



The State of **LinkedIn**

AN ANALYSIS OF 10,000+ POSTS BY CEOS &
TOP EXECUTIVES | 2024

Table of *Contents*

01 *The Future of Thought
Leadership*

02 *Data Analysis*

- a. What to Post About
- b. What to Post
- c. When to Post
- d. How Often to Post

03 *About Executive
Presence*

Why Thought Leadership Matters

Thought leadership is the process of using the leaders within your organization to advance company goals. There are many forms of thought leadership, ranging from physical formats like conferences and bylines to digital media like blogs and social media.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP IS A BETTER MARKETING TACTIC THAN TRADITIONAL ADVERTISING BECAUSE:



YOUR AUDIENCE TRUSTS A PERSON MORE THAN A FACELESS ORGANIZATION:

They're more likely to listen to an executive and their perspective than they are to take your company's website as gospel.



AN AUDIENCE ENGAGES MORE WHEN YOU ARE EDUCATING, AS OPPOSED TO SELLING:

Thought leadership focuses on building credibility through education and experience sharing. Your audience is a lot more likely to engage with content that provides them with interesting insights than advertisements that push products up front.

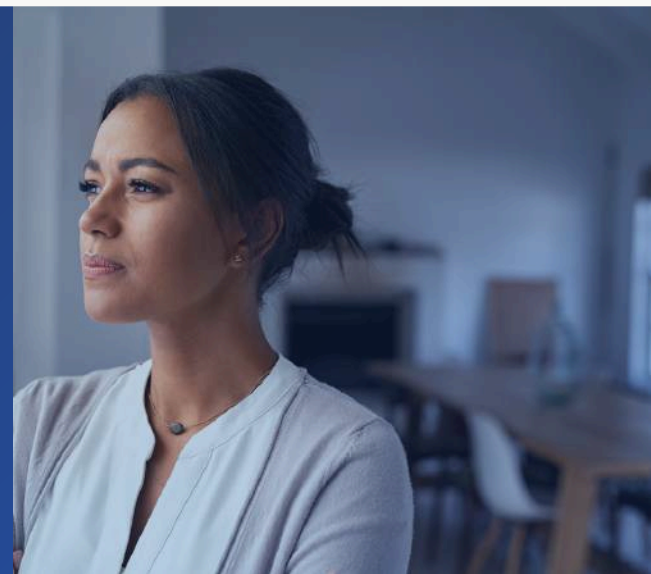


THROUGH THOUGHT LEADERSHIP, YOUR AUDIENCE SEES SOMEONE THEY CAN RELATE TO.

Thought leadership focuses on telling your story as much as sharing insights, and helps your audience see the humans behind the company you are building. This can go a long way in establishing shared ground and building the foundation of relationships that will power the growth of your business.

“Thought leadership is a way to build a relationship with prospects based on knowledge—not on products and services.”

– CHRIS KOCH



Why Thought Leadership Matters

This focus on the long-term credibility and relationships can pay dividends across several audiences:



ACQUIRING NEW CUSTOMERS

Investing in thought leadership increases your visibility with potential customers and shows them you're a partner they want to work with



FUNDRAISING FROM INVESTORS

Thought leadership shows investors how you run as a founder and leader - and shows them you're the type of superstar they want to invest in



SOURCING AND HIRING EMPLOYEES

Current and future candidates for your team also tune into thought leadership efforts to learn more about your vision & understand if they'd succeed under your leadership style



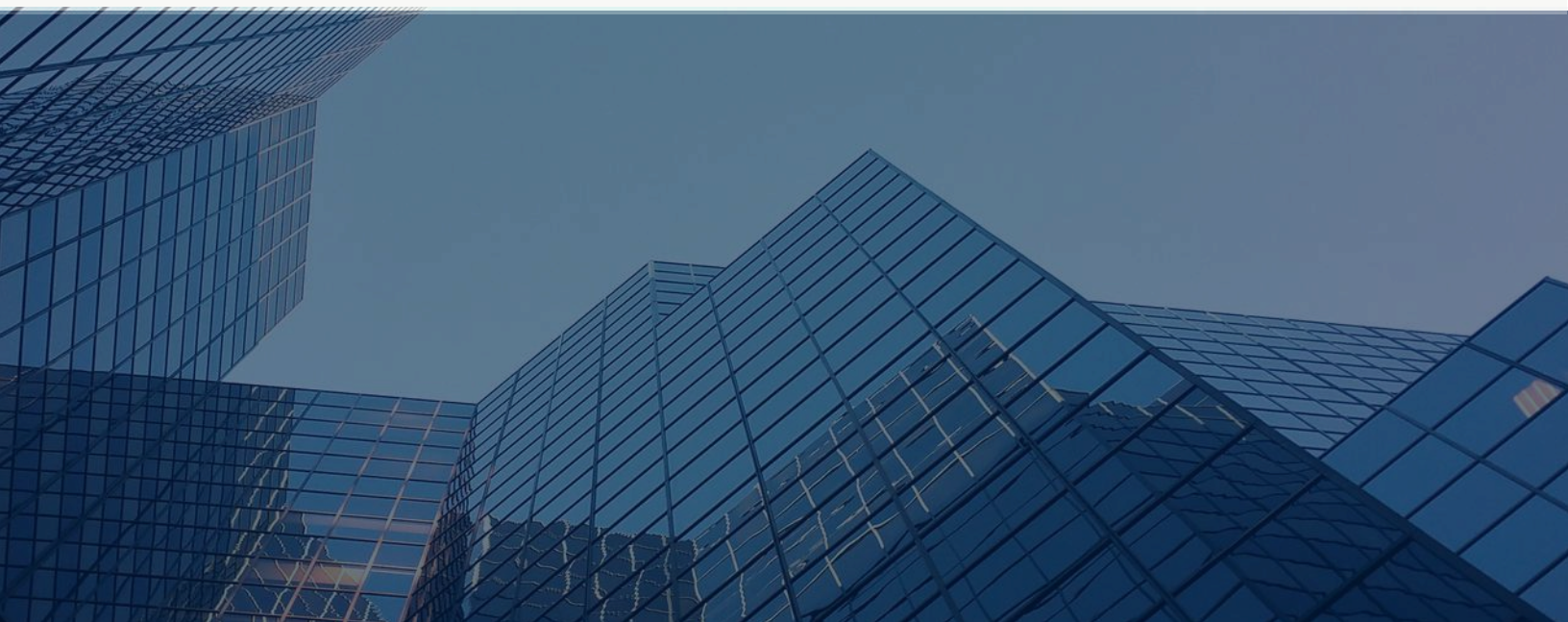
BUILDING RELATIONSHIP WITH POTENTIAL ACQUIRERS

Thought leadership helps new acquirers find you, and also helps show them why your company is the right fit to grow their footprint in your space



BRAND BUILDING WITH PARTNERS & PRESS

The more thought leadership you do, the more visibility potential partners & press get to your work. It also gives you a chance to show them a little about how you run.



Why Thought Leadership Matters

The advent of social media has provided a superior forum for thought leadership by addressing **three key limitations of traditional media**:



ONGOING ENGAGEMENT

Traditional media exposure—whether on TV, podcasts, stages, or in articles—is typically one-time. If a prospect misses it, the opportunity is lost. Social media, however, allows thought leaders to cultivate an ever-expanding audience with whom they can engage daily.



TWO-WAY INTERACTION

Traditional forms of thought leadership are mostly one-way. Social media facilitates two-way interactions, enabling audiences to respond directly, ask questions, disagree, or add their insights, enriching the discussion and deepening relationships.



MEASURABLE IMPACT

Traditional thought leadership lacked detailed data. Social media provides deeper insights, such as the location, title, company, and industry of those interacting with a thought leader's content. Properly utilized, this data is valuable for both the thought leader and their organization.

For executives seeking a professional audience, LinkedIn should be the platform of choice. It fosters more civil discussions than other platforms and attracts employees, investors, sales prospects, partners, and press all in one place.

Why use LinkedIn for thought leadership

In 2024, LinkedIn remains the optimal social media channel for thought leadership. With Twitter/X.com in continued disarray, executives have pulled back from engaging on a platform synonymous with extreme points of view and dysregulation. Facebook is largely viewed as a has-been, and Instagram and TikTok are not geared towards an executive audience. LinkedIn, on the other hand, holds several advantages:

ESTABLISHED NETWORK

Most CEOs and executives already have a network on LinkedIn

PROFESSIONAL AUDIENCE

LinkedIn is tailored for business and industry discussions, with a user base primarily consisting of professionals, executives, and decision-makers.

FOCUSED AUDIENCE

Unlike other social media platforms, LinkedIn's audience is specifically interested in professional and industry-specific content.

ALGORITHM PRIORITIZATION

LinkedIn's algorithm prioritizes professional and educational content, ensuring thought leadership posts reach a relevant audience.

ENHANCED CREDIBILITY

Sharing insights on LinkedIn builds credibility within one's industry, fostering meaningful conversations and networking opportunities.

NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

LinkedIn's professional environment encourages connections and discussions among industry experts, further establishing one's thought leadership presence.



How to use the State of LinkedIn

The key to success on LinkedIn remains consistent: frequently publish high-quality content.

However, the specifics are constantly evolving.

Our annual State of LinkedIn report aims to identify best practices for executives on LinkedIn based on current data. To do this, we analyzed 10,000+ posts from our CEO & executive clients over the last 12 months to show you what strategies work best – and what ideas flop.

While we never encourage writing solely for the algorithm, being aware of these best practices can help thought leaders gain more attention for their ideas and insights.

LinkedIn Post Content & Topic: Original Content vs. Reposts

The first decision an executive must make is whether they're going to post content that's original, or whether they are going to reshare content that's already on another page of the platform.

Our first analysis examines the performance of each type of content on the platform



MAXIMIZE YOUR REACH WITH ORIGINAL CONTENT

Reshares receive only 62% of the views compared to original content, as shown in Chart 1 below. This is because LinkedIn prioritizes and rewards content that is created and posted directly on its platform. While it's still beneficial to occasionally share company content, keep in mind that original posts will significantly outperform shared ones. One workaround given this LinkedIn nuance is to use your company page as idea generation for your personal page, vs. directly resharing content. Here's an example of what that could look like:

- The company page shares a post welcoming a new team member to the team
- The CEO shares a post on their personal page detailing what excited the CEO when he or she met the new team member for the first time, as well as what projects he or she is excited to tackle with the new team member.

