



Influential
EXECUTIVE

Thought Leadership in the Age of Social Media

A GUIDE TO SUCCESSFULLY BUILDING
EXECUTIVE SOCIAL PRESENCE



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Foreword

It's time to make social media marketing personal again. While the benefit of a strong corporate social presence is indisputable, recent research shows that we should be shining a spotlight on the leaders behind those brands as well. Simply put, social media users prefer to engage with people rather than companies, and your executives may be the best tools in your arsenal for elevating your brand.

As of today, Elon Musk has 23.7M followers on Twitter. Comparatively, Tesla has 3.17M followers, SpaceX has 7.65M followers, PayPal has only 579K followers, and Neuralink has a mere 27.7K followers. Musk has roughly 2x more followers than all his founded companies combined, showing how a prominent executive garners a larger following than the brands and companies they are involved with. In addition, the engagement rates speak volumes on this preference toward people, rather than brand social media. Musk's last three tweets garnered a total of 21,000 retweets and 216,000 likes, which stands in stark contrast with Tesla's combined 2,178 retweets and 21,300 likes.

A hand holding a smartphone is shown on the right side of the page. The screen displays a social media post with a teal overlay. The text on the screen is partially obscured by the overlay but includes a post from 'Hem' about a historic meeting of suffragist leader Millicent Fawcett, and a tweet from 'Marshall Mathers' asking 'How come your shirt is so white?'. The background of the right side of the page is a solid teal color.

**We found that
executives and leaders
outperformed companies
on engagement, defined as
engagement per post, per
follower, by over 320%.**

Our team at Influential Executive recently conducted a study of over 1,000 LinkedIn profiles. The takeaway? On average, **leadership profiles drive 3x the engagement rate of companies**, making this trend toward developing a social presence for your leadership team even more attractive.

We aren't the only ones noticing how individuals' content outperforms that of brands. A [2016 study](#) found that, on average, employees' shared content gets 2x higher click-through rates (CTR) than their company's shared content. This result was even higher for large companies with over 10,000 employees where the employee CTR was 2.4x that of the company.¹ Essentially, when an employee shares a piece of content, people are more likely to read it than if the company shared that piece of content.

Getting your leadership team started on social media can feel like a daunting task with a myriad of unique risks and challenges, but this whitepaper provides **practical advice and can serve as your playbook to get started.**



46% of executives aren't using social media for business.² So, why should executives use social?

23%

INCREASE IN POSITIVE
PERCEPTION WHEN CEOS
ARE ACTIVE ON SOCIAL³

75%

RESPONDENTS BELIEVE
EXECUTIVES ACTIVE ON
SOCIAL MEDIA MAKE
BRANDS SEEM MORE
HONEST & TRUSTWORTHY

IN A SURVEY OF FIVE HUNDRED EMPLOYEES
OF DIVERSE AMERICAN COMPANIES, FROM
STARTUPS TO FORTUNE 1000 COMPANIES,

Respondents Agreed

68%

42%

● 2016
● 2013

CEOS NOT ACTIVE ON SOCIAL
WILL BECOME LESS RELEVANT

91%

77%

● 2016
● 2014

SOCIAL MEDIA INCREASES CREDIBILITY
WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND THE MEDIA

Women CEOs reap an even greater benefit...

*91% of survey respondents believe women
executives active on social strengthen the
perception of a brand's leadership team.⁴*



Importance of Executive Social Media Marketing

WHY THE KEY EXECUTIVES

Executive level social media engagement is believed to strengthen 3 key elements of brand reputation: trust, leadership influence, and perceived transparency. Trust refers to the confidence customers, talent, and investors have in a brand. Leadership influence relates to the reputation of your brand's key executives, while perceived transparency refers to your brand's "dialogue" with the public.

