and cold calling. Once the Internet boomed, job boards were created online and applicant tracking systems were developed. However, once social media boomed, recruiters’ responsibilities began to include sourcing passive candidates (Deering, 2016).

Describing the recruitment of passive candidates vs. active candidates is similar to differentiating inbound recruiting vs. outbound recruiting. Adler describes inbound recruiting as a transactional, efficacy-focused process where recruiters fill a job position with the most qualified person that applied for that position. However, outbound recruiting “involves reaching out directly to preselected people in order to get them interested in an open job” (Adler, 2018, Outbound recruiting is both art AND science section, para. 1). Instead of having 150-200 people apply for every person hired through inbound recruiting, outbound recruiting involves networking and exploratory conversations with only 15-20 candidates that have already been deemed as qualified by the recruiter (Adler, 2018). Instead of being reactive to job applications coming in, outbound recruiting puts the recruiter in a position to be proactive. In Figure 1, it is

shown that the recruiter that excels at outbound recruiting is considered a Master Recruiter, passing the levels: Trainable Recruiter, Tactical Recruiter, Proactive Recruiter, and Strategic Recruiter (Performance Based Hiring, 2018). One of the ways for a recruiter to attract passive candidates to their company is through social media.



Figure 1. Master Recruiter Competency Model. From “*Master Recruiter*”, by Performance Based Hiring, 2018, <https://performancebasedhiring.com>. Copyright 2018 by performancebasedhiring.com.

## What is social media?

In order to create social media websites, Internet had to first be invented. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) describe the Internet’s conception as a Bulletin Board System (BBS), where users could go to share software, data, messages, and news with one another. In 1979, the Internet began as a worldwide discussion system that gave Internet users the ability to post public messages - called Usenet. By the late 1990’s, people could go and make their own sites to share about their personal endeavors. Companies entered



the Internet world in 1995, with Amazon selling books online and eBay making it easier for consumers to buy/sell items to each other (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). By 1997, Hendricks (2013) recalls the first social media site was created called Six Degrees. There, users were able to create a profile and make friends with other users on the site. This website spearheaded the creation of various blogging sites in 1999 (Hendricks, 2013).

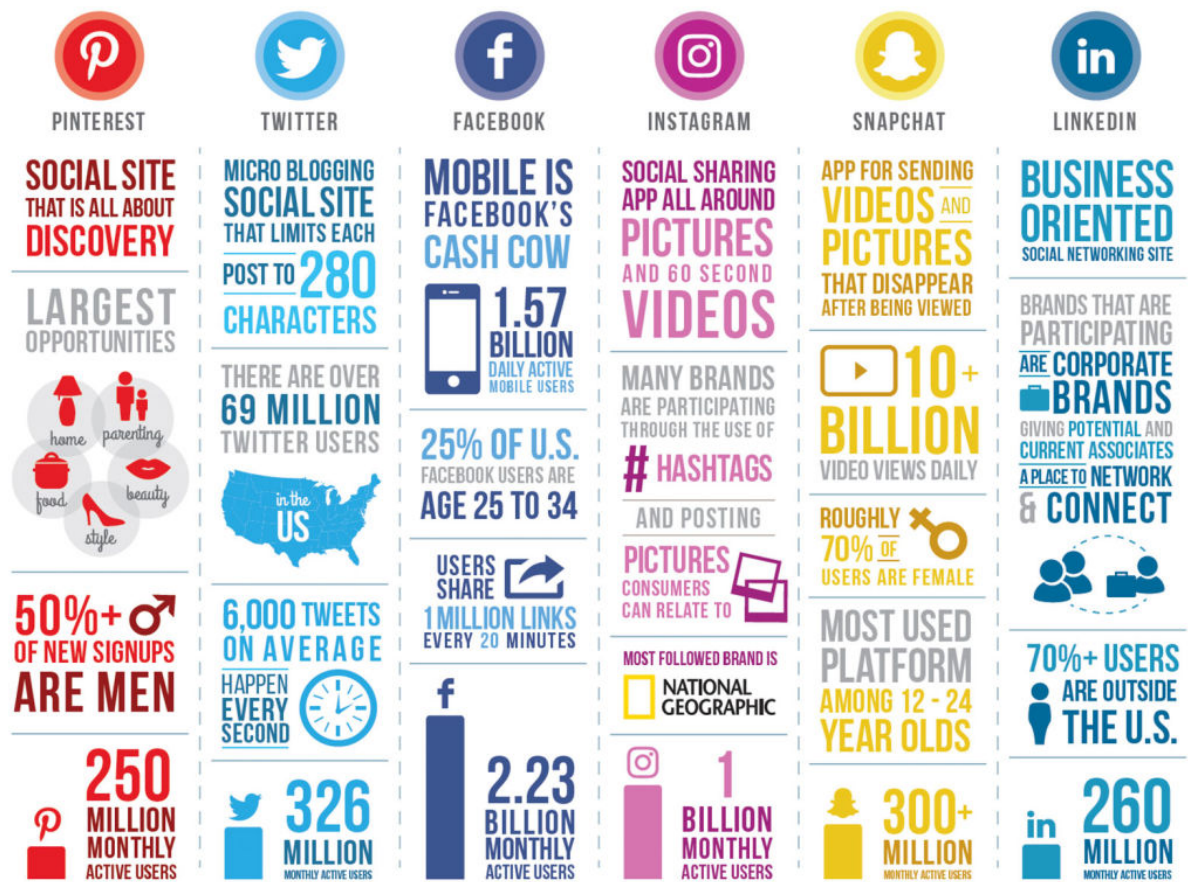
From the invention of blogging sites, social media websites became increasingly popular. Social media provided an “entirely new way for people to communicate and share with each other across great distances” (Hendricks, 2013, Social Media Today section, para. 1). A reason for this popularity is because consumers enjoy seeking out opinions that are different from the people in their immediate physical circle (Kozinets, 1998). This is evident through the consistent use of reading/writing Amazon reviews and having posts to like on Facebook. Goffman (1959) shares that consumers use various social media sites to seek opinion, practicing impression management along the way.

Telepresence is known as projecting a social presence from a distance, such as through letter writing or talking on the phone. However, using the personal websites that social media has to offer is exciting because it goes beyond typical telepresence. This is because social media has added visual, textual, audio, animated, and haptic elements to the idea of telepresence - giving people the opportunity for their content to be watched, listened, or felt from anywhere (Schau and Gilly, 2003).

These two researchers found that people typically use social media to showcase their real life identities, not create new ones. It is a way to “augment their face-to-face social and professional encounters”, enhancing or extending their real-life self (Schau and Gilly, 2003, p. 400). This matches previous researchers’ ideas that people have the desire

to control the impressions other people form of them. People conduct this impression management either for the rewards, such as getting a free size upgrade at Starbucks because the barista has seen the person's posts before and likes them, or for the desire someone has to "create an image that is consistent with one's personal identity", such as being the first to post that they have adopted a new workplace software so their online community recognizes that they are technology-savvy (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 62).

People use these aspects of self-disclosure as a way to present themselves in cyberspace and develop close relationships. Self-disclosure is defined as the conscious or unconscious revelation of personal information (such as thoughts, feelings, likes, dislikes) that is consistent with the image one would like to give (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). During this rush of social media website creation, we see a website titled LinkedIn arise in the early 2000's. Figure 2 shows the contracts between top social media contenders. Pinterest promotes photos/videos being used for creative inspiration, while Instagram helps users maintain their photos/videos and Snapchat makes photos/videos disappear after a set time frame. Twitter leans towards microblogging globally, while Facebook leans towards staying connected with others. However, LinkedIn is for networking and other business-oriented purposes. Despite the difference in the platform, LinkedIn still gives users the ability to generate content for the purpose of all the three reasons people use social media websites - to look for opportunities in real life, relationships in real life, and solutions to their problems in real life.



Statistics as of 12.27.2018 Designed by: Leverage - leverageatl.com

Figure 2. Various Social Media Statistics. From “Social Media Comparison Infographic”, by Yap, 2019, <https://yapmedia.net/social-media-statistics-will-blow-mind>. Copyright 2019 by Yapmedia.net.

## What is LinkedIn?

Based off the webpage titled “A Brief History of LinkedIn” (2015), LinkedIn began when a man named Reid Hoffman rallied together his ex-coworkers from SocialNet and PayPal to help him with a new project in 2003. The site was very much to-the-point, but also strikingly similar to the features it offers today. In order to address the concern that the connections-based site would hold too many similarities to a dating site, the LinkedIn team was intentional about offering these tools in the user’s functionality: “Search the profiles in your extended network” and “Post an opportunity for viewing by people in your extended network”. As seen in Figure 3, the member home page ended up including: Explore your network, Search for job-seekers, Search for hiring managers, Your connections, Invite more people into your network, See your invitations, and My Profile (A Brief History, 2015).