This original post is likely to do much better than if an executive just reshares the company post with a short sentence like, "Welcome to the team!" Overall, whatever your strategy, prioritize original content over reshares. That said, not all original content is created equal. The following section will dive into what topics are most common on LinkedIn, and which perform best

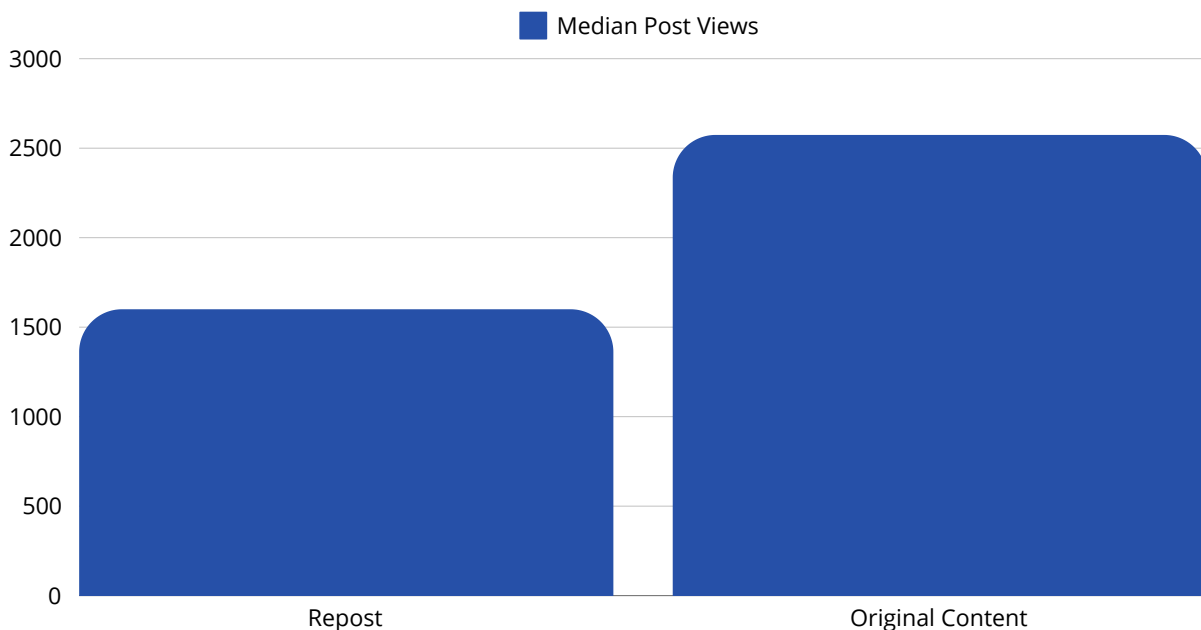


Chart 1

How to Decide on Post Format

When it comes to LinkedIn, understanding the types of content that will engage your audience is crucial. Here are the 8 types of posts you can use:



TEXT

A plain text post, which can be up to 3,000 characters, is perfect for quick insights and updates.



IMAGE

An image—whether it's a photo, graphic, or screenshot—with text as a caption will capture attention and enhance your message.



NATIVE VIDEO

Videos uploaded directly to LinkedIn can increase engagement. Videos can be up to 10 minutes long.



EXTERNAL VIDEO

Links to videos on platforms like YouTube or Vimeo can be useful for directing traffic to other content.



ARTICLE

A link to an article, whether it's hosted on LinkedIn or an external site like *the Wall Street Journal*, to provide in-depth information.



JOB SHARE

Job opportunity postings can help attract talent within your network.



POLL

Online polls can gather opinions and foster interaction among your connections.



DOCUMENT

PDF documents, often used for “carousels” (or slide shows), provide detailed, visually engaging content.

However, it's not just about what you post—it's how you post. The format you choose significantly impacts your content's reach and engagement.

What Formats Are Most Popular

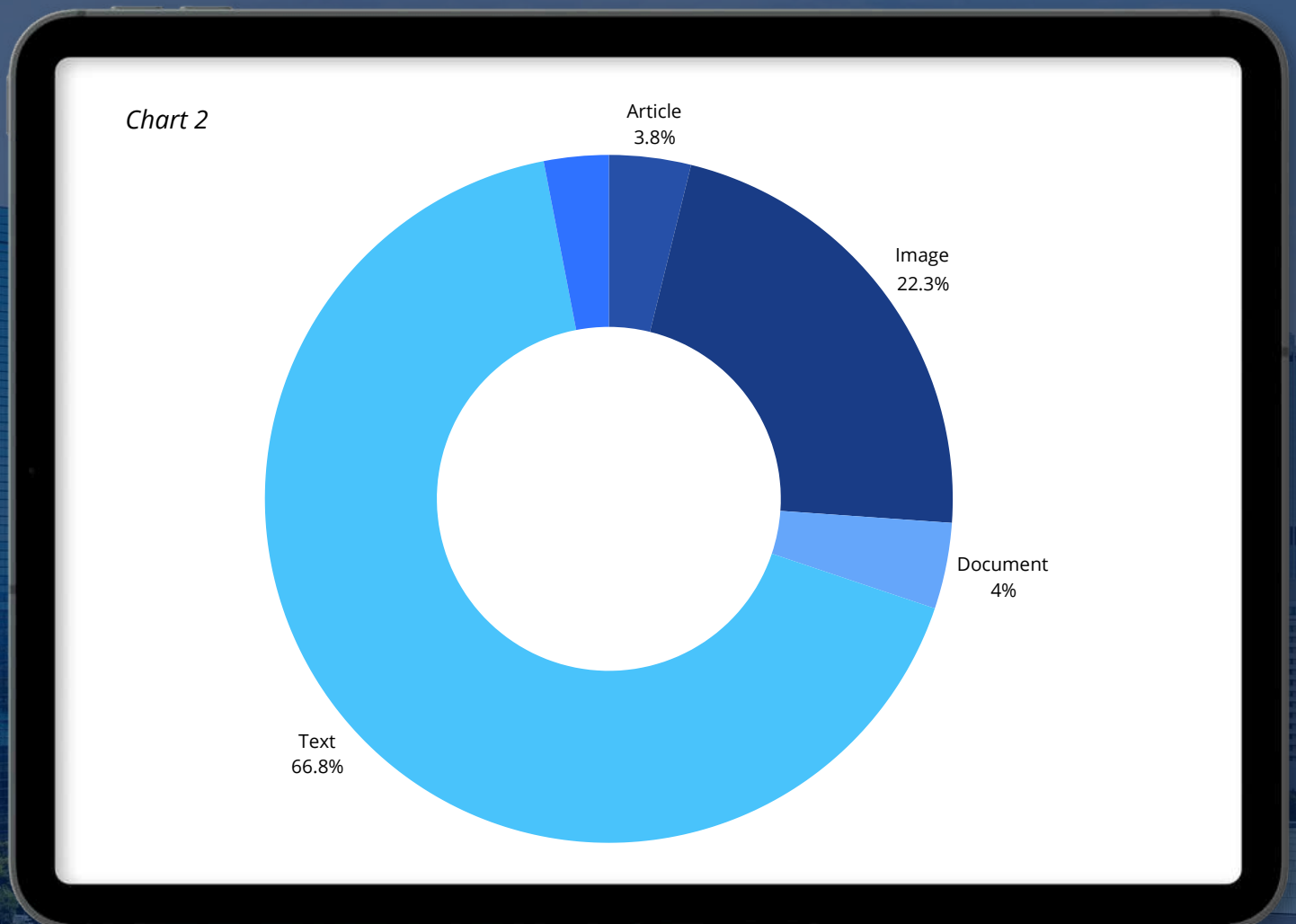
Analysis of 10,000+ posts over the last 12 months reveals that executives primarily lean on text posts, **with text making up ~67% of sampled posts, as shown in Chart 2 below**

The next most popular format was images, which make up 1 in 5 posts in the sample.

The remaining formats each accounted for 5% or less of posts, with external videos & polls being the least used formats

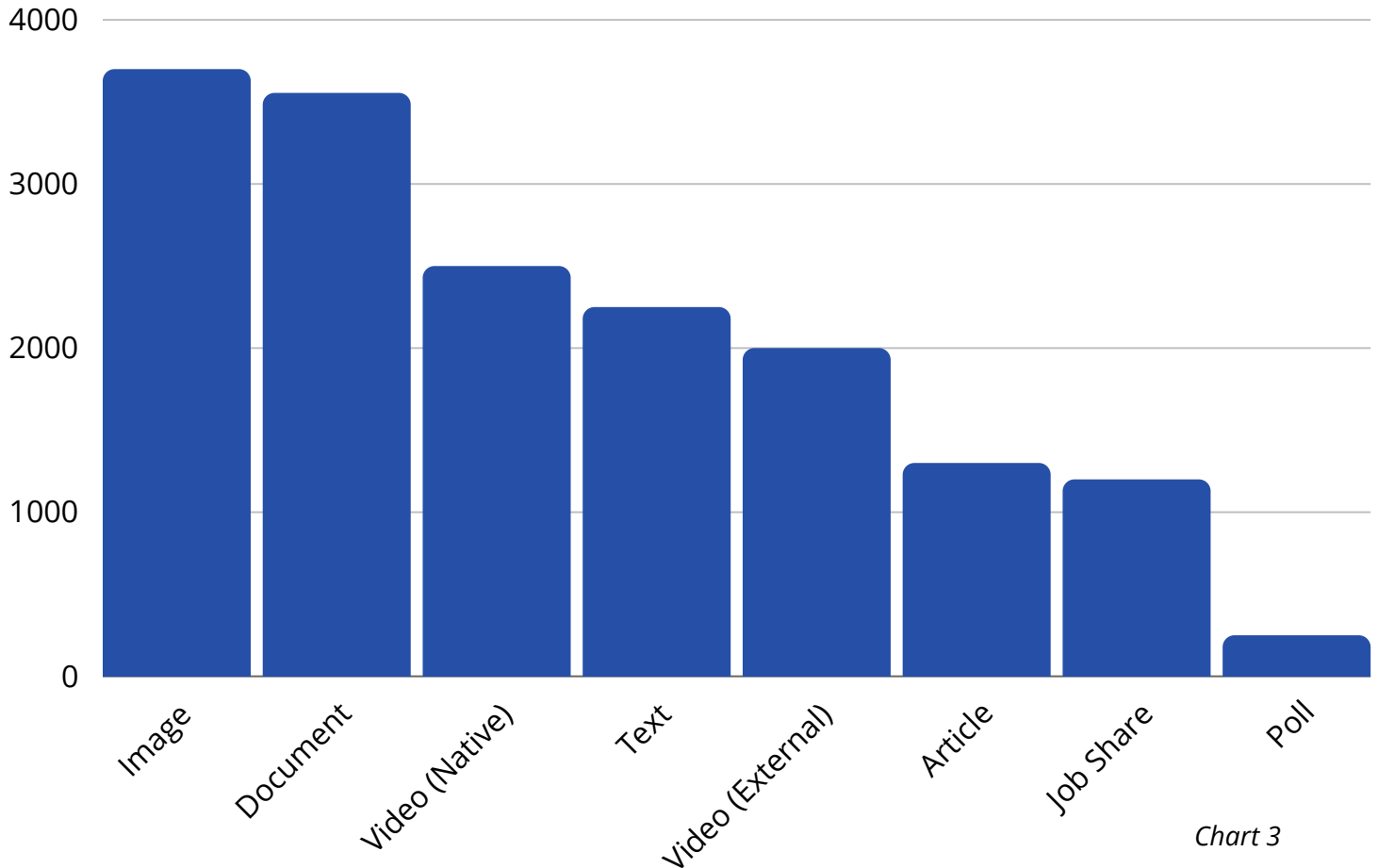
Overall, this reveals that executives are primarily relying on text-based content, though there are some attempts to vary this approach, especially with image-based content.