A 2016 [BRANDfog survey](#) showed that 93% of people believe executive level social media engagement fosters better connections with employees, customers, and investors. Moreover, 75% of respondents in the same survey said they believe executive social media engagement makes the brand seem more honest and trustworthy. Brands who highlight their women leaders see even greater results: 91% of respondents believe social media-savvy women executives strengthen a brand's leadership team.⁵



ESTABLISHING STRONG THOUGHT LEADERS

Despite the known benefits of executive-level social engagement, a [CEO.com Social CEO Report](#) found that only 39% of Fortune 500 CEOs were on any social media platform as of 2015.⁶ While [our recent independent research](#) indicates that this number has since **increased to 54%**, that still leaves **46% of CEOs without any form of social** presence whatsoever, even four years later. Talk about a significant missed opportunity! Although there are a handful of challenges that we will outline in this whitepaper, the data points to the benefits well outweighing these challenges. According to a [2018 Lyfe Marketing stat](#), cost per thousand impressions (CPM) on social media is 3x less expensive than traditional advertising.⁷ Likewise, a [2017 Edelman & LinkedIn study](#) indicated that 83% of B2B buyers believe that thought leadership builds trust and confidence in an organization.⁸ So, from both a quantitative and qualitative perspective, leveraging executive social media sounds like a no-brainer.

CEOs on professional, education-driven social media platforms like LinkedIn or Twitter can provide industry-specific and trust-based interactions that sway decision-making and increase sales in the B2B space. B2C executives, on the other hand, can also benefit from a social presence by instead tapping into the feelings and behaviors of their buyers, especially on more personal platforms like Instagram and Facebook.



ROI: Customers, Talent, and Investors

According to BRANDfog, **73%** of respondents said that social media engagement makes CEOs more effective leaders by **building trust and confidence** in their brand.

Whether these leaders use social as a platform to project grace in a time of crisis or offer transparency into their business practices or values, communicating effectively and regularly on **social can help CEOs be perceived as stronger leaders by customers, talent, and investors**. On top of that, 93% of survey respondents believe socially engaged CEOs are able to build better connections with those same key groups.⁹

In order to drive the greatest impact in the digital age, business leaders must engage with their customers, employees, and partners on social channels. Each of these three stakeholders will respond to unique approaches to CEO social engagement, allowing the company to improve their reputation, attract talent, and increase sales.

A woman and a man are looking at a tablet together. The woman is on the left, wearing a dark top, and the man is on the right, wearing a light-colored shirt and a dark jacket. They are both looking down at the tablet, which is held by the man. The background is a solid teal color.

In order to drive the greatest impact in the digital age, business leaders must engage with their customers, employees, and partners on social channels.

DRIVING CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

The benefit of having an active social presence begins with your potential customers. A [2018 Hootsuite report](#) indicated that three out of four consumers believe a CEO's presence on social makes a brand more trustworthy,¹⁰ and a [2017 SproutSocial study](#) reported that 59% of consumers surveyed believe that CEOs should join conversations around social and political issues on social media.¹¹ Furthermore, a [2016 Nielsen report](#) found that Generation X, a group of individuals likely to be more senior in the workforce and therefore among top decision makers, are even more active and engaged than millennials online—spending an average of almost seven hours per week on social media according to the study.¹² Establishing a credible and authentic brand reputation is paramount for generating and keeping loyal customers, and it begins with having a personal voice backing that brand.



CONNECTING WITH CURRENT AND PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEES

When it comes to cultivating talent, both prospective and current employees are using social media to determine which leaders they are inspired by and who they'd like to work for. In fact, [Hootsuite's 2016](#) study showed a 40% increase in employee engagement as a result of CEO social engagement.¹³ Through strong, ongoing communication that shares your brand's values, vision, and direction, you can help existing employees feel more connected to leadership while building a company they're proud to work for.

When attracting new employees, however, it's important to consider the available talent pool. Millennials now make up both the largest consumer group in the U.S. and the largest generation in the workforce, and the best way to reach this audience is on social media. In fact, there are 87 million millennials on LinkedIn alone, making up 38% of its user base.¹⁴ In addition to being reachable on social, millennials are more likely to turn to social media when it comes to gaining trust in or insight on a brand—a recent [Marketing Sherpa study](#) found that 95 percent of millennial social media users follow brands on social,¹⁵ and this inclination is likely to apply to company

leaders as well. While this group is becoming a critical generation to consider when seeking top talent, we can't forget that Gen X is reported to spend even more time online than millennials, and is an equally valuable group to connect with when recruiting for senior leadership and executive positions.