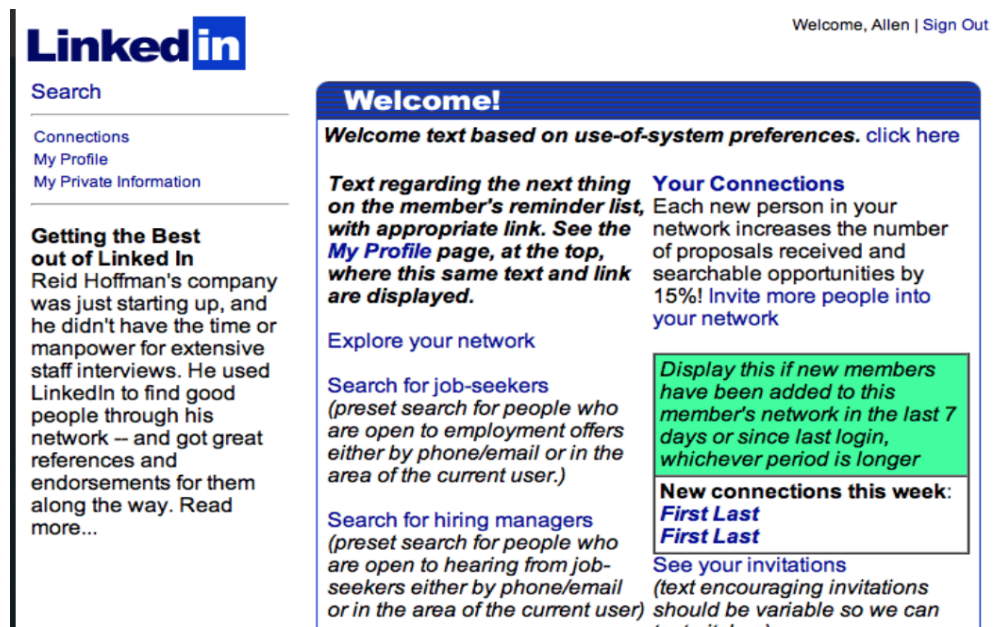


Figure 3. Original LinkedIn Website. From *Phase D*, by n.a., 2015, <https://ourstory.linkedin.com>.

Copyright 2015 by LinkedIn Corporation.

By 2005, recruiters and researchers had the option to buy into the company's first premium service - LinkedIn Jobs. This was where the employer (or recruiter) could send messages to recipients about opportunities, coined "InMail". By 2006, online public profiles really began to popularize. LinkedIn claimed their spot as being the place to have a professional public profile amongst all the other social media platforms. They added features like Recommendations and People You May Know. By 2007, the company launched LinkedIn Answers. This was a forum where users can ask/answer open questions and indulge themselves in reading discussions from users dubbed as "Top Experts", and the ability for members to add profile photos (A Brief History, 2015).

In 2010, LinkedIn's membership hit nearly 90 million members and 1,000 employees. A factor in this mega-growth was the company making it the cover of Fortune magazine that year (A Brief History, 2015). The Fortune article included a quote from the Accenture company's head of global recruiting, John Campagnino, stating that he "plans to make as many as 40% of his hires in the next few years through social media" (Hempel, 2010, Introduction section, para. 3). At this time in history, the average LinkedIn member was aged 43, graduated college, and had a salary of \$107,000 (Breitbart, 2011). In 2012, LinkedIn made revisions to their site to look a little more like we see today. Their focuses became three words: simplify, grow, everyday (A Brief History, 2015).

Now hosting over 450 million users worldwide and 130 million users in the United States, LinkedIn is now the largest professional network in the world and is the most-used social media platform amongst Fortune 500 companies (Gallant, 2019). With 40% of monthly active users getting on LinkedIn every day, the platform is primarily

used for job seeking, recruitment, and professional networking (van Dijck, 2013). When a survey of 260,000 recruiters was conducted on Bullhorn Reach, an online recruiting platform, studies found that 97% of the recruiters use LinkedIn in their hiring process and only 19% of the recruiters use Facebook (Tifferet and Vilnai-Yavetz, 2018). In another survey, the main reasons reported for using LinkedIn include researching people and companies (77%), reconnecting with past colleagues (71%), uncovering potential job opportunities (41%), networking (39%), and increasing marketing presence (39%) (Breitbarth, 2016).

LinkedIn has risen to the ranking of third best social media platform overall (Lindholm, 2017) and has an account for 25% of U.S. adults who are online (Murnane, 2018). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) conducted research to pinpoint the challenges and opportunities of social media in general. Taking a look specifically at LinkedIn, part of their success may be attributed to the fact that they have unintentionally or intentionally incorporated four of the six types of media that the two researchers consider success factors: collaborative projects, blogs, content communities, and social networking.

- Collaborative projects “enable the joint and simultaneous creation of content by many end-users” (p. 62). LinkedIn does this by being a place where users can add, remove, and change the text posted online, in addition to offering social bookmarking through their Save feature (marked in red on Figure 4) (Shaul, 2018). Social bookmarking accumulates media content and Internet links for users to collect (Kaplan, 2010).

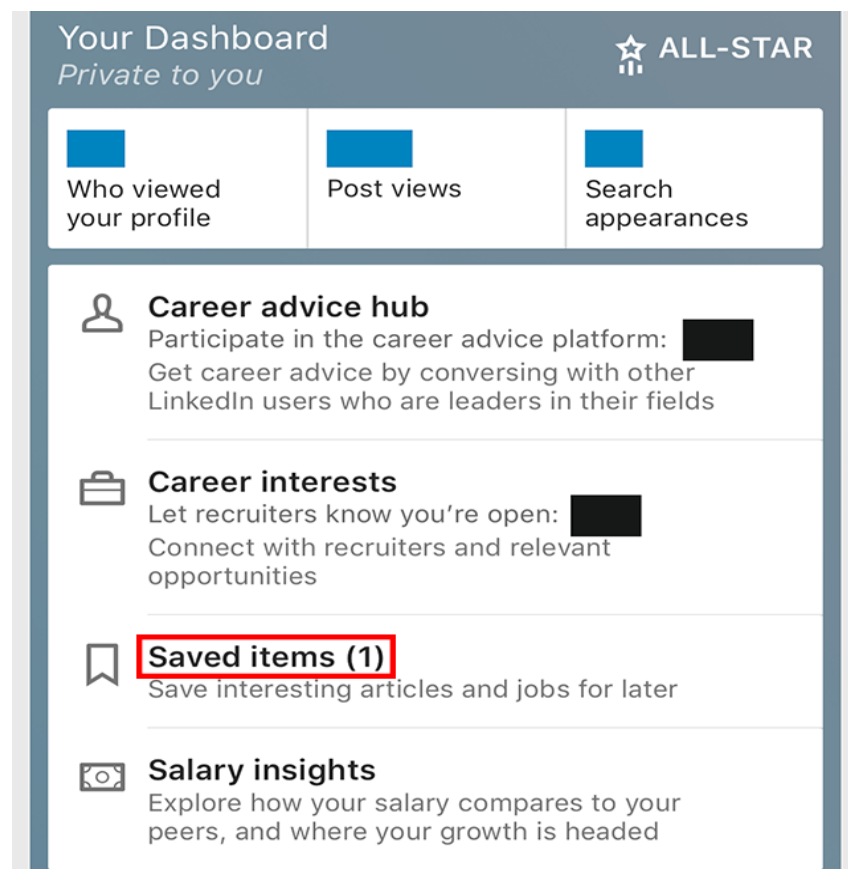


Figure 4. Highlighting the Saved Feature. From *Here's How to Save Articles*, by Brandy Shaul, 2018, [www.adweek.com/digital/linkedin-heres-how-to-save-articles-and-read-them-later/](http://www.adweek.com/digital/linkedin-heres-how-to-save-articles-and-read-them-later/). Copyright 2019 by Adweek.

- Blogs are a type of website that generally display time-stamped entries in reverse chronological order (Wunsch-Vincent and Vickery, 2007). These blogs are often written by one author, can be diary-style or give summaries of topics related to one specific content area, and allows users (including companies) to maintain transparency (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). LinkedIn provides a blog-like feature by offering users a platform to type their work in articles, as well as posts. Figure 5 showcases the page hosting LinkedIn articles created by the thesis author.

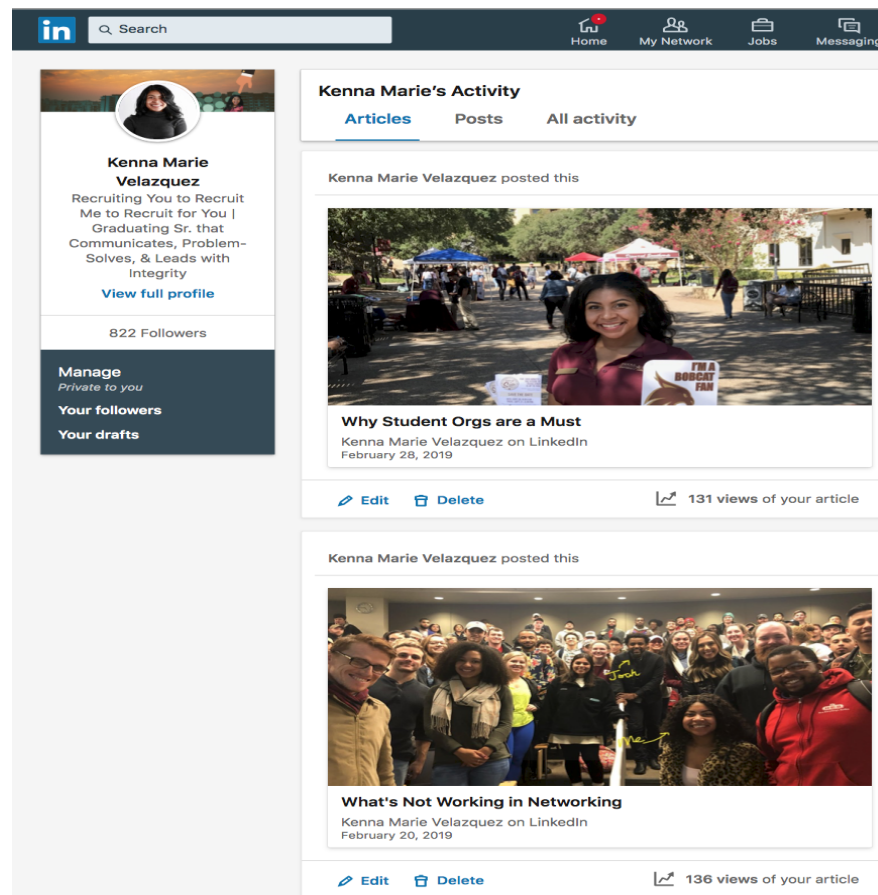


Figure 5. Screenshot of Articles. From *My LinkedIn Articles*, by Kenna Marie Velazquez, 2019, www.linkedin.com. Copyright 2019 by LinkedIn.



