



2021/2022

Communication via LinkedIn. A qualitative research

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LinkedIn is the most recognized site in the business environment. Its importance is also evidenced by numbers, the most important of which are:

- 810 million accounts in 200 countries;
- 57 million company accounts;
- 1.3 billion page views at the end of 2021.

The interest in the service is also growing steadily in Poland. At the end of 2021 the number of registered users exceeded 4.7 million*.

The presented numbers are only a part of those that we can find in the public space. There is also data covering the professional status of users, division into branches, job positions, etc. All the numbers prove the important role of the service, especially in the business environment.

Analyzing the service and its role, one can get the impression that there is a lack of strictly qualitative data that would answer the subjective opinions on the importance of the service.

Therefore, the authors of the study decided, as one of the first, to investigate the qualitative aspect of communication through the service. The research object became the executives of large companies. 116 representatives of C-Level executives (CEOs, CFOs, COOs) took part in the survey.

The purpose of the survey was to answer the following questions:

- What is the level of awareness of building a personal brand, through the service?
- What form does text communication take in the service?
- What elements do users use to build communication?
- How is LinkedIn generally perceived by C-Level executives?

The authors of the study also asked executives and experts for their opinion, which concerned the qualitative aspects of the service.

The study was conducted between 12. 2021- 02. 2022 and is one of the first comprehensive studies to address only the qualitative aspects of communication through the service.

*All data provided based on the report "LinkedIn in Poland - 2022".

C-LEVEL EXECUTIVES' VIEW ON LINKEDIN

Is LinkedIn for everyone? Does being in business mean being active on LinkedIn at the same time?

LinkedIn as a place to read interesting information is certainly a place for everyone. But when it comes to being active on this platform - I think it's a good idea for those businesses that can't be harmed by the extra exposure. I also see more and more often a situation when instead of exchanging business cards - we connect through profiles on LinkedIn.

What trends are you noticing on LinkedIn?

Over the past few weeks, LinkedIn has naturally been dominated by the situation in Ukraine, and this was probably the first time on this platform that such a clear focus on a single event has occurred. In my opinion, the power of this community and motivating the business world to help in various ways is apparent.

Has LinkedIn changed over the years? In what direction is it heading?

It definitely has. In the beginning, LinkedIn was just a way to make business contacts, then it served as a digital resume and a place to look for jobs/employees. Now, for me, it is a platform from which we get first-hand business information and contribute to meaningful discussions about it.

One argument in favor of being active on LinkedIn?

Never before has it been so easy to get in touch with business authorities or potential partners, who until now were almost unreachable for us.

Do you notice the building of a personal brand based on awareness?

The socio-political events of the last two years have emphasized even more strongly the importance of values and authenticity. Therefore, I would rather say that I notice the building of a personal brand based precisely on authenticity.



Piotr Kruszyński
GEPETTO

C-LEVEL EXECUTIVES' VIEW ON LINKEDIN

Is LinkedIn for everyone? Does being in business mean being active on LinkedIn at the same time?

LinkedIn is primarily for opinion leaders and business people. It's a place where you can find opinion leaders from all over the world in one place, and that's a great value. LinkedIn is also a tool for building a personal brand, which is a tool for business growth. Going by the saying that people trust people, not impersonal brands, it can be said that LinkedIn serves its purpose.

What trends are you noticing on LinkedIn?

In the context of business, I notice an increasingly strong link between LinkedIn and reality. Today, checking the profile of your interlocutor while networking is no longer surprising. The service is a kind of supplement to what we haven't said about ourselves in conversation - especially from the perspective of activity, that is, expressing our opinions on specific topics.

Has LinkedIn changed over the years? In what direction is it heading?

LinkedIn, like any service, is committed to making changes and developments that allow new trends to emerge. I notice both a positive trend and a negative one. The positive is some professionalization of the site and a natural filtering of content. If a certain user does not stick to a certain thematic framework of the service, it is systematically ignored by users, which makes it impossible to achieve its goals. A negative trend is the increasing assumption of "power" by algorithms. Today, paradoxically, what matters is not which topic is substantive, but more the one that will generate broad visibility. For this reason, various practices are being created to support this goal.

One argument in favor of being active on LinkedIn?

For me, it's the opinion of others that counts, so if people want to confront their worldview and perceptions of certain issues, LinkedIn is the best option for that. For me, the opportunity to interact with users and talk about topics that interest me is the most important value. Besides, you can't forget that LinkedIn is becoming an essential part of building a personal brand. A professional image in business today is one of the key tasks for a manager, and LinkedIn should be a daily branding tool for them.



Maciej Panek
CEO PANEK S.A.

C-LEVEL EXECUTIVES' VIEW ON LINKEDIN

Is LinkedIn for everyone? Does being in business mean being active on LinkedIn at the same time?

Yes, in my opinion LinkedIn is for everyone and every industry will find its place there. However, statistics show that 90% of people with profiles only consume content, do not publish posts, do not comment and do not like others' posts. I used to do the same thing until I understood why I needed LinkedIn, the value of the portal and its users, and the knowledge and skills I needed to know on how to navigate it.

Being in business does not have to mean being active on LinkedIn. You can get similar results on other portals.

But in this day and age, business means being active in the offline and online world at the same time.

What trends are you noticing on LinkedIn?

Employee branding, social selling, employee Advocacy.

Has LinkedIn changed over the years? In what direction is it heading?

My perspective only goes back two years. On May 7, 2020, I started actively working on LinkedIn. During this time I have been learning it, trying to understand it, but also to feel the spirit of this portal.

For me, less important and noticeable is the shift towards H2H, or Human to Human. Many of us, as Tatiana Galinska (who I met on LinkedIn) puts it, stopped being so bolt upright. We have reminded ourselves that there is a living human being at the end of every process. We don't buy from a logo we buy from a specific person. The same applies to selling.

LinkedIn provides an opportunity to meet and connect with people who perhaps would never meet in real life. It is a place to gain knowledge and sell products or services.

One argument in favor of being active on LinkedIn?

Currently, 99% of my clients, in the mentoring and fiduciary business, come from online, 80% of which come from LinkedIn.

Do you notice the building of a personal brand based on awareness?

Yeah, definitely. But it's still a narrow circle of connections.

