



2026

B2B Influencer Playbook

WHEN TRUSTED EXPERTS SPEAK, B2B BUYERS LISTEN.

LEARN HOW TO AMPLIFY YOUR ORGANISATION'S VOICE
IN A SOCIAL-FIRST WORLD





INFLUENCING B2B-STYLE

We've been pioneers of B2B influencer marketing since 2022. We're the leading independent UK agency specialising in the B2B influencer space.

Well-known B2B brands, agencies and scale-ups come to us to reshape their marketing strategies for a social-first world.



GUY O'BRIEN
FOUNDER

I lead our commercial and creator strategy, with 25 years of experience launching B2B concepts for brands including Microsoft, Dell, and Workday. Previously, I ran large digital media teams and built and exited a specialist B2B programmatic agency before founding Custom Influence.

I've worked at fast-growing companies across the UK and US, developing marketing products for Nielsen and Oracle, award-winning campaigns for Asda, and digital transformation initiatives at Virgin Media O2. Today, I use that experience across B2C and B2B to create thought leadership partnerships and programmes.



KRISTEN SESTO
DIRECTOR

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influencer Industry**

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**Why B2B Influencer
Marketing Works**





PEOPLE



TRUST

PEOPLE—

THATS NOT NEW

In our day-to-day lives, influencer marketing is nothing new

When we search for information, listen to podcasts, or scroll social media, we get ideas and inspiration from content creators, media personalities, Youtubers and other influencers. Spend on influencer marketing reached \$32.55 billion in 2025 and is on track to pass \$40 billion in 2026.

But how does it translate to the world of B2B?



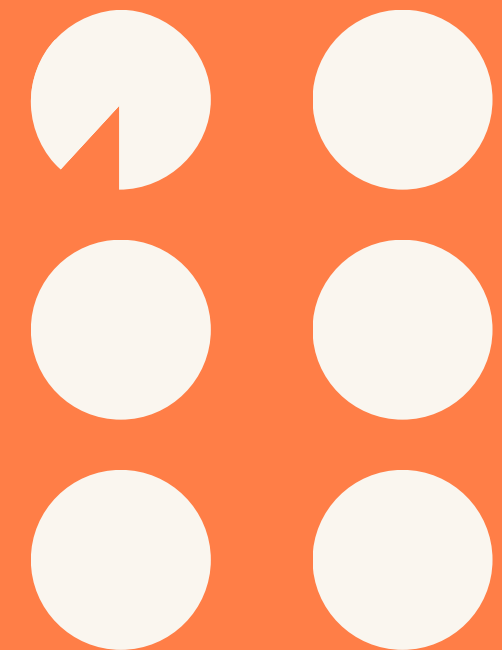
72% OF DECISION-MAKERS TRUST A BRAND MORE IF IT'S AFFILIATED WITH INDUSTRY EXPERTS.

B2B influencer marketing has an ROI of \$5.78 for every \$1 invested.

It might look a little different over here, but influencer marketing makes just as much sense for B2B as it does for our B2C counterparts

67%

report stronger marketing performance from B2B influencer campaigns than from brand-only tactics.



ROI is 478%





GET READY FOR THE GREAT B2B INFLUENCER MOVEMENT

B2B firms are already investing in influencer marketing. To generate strong returns, marketers will need to understand how the B2B approach differs from B2C and learn to design measurable campaigns that leverage existing marketing resources. **To find out how, read on.**

B2B INFLUENCERS

INCREASED TRUST

STRONGER ENGAGEMENT

CREDIBLE CONTENT

TARGETED EXPERTISE

HIGHER ROI

BUILT-IN AUDIENCES

PLATFORM AMPLIFICATION



What Is B2B Influencer Marketing?

1

It's about meeting your audience where they are

More and more business people use social channels as a first port of call to educate themselves, get recommendations and network.

2

It's about credibility

B2B influencers are industry experts, not typical creators. Partnerships should be collaborative and long-term, not one-off promotions.

3

It's about reach

Some B2B firms use internal experts to boost awareness, but many are now tapping into the larger audiences of external thought leaders.

4

It's about doing more with less

Your whitepaper investment goes further when a respected expert co-writes it, introduces it, analyses it on LinkedIn, or discusses it on a podcast.

