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■ THE PLAYBOOK · 02 · LINKEDIN

How to Audit Your LinkedIn *Strategy*

Profile, Content, Audience and Authority

A practical audit for whether your LinkedIn presence is findable, useful, reaching the right people and building a body of work that humans and AI systems will cite.

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A LinkedIn audit should answer more than "Did impressions go up?" It should tell you whether your profile is findable, your content is useful, the right people are finding it, and your body of work is building authority.

LinkedIn is one of the easiest platforms to mistake activity for strategy. You can post three times a week, collect impressions, get supportive comments from people who already know you and still have no idea whether the platform is strengthening your professional positioning.

My LinkedIn audit has four buckets: **Profile. Content. Audience. Authority.** The last one is increasingly important because LinkedIn is no longer only a feed. LinkedIn's 2026 guidance is explicitly thinking about how content gets retrieved and cited by AI systems. Its VP of Marketing, Davang Shah, puts it plainly: structure is necessary for content to be extracted, but a distinct point of view is what makes it worth citing [1].

Translation: polished posts are nice. A recognizable body of expertise is better.

■ AC'S AUDIT RULE

Do not audit LinkedIn as a popularity contest. Audit it as a **professional discovery and authority system**.

BEFORE YOU START RECENT SHIFTS TO ACCOUNT FOR

- LinkedIn rebuilt feed ranking around large language models in 2026, weighting recent activity more heavily and committing to reduce engagement bait and recycled thought leadership [7].
- Members can now flag posts as "Seems Like AI Slop"; LinkedIn says views of content classified as slop fell 40%, and authors who draw enough of that feedback see a tip in Post analytics [8].
- Collaborative Posts let members and Company Pages publish one post with up to five accepted collaborators, including documents, polls and events [9].
- In October 2026 LinkedIn announced a new Creator Dashboard, pinned comments, paid Advice Sessions for U.S. Business Premium members and a U.S. test of In-Stream video ads that pay eligible creators [10].
- Verification expanded with peer-confirmed experience tests and imposter removal for verified Pages; LinkedIn says verified members get 50% more post engagement [11].
- Campaign Manager now includes a Creator Marketplace, and brands can amplify creator content that features them through Thought Leader Ads [12].

SECTION 01

Profile audit: can the right person understand you quickly?

Start with the public profile, not the feed. Pretend you are a recruiter, conference organizer, journalist, partner or potential client who found the person through search.

Check: name consistency; headline; profile photo and banner; About section; current role; Featured section; skills; creator/services links; contact information; verification status; connected apps; recent activity.

The headline should help with both context and search. A title-only headline can be accurate but weak. I want role + areas of expertise + enough specificity that the right person immediately knows why they might care.

Then audit the first 3–5 lines of the About section. If the strongest proof is buried six paragraphs down, bring it up. The profile should establish who you are, what you know, what scale or outcomes you have delivered and what topics you speak about.

Two newer profile signals deserve a line in the audit. Verification is now a trust layer LinkedIn is actively expanding: more than 115 million members have verified identity or workplace, and peer confirmation of work history is in testing [11]. A connected apps section can also show tools you use, with an app-generated statement of how you use them that you cannot edit [13]. Keep either only if it supports the expertise you claim.

SECTION 02

Search and profile discovery: are people finding you for the right things?

LinkedIn gives members profile analytics including profile viewers and search appearances, while creator analytics combine post performance and audience analytics [2][3]. Use them.

Look at search appearances and ask whether the associated job titles, companies or keywords align with the identity you are trying to build. If you want to be known for audience development but your profile is mostly being discovered for an old job title, your profile language may need updating.

This is also where naming consistency matters. Your name, headline, About section, Featured links and the topics you publish should reinforce the same professional entity instead of making search engines, or humans, connect five versions of you themselves. LinkedIn's own AI-visibility material for brands points the same way: consistent messaging across pages, clear headers and topic clusters make content easier for AI systems to pull and cite [22].