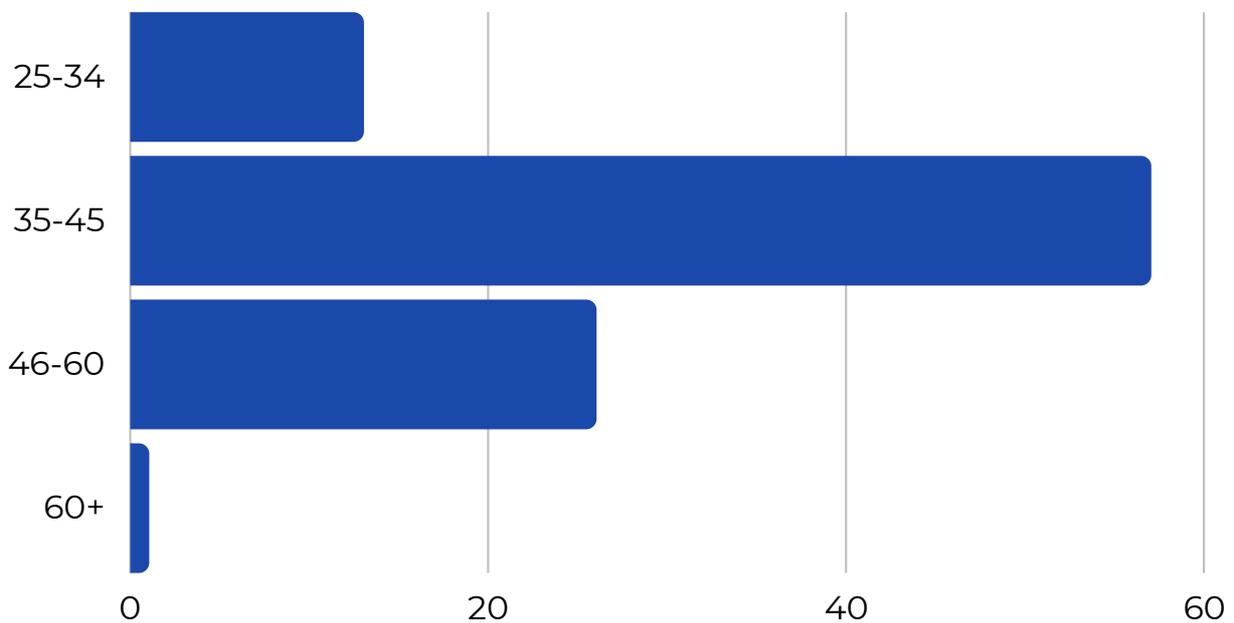
The numbers don't lie. 90% of profiles on LinkedIn are "empty", nothing happens on them. These people don't let you find them, get to know them - so what statistical chance do I have to trust them and eventually buy something from them?



Marek Wikiera
Mentor, coach

Age structure

The chart below shows the age structure of the C-Level staff representatives who participated in the survey.

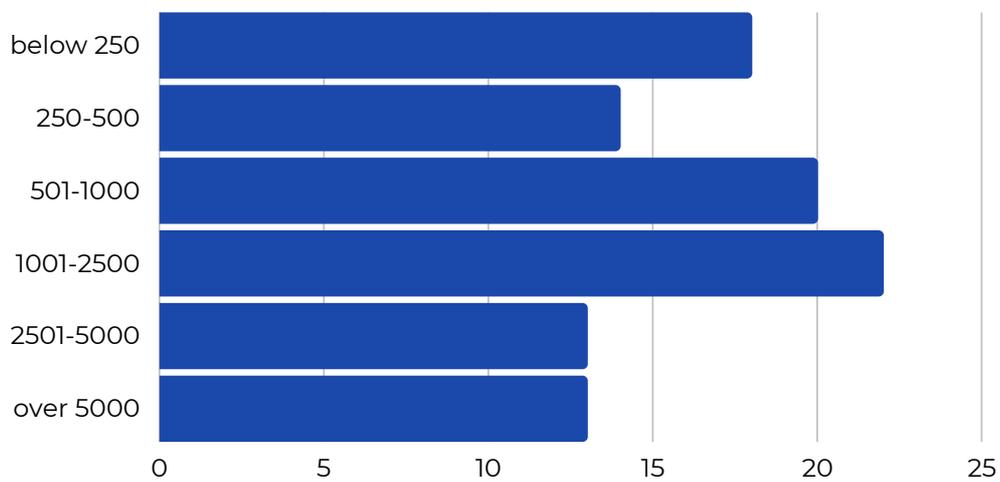


57%

The predominant age structure of the C-Level representatives who participated in the survey

Connection network

The chart below shows the number of connections that ultimately make up the respondents' networks



Networking on LinkedIn is a starting point, in terms of effectiveness

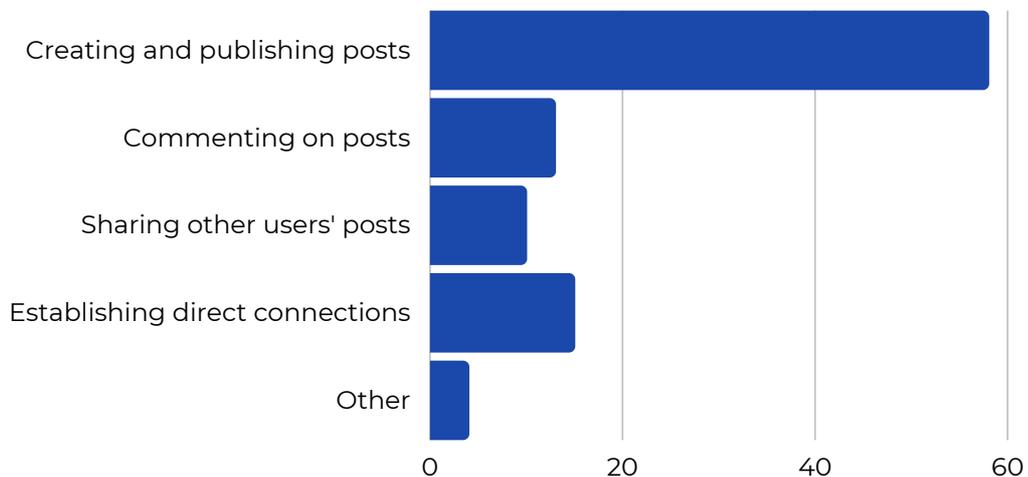
22%

Number of respondents who have a network of contacts between 1001-2500

Preferred activity on LinkedIn

Respondents were asked what form of activity via LinkedIn, they choose most often.

It should be noted that the question did not exclude listing other forms of activity that are available on the site.