GETTING IN FRONT OF INVESTORS

Investors are online too. Establishing your CEO as a thought leader with influence and sway will ensure your company is attracting investors (and acquirers) who believe in your mission. Investors have the opportunity to learn about smaller companies through thought leadership content and social media networks while also connecting with thought leaders who are leading the market. [A Wharton School of Business study](#) showed that having a social media presence that promotes a positive brand image and strategically draws in a larger following on social media is directly correlated with larger investor pools and the ability to obtain funding.¹⁶



Intersection of Thought Leadership with Influencer Marketing

Thought leadership and influencer marketing have emerged as two of the top marketing strategies in 2018, but how do they differ, overlap, or even work together to achieve success?

Thought leaders are typically found on LinkedIn and Twitter. They write blogs, contribute their insight on forums or discussion boards, and write columns for media outlets. Thought leaders spread their ideas out to the world and inspire their audience to make decisions.

Moreover, thought leaders work for the company and represent the company's interests in their content. But as a thought leader and thus, a credible individual in their niche, the thought leader's choice to work at that company and advocate for its vision is a direct endorsement for the brand.



[CONTINUE](#)

Influencers are typically found on Instagram, YouTube, and blogs where they create content that is highly visual, emotive, and primarily (though not exclusively) for B2C brands. This is why they are highly sought after for brand endorsements or sponsorships. Influencer marketing brings a brand's audience into the influencer's world and inspires their audience to spend money.

In order for influencers to remain credible, they have to be seen as authentic and distinctly separate from the product or service they are endorsing. Even if they indicate they are being compensated for the endorsement, they have to convince the audience

they actually use and value the product or service. Thought leaders, on the other hand, come off as more innately credible and authentic, given the lack of third-party compensation for the content they produce.

Likewise, thought leaders are actually better-suited to have influence over larger-scale ideas or public opinions because of this authenticity. In fact, of the 10,000 most shared articles on LinkedIn from 2013 to 2017, only 6% were written by influencers,¹⁷ leaving room for smaller-company executives to have a voice and gain traction on LinkedIn. You don't have to be Richard Branson or Bill Gates for your content to be seen and for people to pay attention.

So how do these two differing marketing strategies intersect, and what can thought leaders learn from influencers? Most social platforms are designed to be influencer-friendly. This is because (1) picture or video social content gets better engagement online, and (2) advertising dollars flow through influencers. So by establishing yourself as a thought leader while practicing some of the techniques of influencer marketing, such as posting photo and video content, you can set yourself up for success on all social channels.

How to Begin

Most of us understand the benefits of being on social media for the B2C space, but how about the B2B space? Social media might not seem like a worthy investment of time or resources for a B2B CEO, but the data increasingly indicates a positive ROI for B2B leaders on social. Collectively, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter drive 90% of social traffic to B2B sites and blogs,¹⁸ and recent studies show that B2B decision-makers are not only using social media to learn more about their market, but also to directly influence the decision-making process within their company. In the B2B space, decisions are collaborative and multifaceted so having your brand represented on social – answering real-time questions on Twitter or providing key thought leadership content on LinkedIn – matters.

So you're getting on board. But where do you begin?



1

Setting Goals

The most important part of this process and the key first step is to make sure you understand your unique objectives, identify your KPIs, and align your social media strategy to your KPIs. Are you trying to humanize your brand or distinguish your executives as thought leaders? Are you trying to attract new talent or investors or both? Understanding your specific goals, and anticipating how they may change over time, is key to your success.

Once your high-level objectives and priority audiences are in place, it is essential that you set your goals and areas of focus for the next 12 months. Is your main goal to build brand awareness? Does your audience need educational content around your product or even your category? Is your company ready to start capturing leads? These goals will vary between businesses, but you must identify your unique goals in order to define a tactical plan, which will include your ability to identify what content pieces and messaging will be needed throughout your marketing funnel.



2

Selecting Leaders

Which team members make sense to help you accomplish your goals? It may not always be the CEO or the entire leadership team. If your main goal is to acquire more investors, it might make sense to begin with the CFO. Or if your main goal is to humanize your brand you may want to start with your CMO and/or the CEO. It's also important to recognize your leadership team's personalities and work with the individual or team that is innately more social (or clearly sees the value) and is comfortable with sharing more of their individual voice online.