SECTION 03

Content audit: classify the job each post is doing

Pull 60–90 days and tag each post. I like categories such as **POV, how-to, example/case study, leadership, industry reaction, personal/career, proof/receipt, and amplification**.

Then tag by topic. If your stated expertise is content strategy, audience development and digital media but 70% of the feed is career inspiration, you may be building a different reputation than you intended.

LinkedIn's June 2026 guidance recommends educational value over promotion, roughly 200–300 words for posts, 2–3 posts per week, and pairing posts with longer-form articles to build deeper topical authority [4]. I treat those as useful platform benchmarks, not commandments. If your best post needs 140 words, do not add 80 words to please a guideline. The audit question is whether the content consistently earns attention **and** reinforces what you want to be known for.

Add a format column to the tag sheet: text, image, document, video, poll, article, newsletter, event. LinkedIn reported that original posts grew 14% year over year and paid video grew nearly 30% in its fiscal Q3 2026 update [14]. Check whether *your* video earns better audience quality than your documents or text before shifting the mix.

SECTION 04

Audit the first line like it is packaging, because it is

The first line is doing at least two jobs: getting a human to stop and giving the platform and search systems clear context. LinkedIn's guidance says the opening line becomes the post URL, which matters for retrieval, and advises against opening with a hashtag [4]. Treat that URL as permanent once published.

Audit ten recent posts. Could the first line stand alone and tell me what the post is about? Or does every post begin with "I've been thinking..." and require six lines before the point appears?

AEO pro tip: use a clear opening that names the topic, then let your personality take over. **Clarity first does not mean boring forever.**

SENIOR STRATEGIST NOTE

Run a two-week first-line test. Publish four posts that open with the named topic ("Audience development budgets in 2026:") and four with your usual hook. Hold format and length steady. Compare out-of-network share and the job functions of new followers, not raw impressions. If the topic-first openers win on audience quality, make it the house style for anything you want found later.

SECTION 05

Audience audit: look beyond total followers

Use combined post analytics, audience analytics and individual post analytics. LinkedIn now shows discovery signals including impressions, members reached, and the share of impressions coming from in-network vs. out-of-network audiences [5]. The new Creator Dashboard, rolling out now, puts performance and content management in one place [10].

I want to know: Are you reaching new people? Are the right job functions, seniority levels, industries and geographies engaging? Which posts attract peers vs. potential buyers vs. recruiters vs. collaborators?

Follower growth is useful. **Follower relevance is better.** If a post produces 80 new followers but none are remotely connected to the work you want to attract, that is a different kind of outcome than 20 new followers who are exactly your target audience.

Read out-of-network share in context. LinkedIn's rebuilt feed matches posts to members through semantic topic connections and reacts to recent activity faster [7], so a spike in out-of-network reach usually means the system has a clearer read on your topic.

SECTION 06

Authority audit: can someone describe what you know?

This is the most important LinkedIn question I use now: **If someone consumed your last 20 posts, what would they say you are an expert in?**

LinkedIn's September 2026 guidance argues that formatting is now table stakes and that AI citations reward a distinct point of view, the original perspective and hard-won experience a model cannot simply synthesize from everybody else [1]. It also argues that a view has to recur across articles, interviews, social posts and third-party mentions before it reads as credible [1]. LinkedIn's AI-search guide for B2B marketers makes the same case for building around a few core topics and reinforcing them through multiple pieces and formats [6].

So audit repetition without fearing it. You do not need 40 topics. You need three or four territories approached from different angles: POV, how-to, example, framework, case study, mistake, data point, story.

That is how a body of work starts to become an authority signal instead of a collection of posts.

SECTION 07

Trust and originality audit: would this survive the slop filter?

LinkedIn now defines AI slop as low-effort, likely AI-generated content that may sound polished on the surface, along with posts that are generic, recycled or built mainly to grab attention [8]. Members can flag it, classifiers limit its distribution, and authors who draw enough flags see a tip in Post analytics [8]. The feed team has said it will filter engagement bait such as "Comment 'Yes' if you agree" [7].