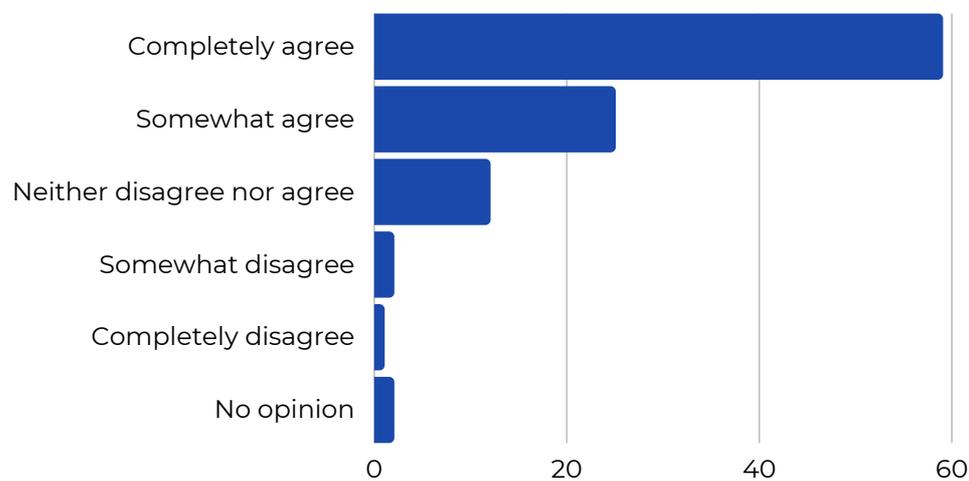
- 58% of respondents declare that creating and publishing posts is their most frequent form of activity on LinkedIn - this means that C-level executives actively engage on the site, create their own content, and want to engage their network of contacts.
- Less than 20% comment on others' posts; respondents therefore avoid entering into discussions on a given topic in comments under others' posts, preferring to express their opinions through a post on their own profile.

58%

The number of respondents who said that creating and publishing posts is currently the most common activity via LinkedIn.

LinkedIn as a place to build your personal brand

Respondents were asked if they thought LinkedIn was a good place to build a personal brand in business



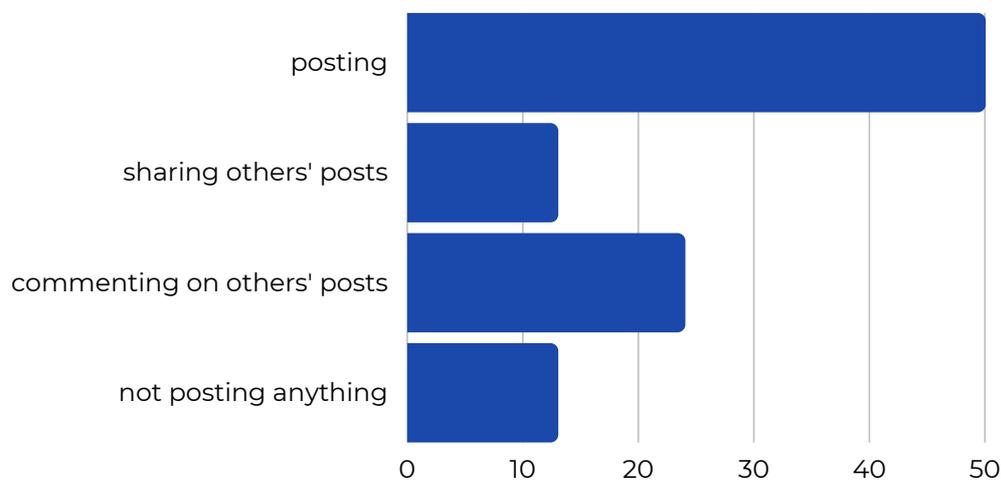
- As many as 84% consider LinkedIn a good place to build their personal brand.
- LinkedIn gives you the opportunity to create your personal brand from scratch. Regular posting and speaking up in discussions not only paves the way for us to expand our network of contacts, but allows us to build a certain reputation and status as a complementary leader who remains active in social media, which translates into recognition of our person, our company/product/service on the market.

84%

Cumulative number of respondents who think LinkedIn is a good place to build a personal brand

Prevalence of activity on LinkedIn

Posting/participating in discussions



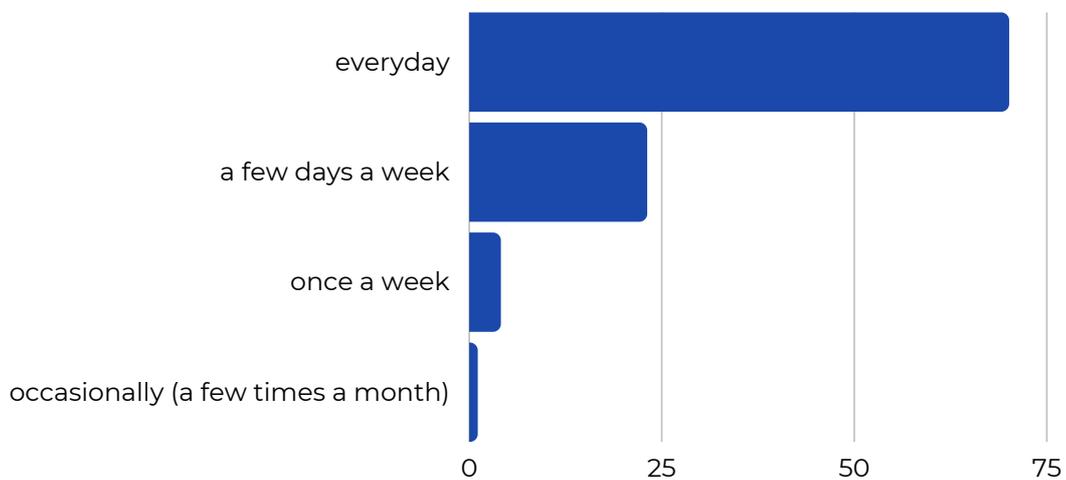
- Half of respondents single out posting as their most common activity - C-level executives predominantly use LinkedIn as a place to speak out on issues relevant to them.
- 23% choose to comment on other users' posts.
- 12% do not post anything.

50%

Number of respondents whose most common activity is posting.

Frequency of using LinkedIn

Respondents answered the question of how often they use LinkedIn for the activity of viewing their wall and other users' posts (without a specific response).