3

Aligning Branding

The next important step is to identify the look, feel, and tone of your leadership's social media presence. If you are getting multiple leaders on social media, are there ways to unify their presence or tie it into the corporate identity? The connection to your brand doesn't have to be as obvious as a logo—it could be a shared typeface, brand colour, iconography or patterns. Even something as simple as using similar LinkedIn headshots or linking to the same thought leadership article in their Twitter bio can create a web of connection for your brand. Creating some cohesion between leadership and your business, while maintaining each leader's personality and authenticity, can elevate your social presence, tie it back to the brand, and make your influence that more powerful.

If you are starting by getting a single leader on social, such as the CEO or a law firm partner, what is their *personal* brand? Identify their key areas of expertise, niche interests, and important *human* elements that can create a theme in their personal brand. While we wouldn't normally recommend an executive post a picture of a dinner salad, if your CEO is an avid gardener, it could make sense to post this kind of photo on certain channels if they harvested the vegetables from their home garden.



4

Creating Content

With your goals in mind, what content makes sense to post? How frequently are you posting content? Who is creating content – the CEO, the marketing team, or both? How does the content ladder up to the strategy and goals? When organizing the cadence and content, it is important to work closely with the leadership team to sync with their calendars, travel schedules, and PR events to align content to key milestones and events, but also to ensure review schedules are agreed to and won't hold up posting.

Moreover, if you are in the B2B, B2C, or B2B2C space, your content and the social channels you share on may differ. For example, if you are a B2C business specializing in cruelty-free makeup, your content should strive to be highly visual and emotive and be shared on platforms that facilitate that, such as YouTube and Instagram. Your executives could share videos of them discussing the company vision and how they are accomplishing their cruelty-free mission in product development.

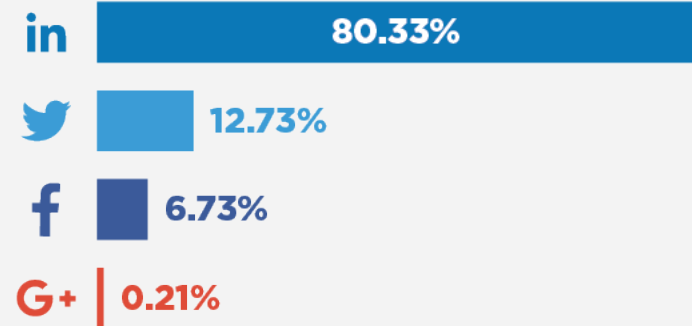
If you are a B2B SaaS company offering software that optimizes operations for energy companies, your thought leadership content may thrive on platforms like LinkedIn and Twitter. Recognizing what content will have the largest impact on your followers and what channels will support that is key to driving the best results.

5

Establishing Channels

That being said, it is important to spread your influence across multiple channels to amplify your presence. Some social channels may not seem intuitive for your business, but can actually elevate your presence and help to accomplish your goals. For example, it may seem intuitive for B2B companies to nurture their LinkedIn presence, especially considering that a [LinkedIn Audience 360 study indicated](#) that 4 out of 5 LinkedIn users drive business decisions, but it may seem less intuitive for a B2C business.¹⁹ Well, a [2016 Salesforce report](#) showed that LinkedIn's users also have 2x the buying power of the average online audience.²⁰ Intuitive or not, LinkedIn is a powerful tool for B2C companies to share key messages about culture, vision, leadership, and social impact work which attracts top talent and investors. Although the strategies you employ on LinkedIn may differ from other social channels, this valuable customer market should not be overlooked.

Platforms Where B2B Brands Gain the Most Leads²¹





Training & Process

Whether you're giving your CEO complete control of their social accounts or working with a marketing or PR team to help manage their presence, it is essential to establish a training process and a clear set of guidelines before getting on social. Social media training will help mitigate the risks that could potentially derail your program and prevent you from achieving your goals.