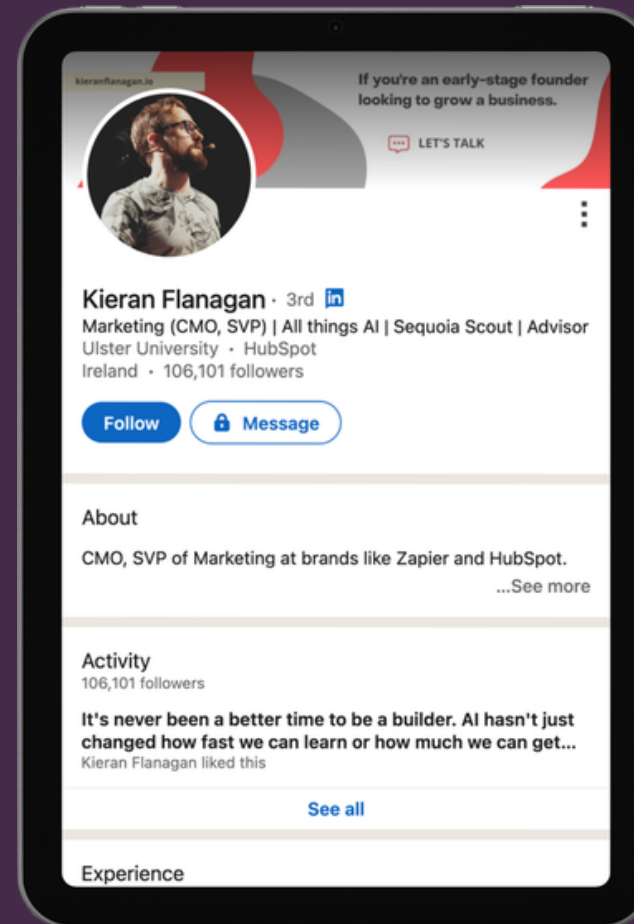


INTERNAL VS EXTERNAL

**CUSTOM INFLUENCE IS
YOUR EXPERT FOR THIS!**

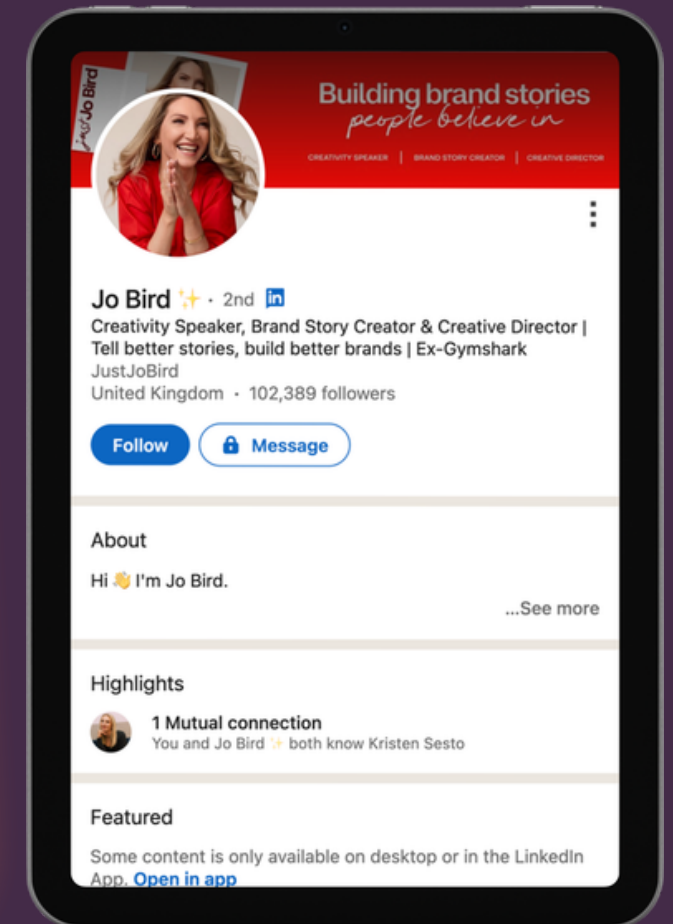
Internal Influencer

- An internal subject matter expert (typically an executive)
- Over time, they become the voice of your brand.
- Typical posts: a mix of product-specific, industry-specific, and personal posts.



External Influencer

- An external thought-leader with a large following
- Access to their audience helps grow yours
- Typical posts: a mix of product promotions, industry-specific, & personal posts



AN EXAMPLE CAMPAIGN: HUBSPOT

Every campaign is different, but here's an example we ran for HubSpot.



1

"We need to reach a different audience"

HubSpot regularly runs online masterclasses, which are well-attended by existing clients, but they wanted to attract new prospects as well.

2

**Matchmaking:
The longlist**

Looking at the ideal audience profile (sector, job role, location), we drew up a longlist of potential thought leaders.

3

**Matchmaking:
The shortlist**

In partnership with HubSpot's UK & Ireland marketing team, we whittled the list down to 4 influencers who best matched the HubSpot brand, audience goals and budget

4

**Promoting the event
for maximum sign-ups**

We briefed and coordinated the chosen influencers. They promoted their plans to attend the event on their channels, including LinkedIn and Substack.

5

Mission Accomplished

LinkedIn activity generated over 1,000 engagements within the target audience, with around 500 more from newsletters. The influencers directly generated over 200 masterclass registrations.

YOUR CONTENT

+

INDUSTRY INFLUENCERS

=

=

MORE REACH AND ENGAGEMENT



B2B $\neq$ B2C

Before we jump into channels and assets, remember:

1

Forget everything you know about B2C influencers. B2B influencers are thought leaders and industry experts who have often spent decades building careers – and their endorsement matters.



2

While LinkedIn tends to be the main B2B influencer channel, other channels are emerging as important places for collaboration, including YouTube, podcasts, TikTok and newsletters.



3

B2B influencer ‘Hero’ content focuses on learnings, reflections, research, company announcements and partnerships specific to your industry.



BRAND CAMPAIGNS

Boost your brand-level campaigns by collaborating with respected industry experts, who can help you reach niche audiences, build trust, and create authentic connections.

How do
you do it?

A curved arrow pointing from the text "How do you do it?" towards the first step of the process.

1

Podcasts & Vodcasts

Tell your brand story through independent industry podcasts and vodcasts. Then repurpose snippets of those conversations for your own social channels or website.

2

Promoted Social Posts

Share your brand values, company announcements and thought leadership on key topics with promoted social posts from influencers across LinkedIn.

3

Blogs & Newsletters

Partner with industry experts on featured articles, blogs, or newsletters that raise awareness among key stakeholders and decision makers.