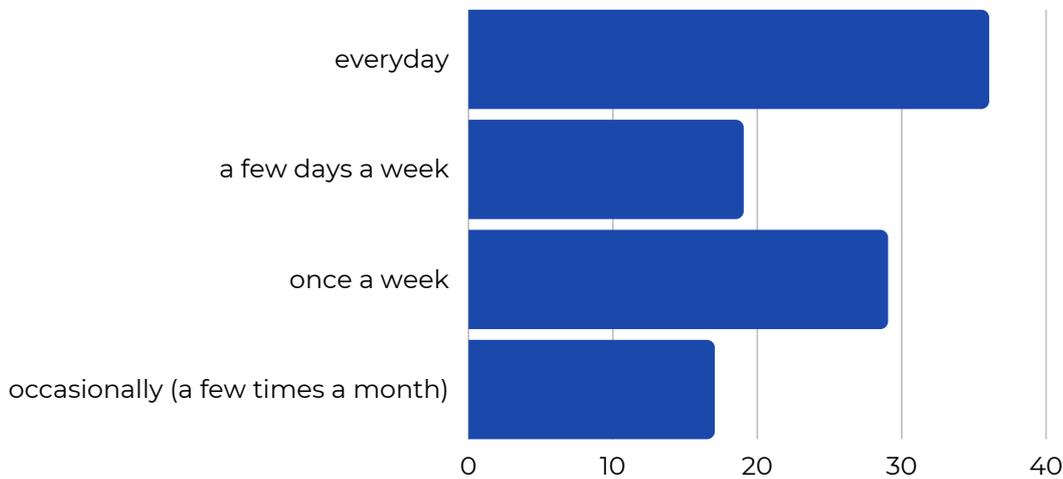
- Daily use of LinkedIn was declared by 70% of respondents - LinkedIn, in addition to its social layer, is a daily habit for C-level executives, keeping them up to date with the activities of competitors or their business partners. It can be concluded that LinkedIn also serves as an information service in their industry. They want to stay up to date and find out about news themselves.

70%

Number of respondents who use LinkedIn daily

Frequency of using LinkedIn

The next question was about a specific activity - posting/taking part in discussions under the posts of other users



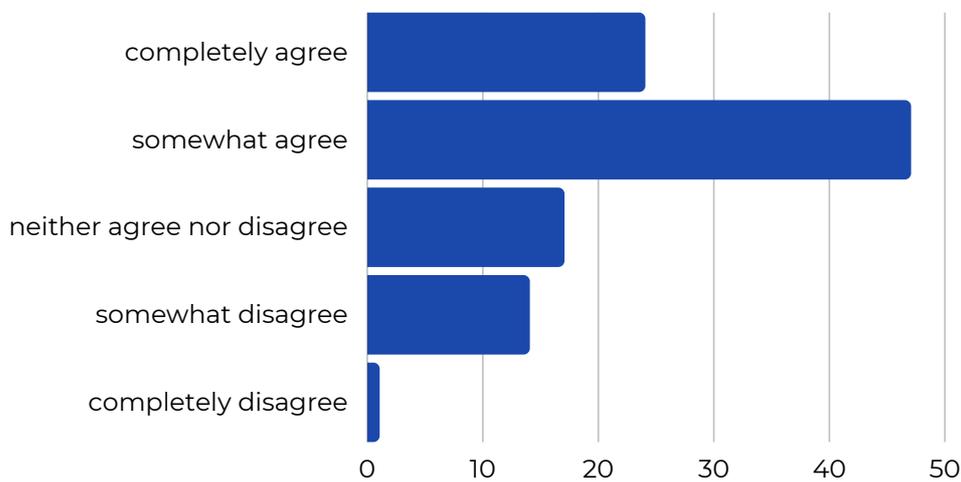
- 36% of respondents post or participate in discussions under other users' posts every day. In this way, they keep in touch with their network. This involves speaking up on current issues.

36%

Number of respondents who post daily or participate in discussions under other users' posts

Thoughtful networking

Respondents were asked whether accepting invitations to connections is the result of a pre-planned networking strategy



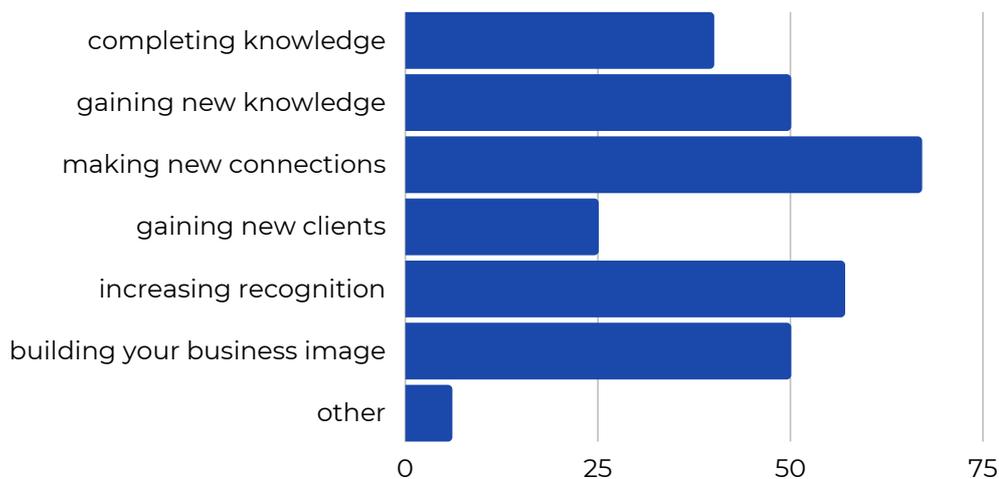
- 71% of respondents build their network consciously - so they do not accept people at random. They use a kind of selection both when accepting invitations and when sending them.

71%

Cumulative number of users who consciously build their network by their activity.

LinkedIn's core value

Respondents were asked what main values they notice within the service. To be as specific as possible, they were asked to select max. 3 answers.