From unintentionally revealing proprietary information to creating security risks to accidentally posting the same content twice

as a result of bad communication between the CEO and their social media team, there are a number of risks that can be mitigated through a strong training program and clearly defined process before kicking off your social campaigns.

What we mean by process here is everything from the content creation and review process (and planned timing each month), the process (and responsibility) to respond to comments and other interactions, the process to deal with problems or crises should they come up, and the process to proactively engage

with other industry influencers. This should be coupled with a set of guidelines, including dos and don'ts to manage risk, that is appropriate to your industry. Companies in highly regulated industries CAN engage on social media, as can their executives, but it often requires additional review steps through the legal and/or compliance teams. While seemingly cumbersome at first, they can quickly become just a standard part of a streamlined process if defined and managed well.



Analytics & Reporting on Successes

Finally, how are you going to track the success of your leadership team's social media presence? Particularly when there may be multiple people managing or engaging in their social accounts, you will need tools to help manage workflows, post approvals, and gauge content performance. The same way you measure business success with metrics and analytics, you need to measure social media performance in the same way.

The key performance indicators you establish to measure your leader's success on social will depend on which objectives you're working towards, and should be monitored on a regular basis. For example, if you want to drive traffic to your company's website, your most important KPIs would be the number of clicks on links to your site and the percentage of your company's website traffic that comes from social media. On the other hand, if your goal is to build an engaged community or brand awareness, your KPIs may be more focused on engagement (likes, comments, clicks, shares, etc.), reach, and follower growth.

Without identifying these goal-driven KPIs, you'll have no way to judge or monitor social performance or to determine true return on investment. Thoughtful, goal-driven KPIs and analytics reporting will help you gauge where you're succeeding, where you need to improve, and whether your tactics or targets need to be adjusted.

LinkedIn Best Practices

To help get you started, the Influential Executive team has done some initial research on LinkedIn social strategy to identify trends that will help your business stand out and accomplish your social media goals.



1

Images & Video

Having a visual element in your post is not a nicety, but an essential component of any social media content. [LinkedIn's 2017 Sophisticated Marketer's Guide](#) reported that articles with images generate 94% more total views than articles without imagery.²² Perhaps even more importantly, users are also more likely to retain information when there is a visual component. According to research conducted by [Brain Rules](#), when someone hears a piece of information, they'll only remember 10% of it three days later, but if the information includes a picture, they'll remember 65% of it three days later.²³

Video content offers similar benefits. According to [Wyzowl's 2019 survey of marketers](#), 94% of respondents said that video content has helped increase understanding around their product or service, 83% believe video drives a strong ROI, 84% said video has helped increase website traffic, and 81% reported that video helps generate leads.²⁴ The overarching takeaway? Something as simple as a video or a graphic can take your content from good to great. It's time to get visual with your marketing strategy.



2

Complexity of Written Content

Our data has shown that when it comes to social media copy, simple is truly better. We used the Flesch-Kincaid readability test to determine how text complexity affects engagement rates on LinkedIn posts. This Flesch-Kincaid readability test indicates how difficult a passage is to read and scores it based on its readability. From this test, we determined that posts with low Flesch-Kincaid scores (indicating less complex text), achieved higher engagement rates than posts with high scores.

Some of the highest engagement rates came with posts that contained short, powerful copy without the use of complex jargon. By keeping it simple, you draw and keep the attention of your followers and ensure you aren't excluding anyone outside of your specific niche by keeping the word-choice simple.

Examples



DAVID PRIEMER

FOUNDER AND CHIEF SALES
SCIENTIST AT CEBRALSSELLING.COM

With endless deliverables, tight deadlines, and no shortage of distractions, the modern work environment is designed for disruption rather than productivity! In fact, studies show that the average worker gets interrupted every 11 minutes and spends 33% of their day simply recovering from those interruptions.

Peak productivity and focus requires us to be mindful of what matters and learn to say no to the things that don't. **#Focus**



DAVID PRIEMER

FOUNDER AND CHIEF SALES
SCIENTIST AT CEBRALSSELLING.COM

Have you ever tried to negotiate with a child? Kids are KILLER negotiators for two reasons:

1. They have no idea what a "good deal" is (10 cookies before bed is reasonable, right?)
2. They are relentless in pursuing their desired outcome!