In the following section, we will examine how performance varies across these formats.



Performance on Posts By Format

To assess how different formats on LinkedIn performed, we first looked at the median post in each category and how many views it received. See the results of this analysis below in Chart 3.



THIS ANALYSIS REVEALED A FEW KEY TRENDS:

- 1 Images - which currently make up 1 in 5 posts for executives - are the top performing format. These posts get 58% more views than text-based posts.** Executives should strive to increase the proportion of images they use.
- 2 While Documents - also known as Carousels - only make up 3.9% of posts, these posts perform almost as well as images, and get 52% more engagement than a text based post.** Executives should experiment more with carousels to break up the text posts in their feed.
- 3 Text posts & video posts perform similarly on the LinkedIn platform.** While it's OK to share videos you already have prepared, we would not recommend investing in custom videos for LinkedIn. Attaching images to text based posts is likely to get you a lot further with lower effort.
- 4 Articles, job shares, and polls are the lowest performing formats on the platform.** We would recommend using these formats sparingly, if at all. It's OK if you occasionally want to share a job on your page, but be aware that this content will get fewer views vs. other content you post.

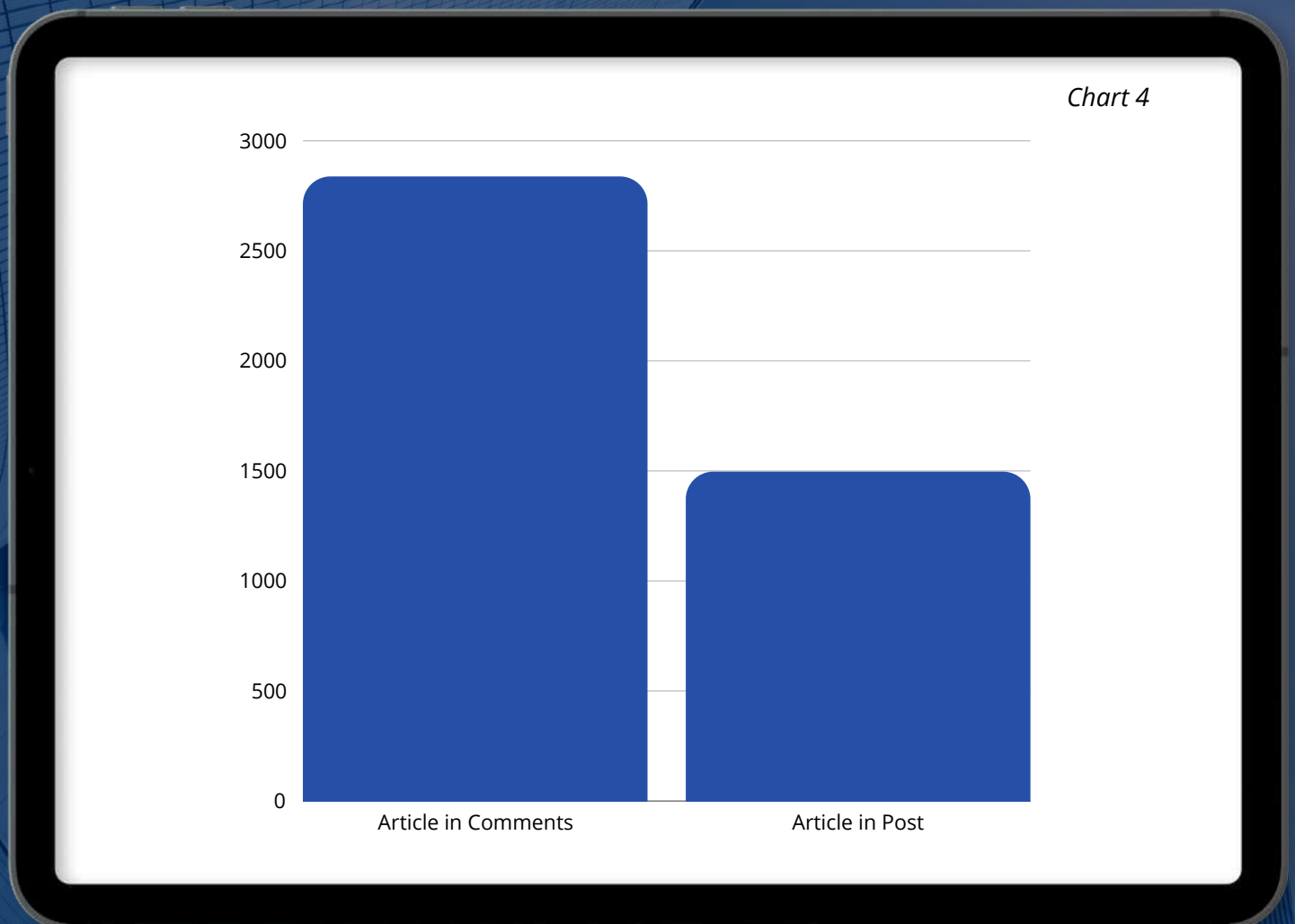
How to Deal With Articles & Other Links

One might look at the results above and think that because article posts get the lowest engagement, it doesn't make sense to post any commentary on research, breaking news, or similar.

However, at Executive Presence, we've found & tested a work-around for our clients:

We recommend putting the link to the article in the comments rather than directly in the post.

This is supported by Chart 4 below, which shows that in our sample, posts with links in the comments got 90% more views vs. posts with articles in the body of the post.



How to Deal With Articles & Other Links

Why is this?

- LinkedIn doesn't publish the details of their algorithm, so it's unknown whether there is an algorithmic penalty for driving traffic off the LinkedIn site, though many LinkedIn experts believe this to be true
- It's also possible that your audience is more likely to engage with the post if they believe it to be original content vs a shared article (engagements include clicking to read beyond the first 3 lines of the post, liking, commenting, and/or sharing the post). When a post garners engagement, it signals to LinkedIn that the content is valuable - and the algorithm boosts the content to more viewers from there. It is possible that there is a delta in engagement between these 2 types of posts that's driving the change in viewership

Either way, our data shows that you're better off putting a link in the comments. Here's how we do that:



Justin M. Nassiri (He/Him) • 1st

CEO @ Executive Presence | LinkedIn Top Voice | We turn leaders into ...

[Visit my website](#)

11mo •

STOP sharing articles on LinkedIn.

LinkedIn rewards original content native to the LinkedIn platform.

Articles drive traffic AWAY from LinkedIn and seem to receive an algorithmic penalty.

If you want to use a link in your post, either:

(a) add it in the comments,

or

(b) edit your post after the initial hour and add it in then. After the first hour, the addition will not adversely impact the post's performance.

Curious to learn more?

Check out our free publication analyzing 1,015 client posts in May. I'll link to it in the comments.

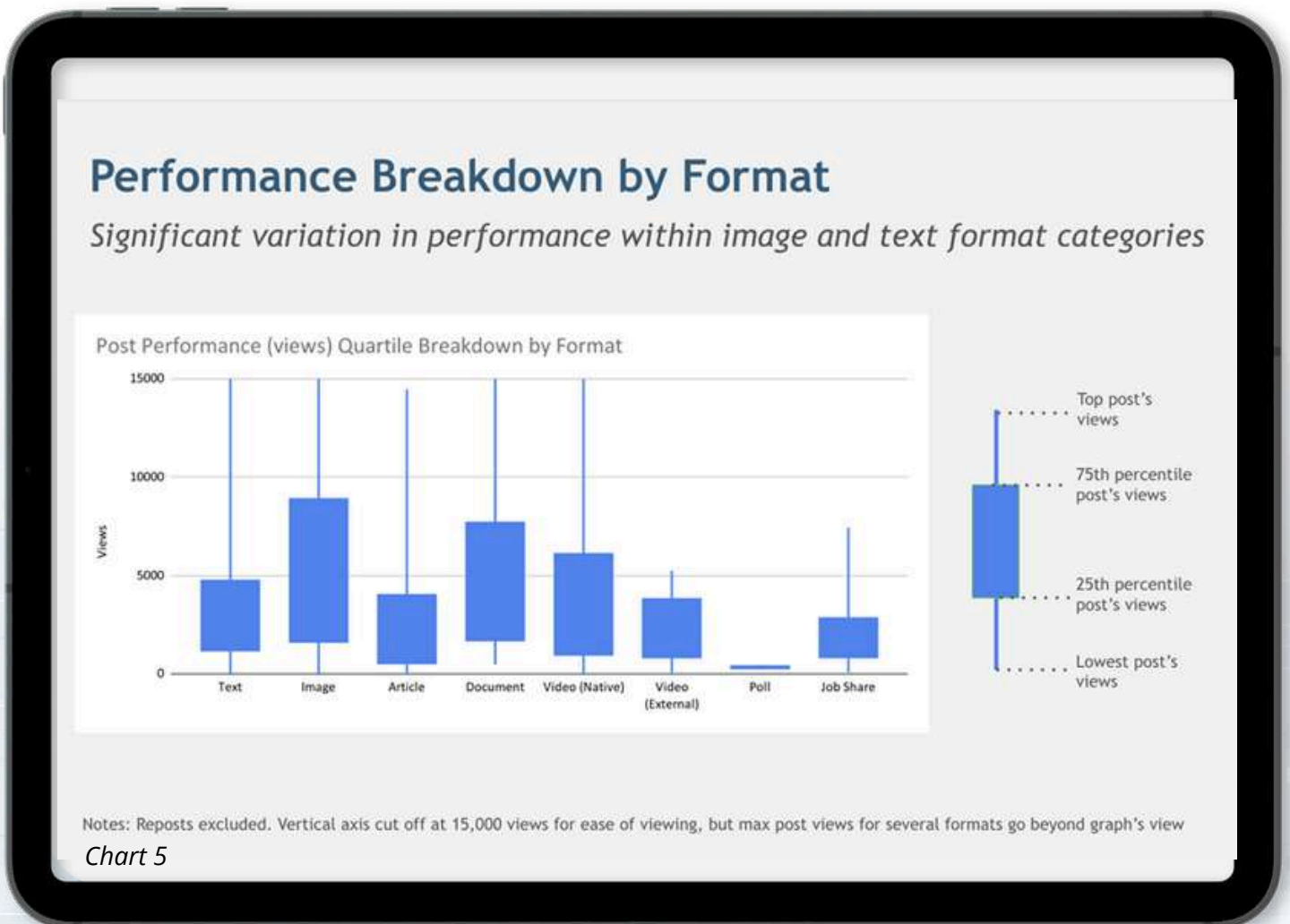
Are you an executive that likes to pre-schedule your content? No worries - many common LinkedIn scheduling tools allow you to automate first comments as well. Executive Presence uses Publer - but there are many other tools on the market that allow you to pre-schedule your content while putting the articles in the comments.