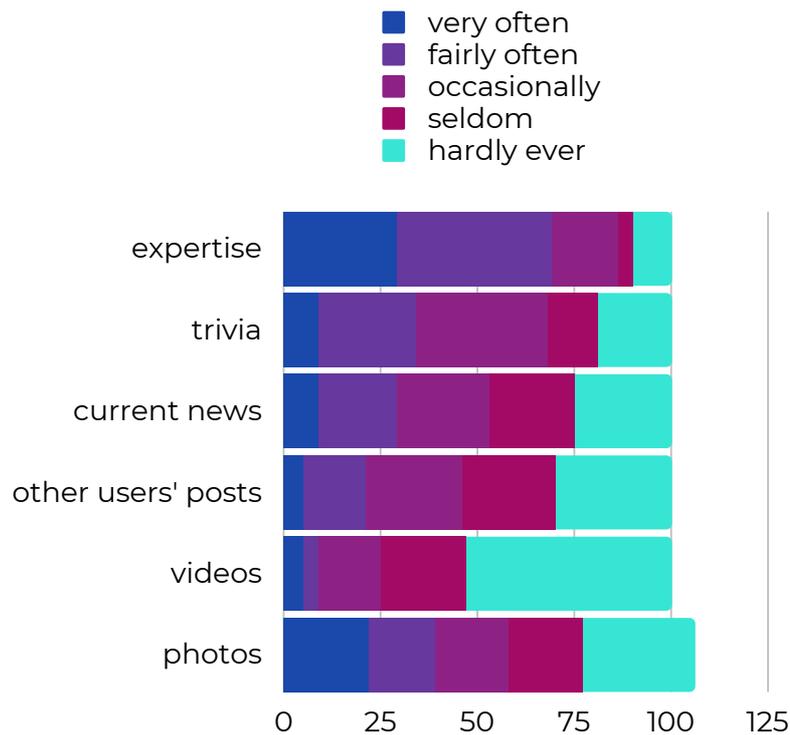
- For 67% of respondents, gaining new connections, is the most important value of LinkedIn. At the same time, more than 50% of them also consider increasing their recognition as an important value - they are aware that their recognition translates into increased credibility of their companies, e.g. among potential job candidates.
- 50% of respondents also chose gaining new knowledge as the main value within the service, which shows that C-Level staff are open to new knowledge, want to follow trends and be familiar with them.
- 50% also indicate building a business image. They are aware that their actions in the service translate into how they are perceived by the environment - that's why they attach great importance to this aspect.

67%

The number of respondents for whom gaining new connections is the most important value on LinkedIn.

Predominant activity on LinkedIn

Respondents were asked about the type and level of activity used via LinkedIn

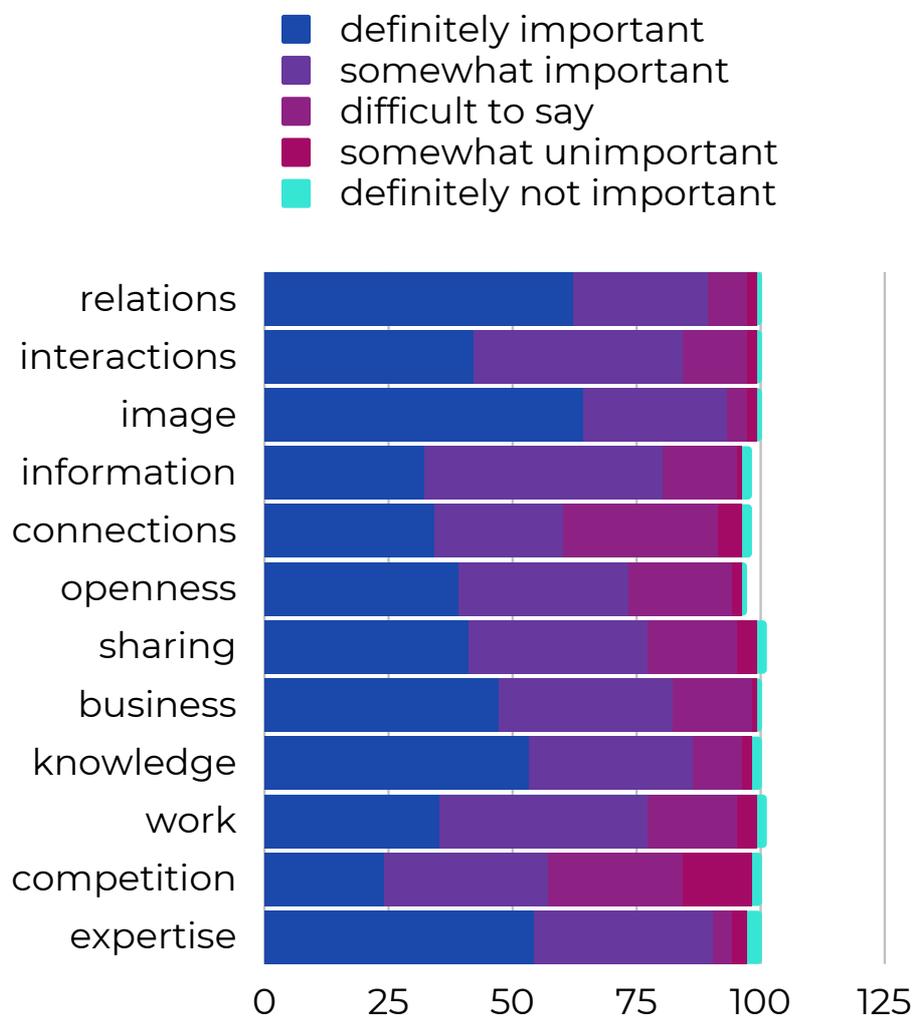


30%

Respondents consider the predominant topics of posts to be those containing professional expertise.

