



The Executive

LINKEDIN PLAYBOOK

How Leaders Build Visibility, Trust,
and Real Business Impact.



“ People
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LinkedIn is the primary platform where professional credibility is built, business influence is shaped, and personal and corporate reputations are formed. People no longer only engage with brands; the people behind them matter.

In March 2026, LinkedIn's recent platform changes reinforced what many effective executives already understood: **authenticity is now an algorithmic advantage.**

The platform rolled out sweeping changes to how it ranks and surfaces content in its feed. Advanced AI models now better understand what a post is actually about and match it to interested members.

More relevant content will be included in feeds, as generic, recycled content is being filtered out, with comment automation increasingly discouraged.

The algorithm rewards exactly what great leadership communication has always required: **real insights from a real person.**

For South African executives willing to show up consistently, the timing could not be better. The noise is being cleared, and the leaders with something genuine to say will be heard more than ever before.



People Trust People.

Personal profiles do not just outperform company pages on LinkedIn. They dominate them.

	COMPANY PAGE	PERSONAL PROFILE
IMPRESSIONS	Baseline	2.75x more
ENGAGEMENT	Baseline	5x more
FEED PRESENCE	5% of content	62% of content

In a 2025 feed analysis, researchers found that no purely organic company page posts appeared in members' home feeds unless someone in their network had already engaged with it first. The implication is structural — a brand without the people inside it cannot reach its audience.

Executives are key to corporate communications and the primary distribution channel.

Just 10% of engaged executives drive 55% of a company's total LinkedIn engagement. (DSMN8)

A small group of consistently visible leaders generates the majority of social impact. That impact compounds as reach and trust grow over time.

The South African Reality Check.

South African executives are on LinkedIn, but most are not actively using it.

65%

of JSE Top 20 CEOs have a LinkedIn profile.

37%

of JSE Top 100 CEOs actively post content.

South African executives who are active on LinkedIn are building valuable personal and corporate brand equity, forming national and global conversations.

UK FTSE Top 100 leaders are roughly 3x more active on social media than their South African counterparts. (FTI Consulting, 2024)

This gap is not a criticism. It is an opportunity.

South Africa has roughly 12 million LinkedIn users, a substantial, high-quality professional audience that is largely underserved by executive voice.

Executives showing up consistently are already ahead.

Those featured in Favikon's 2025 Top 20 LinkedIn Influencers in South Africa share a common pattern:

They post 5 to 6 times per month and achieve engagement rates of almost 6%, close to triple the LinkedIn average.

For executives with something real to say, this is a significant competitive advantage.



When a post earns **real engagement**, LinkedIn's algorithm surfaces it to the second- and third-degree connections networks through the interactions of first-degree connections.



That earned reach is **not replicable** through paid spend alone.



Editor-featured posts earn 10–15 times the average engagement at no paid cost.

(MWW/SocialHP)

Organic First.

Paid, when it **earns it.**



Organic executive content creates trust in a way that paid promotion cannot. Sponsored content is clearly advertising.



It may reach an audience, but it lacks the credibility of a leader sharing a genuine perspective on something that matters to them.