Format Alone Isn't Everything



Our previous section focused on which

However, one important note is that **all formats** show significant variation of post performance, as shown in Chart 5 below.



The upcoming sections will explore the most and least successful posting strategies across sampled posts in each format.

Best Practices for Posting Images

There are 5 typical types of image posts:



PERSONAL PHOTO

Most commonly these are a selfie, a picture of the author with other people, a photo of just other people (such as the authors team or family), or a picture of an object or place.



CHART

Chart posts show data visually through graphs and visual data representations.



GRAPHICS

Infographics and custom visuals that present information clearly and attractively.



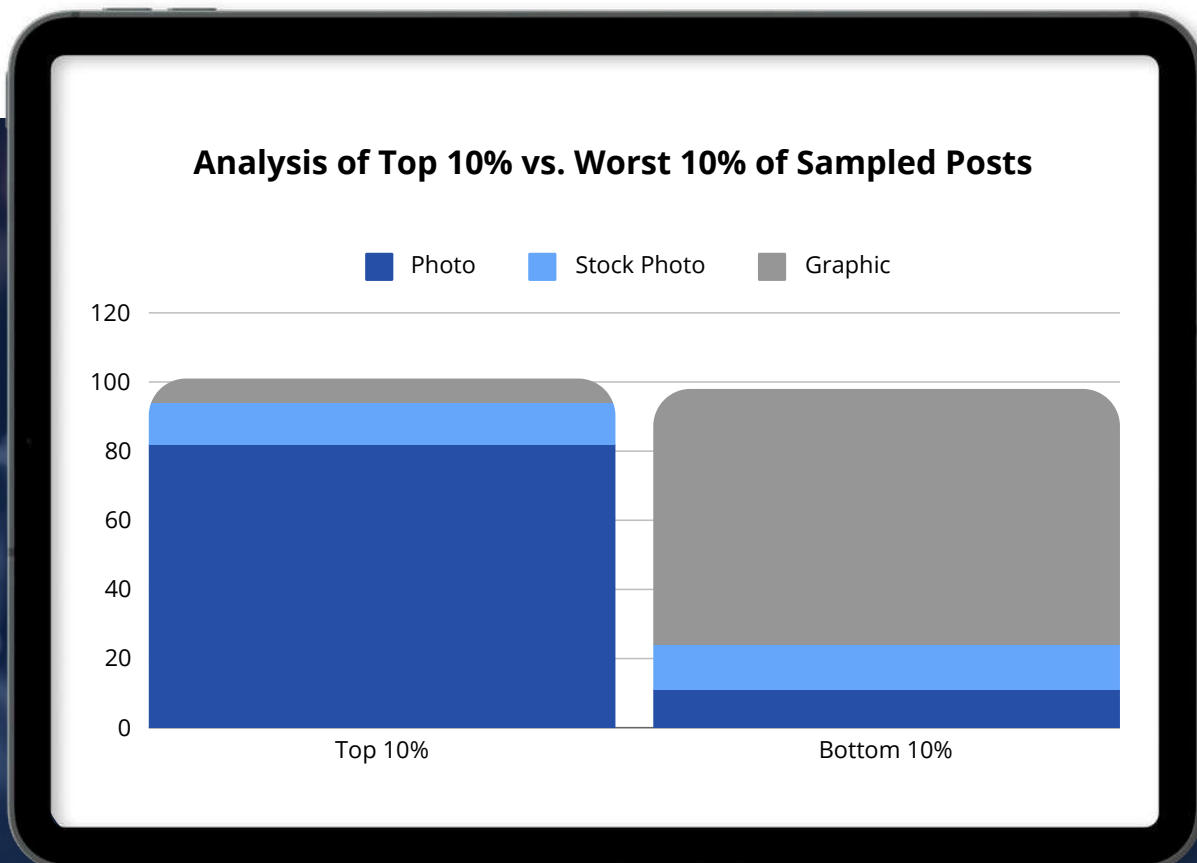
SCREENSHOTS/MEMES

Screenshots highlight key content or feedback, while memes provide a humorous touch.



STOCK PHOTOS

Stock photos are high-quality images sourced from online libraries to illustrate various topics. They are easily distinguishable from a photo taken by the author.



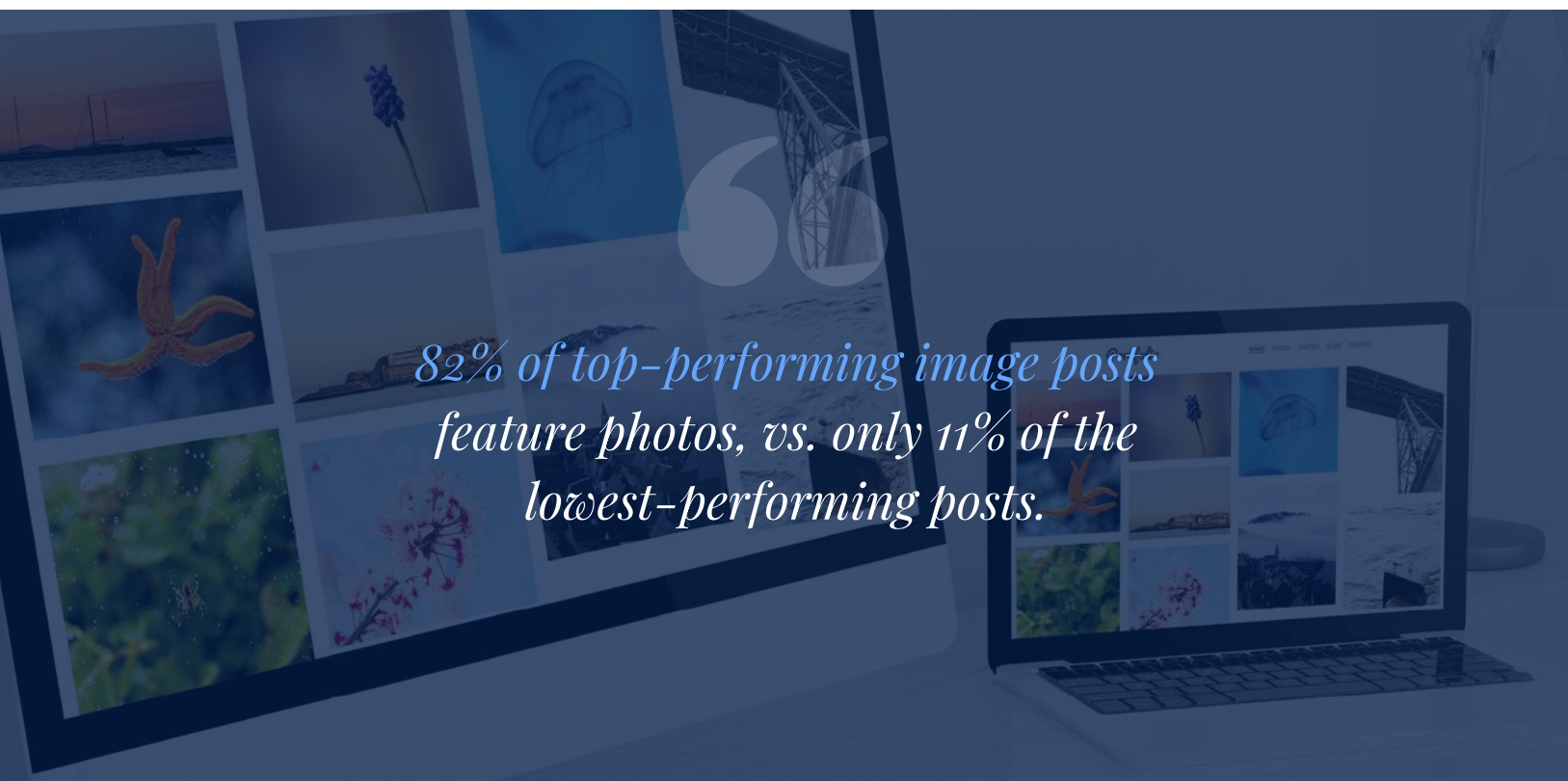
However, not all image types perform equally well. By examining the top and bottom 10% of image posts, as shown in Chart 6 above, we can identify what works best.

Performance By Photo Subject

This analysis revealed a few key trends:

- 1 Personal photos perform better:** 82% of top-performing image posts feature photos, vs. only 11% of the lowest-performing posts. This shows the value of posting relevant, personal photos of yourself, your team, and others in your life as part of your LinkedIn content.
- 2 Graphics frequently flop:** Only 7% of the top-performing image posts features graphics, vs. 74% of the lowest-performing posts. This is often because graphics are perceived as company advertisements. While graphics still may have an occasional purpose, use them sparingly, and opt for photos over Canva where you can.
- 3 Screenshots either fly or die - heavily dependent on the type of screenshot or meme shared.** There is no significant difference in the portion of screenshots in the top-performing image posts (12%) vs. lowest performing image posts (13%). This is likely because of the wide variation of possibilities within this image type that can elicit a wide variety of audience reactions.
- 4 Charts and stock photos are rare across the board:** These formats aren't as typical for executives to use on their personal LinkedIn, though may be seen more frequently on corporate LinkedIn pages.

Overall, to optimize image performance, executives should lean heavily on personal photos, use screenshots where appropriate, and sparingly lean on graphics, charts, and stock photos if the circumstances require it.