Evaluating keywords related to LinkedIn

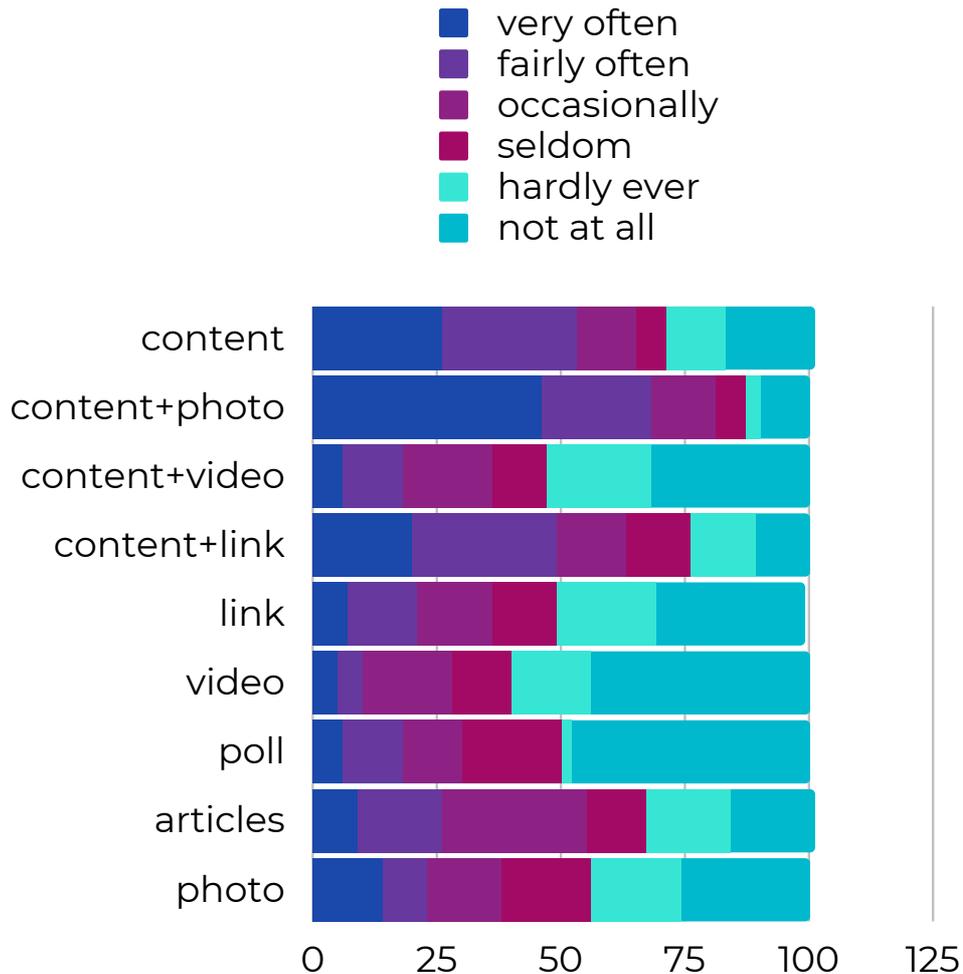
Which keywords, in terms of activity on LinkedIn, are important?



- The selection of specific keywords also most closely corresponds to the activity on the site that appeared in the previous questions. The words that most closely match reality (for C-Level staff) are image, relationships, and expertise

Forms of activity used

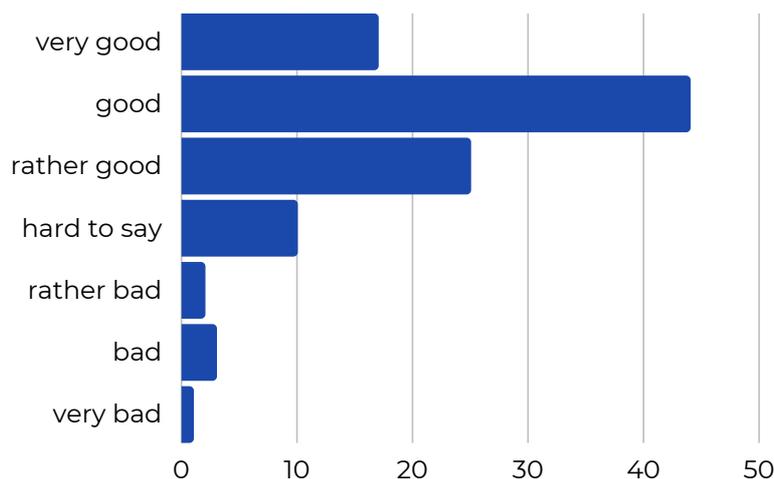
The survey asked respondents which technical aspect of communication is used the most.



- When it comes to the most frequently used forms of activity by the respondents, content combined with the addition of graphics is leading (48%); the least frequently (5%) used form is video publishing.
- Respondents prefer to illustrate their published content with appropriate graphics. They often draw attention of the audience and can become a factor thanks to which a given post will be noticed and remembered.

The value of the knowledge being shared on LinkedIn

The next questions focused on the value of the content that is posted on LinkedIn. Respondents were asked how they generally rate the level of knowledge being shared on the site.



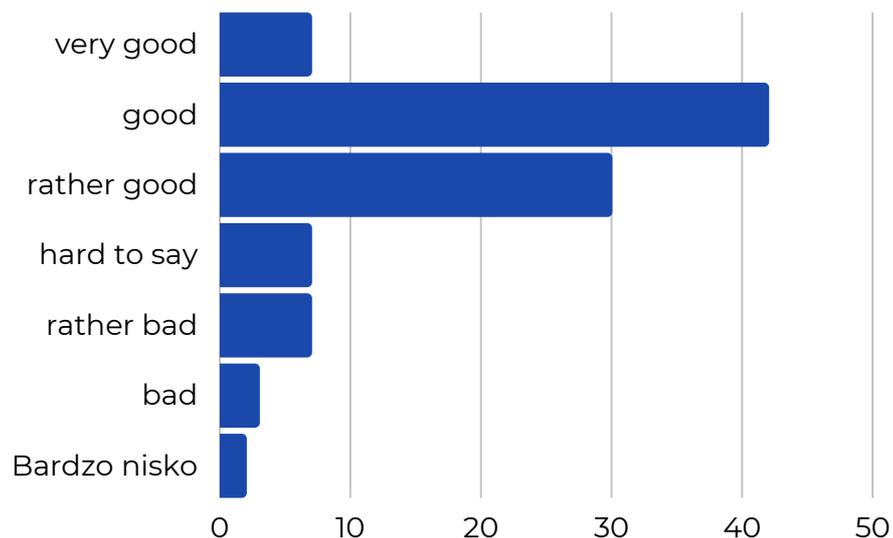
- 85% - the cumulative number of respondents positively rated the level of knowledge being shared on LinkedIn. This indicates that LinkedIn is a site with a predominance of knowledgeable content.

85%

The cumulative number of respondents rate the level of knowledge transferred and discussions held on LinkedIn.

The level of ongoing discussions on LinkedIn

The survey also asked how respondents rated the level of ongoing discussions via LinkedIn.



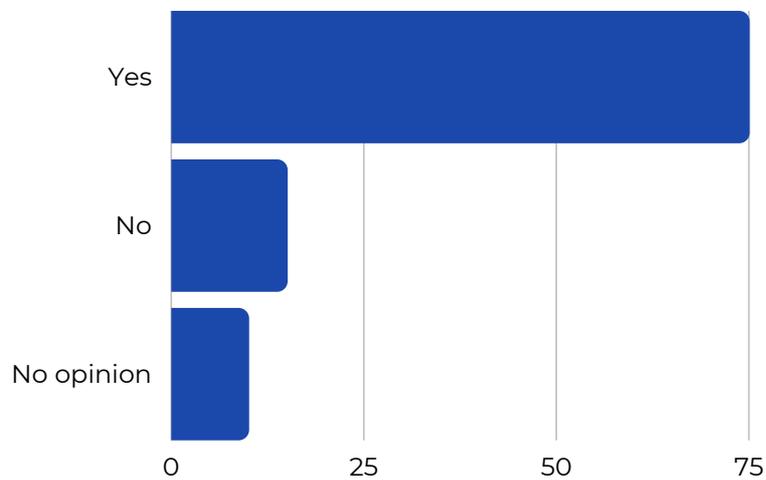
- 79% - the cumulative number of respondents positively rate the level of discussions held on LinkedIn. This shows that LinkedIn is a site where users show great respect for their audience.