If you're in Sales take note. Don't be encumbered by your previous success or failure in the negotiating arena. The sales rep beside you may have just given away a 30% discount and you may have done ten deals yesterday with the same terms...but the customer you're speaking to this afternoon doesn't know that! Start every conversation with a beginners mind and you'll come out ahead. **#Sales #Negotiation**

3

The Human Element

LinkedIn has a reputation for being all business and no personality, but our research shows that posts with a “human element” can outperform posts that are all business. For example, posting about social causes or charities your company supports can help build that well-rounded authenticity and relatability that your followers want to see.



4

Engage Your Audience?

Yes, the simple “?” can ensure your post gets likes, comments, and far more engagement than a simple statement. Asking your audience to participate on a regular basis helps them feel more engaged and build trust with the individual or brand.

Examples



DENNIS CROWLEY

CO-FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE
CHAIRMAN AT FOURSQUARE

Hey is this thing on? Foursquare Comms said I should be posting more here. What'choo want to hear? **#foursquare**



DENNIS CROWLEY

CO-FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE
CHAIRMAN AT FOURSQUARE

Hey it's **#GivingTuesday** and I'm thrilled to be supporting JDRF thru the 'NYC Tech Bids for Good' charity auction! You can bid on a lunch with me (or tons of other folks from NYC tech if you think I'd be a boring lunch date :) Bid here: <https://lnkd.in/dx76haV...> and thx for your support!

5

Target, Target, Target

Show your audience that you have something important to say in your niche. Posts that effectively target your buyer persona also show significantly higher engagement rates than posts that do not. It wouldn't make much sense for a B2B SaaS company to post about the dating scene in Los Angeles, and their audience may not know how to engage with this content, but if that same B2B SaaS company posted about a Los Angeles-based dating app disrupting the market, it should feel much more relevant to their audience and drive higher engagements.

Think about your brand's buyer persona. Who are they? What are their interests? How do they communicate? What problems do they face and how do these problems intersect with solutions your company provides? Although this process may feel a bit silly at first, it can really help you distill an effective communication plan for your audience and create content that truly does convert.

Let this process work to compliment your executive's key areas of expertise. For example, if your executive is the CMO of a marketing automation software company, his or her audience is

likely well-versed in marketing terms and ideas. Because of this, the executive is in a prime position to provide key thought leadership and insights on relevant topics like marketing best practices, automation solutions, or digital innovation. By keeping the content focused on your audience's needs, showcasing your executive's thought leadership, and ensuring the copy is authentic, insightful, and not sales-focused will drive higher engagement rates and build trust in your executive and the brand they represent.

A person wearing a blue denim shirt is shown from the chest down, carefully placing a wooden block on top of a tall, precarious tower of Jenga blocks. The tower is made of light-colored wooden blocks, some of which are missing, creating a staggered pattern. The background is softly blurred, showing a window with warm light. The overall scene conveys a sense of balance, risk, and careful planning.

Risks & Challenges

STAYING ONE STEP AHEAD

Hopefully by now you understand the benefits of a thoughtful executive social presence, but there may be reasons that your company or executives have shied away from taking this step in the past. It's not easy to launch an executive social media program properly, and the risks and challenges you may be worried about are very likely valid. The good news is, there is a light at the end of the tunnel! We've helped clients overcome many of the same concerns you may be facing and successfully launch their programs. It's important to be aware of all possible obstacles, but not afraid of them. Read on to learn more about some of the most common challenges our clients face, and how to confidently conquer them.

Challenge 1

THE EXECUTIVE HAS NO TIME

We all know executives have busy schedules, never-ending to-do lists, and competing priorities. On top of that, generally, executives don't have social media expertise nor the time or desire to develop an optimized social media program. So how do you overcome this?

RECOMMENDATION

In general, there are two types of social CEOs: the DIY executive and the avoidant executive. The DIY executive will assume they have enough time to dedicate to their social media presence, but over time will become sporadic, inconsistent, or post less strategic content in order share posts quickly and stay on schedule. On the other hand, the avoidant executive will want to have the smallest role possible and rely on their marketing team to do it all. This poses challenges for getting authentic content on their executive's behalf, getting their executive to review content before posting, and staying on schedule. In both cases, we recommend setting up bi-weekly or monthly review checkpoints to expedite the review process for the avoidant CEO and ensure the DIY CEO is getting all the support they need to stay consistent and pointed in their strategy.

