

Tue 2
Wed 3
Thu 4

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thought leader brain

Leading on LinkedIn

A plug-and-play guide to authentic thought leadership content

mutant

23 being seen as an authority in your industry

24 content brainstorm

25 Growing your professional network

30
31 Chart your messaging

11
12 Improving employer branding

18
9 trends that resulted in more businesses



What does it take to be a leader today?

The world of work has been irrevocably changed by the events of the new decade. Between one of the worst market crashes¹ in recent history and a wave of digital transformation², business leaders are navigating entirely new territory even as they contend with the adoption of hybrid working³, the great resignation⁴, and the resurgence of hiring freezes and layoffs⁵ to brace against an impending global recession.⁶

The rapid acceleration⁷ of digital media consumption is also changing the way leaders communicate. Social media in particular is increasingly utilised as a platform to drive business objectives and engage with decision makers, inspire employees and show potential talent what a company stands for. The last one is especially important for newer generations entering the workforce, who increasingly expect organisations to communicate with authenticity and align with their personal values.⁸

The conflation of these trends has resulted in more businesses and leaders embracing one of the most important channels of business communications — thought leadership. And with more than half the world now using social media⁹, there has never been a better time for leaders to harness the power of the word on global networks.

In this guide, we share tried and tested tips on crafting authentic thought leadership content that cuts through the noise. We've also included a sample content calendar and some case studies to help you hit the ground running.

Thought leadership can help businesses leaders:



Engage top decision-makers and support their broader commercial and marketing goals

Establish a company as being both customer-focused and innovative while demonstrating a clear sense of direction



Become recognised as an expert, authority and go-to resource in your field

Generate conversations that inspire and influence others



Why LinkedIn?

LinkedIn is indispensable when it comes to building strong business relationships and establishing professional credibility. With a user base of over 810 million people across 200 countries¹⁰, LinkedIn is the world's largest professional networking platform¹¹, making it the most appropriate social channel to amplify business-focused messages. As many as 58 million companies¹² have a LinkedIn presence today, making it a necessary tool when it comes to hiring and talent attraction in particular.

This trend bears out across Southeast Asia, too. According to research by Google, candidates in both Indonesia and Malaysia said LinkedIn played into their decision to change jobs, with as many as 10% more than the global average (35%) saying it played a significant role.¹³ Most candidates in Singapore (96%) and Malaysia (95%) prioritise preparation before job interviews, using LinkedIn as a primary platform to get the information they need to excel.

LinkedIn is also an important marketing platform for furthering business objectives, considering its targeted user base of professionals, of which an estimated 63 million are decision makers.¹⁴