Performance By Photo Subject

This analysis revealed a few key trends:

Analysis of Top 10% vs. Worst 10% of Sampled Posts

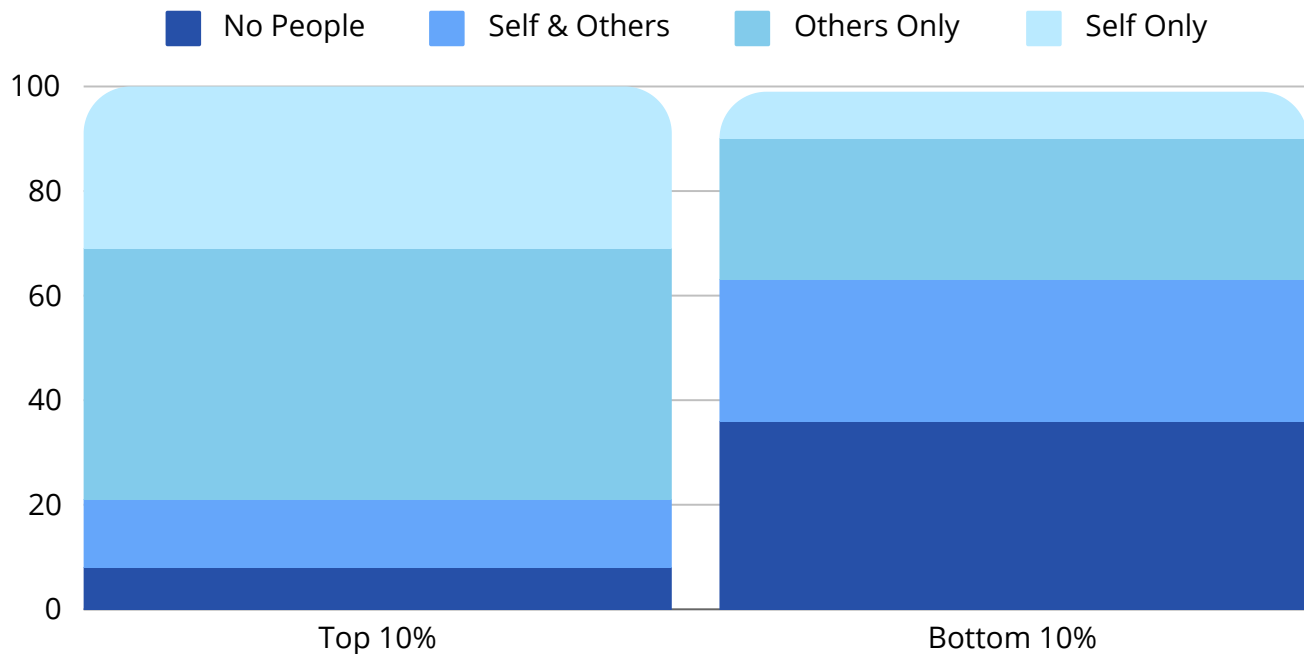


Chart 7

1

Audiences respond better to photos that include the CEO on a CEO's personal page: This is evidenced by the 31% of photos that are of oneself in the top-performing posts, vs only 9% of photos in the lowest performing posts. It's OK if others are in the image - as shown by the fact that 48% of photos in the top-performing posts include the CEO as well as others, vs only 27% of the lowest performing posts.

2

Photos that include others are OK - but include yourself when you can: Photos with others still have the potential to perform well - as shown by the fact that 13% of top performing photo posts have just other people in them. However, many of these photos don't succeed - as shown by the fact that 27% of lowest performing photo posts have other people but not the CEO. At the end of the day, it's OK to use photos of others where it fits the context of the post, but a photo of other people with you included as well will be the best fit, where available!

3

Prioritize photos with people over photos without. Photos without no people included are much less likely to perform well, as shown by the fact that only 8% of the top performing photo posts have no people vs. 36% of the lowest performing posts. There are 4x as many posts with no people in the lowest performing sample!

Overall, analysis of photo subjects shows that audience engagement is the best when photos show the executive themselves. It's great to include others in the images as well (and if you only have a photo of others that's OK) - but where you can, using a photo of the executive is likely to boost performance.

What Photos Are Better: Nostalgic Views or Current Looks?

The last factor we examined across image posts was what timeframe a photo came from - was it sharing a recent update or snapshot into the CEO's life, or was it about their childhood or early career journey? This analysis is shown in Chart 8 below:

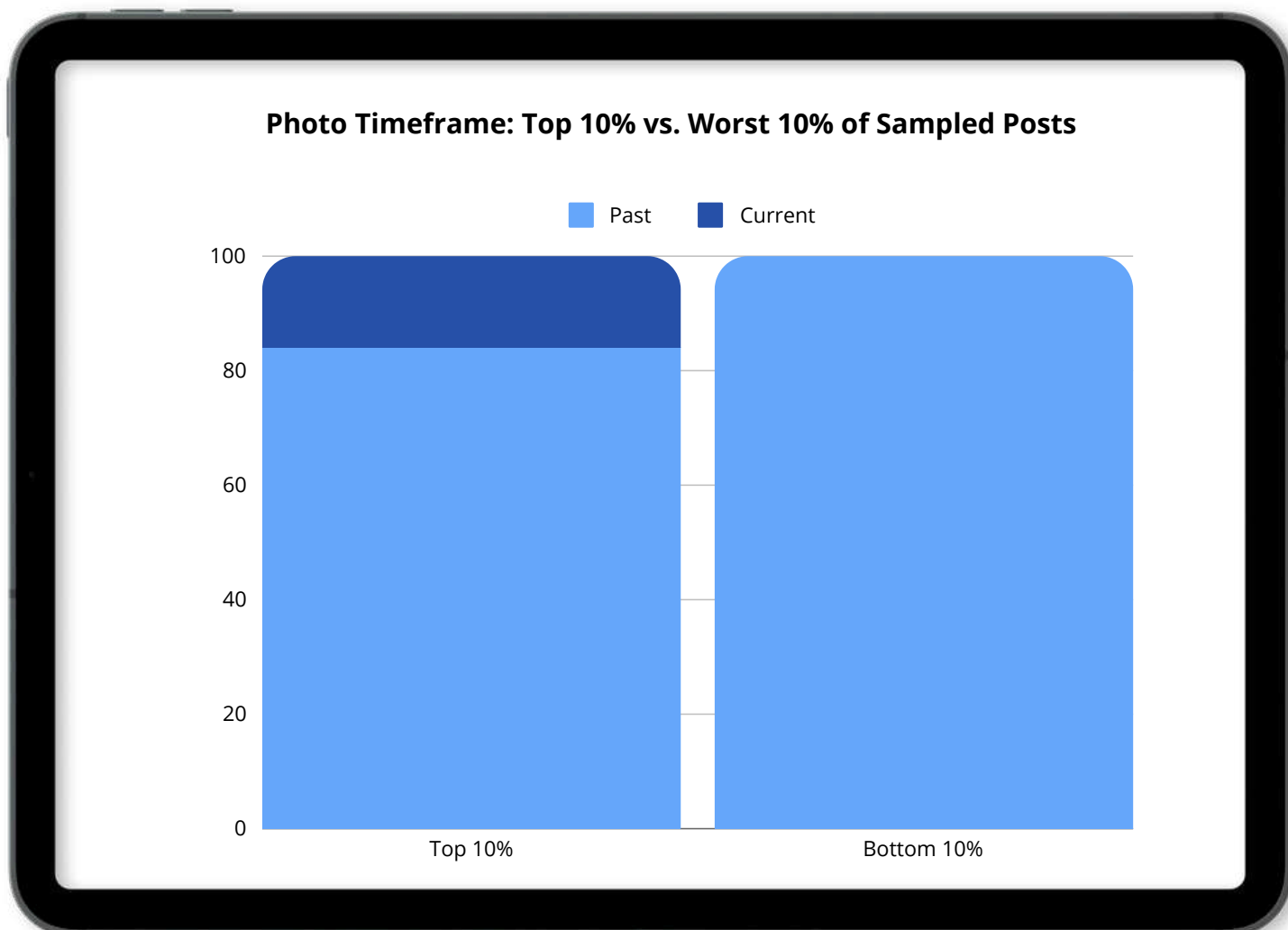


Chart 9

A few learnings from this analysis:

- 1 Audiences love hearing about an executive's early life:** There were NO images from the past in the lowest performing posts, vs 16% of images in the top-performing posts
- 2 Photos from the current day can still do well:** 84% of top-performing photos were from the current day, showing that audiences do engage well with current takes as well.

Overall this analysis highlights the opportunity for executives to optimize engagement by sharing stories - and photos - from all parts of their life. By mixing current pictures with snapshots of the past, CEO's can help keep their audience consistently engaged

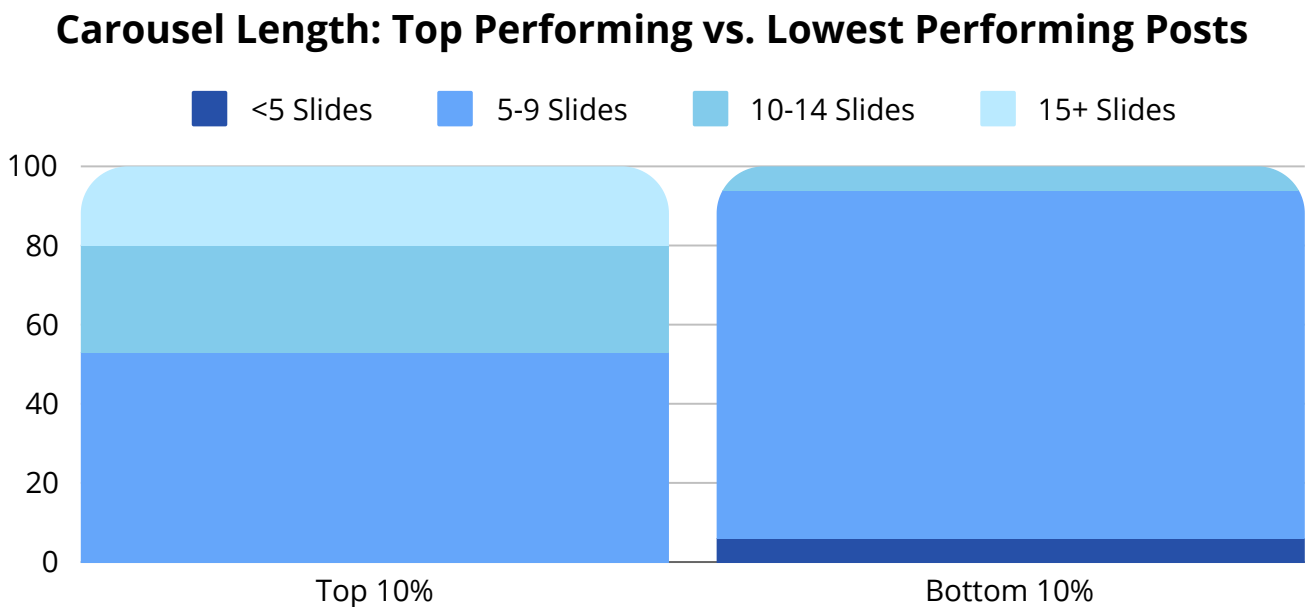
Best Practices for Posting Carousels

Carousels, introduced in July 2022, enable users to swipe through slides and have proven highly effective, averaging 3,622 views. Despite initial predictions of declining interest, carousels remain the second most popular content type. While creating a carousel is more time-consuming than posting a single image, for topics that require a more in-depth or visual presentation, carousels are an excellent option.