Challenge 2

HOW DO YOU AUTHENTICALLY CAPTURE THE EXECUTIVE'S OBJECTIVES, INTERESTS, AND VOICE?

One of the first questions that comes up, particularly for the avoidant CEO, is how will you represent me authentically? Will my team post content I don't agree with or will they fail to capture my tone?

Similarly, the DIY CEO, who you've convinced to let a team support their social presence, is worried their social presence will just be used as a mouthpiece for the brand. But ultimately, this challenge is addressed by a shift in perspective.

RECOMMENDATION

For your avoidant CEO, communicate early on that an experienced team will have an effective process and methodology for capturing an authentic tone of voice, recognizing that a variety of tones can be used based on the content and channel. They will have the ability to adopt and reflect your ideas, values, and interests in their posts and execute this in a strategic content mix (the mix of types of posts related to different topics).

It's important for the marketing team to communicate with their execs early on that while their social content may be used in part to support brand objectives, the company will actually be best served by an authentic executive social presence, as this drives higher engagement rates and more positive sentiment than a brand's corporate social media account. This will give your DIY CEO a sense of autonomy in how and what they post, allowing them to generate engagement with their unique opinions and personalized content. If a CEO were to simply mirror the brand's social content, it would feel distinctly inauthentic and actually deter from the overarching goals. Instead, creating content around your executive's interests, values, or expertise and then supporting those topics with related brand messaging will drive the best results. For example, a Chief People Officer can post genuine and compelling content related to company culture to catch the eyes of top talent and build trust around brand values.

Challenge 3

“NOBODY CAN UNDERSTAND OUR SPACE WELL ENOUGH TO WRITE THOUGHT LEADERSHIP CONTENT”

This is a very common assumption. Executives, particularly those with strong technical backgrounds (and those who skew toward the DIY executive persona), often believe that no one will be able to write compelling thought leadership content or support an authentic social media program because they don't have the CEO's unique technical background.

RECOMMENDATION

Believe it or not, thought leadership content and social media copy created by a professional writer actually performs better than content written by an in-house technical team, even when the content is highly-specialized or technical. For example, social media copy must follow platform best practices and appeal to your audience and the channels they are on. Even when social posts or articles include technical