Check: any slop feedback tip in Post analytics; posts that could have been written by anyone in your field; engagement-bait CTAs; recycled frameworks without a new example; AI-assisted drafts that lost your specifics; whether each post contains at least one first-hand detail (a number, a client situation, a decision you made).

Use AI for research and proofreading if it helps. If a post has no detail only you could supply, rewrite it or cut it.

SENIOR STRATEGIST NOTE

Score your last 20 posts on a simple originality test: one point each for a first-hand example, a specific number or date, and a stated opinion someone could disagree with. Anything scoring 0 or 1 goes on the "stop" list. Re-run it monthly next to reach.

SECTION 08

Audit comments as content and relationship data

Do not only count comments. Read them. Which posts produce thoughtful responses from the people you actually want to know? Which comments introduce new questions? Which people return repeatedly?

Comments are getting more weight inside LinkedIn's own reporting: time spent reading comments rose 18% year over year in its fiscal Q4 2026 update, and knowledge-oriented posts rose 24% [15]. Authors can now pin a helpful comment to the top of a post [10]. Audit whether you use that to surface the best addition to the conversation, or leave the thread to whoever replied first.

A good LinkedIn post can become research for the next one. LinkedIn itself recommends using posts to test angles and then folding what you learn into longer-form content [4]. That is a much healthier content loop than guessing what your audience might care about from a blank document.

SECTION 09

Collaboration and paid hand-off: who else is carrying your ideas?

Authority on LinkedIn is increasingly co-signed. Collaborative Posts let up to five members or Pages publish one post together after each collaborator accepts [9]. Brands can search a Creator Marketplace in Campaign Manager, and creators who opt in approve how their sponsored content is used [12]. Thought Leader Ads let a company sponsor posts from employees, industry experts, customers or creators with the author's approval [17], and members can boost their own posts without a Company Page [18]. BrandLink places brand messages alongside curated publisher and creator video [16][12].

Check: whether co-authored posts beat solo posts on audience quality; what sponsorship requests you approved; whether boosted posts had already performed organically; whether paid and organic are reported separately.

LinkedIn's own boosting guidance is to amplify content that is already performing well [18]. Treat that as the hand-off rule: organic proves the angle, paid extends it. For Thought Leader Ads, save the author's organic performance before the campaign starts so the paid lift can be measured cleanly [17].

SECTION 10

Creator business readiness: is the profile set up to earn?

LinkedIn says more than 80% of its creators build content alongside another role, and it is adding ways to earn directly [10]. Advice Sessions let creators sell paid 1:1 consultations from their profile, currently for U.S. Business Premium subscribers [10]. In-Stream Ads, pre-roll ads on eligible creator videos with revenue paid to the creator, are in a test with select U.S. creators [10]. Article and Newsletter Ads let a company promote a member's article with permission [21].

Check: whether services or Advice Sessions match the topics you post about; whether newsletter editions are evergreen enough to sponsor; whether your rate card prices sponsored posts, collaborations and Thought Leader Ad permissions separately.

Availability varies by market, so verify eligibility in your own Creator Dashboard first.

SECTION 11

Finish with an authority plan, not a posting plan

A calendar says Monday/Wednesday/Friday. An authority plan says **these are the three topics I want my name associated with, these are the proof points I can uniquely bring, and these are the formats I will use to teach them repeatedly.**

My final audit deliverable should include: the three to four topics to own; profile language to update; formats to increase/decrease; a long-form article pipeline; 5–10 proof points or case studies to mine; collaborators and partners to approach; a paid amplification rule; and a 30–60 day testing plan.

CREATIVE SPECS

Creative specs and brand consistency on LinkedIn

Your fonts, colors and voice are your call. On LinkedIn the job is making them hold up in a professional feed where people skim on a phone between meetings and judge credibility fast. Specs below come from LinkedIn's Sponsored Content Ads Guide and video ad specs [19][20]. LinkedIn does not publish feed safe zones on those pages; the safe-zone column is working practice.