- Content Communities are where the “sharing of media content between users” happens, filled with various types of media from text to videos (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 63). The LinkedIn platform incorporates this through their homepage (see Figure 6), where the user can scroll through content from users they do and do not follow.

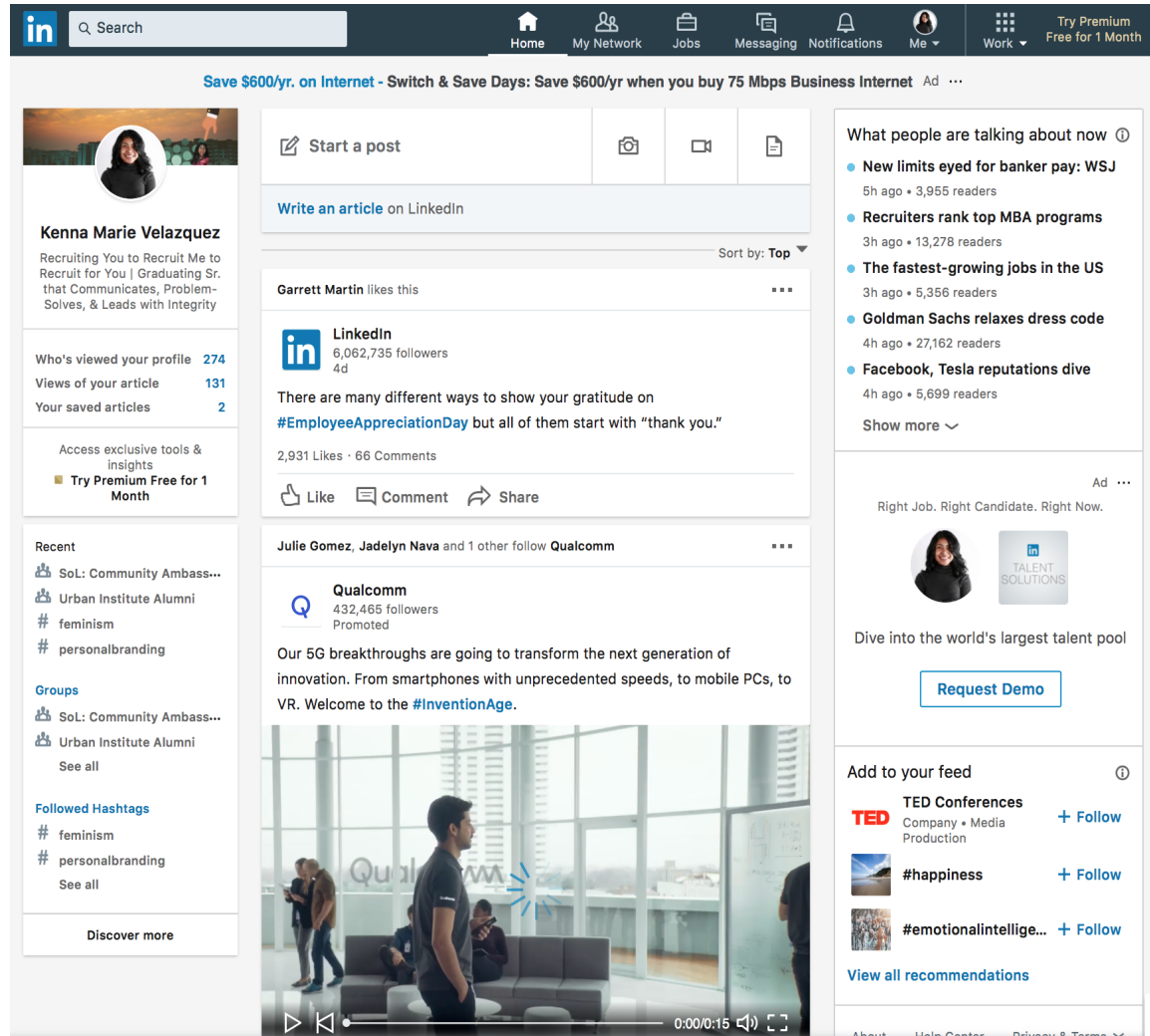


Figure 6. Screenshot of Home Page. From *My LinkedIn Homepage*, by Kenna Marie Velazquez, 2019, www.linkedin.com. Copyright 2019 by LinkedIn.

- Social Networking sites are “applications that enable users to connect by creating personal information profiles, inviting friends and colleagues to have access to those profiles, and sending emails and instant messages between each other” (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 63). Figure 7 takes a glimpse at the inbox feature of LinkedIn, where users can share messages and documents with each other.

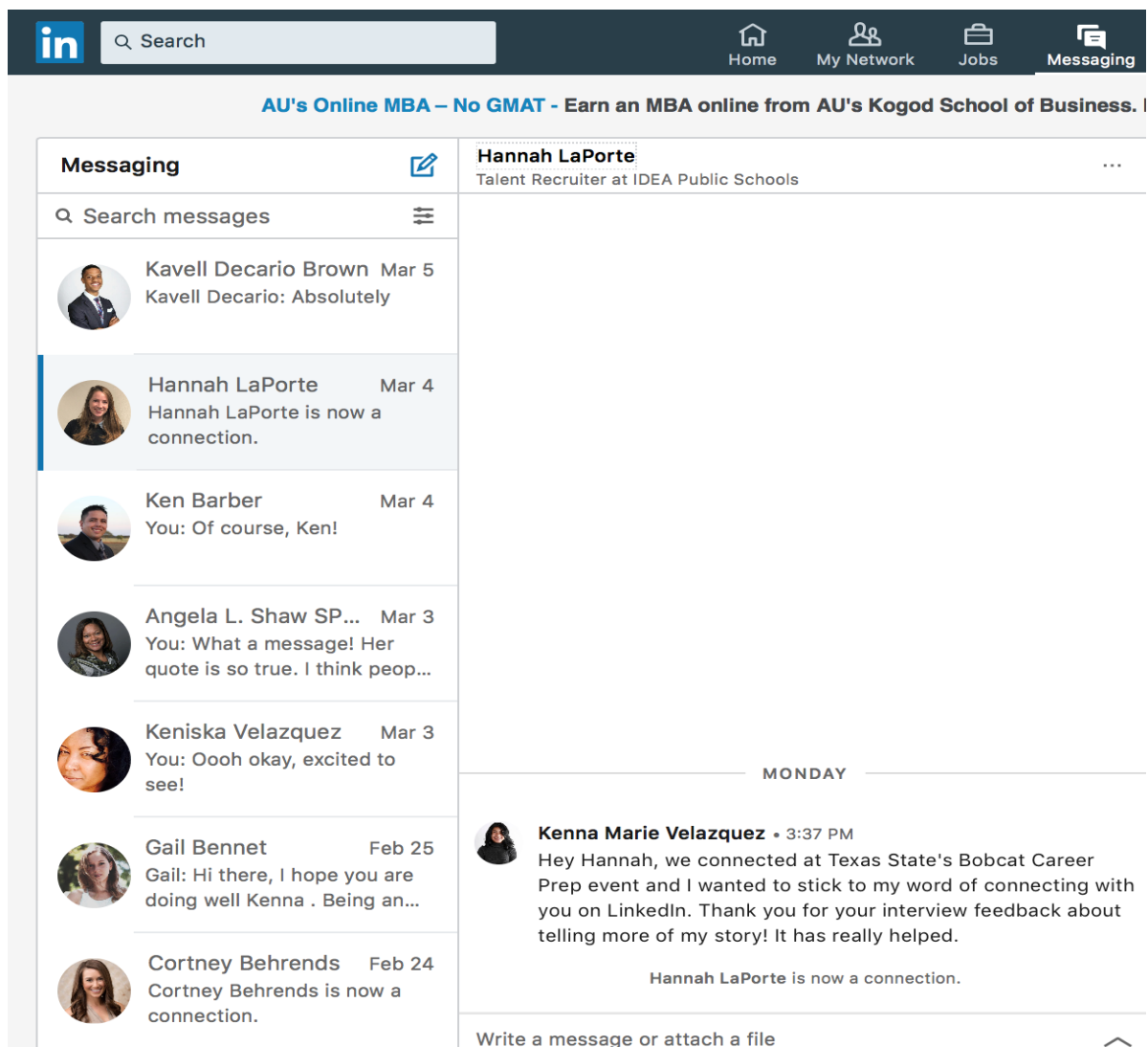


Figure 7. Screenshot of Inbox. From *My LinkedIn Messages*, by Kenna Marie Velazquez, 2019, www.linkedin.com. Copyright 2019 by LinkedIn.