LinkedIn is the #1 social network for lead generation



80% of B2B marketing leads from social media come through LinkedIn



46% of media traffic to company websites comes from LinkedIn

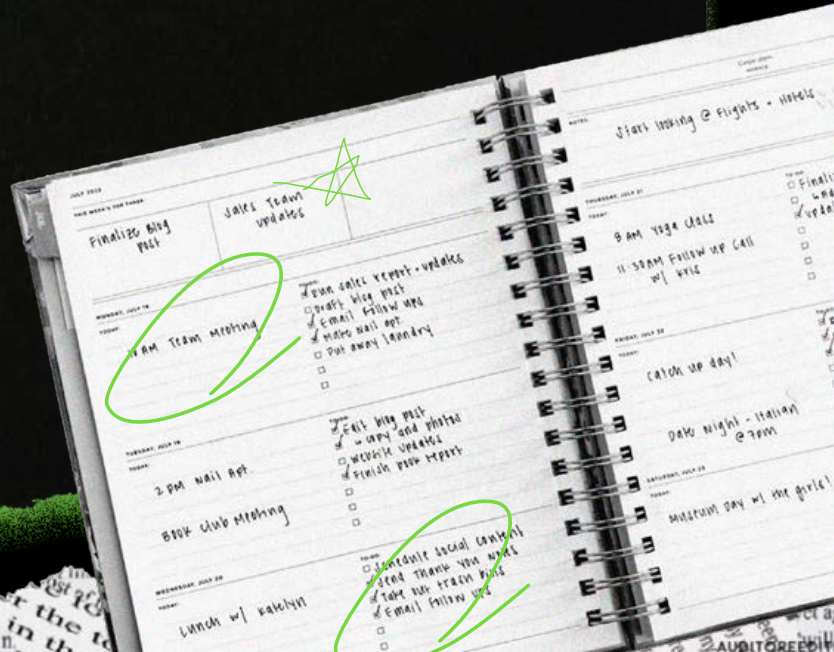
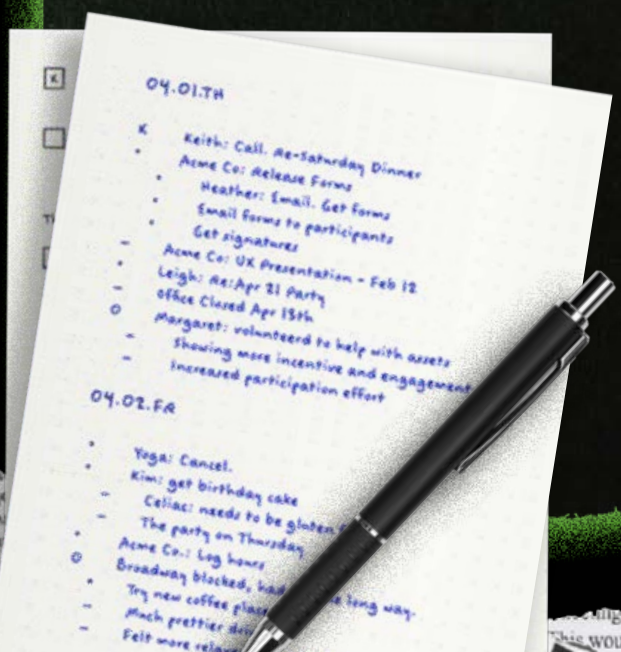
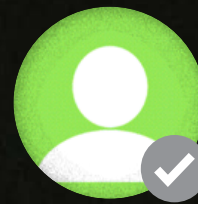
4 Steps to Plan Your LinkedIn Strategy

Before you get started...

Don't forget the basics

Your LinkedIn page needs to have some basics in place to attract the right people and command authority. Do a quick self-audit to make sure your page has the following:

- 
A profile image that reflects the kind of leader you want to be seen as.
- 
A thoughtful background image that shares more about you or your company
- 
A clearly listed job title as well as your top skills
- 
A killer summary that shares your experiences, expertise and interests in an engaging way — but keep it brief! (300 words or less)
- 
A consistent posting schedule that lets your audience become more familiar with your voice and expertise



Step 1: Chart your messaging

Your key messages are integral to both planning and executing content. They set the objective and tone for your immediate communications and inform the direction of future efforts. Take extra care when deciding on these, and make sure to back up each message with proof points that give them substance and integrity.

Crafting key messages that resonate is about having objectives that inform and direct them, and to do this you need to understand the needs of your audience and what they want to see. For example, if your thought leadership efforts are focused around attracting tech talent to your business, you need to have good knowledge, opinions and insights into the subject matters that interest this audience, and provide a reason for them to believe your company would be a great place to work.

Once you have your objectives in place, messages can be mapped to specific goals to help direct and measure their intended impact.

Here's a sample of what key messages mapped to objectives could look like:

Objective	Goal	Description	Key Messages	Proof Points
Brand focused	Improving employer branding	Positioning your business as progressive and forward-thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D&I practices • Sustainability • Female empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D&I research • Sustainability initiatives • Stats on female employees/leadership
Talent focused	Building proactive talent pipelines	Connecting with the future workforce through relatable and engaging content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future work trends • Supporting young or future talent • What working for your company looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research • Initiatives for students/young talent • Employee stories • Videos on office space/perks
Personal	Growing your professional network	Being seen as an authority in your industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insights or predictions • Interesting opinions on trending/relatable topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External research • Case studies

What professionals want to hear

Effective thought leadership should address issues and themes that are important to both your business and your employees, while sharing new ideas. Seventy-seven percent of individuals¹⁷ consider "my employer" as the most trusted of any institution and "communications from my employer" as the most trusted source of information — but with great trust comes great responsibility. The same individuals want businesses to play a bigger role in global issues such as climate change, economic inequality, and racial injustice, and expect CEOs to be the "face of change". They also believe businesses can earn this trust by sharing factual information and demonstrable progress.