LinkedIn rewards recognizable expertise more than recognizable design. A good system makes a document, a video and a text post look like they came from the same person or Page, while organic posts still look like a person talking. If a post looks like an ad, people will treat it like one.

Build your system: one document/carousel template with a fixed cover layout, slide counter and source line; a two-level type hierarchy (one display style for titles, one body style that stays legible on a phone); a small palette with every text pair checked against WCAG AA contrast (4.5:1 for body text, 3:1 for large type); one headshot and one banner reused across profile, Page and event assets; and a fixed name for each recurring series so it reads as a body of work in search [22].

Voice by surface: headline and About: role, expertise and proof in plain language; posts: a topic-first opening line [4], then your own perspective; comments: add a fact, example or question; articles and newsletters: structured, sourced and longer; DMs: short and specific about why you are reaching out. Content from other platforms gets rewritten for this audience, never pasted.

Accessibility: captions on every video, since feed video autoplays muted [20]; alt text on images; document text large enough to read on a phone without zooming; plain-language slide titles so the deck still makes sense when skimmed.

ASSET	SIZE / RATIO	SAFE ZONE	PRO TIP
Single image post	1200 × 627 px, PNG or JPG, under 5 MB [19]	Keep type inside the center 80%; nothing critical at the edges	One claim per image, in type large enough to read in the feed on a phone. Add alt text. If the image only repeats the first line, swap in the proof: a chart, a screenshot or a photo from the work.

ASSET	SIZE / RATIO	SAFE ZONE	PRO TIP
Carousel / document	Carousel cards 1080 × 1080 px, 2–10 cards [19]; documents as PDF, DOCX or PPTX up to 100 MB and 300 pages [19]	Margins of about 80 px; slide count bottom-right	Slide one states the takeaway outright. One idea per slide, consistent margins and type sizes, a slide counter, and a source line wherever you cite a number. Export a test PDF and read it on a phone before posting.
Vertical video	9:16, up to 1080 × 1920; or 4:5, up to 1080 × 1350 [20]	Keep captions and lower thirds clear of the bottom and right edges where controls sit	Burn in captions (feed video autoplays muted [20]) and keep them clear of the player controls. Get to the point in the first few seconds and put your name and role on screen early.
Landscape / square video	16:9 up to 1920 × 1080; 1:1 up to 1920 × 1920; 3 sec to 30 min; 30 fps recommended [20]	Title-safe center	Use a short, consistent title card for recurring series. For talks and panels, cut the single strongest answer instead of posting the full session.
Video thumbnail	JPG or PNG, max 2 MB, same ratio as the video [20]	Headline in top two-thirds	Use a real frame with a face or one clear headline; skip logo slates. Check it at feed size, where busy layouts turn to noise.
Event image	4:1 ratio [19]	Center-weighted	Put the event name, date and format in the center so it survives every crop, and keep the layout the same across a series so returning attendees recognize it.
Profile banner / Page cover	Check current dimensions in LinkedIn Help before export; not verified for this edition	The profile photo overlaps the lower-left on profiles; keep type center-right	Use the banner for one plain statement of what you do or what to look at next. Check it on mobile and desktop, because the crops differ.
Profile photo / Page logo	Square crop shown as a circle on profiles	Center the face or icon	A recent, well-lit headshot with your face filling most of the circle. For Pages, use an icon version of the logo that holds at small size, identical across Page, events and ads.

■ PRO TIP

Before you lock a document template, export one deck and open it in the LinkedIn app on your phone. If you have to pinch-zoom to read body text on any slide, the type is too small. Fix the template once and every future deck inherits the fix.