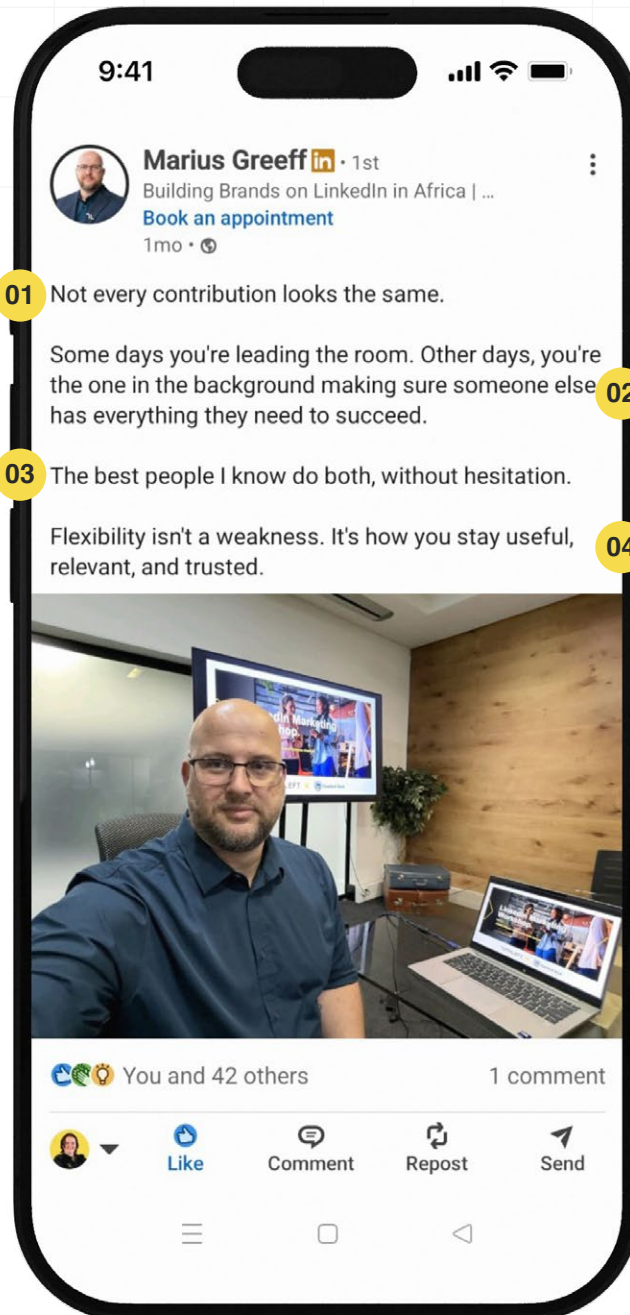
The most effective approach keeps these two levers distinct.

WHEN TO BOOST Boosting amplifies what is already working. It does not rescue what is not.	Post engagement exceeds 3 – 5%	CONSIDER BOOSTING
	Strategic message with broad relevance	CONSIDER BOOSTING
	Standard leadership post	LET IT RUN ORGANIC
	Every post, by default	DO NOT BOOST INDISCRIMINATELY

Maintain a consistent cadence of personal, substantive posts. Use paid support to extend the reach of what has already proven its value. Audiences can sense when something feels over-produced or promoted. Authenticity, LinkedIn has shown, is now the highest-performing content strategy available.

What Good Looks Like.

The most effective executive posts on LinkedIn share a consistent structure, regardless of industry or individual style.



HOOK

A statement or observation that earns the next line. Not a question, not a cliché.

Something that makes a professional stop mid-scroll.

INSIGHT

Insight, not information, but perspective.

The executive's actual view on what something means, why it matters, or what the conventional thinking gets wrong.

HUMAN MOMENT

Something that signals a real person is writing. A specific experience, an honest reflection, a sharply held opinion. This is what the new LinkedIn algorithm is built to find and reward.

REFLECTION

A closing thought that leaves the audience thinking. Not every strong post asks a question. The most effective ones create reflection, tension, or recognition.

How South African Leaders Are Using LinkedIn.

Different voices. Same structure. Consistent impact.

01



Phuthi Mahanyele-Dabengwa

Executive Director | Naspers & Prosus

Come with me to discover the AI House Amsterdam! 🇳🇵

This is where Europe's brilliant minds come together—entrepreneurs, policymakers, artists—all collaborating to build the future.

Europe has incredible talent and world-class startups, but what's been missing is genuine collaboration. That's exactly why we've created the AI House Amsterdam.

Since October, we've hosted 50 events with 3,500 participants, all building dreams together. We've also partnered with incredible firms focused on European tech growth, making a real impact.

Be part of building Europe's AI future with us. 🇳🇵

Sign up and check out our website for upcoming events: <https://www.aihouse.nl/>

#AIHouse #EuropeTech #Collaboration #Innovation #ProsusProsus



WHY THIS WORKS

- Executive accessibility
- Future-focused leadership
- Human and optimistic tone
- Makes innovation feel approachable

02



Fred Swaniker

Founder & CEO | Sand Technologies

Last week marked one of the most significant milestones in ALX's history. Together with Anthropic and the Government of Rwanda, we launched one of the continent's most ambitious AI-enabled education initiatives. In Kigali, we unveiled Chidi, our AI-powered learning companion built on Anthropic's Claude model.

Chidi is designed to give every learner the kind of personalised support that has for too long only been accessible to a privileged few. It embodies what I have always believed education should do: nurture curiosity, build confidence and strengthen critical thinking. Using a Socratic approach, it adapts to each learner's pace and style, supports multiple languages and meets learners exactly where they are.