Staying current with these expectations by weaving them into your messaging can improve the impact of your thought leadership content.

Step 2: Find your authentic voice

An overwhelming majority¹⁸ of audiences believe authenticity is important when deciding which voices they like and support — and as media literacy increases around the world, audiences are more aware of when they are being marketed to. Sharing genuine messages has never been more important.

10 ways to shape your authentic voice:

1. Have a relevant purpose

Audiences want to see their values reflected in your personal and company ethos

2. Take a stand

Focus on causes that matter to your audience

3. Walk the talk

Have statistics and examples in place that back up your stance

4. Follow through

Go beyond trendjacking to communicate consistently on topics that matter to your employees

5. Honour your employees

Tell their stories, showcase their challenges and celebrate their successes

6. Champion digitalisation and innovation

Make your case as a leader and company of the future

7. Celebrate the everyday

Audiences resonate with your ideas more when they see you as human, just like them

8. Lead by example

Carving out time to periodically engage can send out a powerful message for your brand

9. Be transparent

Break barriers, pull down walls and encourage dialogue

10. Be responsive

Show audiences you're listening by engaging with them



Step 3: Develop your calendar

With what you want to say and how you want to say it in place, it's time to create your content. Consistency is key to building momentum, and having a calendar in place can help you plan, track, amend and strategically approach your thought leadership.

We recommend using a mix of formats, including short-form posts, longer articles and external content that is relevant to your industry or interests.

If you're unsure of what your thought leadership strategy should look like, here's a sample monthly calendar for Company A, a global enterprise tech brand that wants to drive employee engagement and grow its potential talent pool.

Week	Content Type	Format	Topic	Title/Concept
1	Shortform	Image	Diversity & Inclusion/ Leadership	Quote on personal journey with D&I (eg. parenthood) and how it has shaped your professional approach,
	Longform	LinkedIn Article		3 D&I practices at your company that make you proud to be a leader
2	Shortform	Re-share Content from Company Page	Sustainability	Recent sustainability initiative at your company that you led/attended
	Longform	LinkedIn Article		Why tech companies must lead sustainability initiatives in 2022
3	Shortform	Video	International Women's Day	Ode to a female figure in your life, whose influence has inspired you professionally
	Longform	Infographic		The demonstrated benefits of having more female employees in your business
4	Shortform	LinkedIn Post	Company Culture	The importance of mental health discussions in the workplace
	Longform	Long-form Video		Office-tour of facilities, benefits and collaboration rooms



Step 4: Tweak and Repeat

Having consistent measuring and reporting in place can provide insight into what works best for your audience. The effectiveness of everything from the frequency of your content to the mix of messages being shared are good metrics to track. Looking at the data and tweaking your plans in response can produce powerful incremental results.

Getting your strategy right can be an iterative process. If the numbers aren't adding up, it can help to focus less on the numbers itself and more on what the numbers mean. Continuously reviewing your results keeps the door open to constructive improvements.

Our team of content experts can help you build a thought leadership strategy to meet your business objectives. Our clients love our results and you will too. Get in touch with us [today](#).