In addition to LinkedIn's effective use of social media success factors, another part of the website's mega-growth was through their launch of Influencers, which their "A Brief History of LinkedIn" webpage calls a select group of 250+ thought leaders chosen by LinkedIn. These leaders facilitated discussions on the platform and shared their views on various business matters. These leaders included Virgin Group founder Richard Branson, President Barack Obama, Governor Mitt Romney, and LinkedIn CEO Jeff Weiner himself (A Brief History, 2015). Their shared content included titles like "It's not just who you know, it's what they know" and "The six lessons I live by" (Rolansky, 2012). By 2014, Ryan Rolansky gave an update that the ability to publish articles on LinkedIn expanded from this select group of Influencers to a whopping 25,000 of the website's members. This number has grown exponentially throughout the years because now, only a miniscule amount of members in certain geographic regions do not have the network permissions to create their own LinkedIn articles (Rolansky, 2014). With this said, the launch of LinkedIn Influencers paved the way for everyday people to begin creating user-generated content on the platform.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (Wunsch-Vincent and Vickery, year), in Paris, user-generated content must satisfy three basic requirements:

1. Content must be published either on a publicly accessible website or on a social networking site accessible to a selected group of people, excluding context exchanged in e-mails or instant messages.
2. Content needs to show a certain amount of creative effort, excluding the mere replications of already existing content.

3. Content needs to have been created outside of professional routines and practices, outside the context of a commercial market.

As more every day users began creating user-generated content, a rise of social media influencers begins to form.

### What is social media influencing?

Social media influencers are “contributors [that] gain extended competencies in creating sophisticated content in the form of stories, videos, and visuals” (Audrezet, De Kerviler, and Moulard, 2018, p. 1). These contributors use social media to “give their opinions (e.g., Tripadvisor, Amazon), inform their network (e.g., Twitter), share their expertise within a field (e.g., Wikipedia), or express their passions (e.g., personal blogs, Instagram, Pinterest, Facebook)”. Popular topics are technology, beauty, fashion, politics, health, and in LinkedIn’s case - trends in the business world (Wunsch-Vincent and Vickery, 2007). As more and more people follow and engage with the contributor, the contributor is launched into a place where they can transition into a social media influencer, “represent[ing] a new type of independent third party endorser who shapes audience attitudes through blogs, tweets, and use of other social media” (Freberg et. al, 2011, p. 1).

From most common to least common, the techniques used to link the influencer and company are: ongoing ambassadorships, product reviews, brand mentions, event coverage, sponsored content, affiliate links, and more (Ahmad, 2018). From most important to least important, the goals of influencer marketing are: improve brand advocacy, expand brand awareness, reach new targeted audience, increase share of voice,

improve sales of conversion, manage reputation, drive lead generation, accelerate digital transformation, improve customer satisfaction, and improve employees influence.

Overall, de Veirman (2016) states that marketers use influencers to “have a strong impact on their target audience and influence them to try and adopt new products and help diffuse them in their social network through their posts” (p. 799). Instagram is a popular platform for influencers because the application has photo and video features where the product can be visually imagined, and also offers a caption box that can hold product information or product reviews (de Veirman, 2016). The Influencer Marketing Hub lists 4 types of influencers:

1. Celebrities: This is where influencer marketing began. Celebrities are targeted for their large fan base and social media following, to be the ideal person to promote or endorse certain brands.
2. Industry experts and thought leaders: These influencers “gain respect because of their qualifications, position, or experience about their topic of expertise” (cite).
3. Bloggers and content creators: This type of influencing happens when a popular blogger brings up a brand in their post. Supporters of this blog may want to learn about the brand themselves.
4. Micro Influencers: This type of influencer can be a normal, everyday person who has knowledge on a specialist niche. Their following typically consists of others who admire that niche (What is an Influencer, 2019).

When looking at these different types of social media influencers, it is noted that they share the two qualifications that are said to “make an influencer an influencer” (Mundine, 2008, Introduction section, para. 2):

1. Online influencers hold credibility.
2. Online influencers have a niche audience (Mundine, 2018).

When relating these qualifications to a recruiter in particular, their experience in the field can back-up their credibility. Their niche can be anything, from telling stories of entertaining places in the workplace environment to discussing their views on artificial intelligence. By utilizing their credibility and niche to their advantage, a social media influencer can then develop an online following (Mundine, 2018). By meeting these qualifications, a recruiter is ready to follow the next steps towards becoming a social media influencer.

# DISCUSSION

## How does recruiting fit into social media influencing?

The WayUp company describes a recruiter as someone who understands a company's recruitment needs and identifies talented candidates to fill open positions ("What Does a Recruiter Do", 2019). In other words, recruiting is promoting the company you work for to talented individuals who may be influenced to apply for a position at your company. The definition of influencer marketing holds similarities. Influencer marketing is "promoting brands through use of "specific key individuals who exert influence over potential buyers" (Audrezet et al., 2018, p. 1). In relevancy to LinkedIn, it is implied that the "brand" could be the company a recruiter works for and the "buyers" are the recruiter's followers that may apply for a job at their company.

The company a recruiter works for correlates to the recruiter because LinkedIn users are able to improve the image of the company they work for (van Dijck, 2013). In fact, the recruiter of a company is so vital that how they behave is more important than how the interview is structured or focused, when it comes to how attracted the applicant is to the job position (Turban and Dougherty, 1992). The sole behavior of a recruiter can tell a candidate how well the organization treats their employees and affects the likeliness of someone accepting a second interview invitation (Rynes and Miller, 1983). This means that the image of a recruiter plays an essential role in the image of the company.

Just like recruiters affect how someone views the company, influencers recognize that followers believe that the brands they promote embody their personal tastes and choices (Freberg, 2011). This means that in the case where the brand an influencer

promotes is the company the influencer works for, then followers' judgements about applying at that company may be more positive because they express approval for the influencer. A 1990's study found that individuals share the way they feel about organizations with other people, influencing the other person's attraction to that organization (Breagh, 1992). Since people seek friends and family members to give them recommendations when making decisions and people consider their acquaintances on social media to be friends (Sammis, 2015), social media is an ideal place to both give and receive company recommendations. If a follower grows a liking to an organization because they believe it matches the influencer's personal tastes and choices, then this research shows there is a chance they will share their feelings with someone may will grow a liking for that company as well.

Since influencers and the brands they promote tend to be looked up to, Chae (2018) studies how envy can play a part in this notion - particularly how envying these social media influencers affects females. Labeling influencers as "micro-celebrities", examples used of influencers are unknown models and actresses, fitness instructors, friends of famous people, wealthy people, and even high school girls. Whoever it is, they share their everyday life with a large number of followers (Chae, 2018). A LinkedIn influencer is no different, as the posts shared may be about their exciting day at work or their time spent improving their professional development. They use their humor and insight to showcase what their followers do not have but wish they had (Saul, 2016), such as a position at a certain company. Marwick (2015) calls their posts "catalogs of what many young people dream of having and the lifestyle they dream of living" (p. 155).



Different followers feel different reactions when it comes to social media influencers' posts. While some feel satisfaction when they have the chance to engage with the influencer, others feel an uncomfortable emotion that stirs up when we compare ourselves with others and do not feel we have the upperhand - envy (Chae, 2018). He notes that envy comes from social comparison, and humans compare themselves to people similar to them (Smith, 2004). Because of this, people may be more envious of influencers than they are of celebrities. To followers, celebrities seem like they are out of this world. However, influencers can be your next-door neighbor or an old flame. Smith (2004) listed four conditions of envy. Envy happens when:

- a. There are similarities between the individual and the envy target, except for the desired attribute.
- b. The desired attribute has relevance to the individual, personally.
- c. The individual is unsure whether they are capable of attaining the desired attribute.
- d. The envy target's advantage is viewed as unfair.

With this said, when the opportunity comes up for an envious follower to have what the influencer has (i.e. a position at their company by the influencer posting a job opening), the opportunity may appear a lot more desirable. An influencer that posts about the company they work for can lead followers to begin thinking how life would look like if they were working at that company. This mindset is similar to a shoppers' mindframe when at a store, as 60% of them have reported being influenced by a social media post or blog review and 49% of consumers look to product recommendations shared by influencers for their purchases (Barker, 2018). Similar to vloggers, followers tend to

develop an impression of friendship with the influencers they admire, known as “para-social interaction” (Lee, 2016, p. 5). Viewing the relationship as a friendship, followers trust the influencer and crave replicating their behaviors. This can also lead to adopting the influencer’s choices, including the company that the influencer chose to work for.

The fact that people share how they feel about others with friends and have a tendency to seek out the things they envy may be why influencer marketing is the second most effective promotional strategy, ranking higher than celebrity endorsements and magazine advertising (Audrezet et al., 2018). Recruiters have a duty to market their company favorably and becoming an influencer will result in more applicants applying to their company, particularly through LinkedIn.