To assist with effective carousel creation, the following sections analyze what factors define carousel performance and offer recommendations for how to create the most effective carousel content.

PERFORMANCE BY CAROUSEL LENGTH

The first attribute of carousel performance we examined was the # of slides in the carousel. This analysis is shown in Chart 10 below:



These results reveal a few points:

Chart 10

- 1 Almost every carousel is 5+ slides:** Every post in the top 10% was 5+ slides, and even in the bottom 10%, only 6% of carousels were shorter than 5 slides. This highlights that there is typically a minimum amount of information required to use the carousel format
- 2 Longer carousels tend to do better:** This is evidenced by the fact that 20% of top performing carousels were 15+ slides, vs 0% of the lowest performing posts. Additionally, 27% of the top performing posts were 10-14 slides, vs only 6% of the lowest performing posts
- 3 Mid-length carousels can still do well:** Even though 5-9 slides carousels make up 88% of the lowest performing post sample, they also make up just over half of the top performing post sample. This indicates that using a 5-9 slide carousel is still a good practice, and the success of these posts likely depends on other factors like post subject.

Best Practices for Posting Carousels

4

Focus on Trends: Carousels that highlight trends (e.g., industry trends, common founder traits) perform well and are less common among low-performing posts.

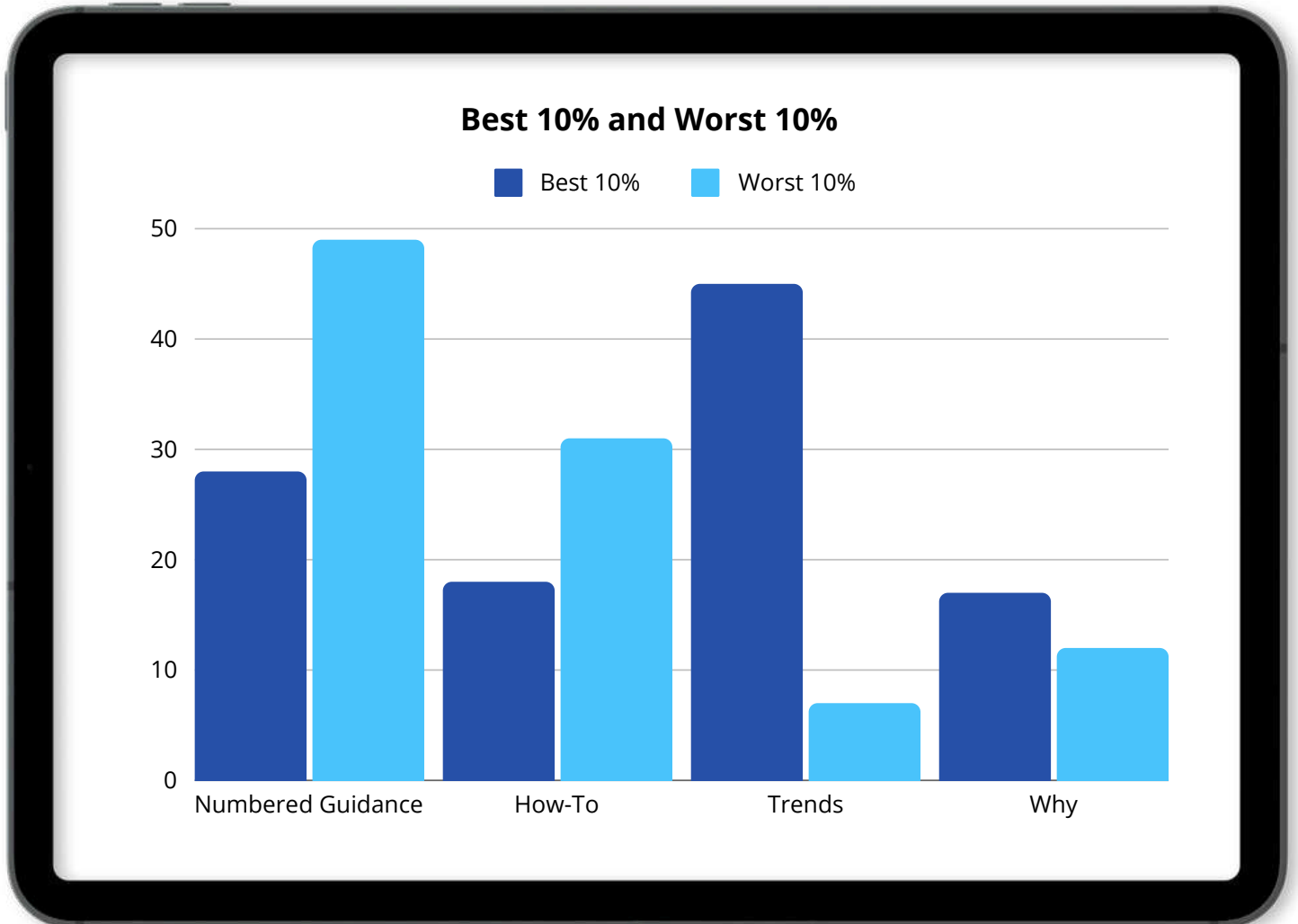
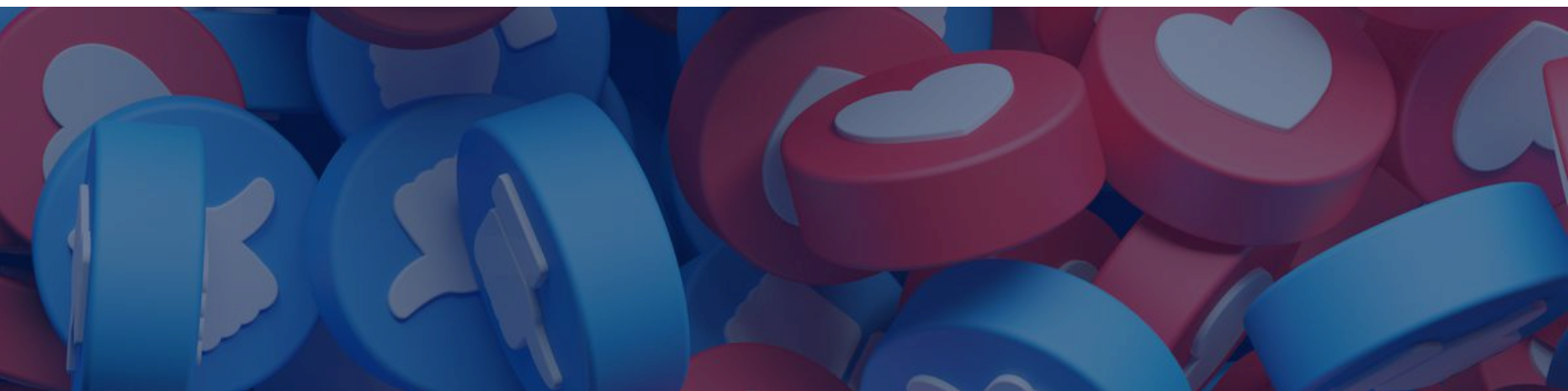


Chart 11

WORST PRACTICES FOR CAROUSELS

Avoid "How To" Content: Carousels focused on "how to" topics (e.g., company processes, financial advice) are more common among the worst-performing posts. Aim for engaging, insightful content instead.

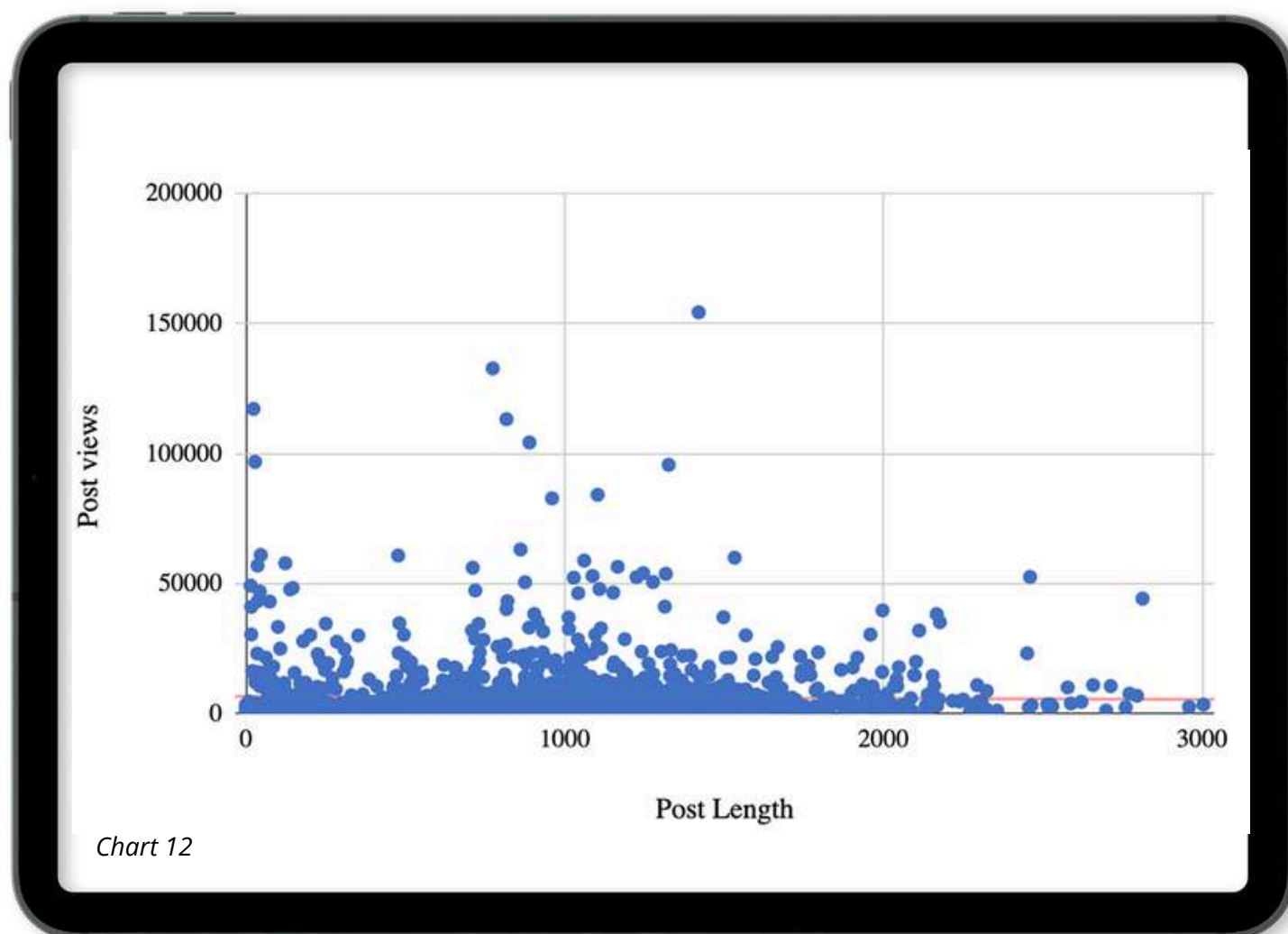
By understanding these strategies and best practices, you can create LinkedIn content that resonates with your audience, maximizes views, and drives engagement.