For years, we've dreamed of creating this kind of environment at scale. Knowing that every ALX learner across the continent will soon have access to this level of support fills me with immense pride.

This partnership is meaningful on many levels. Anthropic is one of the world's foremost AI organisations, shaping global conversations about both powerful and responsible AI. Collaborating with them at this level is an honour. Rwanda equally continues to demonstrate remarkable leadership by choosing, time and again, to put its people at the forefront of innovation. As part of this initiative, hundreds of educators and a cohort of civil servants will go through ALX's AI Career Essentials program, a major step toward building a country ready for an AI-driven future. This work will inform Rwanda's national AI education policy and lay the groundwork for future innovations like Chidi for Schools and African-language LLMs.

A big thank you to everyone we were honoured to host during the launch: Paula Ingabire (Rwanda's Minister of ICT & Innovation), Pascal Gatabazi (Chief Technical Advisor, Ministry of Education), Drew Bent (Anthropic's Head of Education), and all the dignitaries, leaders, media and partners who joined us.

And a huge shoutout to the ALX team for steering this initiative, delivering a flawless launch, and amplifying this milestone across the world.

This is just the beginning, but it represents a true turning point: a moment where we move from talking about #AI to making it work for the people who need it most.

aih_africa



WHY THIS WORKS

- Mission-led perspective.
- Human-centred innovation.
- Clear leadership voice.
- Purpose over promotion.

03



Vusi Thembekwayo

Investor | Entrepreneur | Speaker

The architecture of Venture Capital is often misapplied in the African context.

We are currently in a developmental stage similar to the US 50 years ago.

At that time, the goal was simple: build a strong middle class.

This wasn't achieved through mythical billion-dollar valuations, but through robust, 'black and white' businesses, the Zebras.

Zebra companies are:

- Profitable: They don't just burn capital; they generate it.
- Resilient: They are built to last, not just for an exit.
- Pluralistic: They benefit a wide range of stakeholders, not just shareholders.

As a leader, are you prioritising short-term valuation or long-term economic impact?

The "unicorn" model often relies on "blitzscaling", burning cash to capture market share.

But in our economy, cash is king and sustainability is survival.

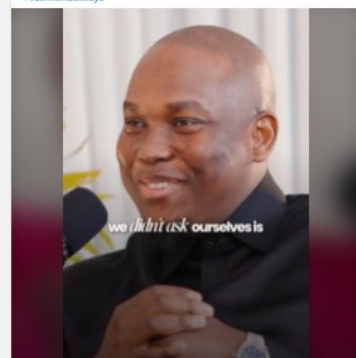
We need to go back to the basics of what venture capital was meant to do: build a strong middle class.

My GrowthFund Venture Partners have pegged our 2030 strategy on this strategic pivot. And we are sensitising LPs to what this means in the real context. What does it mean for liquidity modelling, what does it mean for exits & what does it mean for deal flow.

Let's discuss the shift we need in African VC.

VT

#VentureCapital #Africa #Leadership #ImpactInvesting #ZebraStartups #VusiThembekwayo



WHY THIS WORKS

- Strong opening perspective.
- Contrarian thinking.
- Insight-led argument.
- Drives professional debate.

The Five Principles

THE FIVE PRINCIPLES



ONE

Post consistently

Five to six posts per month is the benchmark. Below that, the algorithm and both the audience lose track of you.



THREE

Remain authoritative and human

The goal is not to sound casual.
The goal is to sound real.



FIVE

Earn reach before you buy it

Organic credibility is the foundation. Paid promotion is the multiplier, used selectively.

TWO



Lead with perspective

Company news belongs on the company page. An executive's profile is where they share what that news actually means.

FOUR



Engage, not just post

Replying to comments and participating in other people's conversations signals to the platform that there is a real person behind the profile.

The opportunity for South African executives is real.

LinkedIn has changed, and those who act now will not only be more visible, they will help define the conversation.

The business value is becoming increasingly clear:



Stronger engagement



Broader reach



Deeper trust



Meaningful business value

In a professional landscape where people do business with people, LinkedIn is a powerful channel for leaders to shape their company's reputation in a genuinely human way.



Visibility builds awareness.

CREDIBILITY BUILDS INFLUENCE.

Modern executive presence is no longer about broadcasting authority. It's about building trust, perspective, and meaningful visibility at scale.

 **TURNLEFT** ×  **LINKEDIN**
PLAYBOOK

2026