### Why is LinkedIn an ideal place for social media influencing?

According to Statista, 81% of Americans have had a social networking profile in 2017 (Topic, 2018). With so many people using social media, one may wonder what prompts people to create a social media account. Research finds that a change in someone’s life often prompts social media usage (Schau, 2003). When a consumer’s role is changed, they are more motivated to be mindful of the image communicated through the products and groups that they use. These are associations that social media has the ability to manage. This could be why 50% of children have a social media account by age 12, as that is the age frame where many American children are experiencing a life change transitioning from elementary to middle school (Kids and Tech, 2018). Another place where a change in a consumer’s role may spark their use of using social media to make a personal web space is a student transitioning from college student to recent graduate

looking for entry-level opportunity, or a potential job candidate going from employed to unemployed. Recognizing the correlation between life changes and social media is key for recruiters to understand why they should use LinkedIn to target candidates, as this correlation means that recruiters are constantly receiving access to more talent through the growing number of life changes happening and consequentially, user accounts being created.

As more people make social media accounts, more chances to influence users online arise. Ahmad (2018) claims that influencer marketing has a return on investment that is 11x higher than traditional forms of digital marketing. Only 6% of marketers who have used it before do not agree that it is effective. In fact, more and more marketers are increasing their budgets to make room for influencer marketing. One reason why influencer marketing has proven to be more effective than the traditional ways of advertising is because the authenticity and credibility of it lead to lower resistance of the message (de Vries, 2012). Since the endorsements happen among other posts of the influencer's personal life, the endorsements appear more like the influencer's unbiased opinion and may have relevant persuasive power (Abidin, 2015). A joint study by Twitter and analytics firm Annalect surveyed the social media website's users and found that 56% of users say they rely on recommendations from friends, while the amount that relies on influencers' recommendations tracks closely behind at 49% (Swant, 2016). The LinkedIn website puts an emphasis on users only adding each other if they know each other ("Using the 'I Don't Know'"), meaning most of the users one adds on LinkedIn are their friends in real life. Because of this, LinkedIn is a prime spot for users to give recommendations, as most users will be a friend to the user and double as an influencer.

This is another reason the LinkedIn platform is an ideal platform for a recruiter to recommend their company to others and receive more job applications consequentially.

### But, is more candidates a good thing?

In a simple answer, yes. If there are more applications to choose from, there are more chances that one of the applications harnesses an applicant that will be a good fit for the position. Receiving more applications through LinkedIn specifically could benefit the recruiter because the under-30 age bracket is highly desired for recruiters: often because of the younger worker's energy and stamina, tech savviness, adaptability, and salary preferences; these are all skills that are highly sought after by recruiters (Shields, 2018). To the recruiter's benefit, almost 25% of LinkedIn users are between 18 and 29 years of age (Fontein, 2017). In fact, 87 million of the 2 billion Millennials in the world are on LinkedIn (Gallant, 2019).

When it comes to increasing the amount of *quality* applicants, a reason recruiters are having trouble receiving quality applications is because they are not targeting passive candidates (Boogaard, 2018). Passive candidates are the candidates that are not actively in the job search. Instead, they are part of the 82% of already-employed workers that are open to new job opportunities nonetheless (Hollon, 2018). "The cream of the crop talent is likely already employed. To get their attention, the opportunities need to sort of fall into their laps." (Boogaard, 2018, You're not targeting passive candidates section, para. 1). A highly-qualified, passive candidate that stumbles onto the profile of an influencer and their attractive posts about their company could be an example of an opportunity "sort of fall[ing] into their lap".

Another reason a company may not be receiving quality applicants is because the recruiter is not building awareness, informing the recruiter: “Many qualified candidates likely don’t know that your company exists - let alone that you’re hiring” (Boogaard, 2018, You’re not building awareness section, para. 1). On the other hand, people may know the company exists but it may have a bad, or non-existent, employer brand (Picard, 2013). After the 2012 Employer Brand International survey revealed that 84% of employees believe a clearly defined strategy is the key to achieving employer branding objectives, LinkedIn suggests that recruiters ask themselves the following questions: What do your employees value about you most as an employer? How do employees describe your company culture? (Picard, 2013)

Recruiter should find the answers to these questions and create posts on LinkedIn that answer them. Doing this is a way to create online presence as an influencer, while simultaneously building awareness about their company and harvesting an employer brand. A recruiter who puts effort towards being a LinkedIn influencer follows Boogaard’s final advice to recruiters: “You need to get out in front of candidates, rather than waiting for them to stumble upon your job listing themselves and apply” (Boogaard, 2018, How to Find Stronger Applicants section, para. 2).

## Posting Tactics for the Recruiter

### *Growing Social Presence*

Anything a recruiter puts online is a form of communication with the recruiter’s online audience. Because posting is a form of communication, recruiters should be aware

of two terms in the communication world: media richness theory and social presence. Media richness theory assumes that the purpose of any communication is finding the solution to ambiguity and the minimizing of uncertainty (Daft and Lengel, 1986). Social presence is the intimacy and immediacy between two people communicating (Daft and Lengel, 1986). “The higher the social presence, the larger the social influence that the communication partners have on each other’s behavior” (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). Since social presence is higher for interpersonal interactions (i.e. face-to-face chats) than mediated interactions (i.e. direct messages), and higher for synchronous communication (i.e. instant message) than asynchronous communication (i.e. e-mails) (Short, Williams, and Christie, 1976), it is important that recruiters who want to build influence on LinkedIn put effort in mimicking interactions that are both interpersonal and synchronous. Recruiters can practice being interpersonal and/or synchronous through unconventional ways. A way to practice being interpersonal while on a digital platform is through hosting online discussions that support video and/or live chat, a feature that mimics face-to-face chats. LinkedIn announced a LinkedIn Live feature in February 2019; users now have the ability to broadcast real-time videos to their entire LinkedIn feed or select groups (Lunden, 2019). Practicing synchronous communication could look like a recruiter replying quickly to the conversations made on social media. Quick replies have become a social expectation, even for the busiest of companies. In fact, 83% of people expect a response from a company within a day or less, while 38% of people expect a response in an hour or less (Cox, 2018). With that said, business does not excuse people’s preferences for swift replies and recruiters should put effort towards replying to their social media comments with appropriate timeliness.

## *Exhibiting an Online Persona*

Karen Freberg's study found that the profiles of both social media influencers are viewed as smart, ambitious, productive, poised, power-oriented, candid, and dependable. Influencers are *not* viewed as being victimized, likely to give up, self-defeating, lacking meaning in life, doubting adequacy, submissive, fearful, anxious, and thin-skinned. This could be why influencers have a high chance of being reached out to for advice or reassurance by their online community than the CEO of a company would (Freberg, 2011). In fact, her study about public perceptions of personality found that society thinks of someone who gives advice or is turned to for advice, when they think about social media influencers (Freberg, 2010). In 1977, a poll by MediaPost found that “67 percent of people...were moved to take some sort of action by word-of-mouth influence”. By 2003, that number jumped to 92 percent (Gillin, 2003, p. xiv). Based off these percentages, we can see people are listening to other people’s advice, as long as it does not appear like it is all part of a marketing campaign. For the recruiter, this advice they want others to listen to could be applying to their company.

As a recruiter works towards being a social media influencer, they should make sure their posts are the opposite of self-depreciative. Instead, their posts should radiate hope and be an encouraging read for the reader. Sending out positive messages may be natural to the recruiter, as someone who uses social media actively (which means doing more posting than reading) has less links to negative feelings, than a passive user does (Krasnova, 2013).

## *Combating Social Media Envy*

Another reason for a recruiter to post encouraging messages to their followers is because there could be followers that need to read it. Social comparison theory happens when someone evaluates their standing based off the capabilities and opinions of someone else (Festinger, 1954). The followers that partake in social comparison the most are those who:

- a. Are highly conscious about the self
- b. Show interest in what other people think
- c. View themselves negatively (Buunk, 2007).

Chae (year) concludes that the cases that most predict feelings of envy are:

- a. Users with high public self-consciousness and low self-esteem
- b. Users who see an influencer's posts frequently and have interest in their everyday life

As influencers, recruiters that provide practical information relevant and specific to their followers will not cause as much social comparison within these followers, compared to someone that posts impractical or unrealistic information (Chae, 2018).

Posting relevant and specific information makes it more attainable for a follower to attain the desired attributes the influencer has, therefore combating against the fact that an influencers' posts subconsciously brings down their followers' self-image. If a recruiter posts about the company they work for along with specific information on how to get a job at the company, then the post would be a benefit to both the recruiter and follower because the follower's self image goes unharmed and the recruiter would make a



successful promotion for their organization. This is why recruiters should make posts that are both *practical* and *specific*.

Because of the proximity between influencer and follower (in comparison to follower and celebrity), another conflict is that followers sometimes feel social media influencers do not deserve all the perks that they receive (Chae, 2018). This means a follower could think a recruiter does not deserve working at the company they work at, possibly because the follower has ready access to look at what is on the recruiter's LinkedIn profile and conclude that they are more qualified than the recruiter. Posting practical and specific work on LinkedIn counters the idea of undeservice, because it shows the follower that the influencer does have industry knowledge. Seeing this, the follower may even feel inspired to apply to the company themselves, upon recognition that they also hold knowledge on the topic at hand. The Content Marketing Institute agrees that knowledge-based posts are important, labeling successful LinkedIn posts as: personal, professional, practical, portraying of a path for change, and pointing towards peak experiences (Moeller, 2017).