How Long Your Writing Should Be



In addition to looking at what topics and formats perform the best, we also analyzed the length of each post and how that correlated to post performance, as visualized in Chart 12 below.



This analysis shows that **POST LENGTH is NOT THE MOST IMPORTANT DETERMINANT OF PERFORMANCE.**

A post of any length within reason can go viral, or it can flop, but it tends to be related more the content and subject of the post vs. purely the post's length.

How Long Your Writing Should Be

In addition to looking at what topics and formats perform the best, we also analyzed the length of each post and how that correlated to post performance, as visualized in Chart 13 below.

1

There is a slightly positive correlation based on length, meaning that while length is not the most important determinant of performance, longer posts have a slightly better chance of going viral

2

Posts <400 characters get >5000 views much less frequently than longer posts. This is likely because posts need a minimum level of “substance” before they have the potential to go truly viral (see the black box in Chart 12 for reference). 400 characters is roughly 2-5 sentences depending on length. Keep in mind you likely have to pass this mark before you have a true chance of a post getting >5000 views.

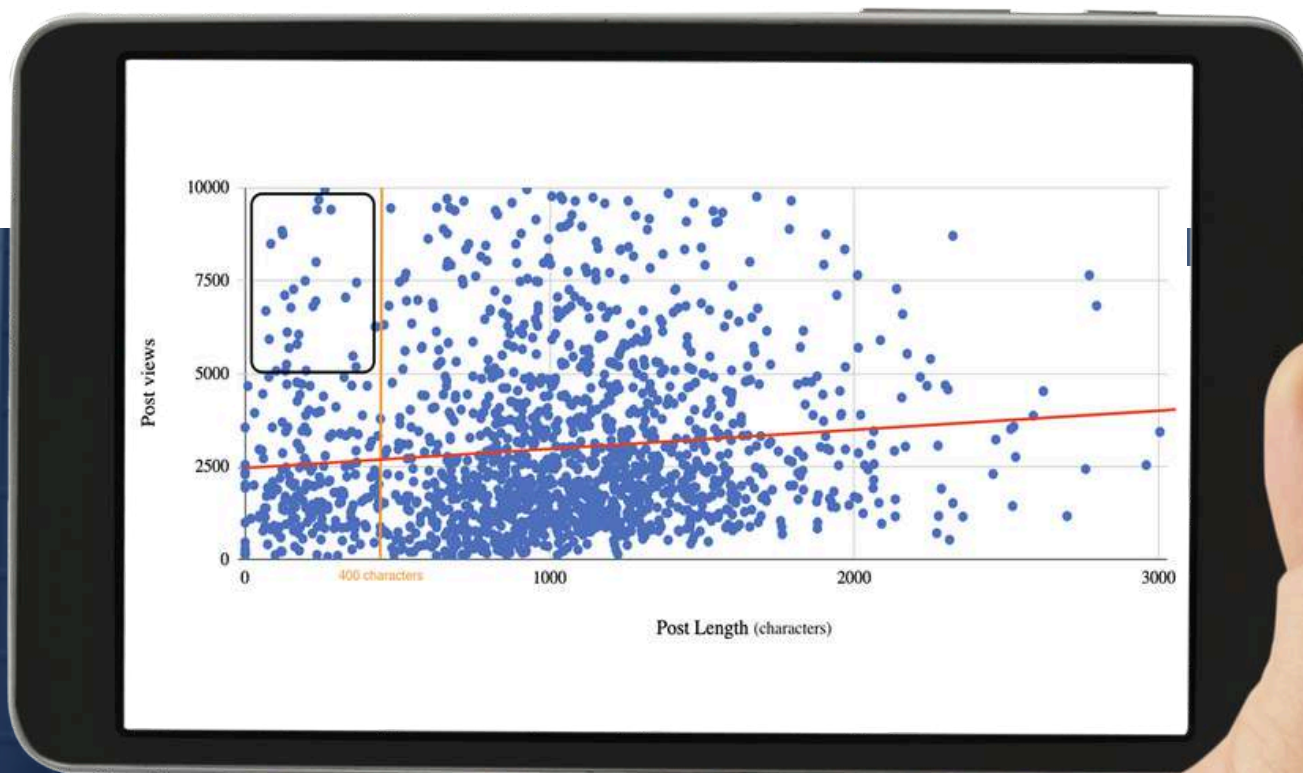


Chart 13

Overall, length is not the most important attribute, and you should write posts to the correct length for the information you're sharing rather than to meet an arbitrary goal. That said, do ensure your content has enough substance and goes beyond the 400 character mark to ensure it has the best shot at good engagement.

When to Post: Performance of Weekday Posting

Often, LinkedIn experts make recommendations on how to “hack the system” by posting on specific days and avoiding others.

However, at the aggregate level, we do not see significant variation in post performance by weekday, as shown in Chart 14.

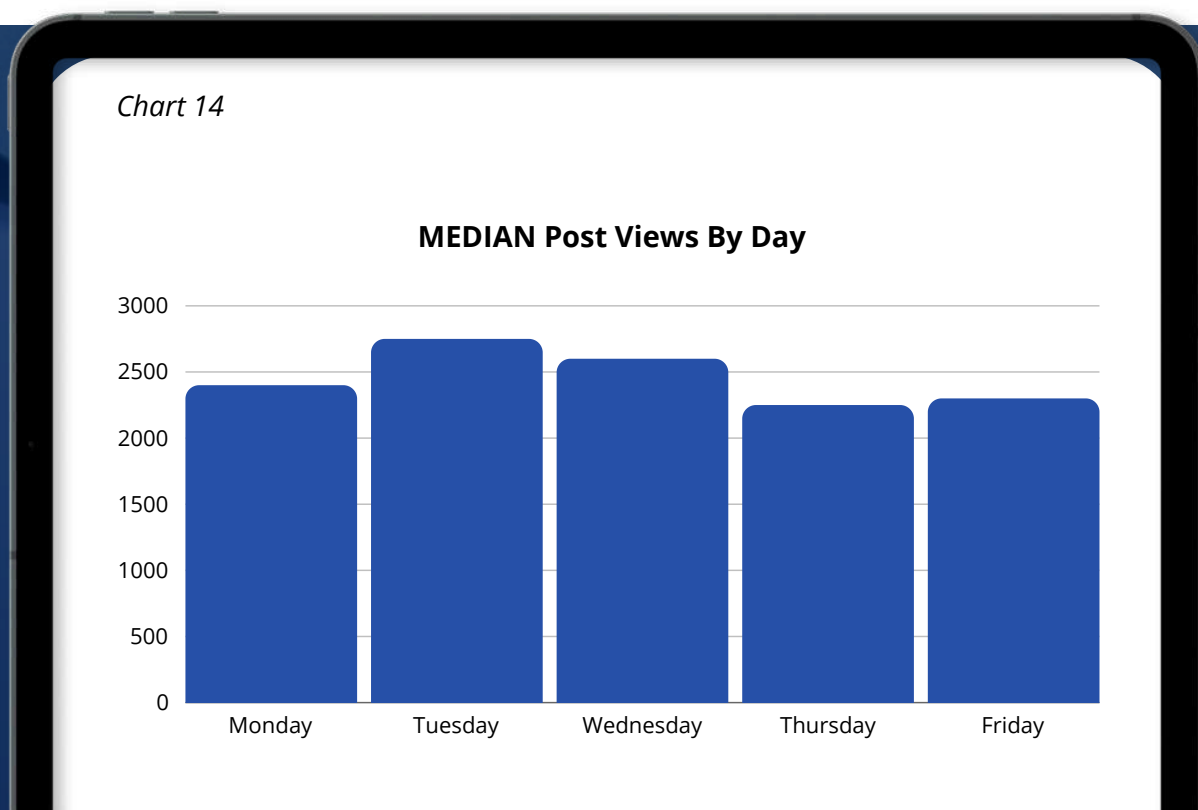
While there are small variations, ultimately a solidly written post will perform well regardless of the weekday on which it's posted.

One thing to note is that while this is true at the aggregate level, we have seen some variation of performance by weekday at the individual executive level based on the characteristics of the executive's audience and industry.

Therefore, our recommendation?