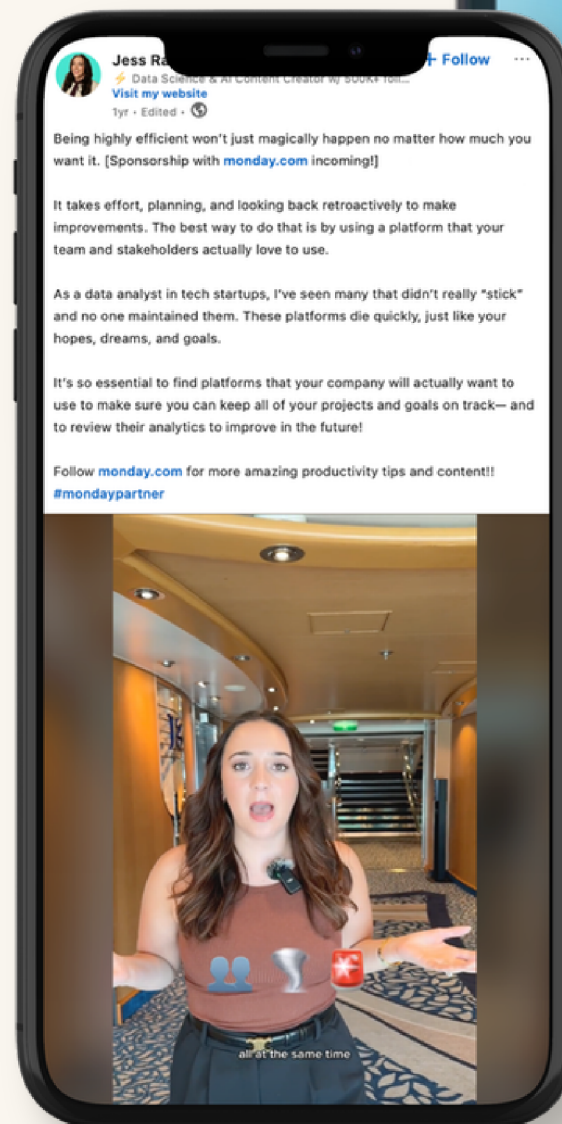


BRAND CAMPAIGNS

EXAMPLES

Jess Ramos
monday.com

See the Promoted
Social post here.

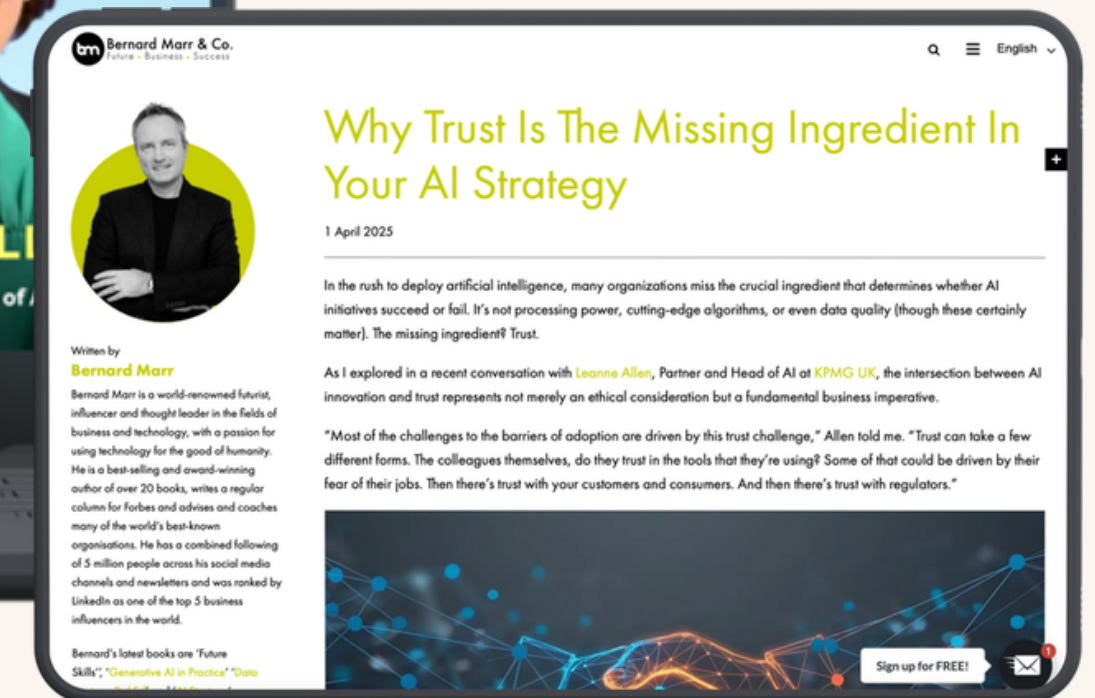


Helen Yu - KPMG

See Podcasts & Vodcasts here.

Bernard Marr - KPMG

Read the article here.





EVENT MARKETING

Put a social-first framework around your current event marketing strategy. Influencers can play a pivotal role in attracting more attendees, creating buzz and facilitating networking opportunities.

How do
you do it?



1

Event Promotion

Industry experts can help drive registrations for both digital and in-person events via their digital footprint, making sure your event is a well-attended success.

2

Speaking & Moderation

Aside from the traditional keynote speaking opportunities, influencers can also help with roundtables, panel moderation and executive Q&As.

3

Livestreams & Event Content

Great for events that a brand is already sponsoring or attending but not hosting. Influencers can help raise awareness of the event through video coverage and wrap-ups on social media.