■ DO	■ DON'T
+ Lead slide one with the takeaway, number or result. + Keep one document template with a fixed cover layout, slide counter and source line. + Check text contrast and phone legibility before saving any template. + Caption every video and add alt text to images [20]. + Name recurring series the same way every time so they build search recognition. + Rewrite cross-posted content for LinkedIn's professional context.	– Open posts with a hashtag or a vague hook [4]. – Dress organic posts up to look like Sponsored Content. – Put key text at the edges of images or where video controls sit. – Use a different font and color scheme for every series. – Paste captions from other platforms unchanged. – Rely on color alone to carry meaning in charts and slides.

Copyable audit checklist

- ☐ **Identity:** Is my display name and professional positioning consistent across the web?
- ☐ **Headline:** Does it include role + expertise + clear context?
- ☐ **About:** Do the first lines establish authority quickly?
- ☐ **Featured:** Are the best current proof points, essays, work samples or media appearances featured?
- ☐ **Trust signals:** Am I verified, and do connected apps support the expertise I claim?
- ☐ **Search appearances:** Am I being found for the roles/topics I want?
- ☐ **Content mix:** Do my last 60–90 days balance POV, how-to, examples and proof, across formats?
- ☐ **Topic consistency:** Could someone name 3–4 things I am known for after reading my feed?
- ☐ **Opening lines:** Are posts clear enough for humans and search/AI retrieval, with no hashtag openers?
- ☐ **Discovery:** How much reach is in-network vs. out-of-network, and is the new audience relevant?
- ☐ **Audience quality:** Are the right industries, functions and seniority levels engaging?
- ☐ **Authority:** Do I use first-hand experience, examples, original frameworks and proof?
- ☐ **Originality:** Any slop feedback tips in Post analytics? Does every post carry a detail only I could supply?
- ☐ **Comments:** Am I reading, replying to and pinning the comments that move the conversation?
- ☐ **Collaboration & paid:** Which collaborative posts, sponsorships or boosts worked, and are paid and organic reported separately?
- ☐ **Creator business:** Do services, Advice Sessions or newsletter sponsorships match my core topics?

- ☐ **Long-form:** Do I have articles/newsletters that anchor the short posts?
- ☐ **Creative specs & consistency:** Do assets use my own templates, current LinkedIn ratios and file limits, captions, alt text and a voice that fits each surface?
- ☐ **Actions:** What will I Stop / Start / Continue / Test?

Audit scorecard

AUDIT AREA	WHAT I'M CHECKING	SCORE (1–5)	ACTION / EVIDENCE
Profile	Name, headline, About, Featured, current role		
Trust signals	Verification, connected apps, services and contact details		
Searchability	Search appearances, keywords, identity consistency		
Content system	Clear formats and 3–4 recurring topics		
Packaging	Strong opening line, readable structure, clear takeaway		
Audience	Relevant follower growth and discovery demographics		
Authority	First-hand POV, proof, frameworks, long-form depth		
Originality	No slop feedback, no engagement bait, first-hand detail in every post		
Engagement quality	Thoughtful comments, repeat relationships, pinned comments used well		
Collaboration & paid	Collaborative posts, creator partnerships, boosts and Thought Leader Ads measured against organic baseline		
Creator business	Services, Advice Sessions, newsletter and sponsorship readiness		
AEO / discovery	Clear questions, answer blocks, consistent terminology		
Creative specs & consistency	Correct ratios and limits, consistent templates, captions and alt text, voice by surface		

DECISIONS

How I'd turn this into action

Finish with a one-page decision summary: **three things to stop, three to start, three to continue and three tests to run.** Assign an owner and a date to every test. An audit without a decision is just organized hindsight.

SOURCES

Official sources and creator resources

Platform features change quickly. This Playbook was checked against official guidance available in October 2026. Verify feature availability inside your own account before treating any tool or metric as universal.