Case Studies

1. Strengthening personal branding by profiling Kimberly-Clark senior leadership

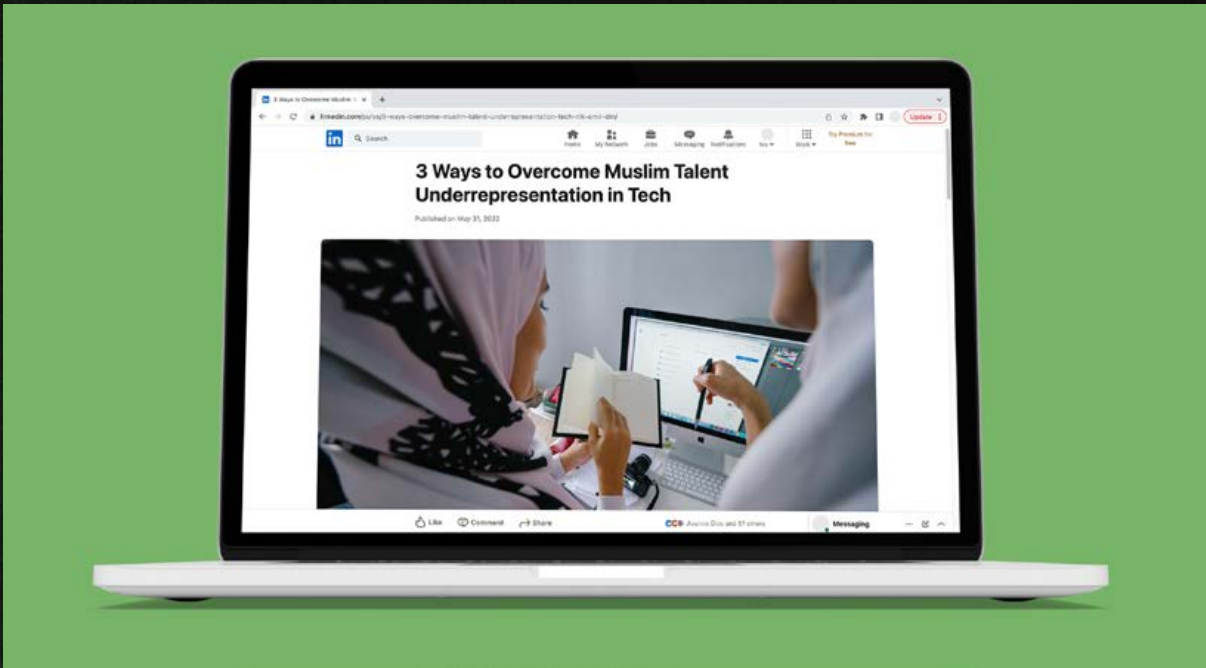


Mutant worked with Kimberly-Clark to develop content for their senior executives on LinkedIn, as well as for the company's global social media channels. We partnered with relevant teams to ensure the content produced was aligned to KC's broader mission, vision and corporate reputation.

- To date, we have written and published LinkedIn posts and articles for 13 executives across Kimberly-Clark's regional c-suite and management team.
- 74% increase in average number of views per post for Kimberly-Clark's executives from 2,049 in 2018 (May - Dec) to 3,560 in 2019 (Jan - Dec).
- Among the executives Mutant worked with for at least a year, we saw a significantly higher follower growth ranging from 20% to 255% (3.5x).

Case Studies

2. Championing authenticity via thought leadership for Muslim Pro



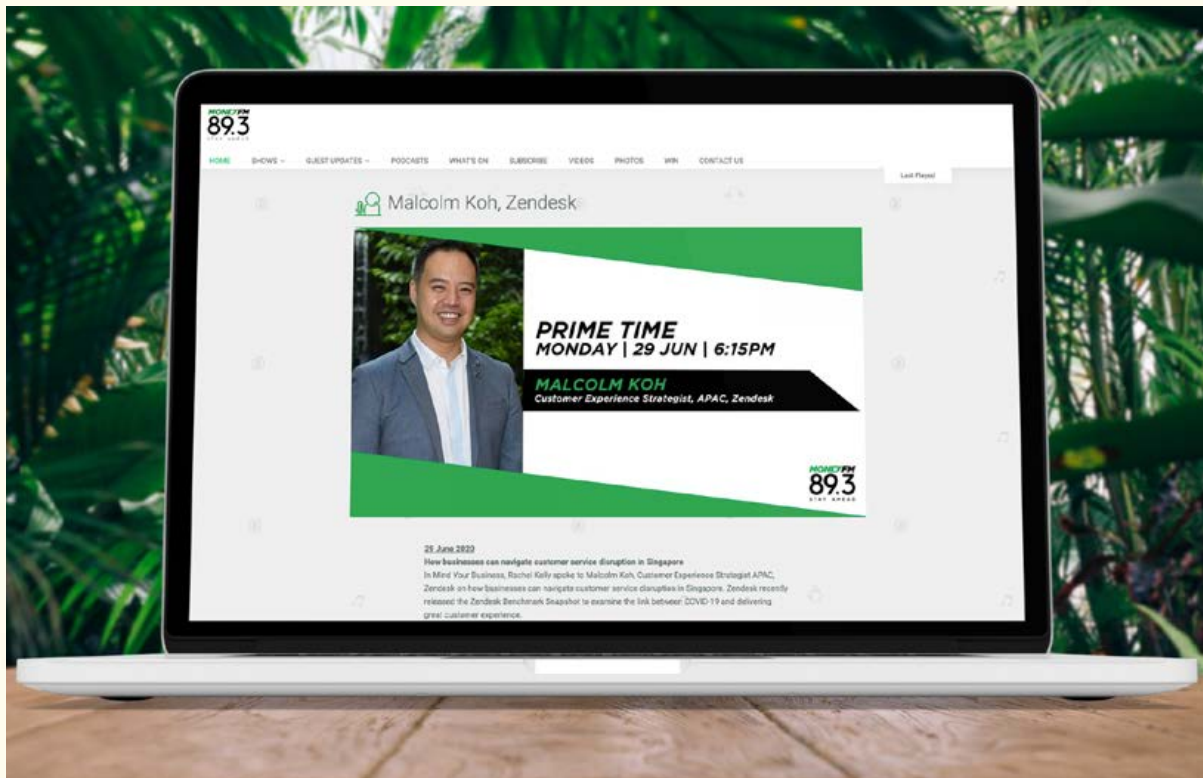
Muslim Pro, one of the world’s largest Islamic lifestyle apps was looking to create thought leadership content for key executives, co-CEOs Fara Abdullah and Nik Emir Din. After a series of extensive and in-depth interviews revealing their backgrounds, personal struggles, and professional priorities, Mutant created a variety of content on topics including leadership, innovation, technology, identity, faith, representation, and religion.