- 1 Start by posting every weekday, or varying up the day you post if you're not posting daily**
- 2 After gathering sufficient data, take a look at how your individual posts perform**

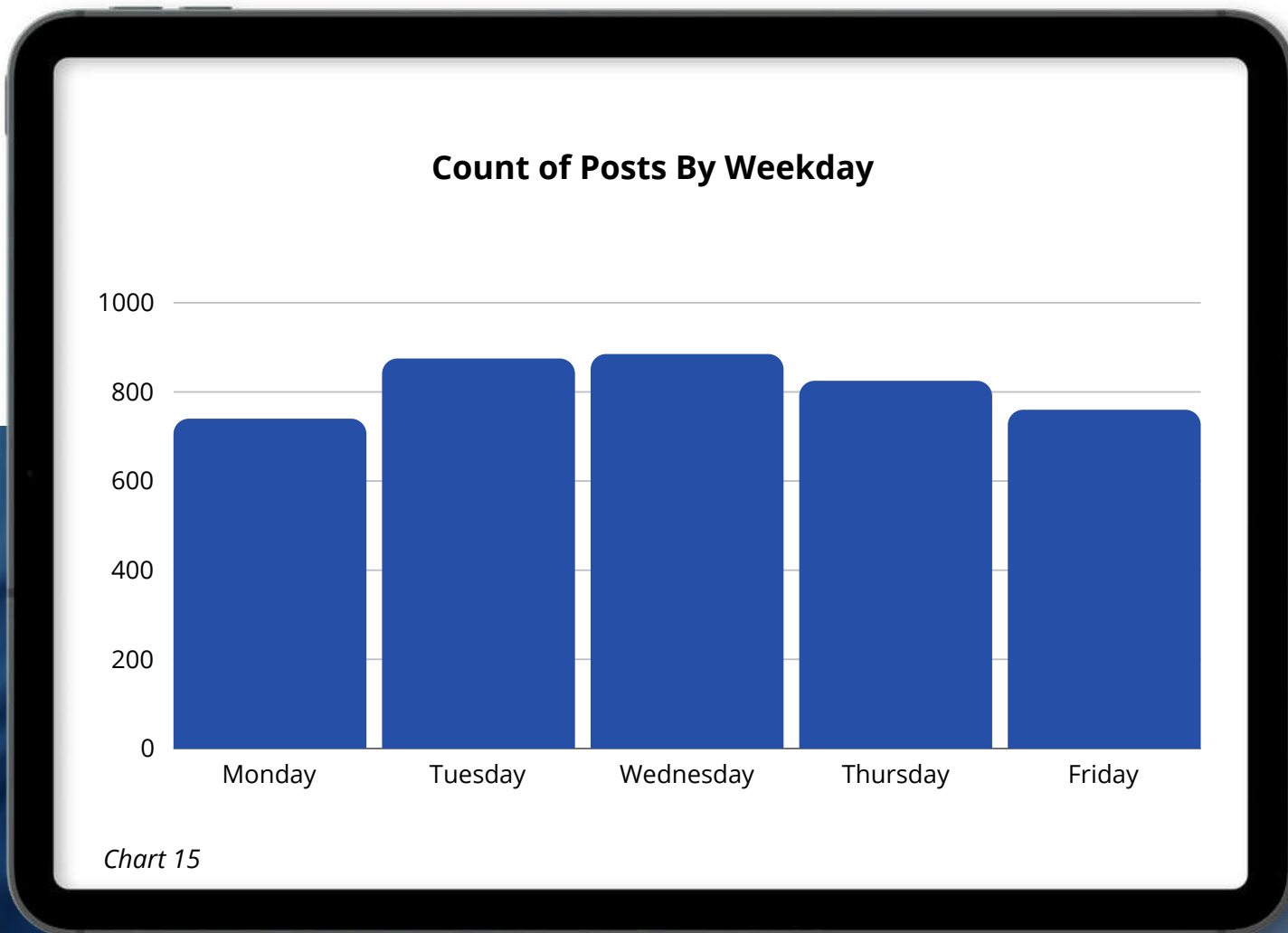
This is exactly what EP does for each of our clients as a part of the quarterly strategic reviews we conduct.



When to Post: Frequency of Posts by Weekday

In addition to weekday performance, we also wanted to examine whether there was a notable difference in posting frequency on certain days of the week.

This analysis is shown in Chart 15 below.



While all days have a number of executives posting, Monday & Friday have slightly fewer posts, likely due to their proximity to the weekend.

This data would suggest that keeping Monday & Friday as a part of your overall posting schedule might help you break through the noise on LinkedIn.

Remember, though - your content has to be high quality for it to perform well on any day of the week.

When to Post: How to Handle the Weekends

The majority of our executives post sparingly on the weekends, if at all.

The chart below shows the breakdown of executives in our sample. Roughly 9 of 10 executives skip posting on the weekends, and only 1 in 10 executives has posted more than 5 times on a weekend in the last year.

The majority of our executives post sparingly on the weekends, if at all.

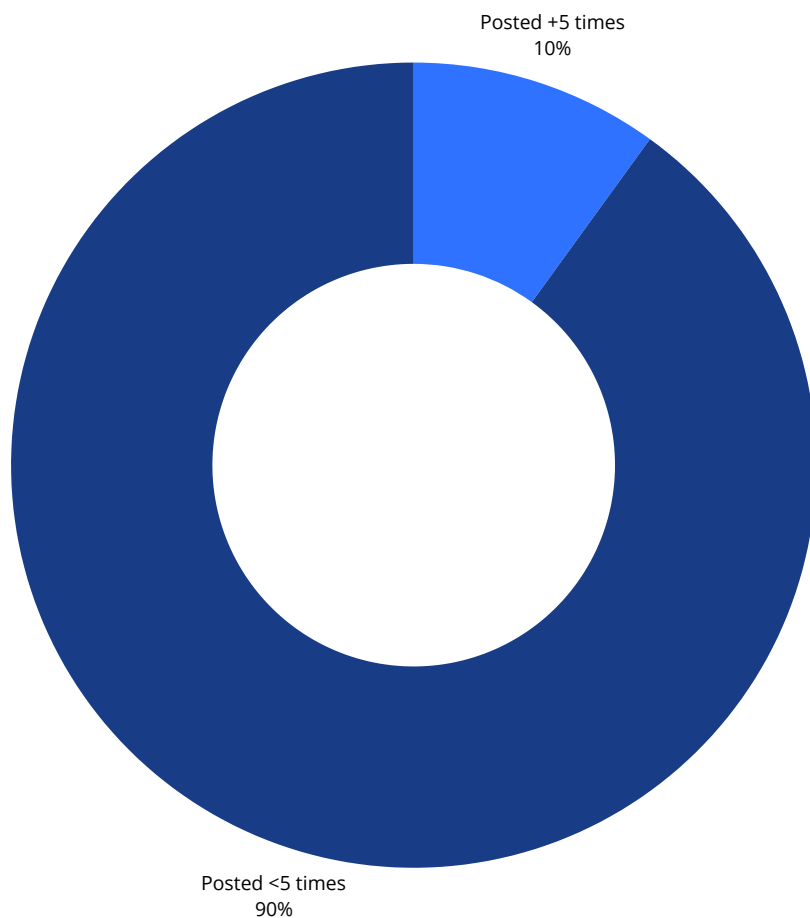


Chart 16

Only 1 in 10 executives has posted more than 5 times on a weekend in the last year.

When to Post: How to Handle the Weekends

That said, for executives that do post on the weekends, we wanted to examine how those days compare to other days of the week.

You can see the breakdown of this analysis in Chart 17 below.

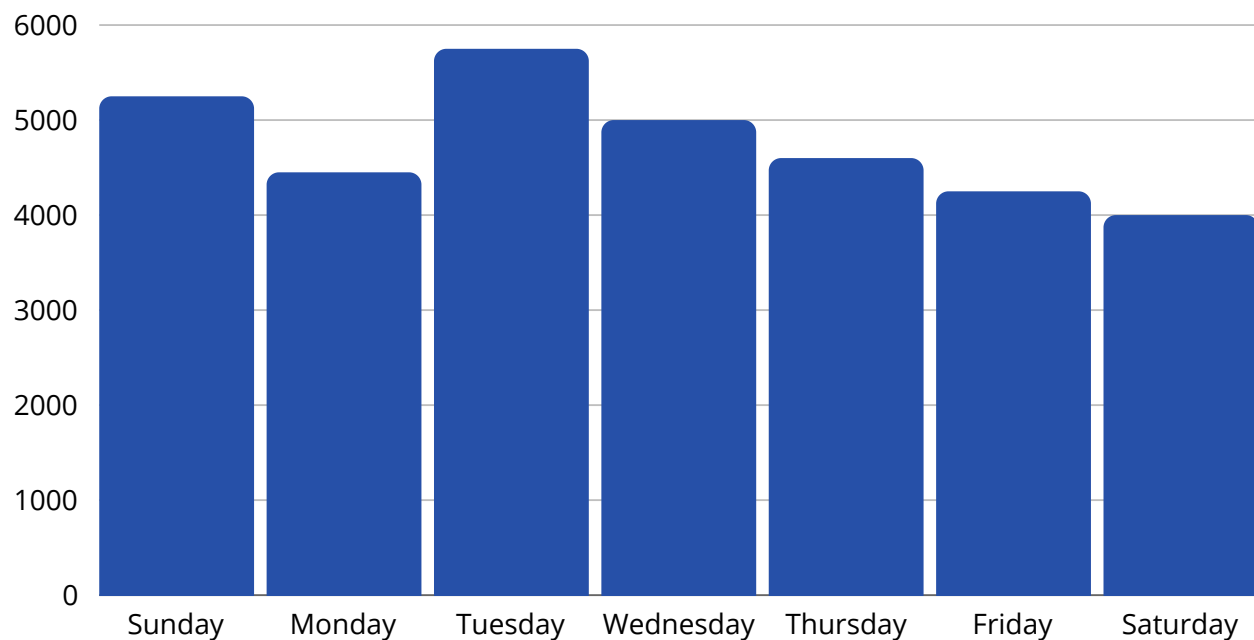



Chart 17

When to Post: How to Handle the Weekends



Saturday is the lowest performing day of the week, which is likely because a significant portion of the professional audience is offline.

Though it's important to note that this study has a lower sample size than the other analyses we've provided, our data shows that posting on weekends still gets a significant level of engagement.

Saturday is the lowest performing day of the week, which is likely because a significant portion of the professional audience is offline.

Sunday, however, performs just as well as the average weekday. While we can't definitively attribute the causation of this trend, hypotheses include:

1

Many people - especially those at the executive level, who are often the target audience for our clients - do some level of work on the weekend to prepare for Monday in the office

2

Posts get engagement for several days before falling off the feed - which means that many Sunday posts show up on the LinkedIn newsfeed when audiences tune in Monday morning.

Overall, this analysis would suggest that it may be worth testing a few posts on the weekend if you can swing it, especially because only 10% of executives are competing for space on the newsfeed with original content also posted that day.

About



EXECUTIVE PRESENCE

We specialize in transforming senior executives into influential voices through our unique LinkedIn strategy and content creation services. Since January 2022, we have successfully assisted over 200 CEOs and executives in becoming recognized thought leaders on LinkedIn.

Our team is composed of former consultants from prestigious firms such as McKinsey, Bain, BCG, and Accenture. These experts craft your narrative, ensuring the creation of high-impact posts that grow and engage your network.

OUR SERVICES INCLUDE:

- **Content Strategy:** We guide you on what to post, how often, and in what format to maximize impact.
- **Content Creation:** Through a monthly interview, we extract insights in your unique voice and convert them into high-performing LinkedIn posts.
- **Data Analysis:** We analyze content trends to understand what works best and for whom, allowing us to optimize your posts continually.

Our process attracts more attention to your work, drawing in clients, partners, and top talent. Our evidence-based approach ensures constant optimization for better results.

If raising your executive voice and expanding your business influence is a priority, reach out today for a free consultation. Let us help you amplify your impact and achieve your business goals.