79%

The cumulative number of respondents who believe that the level of discussion via LinkedIn is good

Negative occurrences on LinkedIn

Respondents were asked if they notice any negative occurrences.

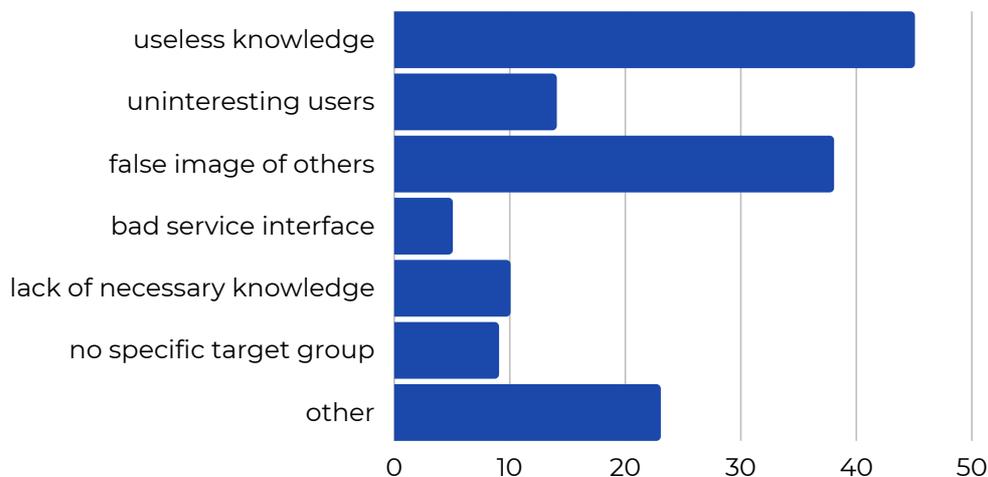


75%

Respondents notice negative occurrences on LinkedIn

Negative occurrences on LinkedIn

What exactly?



- 45% - the number of people who said that one of the negative things on LinkedIn, is useless knowledge.
- 38% of respondents singled out the creation of false images by other users as another negative occurrence.
- The result may seem surprising, to say the least, given previous survey results in which knowledge was mentioned as one of the values that is present through the service. It may be that knowledge itself is transmitted, while in the process of its verification, respondents change their minds. This thread requires further research.

45%

The number of people who stated that one of the negatives on LinkedIn, is useless knowledge.



The level of substantive content on LinkedIn

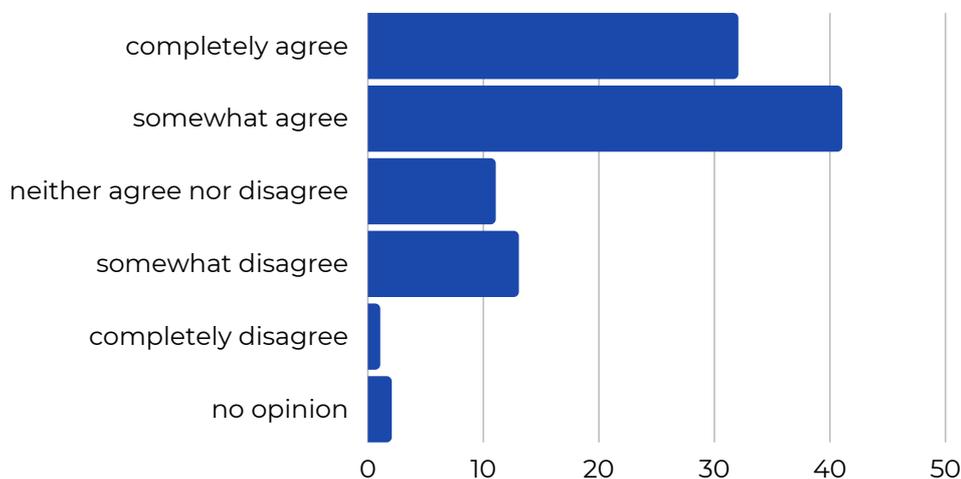
Scale 1-5

3,77

Averaged level of substantive content on LinkedIn

Has there been a steady increase in content directly unrelated to LinkedIn?

Respondents were asked whether they notice the appearance of content that does not match the service.



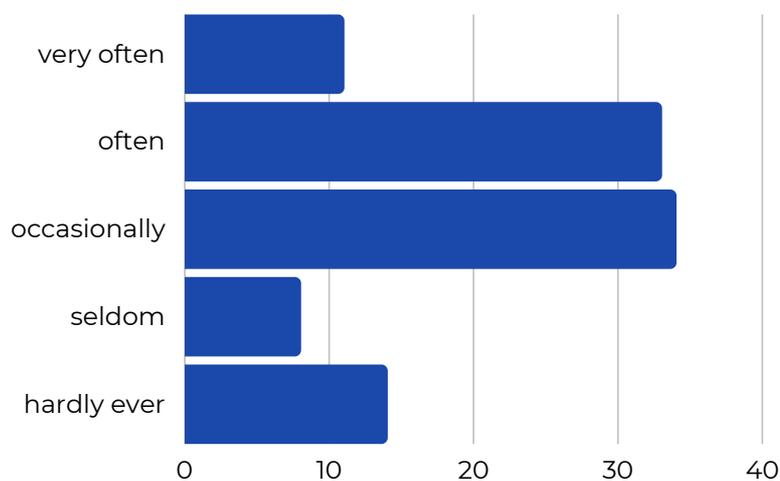
- 73% - the cumulative number of respondents who notice the appearance of content unrelated to the main premise of the service.
- On LinkedIn, more and more content related to broadly defined lifestyle or pop culture is appearing, which deviates from the business premise of the service.