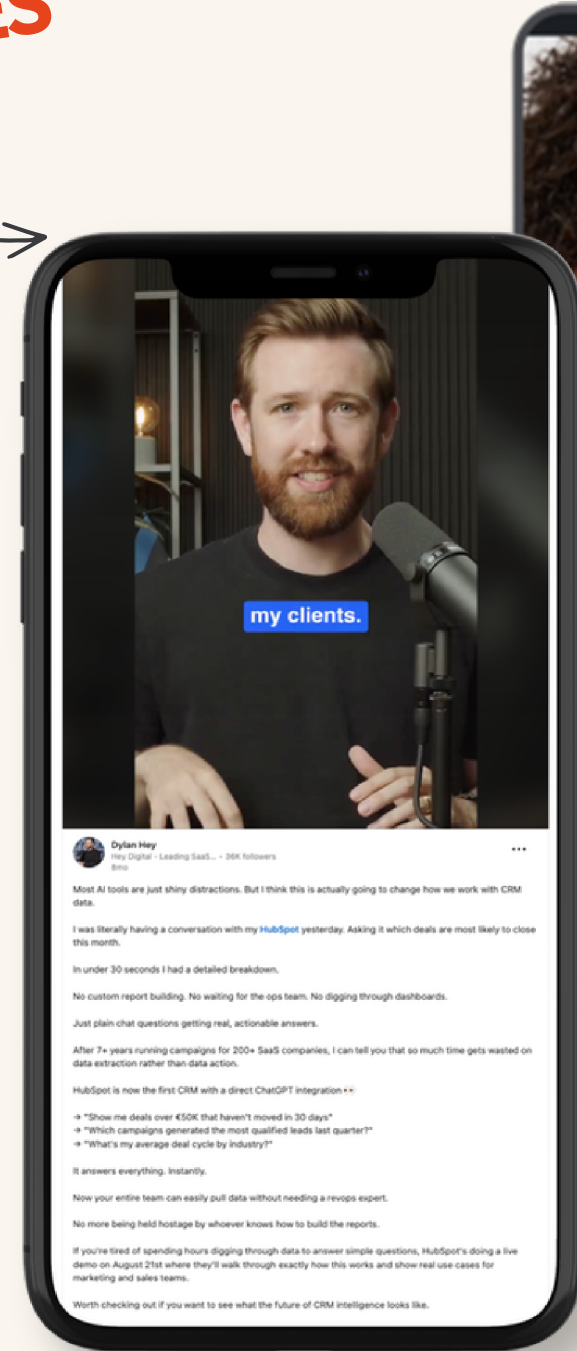


EVENT MARKETING

EXAMPLES

Dylan Hey
HubSpot

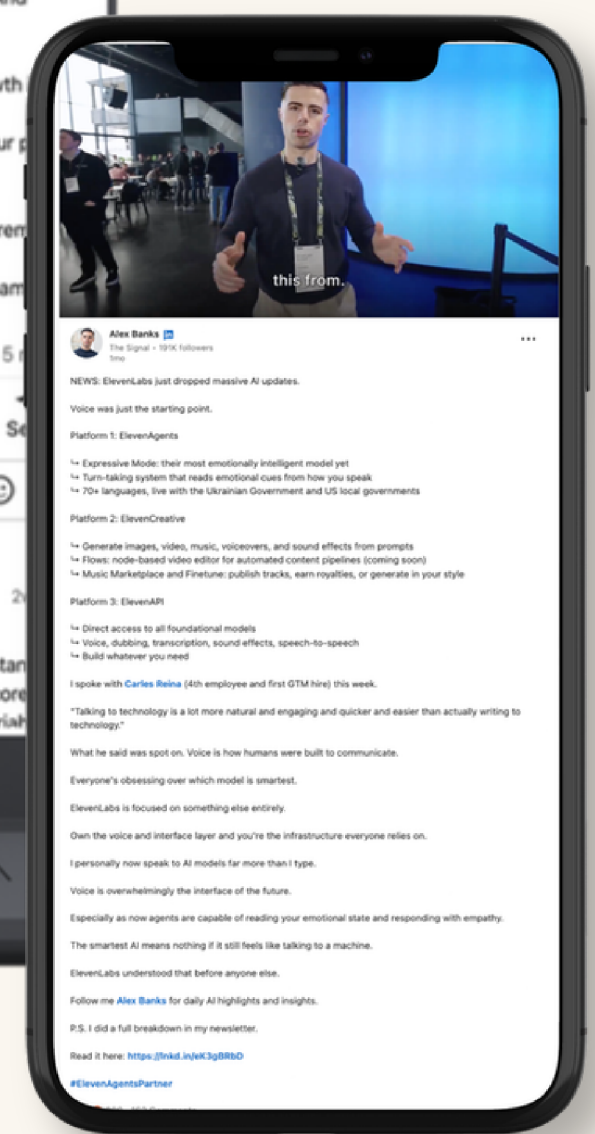
See Event Promotion
post here.



Kenza Ait Si Abbou - Zoom
Event Speaking & Moderation

Alex Banks
ElevenLabs

See Event Content
post here.





CONTENT MARKETING

When influential voices share content with their audiences and communities, their unique angle can immediately help brands gain credibility, make content more memorable and reach professionals who are typically hard to engage.

How do
you do it?



1

Co-Produce Content

Engage expert voices to develop content with your team. They can offer quotes, help conduct research and interviews, provide strategic advice or produce full, well-researched reports.

2

Content Amplification

Use influencers to amplify branded content, such as eBooks and research, on LinkedIn and other platforms. Run a series of A/B test posts to focus on different points and key takeaways.

