LINKEDIN
PLAYBOOK



The Executive

LINKEDIN PLAYBOOK

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

TURNLEFT

2026



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 no longer only engage with brands; the people behind them matter.**



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.

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

The South African Reality Check.



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.

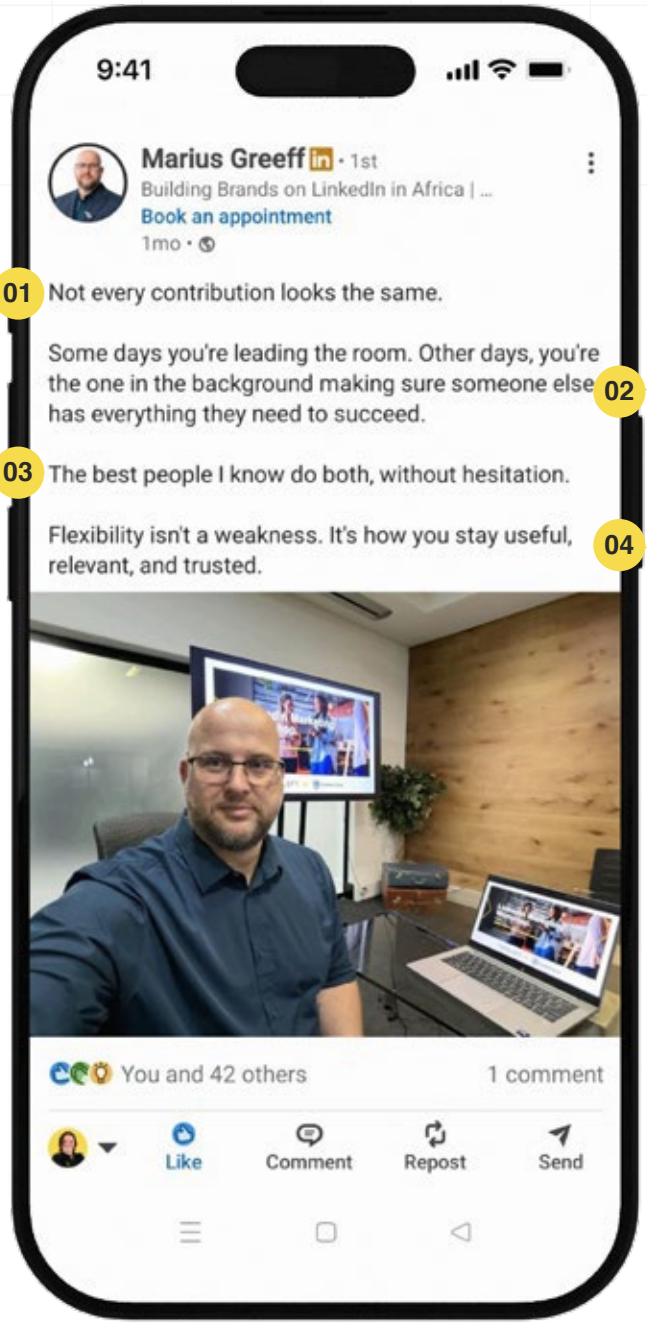
The most effective approach keeps these two levers distinct.

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.

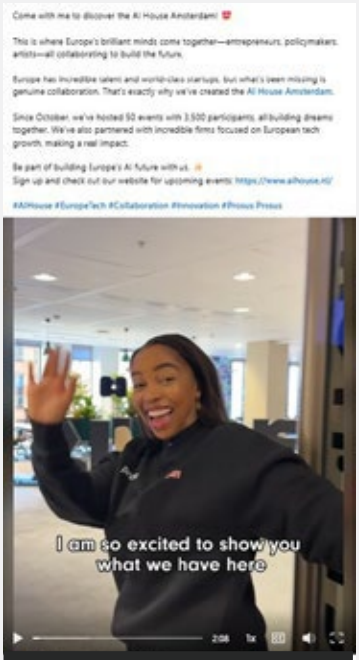
> Different voices. Same structure. Consistent impact.

01



Phuthi Mahanyele-Dabengwa

Executive Director | Naspers & Prosus



WHY THIS WORKS

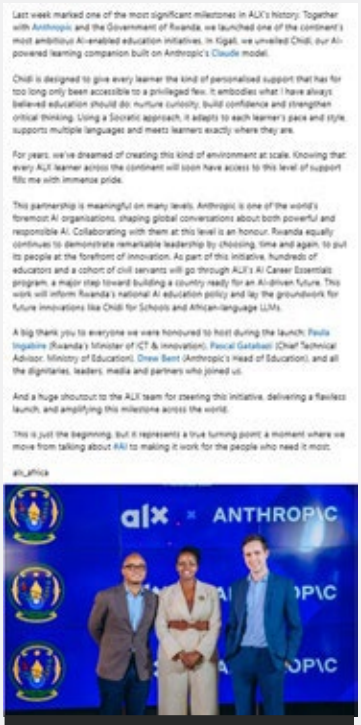
- Executive accessibility
- Future-focused leadership
- Human and optimistic tone
- Makes innovation feel approachable

02



Fred Swaniker

Founder & CEO | Sand Technologies



WHY THIS WORKS

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

03



Vusi Thembekwayo

Investor | Entrepreneur | Speaker



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.

TWO

Lead with perspective

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

THREE

Remain authoritative and human

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

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.

FIVE

Earn reach before you buy it

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

THE BOTTOM LINE

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.



Sources: Refine Labs, DSMN8, FTI Consulting, MWW/SocialHP, DataReportal, LinkedIn (Tim Jurka, March 2026). All data reflects the most recent 12 to 18 months of LinkedIn usage and trends.



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.

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