- Over 6 months, we created 14 pieces of content for Fara and Nik, earning organic engagement and shares on complex topics including religion, culture and identity.
- Fara’s most popular articles to-date include her reflections on motherhood¹⁹, and tips on succeeding as a female Muslim business leader.²⁰
- Meanwhile, Nik’s LinkedIn network enjoyed reading his views on Muslim representation in the media.²¹



Case Studies

3. Establishing Zendesk as a regional thought leader



Zendesk's APAC leadership team was looking to create content centered around employee engagement, culture, and leadership. Although Zendesk has an active blog on their website, we wanted to extend the potential for strong thought leadership content by leveraging LinkedIn networks. We worked with APAC executives, COO Wendy Johnstone and former SVP Sales Gari Johnson to create a series of relevant thought leadership and executive profile pieces.

- Since early 2018, we have worked with Zendesk to create multiple articles for senior leaders, successfully establishing them as thought leaders in sales, and diversity, equity & inclusion.
- Wendy's articles covered a diverse range of topics connected by a common thread — her passion for every discussion point. Her best performing article focused on accelerating gender equality despite COVID-19 setbacks²², a topic close to her heart which we also pushed through earned media platforms.
- Gari's articles secured over 115 likes and various engagements within the leadership community, with his piece on managing a sales team in pandemic uncertainty²³ sparking conversation around good management.

Case Studies

4. An organic Women's Day campaign that galvanised this tech company's talent pipeline




A global tech company was looking to achieve stronger talent pipelines by having more highly skilled talent proactively approach them. Using strategic and employee-centric content on LinkedIn, the company was able to organically boost reach and engagement, resulting in the exponential expansion of its potential talent pool in the span of a month.

- Beginning with International Women's Day, the company highlighted and celebrated not only the triumphs but the challenges of its female employees.
- A combination of static and video posts that directly quoted employees lent authenticity to its key messages while encouraging organic sharing.
- In one month, the campaign increased page impressions by over 58,000% and engagement by 2000%.
- Followers increased by 4000%, of which 33% were senior level professionals.
- 20% of followers were from IT and Engineering job functions.



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Its time to kick start your thought leadership journey.

If you need help generating thought leadership content, give us a shout at hello@mutant.co.id – we're here to help.

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About Mutant

An award-winning agency, we help brands across Southeast Asia solve real problems that make a real impact for your business. Through an integrated and strategy-led approach to public relations, communications and content, we help you generate awareness, increase sales, drive inbound leads, and gain the attention you need. Your results are what we measure our success on. Learn more about us at www.mutant.co.id