[1] LinkedIn: Why Your Brand Needs a Point of View AI Can't Replicate · https://www.linkedin.com/business/marketing/blog/ai-search/why-your-brand-needs-a-point-of-view-artificial-intelligence-cant-replicate

[2] LinkedIn Help: Analytics and tools on LinkedIn · https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/a1431220

[3] LinkedIn Help: Analytics for LinkedIn members · https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/a711358

[4] LinkedIn: How to Maximize AI Visibility for Your LinkedIn Posts · https://www.linkedin.com/business/marketing/blog/ai-search/how-to-maximize-ai-visibility-for-your-linkedin-posts

[5] LinkedIn Help: Post analytics for your content · https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/a516971

[6] LinkedIn: New Guide: How B2B Marketers Can Dominate AI Search on LinkedIn · https://www.linkedin.com/business/marketing/blog/ai-search/how-b2b-marketers-can-dominate-ai-search-on-linkedin-2026

[7] LinkedIn Engineering: Engineering the next generation of LinkedIn's Feed · https://www.linkedin.com/blog/engineering/feed/engineering-the-next-generation-of-linkedins-feed

[8] LinkedIn Pressroom: How LinkedIn is Continuing to Tackle AI Slop (Sep 15, 2026) · https://news.linkedin.com/2026/how-linkedin-is-tackling-ai-slop

[9] LinkedIn Pressroom: Introducing Collaborative Posts, Now Available to Members and Company Pages (Jul 23, 2026) · https://news.linkedin.com/2026/introducing-collaborative-posts-now-available-to-members-and-company-pages-on-linkedin

[10] LinkedIn Pressroom: New Ways to Build Meaningful Connections, Grow Your Side Hustle, and Earn on LinkedIn (Oct 15, 2026) · https://news.linkedin.com/2026/new-ways-to-build-meaningful-connections

[11] LinkedIn Pressroom: LinkedIn expands verification to help members and businesses build trust (Sep 23, 2026) · https://news.linkedin.com/2026/linkedin-launches-new-verification-features-to-build-professional-trust

[12] LinkedIn Pressroom: How B2B Brands Can Drive Impact with Creators and Stronger Creative on LinkedIn (Jun 10, 2026) · https://news.linkedin.com/2026/how-b2b-brands-can-drive-impact-with-creators-and-stronger-creat

[13] LinkedIn Pressroom: Visibility builds credibility: the tools you use every day, now visible on your LinkedIn profile (Jun 17, 2026) · https://news.linkedin.com/2026/visibility-builds-credibility---the-tools-you-use-every-day--now

[14] LinkedIn Pressroom: Q3 Earnings & Business Highlights (Apr 30, 2026) · https://news.linkedin.com/2026/q3-earnings-highlights

[15] LinkedIn Pressroom: Q4 Earnings & Business Highlights (Jul 29, 2026) · https://news.linkedin.com/2026/q4-earnings-and-business-highlights

[16] LinkedIn Pressroom: Helping brands expand their reach in new ways with video from top creators and publishers (BrandLink, Apr 30, 2025) · https://news.linkedin.com/2025/helping-brands-expand-their-reach-in-new-ways-with-video-from-to

[17] LinkedIn Marketing Solutions: Thought Leader Ads · https://business.linkedin.com/advertise/ads/sponsored-content/thought-leader-ads

[18] LinkedIn Marketing Solutions: Boost your posts · https://business.linkedin.com/advertise/ads/boosting

[19] LinkedIn Marketing Solutions: Sponsored Content Ads Guide (specs) · https://business.linkedin.com/advertise/ads/ads-guide

[20] LinkedIn Marketing Solutions: Video Ads specs · https://business.linkedin.com/advertise/ads/sponsored-content/video-ads/specs

[21] LinkedIn Marketing Solutions: Article and Newsletter Ads · https://business.linkedin.com/advertise/ads/sponsored-content/articles-and-newsletters-ads

[22] LinkedIn Marketing Solutions: AI visibility guide for B2B marketers · https://business.linkedin.com/advertise/resources/unlocking-ai-visibility

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■ ABOUT

About the author

Ashley “AC” Trybula is an award-winning content and audience executive, journalist and media leader working across media, culture, social and the creator economy. Her work spans content strategy, audience development, editorial leadership, video, original programming and digital distribution. She writes about audience growth, social media, digital culture, media leadership and the business of attention.

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