73%

Cumulative number of respondents noticing the appearance of content unrelated to the main premise of the service

Verifying the knowledge of other LinkedIn users

Do respondents attempt to verify the knowledge they find on LinkedIn



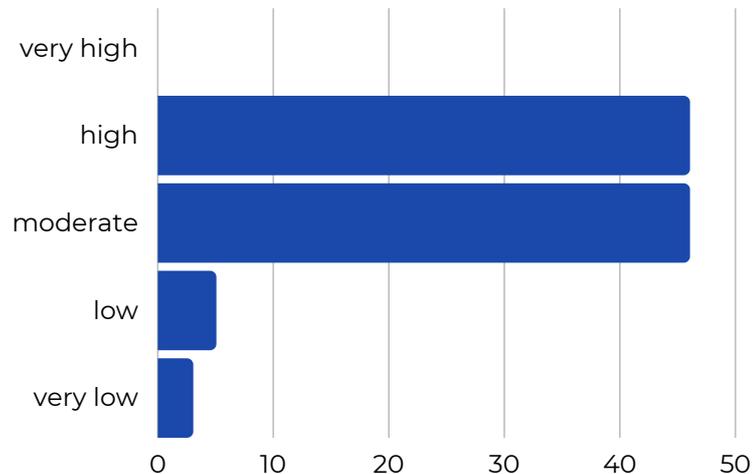
- 34% of C-Level executives occasionally verify the content they encounter on LinkedIn. This shows that they have a certain level of trust with other users.
- Authorities on LinkedIn - people whose opinion does not require verification because they are widely recognized as an expert in their field, then the frequency of verification may be lower. On the other hand, when it comes to news, informational content - there is more frequent verification.

34%

The number of C-Level executives who occasionally verify the content provided.

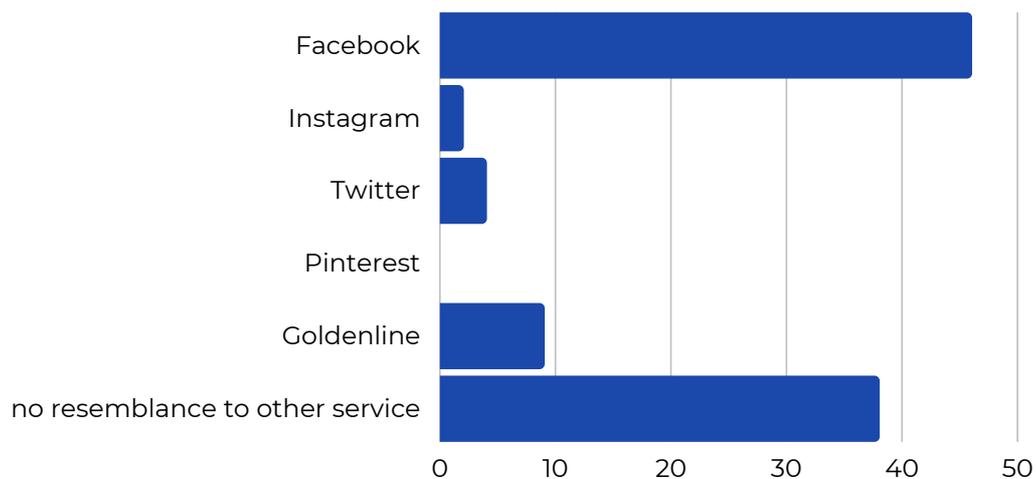
Verifying the knowledge of other LinkedIn users

At what level?



- The answers to this question may be a pretext for further research, as the answer "moderate" may suggest a dilemma that the respondents had when evaluating the question. This is another sign that despite the knowledge (understood broadly) being conveyed, its quality may significantly differ in terms of content. The theme becomes all the more important as we are talking about real-time verification of knowledge, which is conducive to binding and authentic observations.

What service does LinkedIn resemble?



- 45% of respondents believe LinkedIn resembles Facebook, with 39% saying it does not resemble any other service.
- Those who responded that LinkedIn resembles Facebook may be suggesting the similarity of their friends list to their network or the range of reactions under posts (instead of likes, there were other reactions on LinkedIn, as on Facebook)
- At the same time, 38% see no similarity to any other service; this may indicate that some associate LinkedIn with purely business content, while for others it balances between lifestyle and daily life (as on Facebook) and the business sphere - and this does not affect their perception of LinkedIn as a service similar to Facebook

45%

Respondents see LinkedIn as similar to Facebook

CONCLUSIONS

Based on a study titled.

"Communication via LinkedIn." several important conclusions can be detailed:

01.

High awareness of C-Level executives

C-Level reps demonstrate a high awareness of the benefits of proper personal branding through LinkedIn.

02.

Consensus on LinkedIn's evaluation

There is a consensus among survey respondents when it comes to evaluating the credibility of the content, the level of discussion, and the knowledge shared on LinkedIn - it is positive.

03.

Concretized activity

Respondents largely choose to actively participate on LinkedIn - adding posts, speaking on current affairs, participating and/or initiating discussions.

04.

Frequency of using LinkedIn

83% of respondents add posts or participate in discussions at least once a week; almost all of them view the wall on LinkedIn at least once a week - C-Level staff are therefore very active on the portal.

05.

Keywords

Relationships and image - turned out to be the most frequently used keywords on the site.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the results of the survey and the conclusions drawn from it, the following recommendations can be made to C-Level executives:

01. More frequent content verification
According to the report, as many as 34% of respondents only occasionally verify information they come across on LinkedIn.

02. Expansion of activity forms selected
The vast majority of C-Level executives add only graphics to their posts. Expanding with video content can translate into increased interest in the profile, and thus the user's personal brand.

03. Implement an acceptance verification process for the contact list
29% of respondents do not have such a process in place. Implementing it will allow for a more conscious creation of a connections list and may increase the user's credibility and status. Then, belonging to the list of his contacts will mean a kind of distinction for its members.

04. Compliance of the published content with the premise of the service
According to the report, more and more posted content is considered unrelated to the site's purpose. It is therefore necessary to implement a process of verifying content for this purpose.

05. Being natural and true to yourself
Among the negatives on LinkedIn, 38% of respondents cite creating a false image. When creating your own, always follow your values first and not the prevailing trends.

PhD Bartłomiej Machnik, MBA



- Image advisor to C-Level executives in the area of bossbranding, academic lecturer and researcher,
- Host of TV show "Your Branding" on Biznes24 and commentator in mass media.
- Doctor of Social Studies (specialization: marketing and social media).
- Graduate of MBA studies in the field of leadership and coaching and postgraduate studies in public administration.
- He supports managers in the following areas: establishing a personal brand strategy, creating an image via LinkedIn, establishing business relations and cooperating with mass media (www.bmachnik.pl).

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