### *Going Viral*

Berger (2019) studies how online users get their posts to spread. He uses his 15+ years of studying how social influence drives products/ideas in order to consult for Fortune 500 companies and start-up businesses, improve their communications, and even publish a book titled "Contagious: Why Things Catch On". In the book, he suggests six different posting strategies in an acronym called STEPPS (FightMediocrity, 2015). Although his suggestions are catered to the everyday person trying to get more buzz on their posts, this thesis suggests that a recruiter can use his principles to attract more users

to their page. Below, this thesis takes Berger's (2019) five principles and propose various ways a recruiter can implement these tools on their own LinkedIn profile.

- Social Currency is what makes someone look good. In simple terms, Berger claims that if sharing something makes you look good, you are more likely to share it (Berger, 2019). People will post about their stay at The Four Seasons hotel before they post about their stay at Motel 6. A way that recruiters can utilize social currency is by making posts that shout-out other users. These shout-outs involve tagging other users in a compliment about them, and could look like writing a post about their co-worker who helped the recruiter out on a deliverable. When the coworker sees the recruiter's post, the principle of social currency suggests that they are more likely to share it on their timeline - giving the recruiter's post more exposure overall. This is because the creation of online self-presentations harbors the opportunity for users to choose which aspects of their personality to show and which images are their most favorable images, making self-presentation online more strategic than in-person situations (Ellison, 2006).
- Triggers are how the target audience is reminded of the product. This is why Rebecca Black's song "Friday" receives the most views on Fridays, because users are reminded of the date "Friday" every week ("How to Trigger"). One idea to utilize triggers is if recruiters have a consistent posting schedule, like posting an article every week under the hashtag "#WritingWednesday". The recruiter's followers could become accustomed to seeing a new article every Wednesday, and when the next Wednesday comes, they may think of checking the recruiter's page for the newest addition. In the midst of searching for this article, the

opportunity presents for the user to run into job openings the recruiter had posted previously. In either instance, having a consistent posting schedule helps the recruiter grow as an influencer because there is a higher chance of being seen when someone posts weekly since only three million users share content weekly (Gallant, 2019).

- Emotion is that the more anxious the post makes the audience, the more the audience shares it (FightMediocrity, 2015). However, Guy Golan shares that people do not like sharing topics that are sad. This could be why instead, nearly all of the most successful viral advertising messages have something humorous in them (Golan, 2008). For example, a proposal of the LinkedIn post a recruiter could make that incorporates both anxious thoughts and humor could be:

*“Did you know 43% of Millennials quit their job within 2 years? At our company, our Millennial turnover rate is only 12%! Come find out what makes people want to stay...*

*And yes, our application can be done through your phone 📱”*

- Public is that humans tend to do what everyone else is doing. Starbucks could always give their customers a plain undecorated cup and save some extra money; however, they find it a good investment to use cups that distinctly show the brand name and design, in order to influence others passively to buy Starbucks too (FightMediocrity, 2015). A recruiter can use their LinkedIn to LinkedIn Live or even publicize Facebook watch parties; both are where fans of their work can publicly watch the recruiter’s presentations or a live workshop together. Facebook is set to send out notifications to friends of public video-watchers, encouraging

them to join in on the watch party as well and increasing the amount of online users who see what “everybody else is doing”.

- Pactical Value is that a recruiter’s post must be helpful to its audience. One of Jonah Berger’s (2019) most popular videos breaks down how he has learned to read faster. Many people found this topic valuable and applicable to their lives, and that they enjoyed being able to help others by distributing useful information (Pressgrove, 2018). A practical example of this is a recruiter making posts with tips on what they believe makes a phenomenal interview, rather than a simple post stating that they have witnessed a phenomenal interview before with no real tips for the followers to take along with them.
- Sories focus on the fact that people remember stories, rather than specifications (FightMediocrity, 2015). An example of this is a true story about a blender with a really powerful blade. The details of the blade is not what spread to friends; instead, it was when followers witnessed the blender turn an entire iPhone into powder (Inside Edition Staff, 2019). A recruiter can implement story use through their own LinkedIn biography. Their biography could tell a story about how the leader got to where they are today, instead of solely listing out their qualifications and accomplishments.

### *Writing Articles*

Articles are another way for recruiters to create posts. Roughly 45% of the people that read articles on LinkedIn are in upper-level positions, such as managers, Vice Presidents, Directors, and those in C-level positions (Gallant, 2019). These readers may

enjoy the article and share it with their network, not realizing they could be attracting their followers to the recruiter's page.

Gallant's research shows that long-form content gets shared on LinkedIn most often, with the ideal word count being 1900 words. Although seeing questions on LinkedIn is pretty common, recruiters should share how-to posts and lists because they receive 2x as many views as question posts. Figure 8 shows that "How" or "How-To" posts receive nearly 1.5x more views than all other post types. In fact, Moeller (2017) observed that 30 of the 500 "Most Shared LinkedIn Articles in 2016" were short lists of 5-10 items.

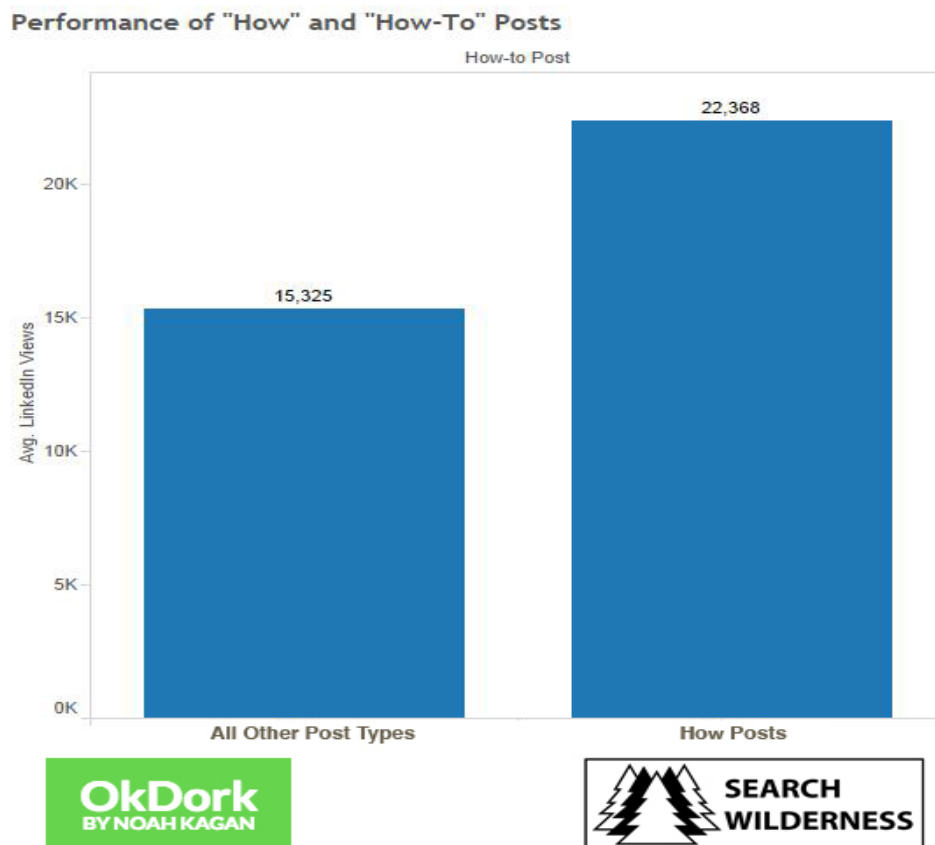


Figure 8. Do write How posts. From *Performance of How and How to posts*, by Noah Kagan, 2018, <https://okdork.com/linkedin-publishing-success/>. Copyright 2020 by Noah Kagan.

In 2016, eight of the top headlines for articles had “What I Learned” in them; only two of the eight were from LinkedIn influencers. Figure 9 is an example of these teaching-oriented posts. “Success”, “career”, “job”, “business”, “employee”, and “boss” were popular headline words, while the most-shared articles used change-related or growth-related words as headlines, like “big”, “every”, “all”, “must”, “never”, and “most” (Moeller, 2017). The most successful articles had headlines between 40-49 characters long, and included 8 images in their content (Shapiro, 2018). Since the mind prefers odd numbers over even numbers (Loewenstein, 1994), it is suggested that recruiters trying to grow their platform have 5, 7, or 9 headings on an article (Moeller, 2017).



## I Didn't Speak For 10 Days. Here's What I Learned...

Published on September 5, 2016



**Ryan Paugh** | Follow

Sales coach, speaker, philosopher, world traveler



3,862



374



731

Figure 9. Popular Article. From *I Didn't Speak for 10 Days*, by Susan Moeller, 2017, <https://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2017/03/linkedin-publishing-sharing-trends/>. Copyright 2019 by UBM.

After analyzing these 3,000 LinkedIn blog posts, Paul Shapiro also found that Thursdays are the best days for posts to create traction, particularly around 7:04PM. Figure 10 shows that 7:04PM tracked the most LinkedIn usage, with 2:05PM and 4:08PM also being marked as exhibiting high usage.