3

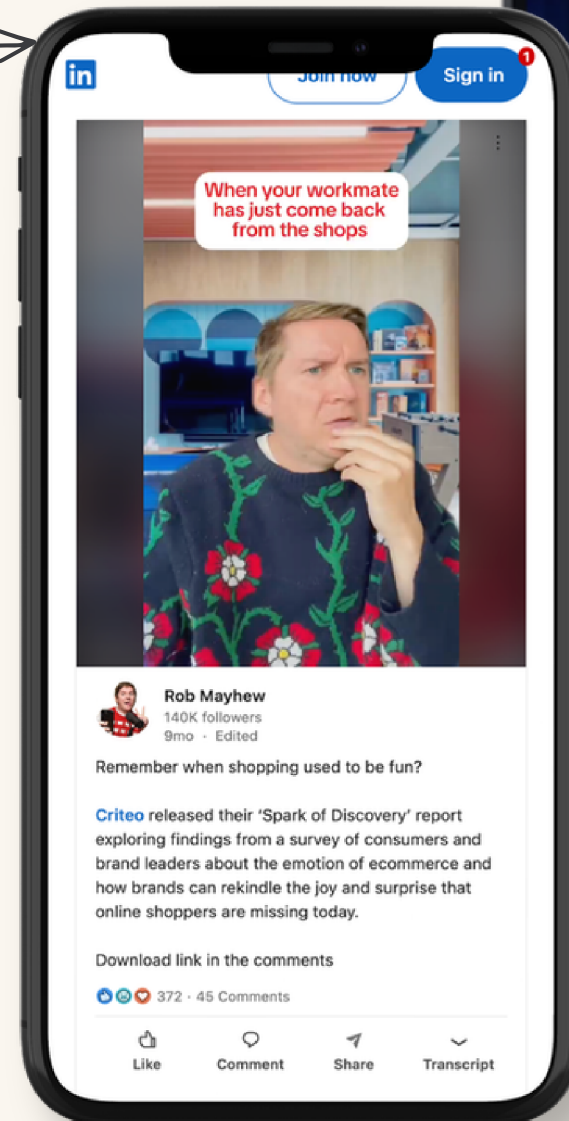
Transform the Whitepaper

Work with content creators to turn written content like whitepapers into short-form explainer videos, or have your executives give a podcast interview that expands on the content in more detail.