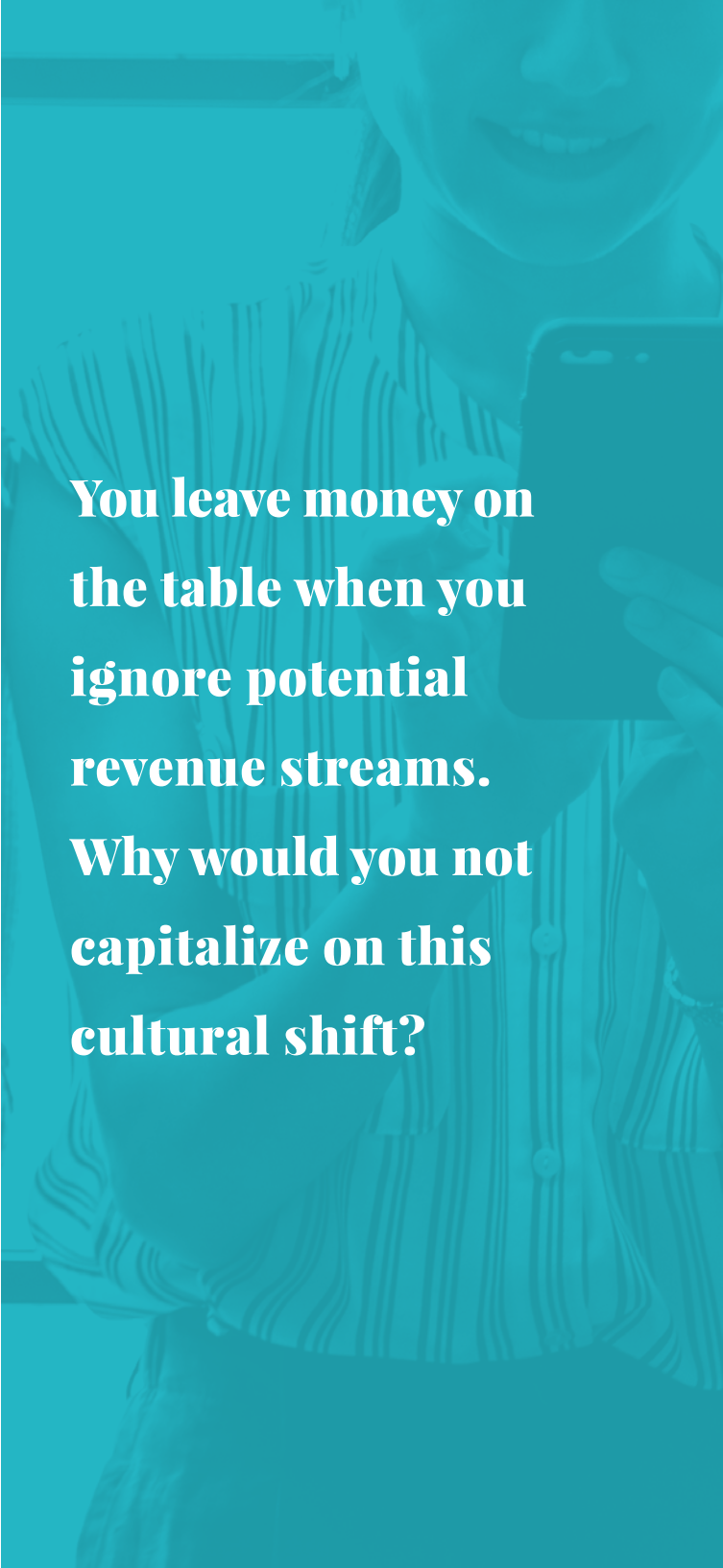
takeaways or compelling statistics, they should be written in a way to encourage engagement or click to a long-form content piece. Ensure your CEO knows that the best content is created from a combination of deep research and immersion, prior category experience, executive or team insights, and a smart and capable writer. Effective social media writing teams also have developed processes to efficiently capture insights and hypotheses from executives to shape thought pieces. The best way to get your CEO on board and build his or her trust in this process is to have your writing team share relevant examples of work - technical case studies or thought leadership content. This will give your executive insight on the types of content your team can produce and build trust in your abilities to capture highly technical or complex subject matter.

What's Next?

While there are a number of risks and challenges to getting your CEO or leadership team on social media, the benefits clearly outweigh the costs. From attracting top talent, investors, and consumers to standing out as a thought leader in your niche, a strong executive social presence can support a number of company goals. As more and more leaders are establishing a presence online, it's prime time to launch a social media program for your own leadership team and avoid falling behind the curve. So, what are you waiting for?

The first hurdle will be to get the rest of your marketing team and executives on board, and we hope this whitepaper will serve as an influential jumping off point. By using this as a playbook for best practices and risk mitigation, you can kick off your executive social program with confidence. If you feel overwhelmed, we recommend that you start with a single, versatile social platform like LinkedIn. From attracting talent to garnering more funding, LinkedIn is a channel where both B2B and B2C executives can make a significant impact.

All of that said, we'd love to help. Get in touch today to start building a thoughtful social media strategy for your leadership with support from our expert team.



**You leave money on
the table when you
ignore potential
revenue streams.
Why would you not
capitalize on this
cultural shift?**

An aerial photograph of a tropical coastline, showing a dark, calm body of water in the foreground, a narrow white sandy beach, and a dense line of green tropical vegetation and trees along the shore. A black rectangular box is positioned in the upper left quadrant of the image, containing the company logo.

Influential EXECUTIVE

About Us

Influential Executive uses a proprietary methodology to develop an authentic social media presence for company leaders that humanizes the brand and impacts the bottom line.

We apply our expert knowledge of executive social media strategy to a mix of company messages, thought leadership content, and personal insight to connect executives online with the audiences that matter most to their business.

Contact Us

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