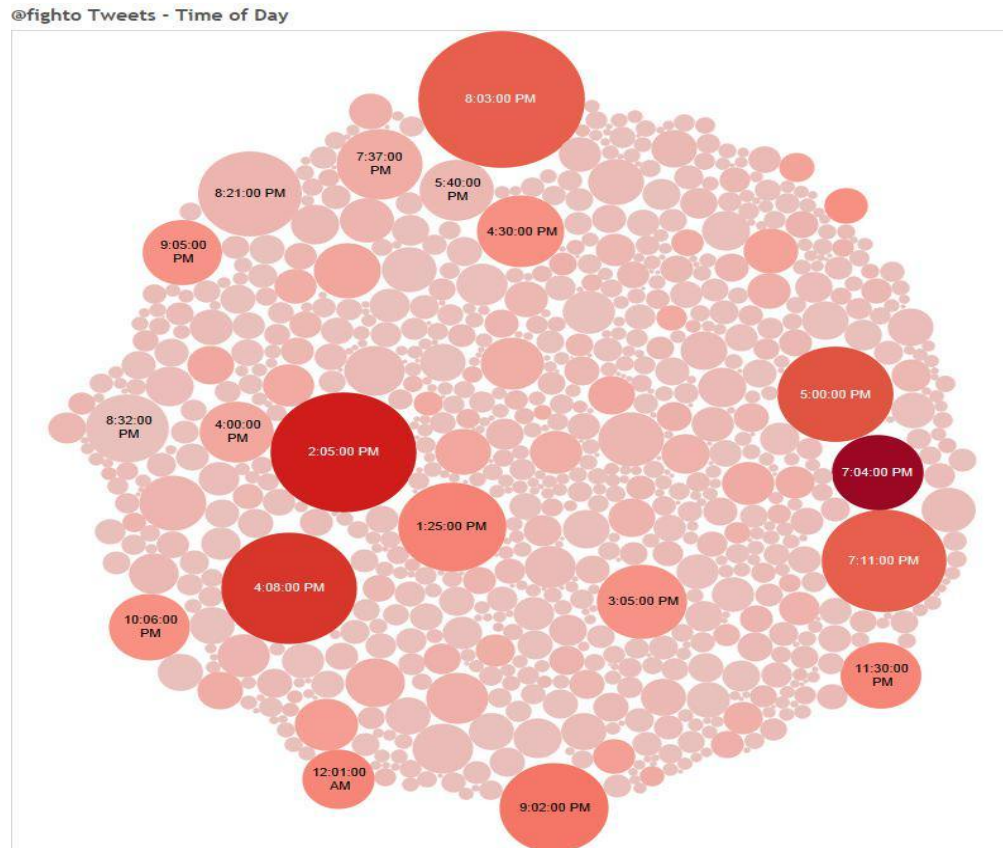


Figure 10. Publish your LinkedIn posts on Thursday. From *Publish Your LinkedIn Posts on Thursday*, by Noah Kagan, 2018, <https://okdork.com/linkedin-publishing-success/>. Copyright 2020 by Noah Kagan.

Figure 11 showcases the average total views of LinkedIn posts, sectioned by the day of the week. Although Thursday is the most popular day with 19,164 average total views, Sunday falls closely behind with fewer than 1,000 less views. On the other hand, Friday appears to be the least popular day to view posts at only 12,249 average total views.

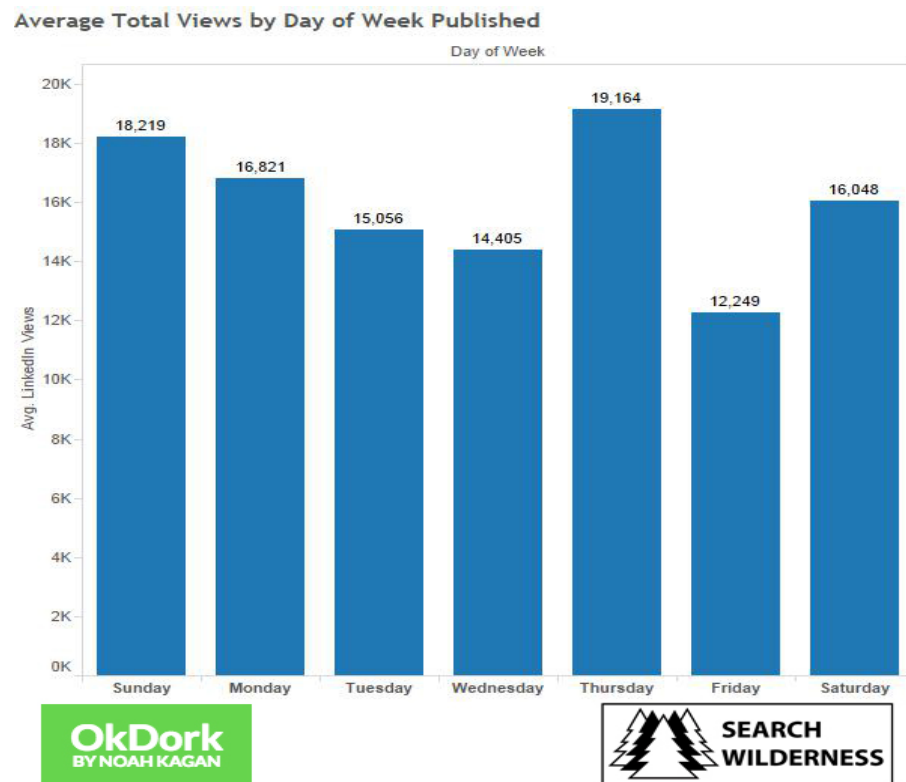


Figure 11. Time of Day. From *The Time I Should be Tweeting*, by Noah Kagan, 2018, <https://okdork.com/linkedin-publishing-success/>. Copyright 2020 by Noah Kagan.

The Flesh-Kincaid Reading Ease test is a common tool that assesses the comprehension difficulty of a body of text. For context, Readers' Digest magazine ranks a "Standard" in this test, meaning it should be easily read by 13-15 year olds and 80% of adults. However, on the LinkedIn platform, Shapiro (2018) notes that the posts with the most views, shares, and likes are ranked as "Easy", meaning an 11 year old should be



able to understand the post. This factoid could be because less effortful thinking leads to more social media use (Zhong, 2011). Because this means social media users lean towards thoughts that require minimal effort, recruiters trying to grow as social media influencers should pay attention to the parts of their LinkedIn profile that online users make inferences on subconsciously - their profile photo.

### *Choosing the Best Profile Picture*

As noted earlier in this thesis, the way a recruiter is viewed has an impact on how others view the company they work for. In a study on profile pictures, researchers concluded that profile pictures affect how viewers perceive the user and are believed to reflect the user's personality (Wu, Chang, and Yuan, 2015, p. 885). Profiles with a profile photo receive 21x more views and 36x more messages (Gallant, 2019). In a different study that researched how recruiters affect employment opportunities by Michael Harris, researchers found that the characteristics of a recruiter have a strong chance of relating to the job applicant's intentions to accept a job offer. This study also found that the perceived recruiter's informativeness and personableness are two successful recruiter characteristics (Harris and Fink, 1987). The recruiter can showcase being informative through their posts and content, but the recruiter's profile photo gives them a chance to show a personable nature.

Tifferet and Yilnai-Yavetz studied self-presentation through LinkedIn photos, by analyzing 480 portraits on the platform. The way the user chooses to represent himself/herself through their profile photo is a way to practice non-verbal impression management (Tifferet and Vilnai-Yavetz, 2018). "For instance, emotional expressivity can be communicated by facial expressions (Coviello, 2014), professionalism by the

formality of one's attire (Rafaeli and Pratt, 1993), or status by the prestige of accompanying objects (Han, Nunes, and Drèze, 2010).” (p. 33). People attempt to look professional through the way they groom and dress themselves. Doing this links to rating positively in interviews (Barrick, Shaffer, and DeGrassi, 2009), receiving the customer reaction desired in sales (Kim, Ju, and Johnson, 2009), and the ability to facilitate social interactions (Nelissen and Meijers, 2011). These are all situations that are part of a recruiter’s everyday duties, both online and offline.

Differing from Facebook profile photos, most LinkedIn profile photos are medium close-up photographs that show part of the head and shoulders with the person looking toward the camera, called standard headshots (Tifferet and Vilnai-Yavetz, 2018). Because of this uniformity, researchers further believe LinkedIn is used for self-promotion before self-expression. However, as time goes on, the use of self-expression on social network sites (including LinkedIn) has been encouraged. By using LinkedIn to self-express, this essence of non-conformity can signal higher status, since refusing to conform to social norms can make the person appear like they live autonomously (Bellezza, Gino, and Keinan, 2014).

The profile photo can influence how the viewer rates the recruiter in approachability and dominance (Vernon, Sutherland, Young, and Hartley, 2014). In a PhotoFeeler study that gathered 60,000 ratings for 800 portraits on social media, the researchers concluded that seeing a toothy smile improved Likability, Competence, and Influence. A closed-mouth smile still has a positive effect on Likability, while a laughing smile gains a large positive affect on Likability but lowers the rating on Competence and Influence (PhotoFeeler, 2014). For men in recruiting, however, a wide smile can lower

their Competence rating (Wang, Mao, Li, Y.J., and Liu, 2017) and social status (Coats and Feldman, 1996).

The PhotoFeeler (2014) team also found nothing should be covering the eyes of the person photographed. Sunglasses significantly dropped a person's Likability score by -.36; however, a hair or photo glare did not affect Likability much, but significantly dropped Competence by -.29 and Influence by -.31. On the topic of eyes, squinching eyes exhibited comfort and confidence, receiving a +.33 for Competence, +.37 for Influence, and +.22 for Likeability (PhotoFeeler, 2014). Eyeglasses were associated with the subject looking less forceful (Terry and Krantz, 1993) and less attractive, but with higher intelligence (Leder, Forster, and Gerger, 2011), competence (Terry and Krantz, 1993), and professional status (Guéguen, 2015).