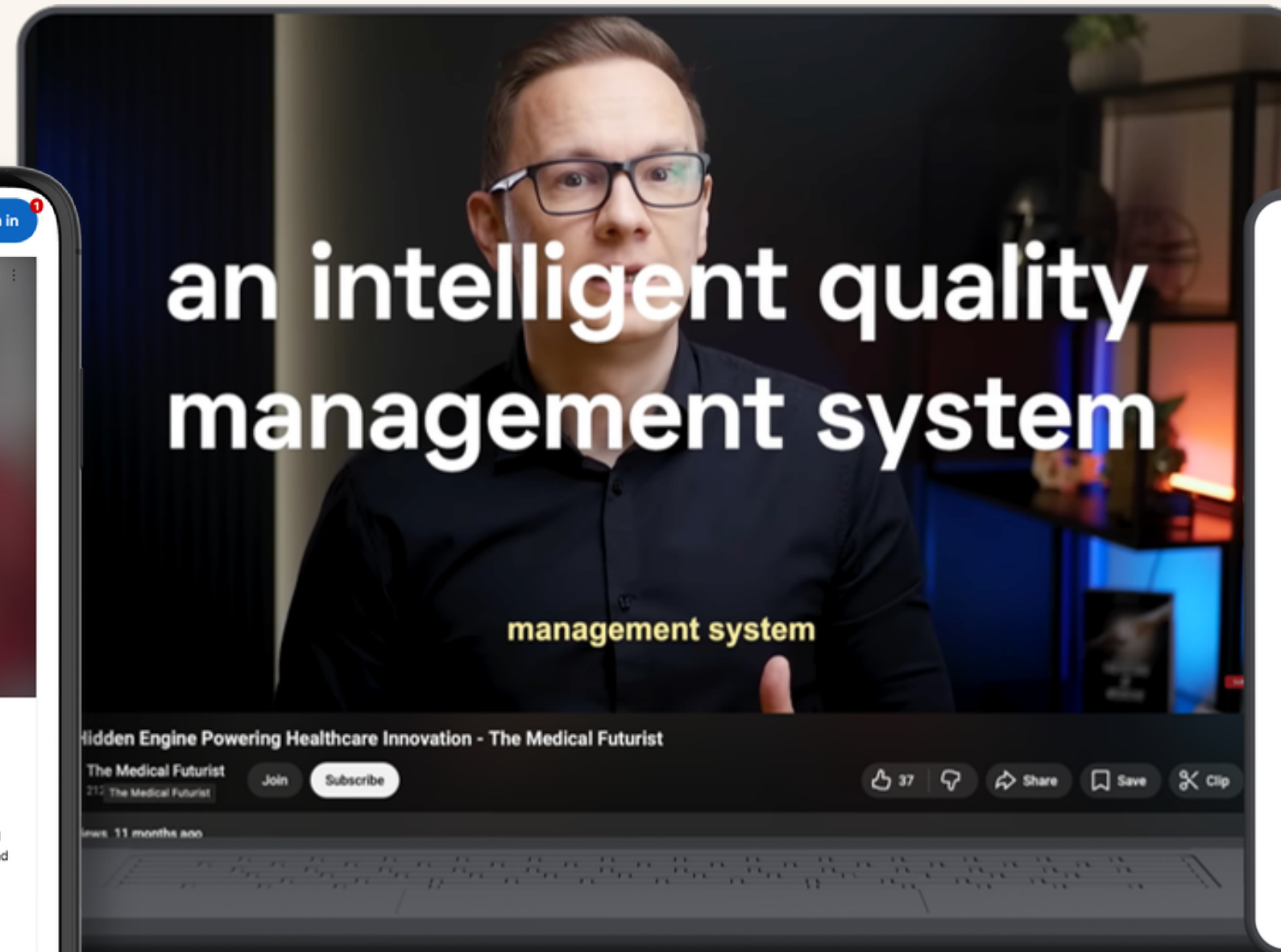
CONTENT MARKETING

EXAMPLES



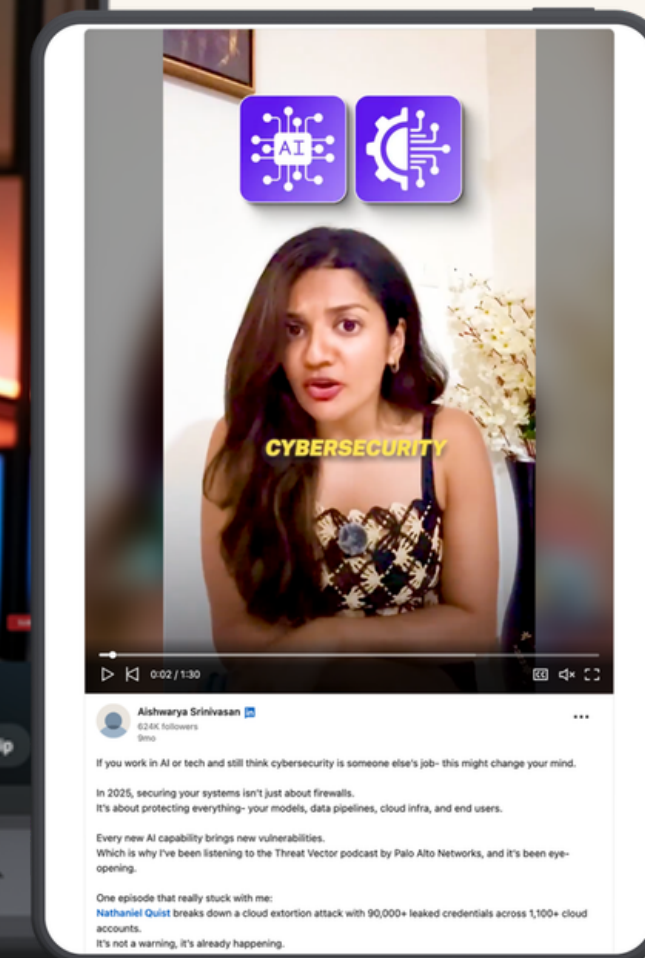
**Rob Mayhew
Criteo**

[Watch the video here.](#)



The Medical Futurist - MasterControl

[See Content Amplification video here.](#)



**Aishwarya
Srinivasan -
Palo Alto
Networks**

[See the Co-Produced
Content here.](#)



PAID MEDIA & AD'S

LinkedIn's Thought Leader ads option lets you boost UGC (user-generated content) to a broader audience for more reach and engagement.

How do
you do it?

A curved arrow pointing from the text 'How do you do it?' towards the first step box.

1

Increase ROI with Thought Leader Ads

Turn influencer-created content into adverts for your brand with significantly better results than standard LinkedIn paid ads: 1.7 higher click-through and 1.6 higher engagement rates, on average.

2

Reach more of the Right People

Boost posts to reach a specified audience outside the influencer's following. Target on criteria like job titles, experience, industry and geography.

3

Make Investments go Further

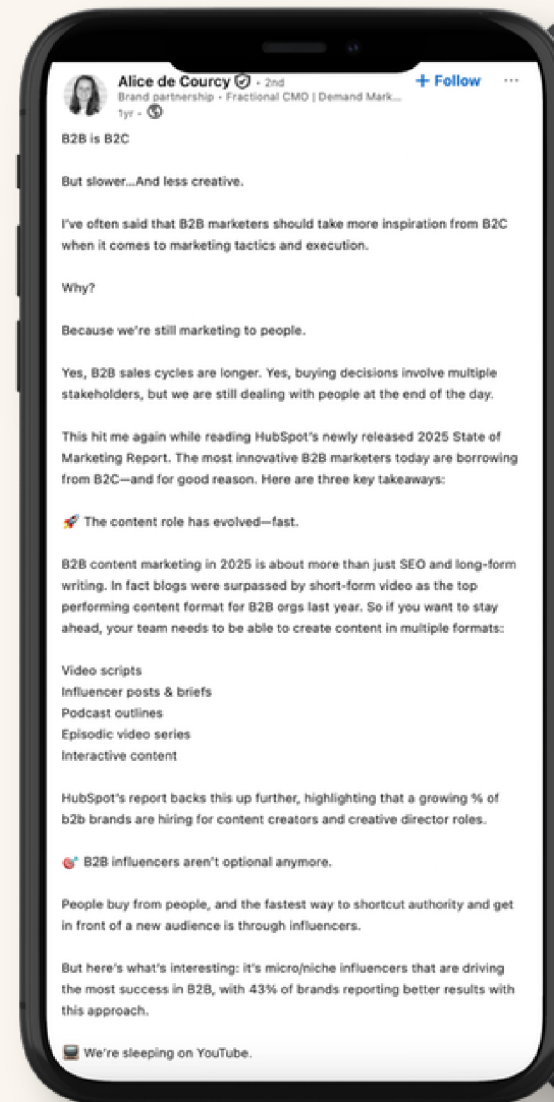
Reuse organic content to feed your paid media campaigns - maximising your influencer investment and reducing the content burden on your team.



PAID MEDIA & AD'S

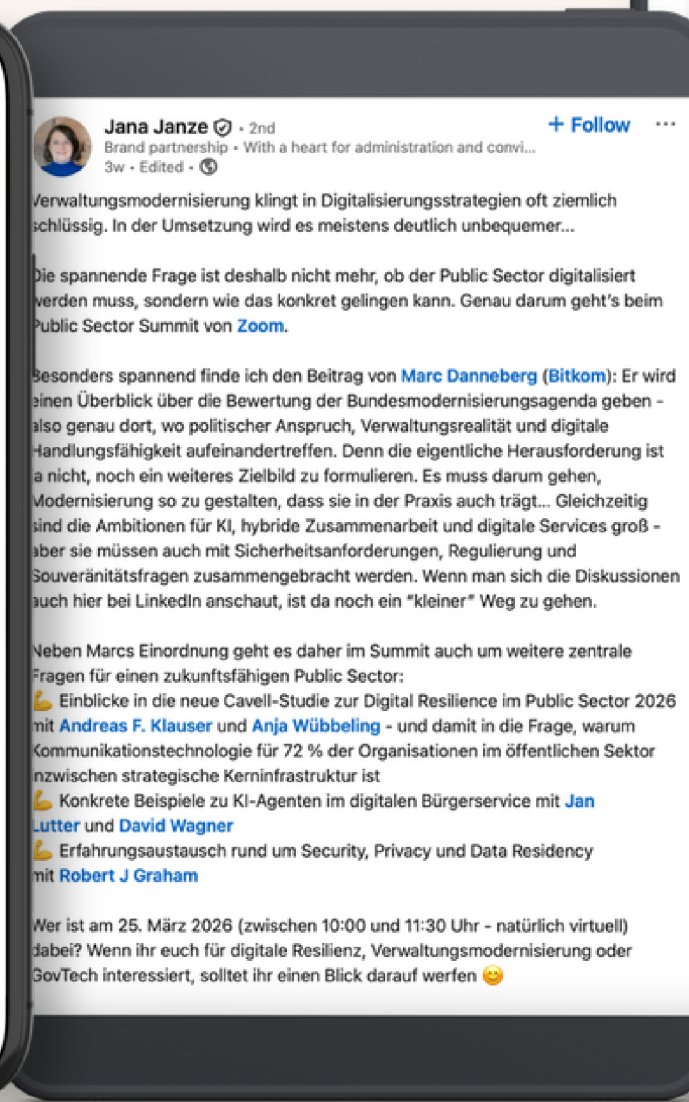
EXAMPLES

Alice de Courcy
HubSpot

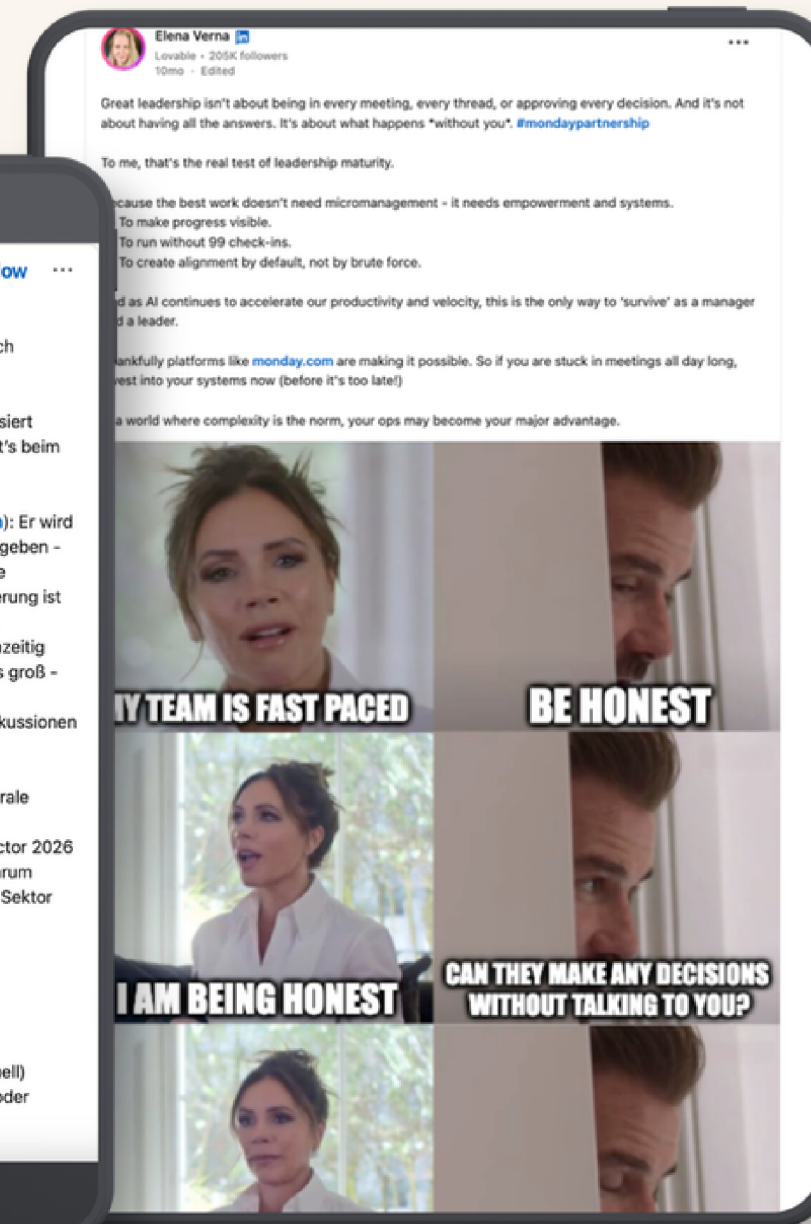


See the example
post here.

Jana Janze
Zoom



See the example
post here.



See the example
post here.

Elena Verna
monday.com

PRODUCT LAUNCHES

Put a social-first approach around your product launch or feature updates.



How do
you do it?

A curved arrow pointing from the text "How do you do it?" towards the first step box.

1

Build Pre-Launch Momentum

Work with industry experts to introduce your product before launch. Teasers, early opinions, and “first look” demos help build anticipation and credibility ahead of release.

2

Launch Through Trusted Voices

Have influencers announce, explain, or demo the product to their audience creatively. This drives awareness with credibility and makes it feel less like a brand push.

3

Sustain Post-Launch Conversation

Keep momentum going after launch with reviews, use cases, and deeper discussions. This helps reinforce value, answer questions, and extend the lifecycle of the product announcement.