A shadow line that outlines the entire jaw aids the recruiter in ranking higher in all three categories, along with formal dress (PhotoFeeler, 2014). Findings regarding viewer perception of facial hair is mixed, but when choosing prospective managers based off photographs, Altay de Souza's study found that human resources managers preferred men that were clean-shaven. However, researchers speculate that the preference to be clean-shaven was a result of the popular style in that time period (de Souza, Baião, and Otta, 2003).

Photofeeler (2014) found that the photo setting did not have much effect on rating, but photo editing ranks best when it is done in moderation. The ideal amount of body shown is either the head and bust, or head and torso. Face-only photos lowered Likability, while full-body photos lowered Competence and Influence (PhotoFeeler, 2014). LinkedIn suggests that the user's face takes up 60% of the frame; to wear dark,

solid colors; and to wear the same type of clothes as they would normally wear to work (Abbot, 2014). Another LinkedIn blog, written by Lee Coles, suggests the use of natural light and that the photo will be more flattering if taken from above. This blog warns against all cliché selfies, such as: “duckface, pouting, sparrow face, fishlips, belfie, the bed, the bathroom, the restaurant, the seatbelt, the gym”, emphasizing that these looks have no place on someone’s LinkedIn profile (Coles, 2015). Since a tilted head can give off low self-confidence, the recruiter’s head should be straight (Pachter, 2014).

In summary, a recruiter should work towards being perceived as approachable to potential job seekers, competent about the job and their company, and influential as they seek out social media influence. This means recruiters should choose a toothy smile over a laughing smile, particularly for women. Nothing should be covering the recruiter’s eyes except eyeglasses if preferred, but their eyes should be squinted. The recruiter should try to have a shadow along their jaw line and their head straight. Their attire should be dressed professionally in solid colors, while keeping the photo editing moderate and the amount of body shown starting at the head and ending at the bust or torso.

### *Remembering the Golden Rule*

Recruiters can learn from the influencers on various social media platforms about being careful in the way they promote their company. Followers view content as more trustworthy when it is “ordinary” and does not look commercialized, based off a study of the perception of Amazon reviews (Mudambi and Schuff, 2010). This is because audiences view social media influencer’s content as real and authentic (Scott, 2015), in comparison to ingenuine marketing communications that are more common. Followers expect influencer to express content that can be trusted by its impartiality and originality

(Mudambi and Schuff, 2010). Posts with this authenticity is crucial because it strengthens message receptivity (Labrecque et al., 2011), improves perceived quality (Moulard et al., 2016) and raises purchase intentions (Napoli, 2014). Although a recruiter's followers may not be purchasing into a company physically as the influencer ads on Instagram may look like, a recruiter's posts should influence the followers' buy-in to the company mentally. With all the promoting recruiters and influencers are capable of going, strategies have emerged to maintain authenticity. A study found that being passionate is a way to combat ingenuity (Audrezet et al., 2018).

It is important that influencers are intrinsically motivated and love their platform usage because it brings them inner joy (Hirschman, 1983). According to Audrezet (2018), "self-oriented producers follow a production orientation, place more value on authenticity for themselves, and produce market offerings they enjoy, rather than market-oriented offerings that are financially successful" (p. 3). A study by Terakeet found that someone using their influencer status to make money is only the fourth-ranked motivation, coming after using publishing as a way to express creativity, connecting with others, and a way to journal everyday life (Audrezet et al., 2018). With this said, we can see that authentic posting has benefits for both the followers and influencer. As a recruiter works towards being a social media influencer, their efforts online should be done because they enjoy using LinkedIn since posting authentically on any social media platform correlates to better posts.

Audrezet's (2018) study observed current social media influencers (on Instagram, Facebook, Blogs, Youtube, Twitter, and Pinterest) and documented the ways they foster authenticity, through the way they frame their message. They found that the signs showed

a mix of intrinsic motivation and integrity. Below are some of the things they picked up on, that recruiters can incorporate in their content as well:

- Influencer's content is often shaped like a mini-story, connecting their topic to their life.
- Exclamation marks, capital words, and emoticons are used to show style, excitement, and pleasure.
- Influencers showcase how they feel when they are in the presence of the topic (ex: how they feel when they are at their job, how they feel at a presentation about XYZ technology).
- Influencers tie themselves and the topic together, discussing how the topic (company, product, service, etc.) fits their personal preferences.
- Instead of strictly using wording that shows excitement, they may use fact-based opinion to discuss the how, when, and where about the topic and its outcomes.

What influencers post should be dictated by their inner desires and passions more than their commercial goals, as followers are capable of seeing through the words on the posts. Content that is gratifying, fact-based, and enjoyable to the influencer should be posted, as if the influencer is marketing to their own self (Hirschman, 1983).

Making these types of posts helps the influencer themselves with greater satisfaction in life and a heightened self-esteem (Goldman and Kernis, 2002), along with a reduction in stress levels (Wood, Linley, Maltby, Baliousis, and Joseph, 2008). Honesty and representing oneself as one truly is also increase one's subjective well-being (Reinecke and Trepte, 2014). This makes it even more vital that influencers do not post

about brands that do not fit their interests well (Audrezet et al., 2018). For a recruiter, this means they should not even work for brands that are not a good fit for them. The higher the recruiter or influencer's self-esteem, the easier it will be to follow these guidelines; "users with lower levels of well-being are likely to experience a conflict between their need for authenticity and the positivity norms of the social networking service environment" (Reinecke and Trepte, 2014, p. 95-96).

In the midst of marketing, it is important that the rest of their content is connected to what the influencer or recruiter believes in. Their content should be personal, they should be opening up, and they should be sharing opinions; doing this encourages self-discovery. With self-discovery comes the chance of the user coming up with their own unique value. Based off a study done on fashion bloggers and how they influence their industry, the taste of leadership that comes from unique value can develop into cultural capital for the influencer (McQuarrie, Miller, and Phillips, 2013).

Based off the above research, it can be concluded that the golden rule that a recruiter can take from an influencer is that authenticity and passion should be weaved throughout every communication they send on LinkedIn.

# CONCLUSION

Taking the steps above will better market both the recruiter and their company. As the recruiter's job is essentially to recruit candidates, there is a natural motivation for doing these things because it leads to a job better-done. This is also in line with the digital and global trend for job searches, where the first time people interact with a company is often completely digital.

A comprehensive approach to the way a recruiter regards social media, especially LinkedIn, will create long-lasting impact to their candidate pool and the company's brand. If the perception of the company is greater in the eyes of students or organizational committees, there is more opportunity for the company to be invited to job fairs and various recruiting events. Attending these events continues to broaden the job pool and amp the chances of receiving quality candidates. Being strategic on social media opens the door to new opportunities and ultimately greater candidates.

This thesis was inspired by my own recognition that I often want to apply at companies, once I notice one of my favorite social media influencers works at that company. When looking into this topic, research has proven that the power of social media can influence the recruitment process for job-seekers. Yet, this thesis takes a proactive step looking at how a recruiter can use social media to influence their recruitment process. This idea gives more power to the recruiter than to social media.

The findings of this thesis may not benefit large-scale companies like Chase and IBM, where their company may not need recruiters to build the branding of their company. However, for a small- to mid-scale company with room for growth,



implementing influencers into their recruitment strategy can transform the way that company is seen to consumers.

## Limitations

Not every qualified candidate is on the LinkedIn platform. If a recruiter decides to cut former methods of recruitment and stick directly to outbound sourcing, they are missing out on the social media-less candidates who still have strong suits that will fit the job position well. Because of this, it is encouraged that recruiters do not completely forfeit their old methods of getting the word out that their company is hiring. Instead, it is suggested that they revamp their practices and make outbound recruiting a priority, while still keeping inbound recruiting in their recruitment process.

A company that newly begins to incorporate searching for passive candidates, along with active candidates, must combat the risk of burn-out. For the employee, the risk is ran whether their social media use that is required for work will interfere with their time off the clock. Because of this, it is essential that the company provides time for the recruiter to write his/her company-related LinkedIn posts on the clock. In addition, the company should pay for any application that schedules the posts automatically so the recruiter does not need to worry about posting for work amidst their personal life. For the audience, the recruiter will need to be strategic in their posting schedule to ensure their posts do not become so constant that their followers tend to brush past them.

## Future Research

In future research, there should be test subjects used to see the effect on influencers on LinkedIn. Upon researching about the topic, there was a wide assortment of articles listing the best influencers to follow on the platform. This gave me confirmation that there are everyday people that are considered influencers on LinkedIn, by others. However, there was a lack of data that describe the results of influencing on LinkedIn. Because of this, the conclusions in this thesis gave reasons why a recruiter that pursues LinkedIn influencing is a good idea. However, there were no published results on recruiters who have tried this method to include as further back-up.

In addition, future research can include what users' thoughts are on people that use the platform the way influencers do. There should later be a poll or data from LinkedIn available that quantifies how many people hear of a job opening due to a recruiter's LinkedIn post. Following that, there could be a study that calculates the success rates of recruiters who are active on social media compared to recruiters who are inactive on social media, and/or a study that measures the perception of authenticity/transparency on job postings based off the verbiage or message source. It would be interesting to find further correlations between product advertisements on Instagram, and job advertisements on LinkedIn. Although many sites describe what a social media influencer does, there were not an abundance of sites that listed the specific qualifications for someone to become a social media influencer.

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