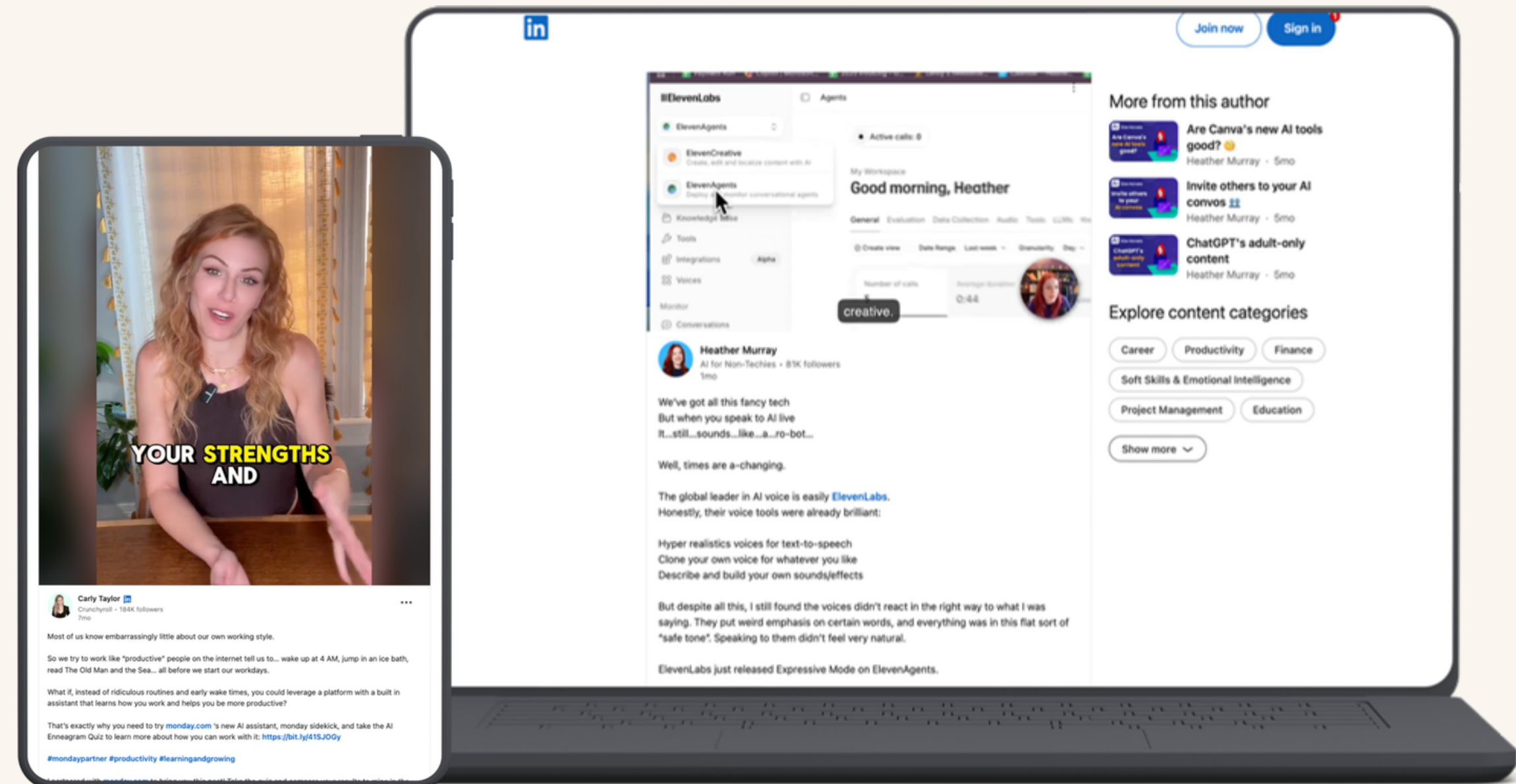


PRODUCT LAUNCHES

EXAMPLES

Carly Taylor
monday.com

[See a monday
Sidekick launch
post here.](#)



Heather Murray - ElevenLabs

[See an Agents Launch post here](#)



MEASURING SUCCESS

Set your campaign up for success by agreeing on reporting schedules and metrics with influencers and content creators up front. Reporting can be manual, especially on platforms like LinkedIn, so it helps to have the right team and processes in place to gather the data you need to demonstrate results.

**REMEMBER
THIS!**



1

Align your KPIs

Know what good looks like from the outset, and decide what influencer marketing KPIs align with your current marketing objectives. Don't try to optimise to multiple awareness or performance KPIs with each influencer partnership or post.

2

Go Platform-Specific

Metrics differ by social media platform. For example, podcasts work on listens and downloads whereas social posts will provide reach, engagement, and engagement rate. Calculating ROI may be easier if you benchmark influencer activity against metrics you already use for paid or organic social.

3

Test & Learn

Test multiple strategies with several influencers to understand where they can add value. Although the best partnerships happen when brands and influencers partner long-term, pilot programs and experimentation should come first.



3 REASONS B2B INFLUENCER MARKETING WORKS

1

Personality-led content is more likely to create trust and feel credible. People want to buy from people — not businesses.

87% of B2B audiences see B2B influencers as trustworthy.
[TOPRANK MARKETING](#)

2

Brand marketing requires consistency. Ditch one-off adverts for a long-term relationship with your target audience, facilitated by a trustworthy voice.

72% believe that the quality of customers from influencer marketing campaigns is better than other marketing types
[INFLUENCER MARKETING HUB](#)

3

Social media is increasingly where your B2B audience is looking for product recommendations: meet them where they already are.

46% of Gen Z & 35% of Millennials prefer social media over search engines for researching brands.
[FORBES](#)

WHERE DO I START?

We can make your existing marketing activities work harder, through intelligent collaborations with B2B influencers and experts. Why not ask us one of these common questions to get started?



CUSTOM INFLUENCE

Ask Guy:

- What does a typical commercial engagement look like?
- How do influencers fit into a B2B lead generation strategy?
- I'm interested, but can you help me sell this idea to colleagues internally?

guy@custominfluence.com

Ask Kristen:

- How can you help us adapt our current content plan to make more of social channels?
- How can we work with external individuals while fully protecting our brand?
- How many B2B influencers do you work with in our particular industry?

kristen@custominfluence.com

