willow

SECOND EDITION · 2026

Six pillars to win at social media.

The six habits that turn posting into results — and a year of our own data showing which of them actually move the numbers.
Written for people without a marketing department.

LUDWIG DUMONT & KJELL VANDEVYVERE

WILLOW.CO

What's inside.

NEW IN THIS EDITION

Our own research across 488 LinkedIn company pages and 43,738 posts. Collaborative posts. What AI is and isn't good for. Social search. Short-form video. And what the EU's new rules mean for you.

The six pillars won't make you go viral. They will help you reach your goals.

Let's be clear before we start: this e-book won't work a miracle if you're looking for quick hacks. It won't make you go viral. It isn't a shot of caffeine.

But it is a formula. It brings structure. It shifts your focus from short-term gains to long-term value. Social media is here to stay for another twenty-odd years, and this will make sure the time and effort you put in actually grows your business.

Whether you're a founder, lawyer, accountant, consultant, marketer or coach, you're probably here because of the same three problems every professional services business runs into.

Some tactics will look obvious but prove hard to do, because you're short on inspiration or you can't get from to-do list to published. Others will be new. We've structured all of it into six pillars — part research, part lessons we learned the hard way. Page 06 summarises the lot if you'd rather skip ahead.

YOU'RE HERE BECAUSE

- You run out of ideas and don't know what to post.
- You've posted for a while and seen nothing back.
- You know what to do. You just can't deliver it.

WHAT CONSISTENCY ACTUALLY BUYS YOU

Reputation
Buyers look you up before they call. Turning up every week for a year is what separates a credible firm from a dormant one.

Leads
Rarely from posts that ask for work. They come from being remembered at the moment someone needs you — and from surfacing in search months later.

Hiring
Candidates read your team's feeds long before your careers page, and decide from those whether you look worth joining.

Retention
Colleagues who build a reputation under your name are slower to leave and rebuild it somewhere else.

Why listen to us?

We built Willow around one problem we understood in some detail: how hard expertise-driven businesses find it to reach their customers, their future hires and everyone else who matters to them.

Digital marketing was already complicated for these businesses. Lawyers, accountants and consultants were famously reluctant to post a status update at all.

Now social media has overtaken most traditional marketing channels, and buyers simply don't trust a business they can't find online. Increasingly they don't find you through Google either — they search inside LinkedIn, TikTok and, more and more, through an AI assistant.

For years now we've worked exclusively with professional service providers, making their social presence simple to understand and easy to be good at. Sustainably, not in bursts.

This e-book lays out the framework we use with every client. Take what's useful, and get in touch if you'd like to talk it through.

WILLOW IN ONE LINE

Social media planning software, a human coach, and AI that helps you make the content — for businesses without a marketing department.

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The six hold each other up.

Get them going together and each one makes the next five easier.

Start with one. Add the next when it sticks.

PAGE 06

The six pillars in one page.

1

Consistency

Post at least once a week, every week. Twice if you can hold the rhythm. Plan a month ahead, one platform at a time.

2

Value

Give before you ask. Share the knowledge you'd normally keep behind a paywall — it's how people decide you're the expert.

3

Content mix

Vary what you post so people stay interested. Original, curated, social. Short video is the default format now.

4

Employees

Your colleagues' networks dwarf your page. Co-author posts with them, and get them commenting in the first hour.

5

Engage

Comments are the currency. Our own data is blunt about it: one or two comments beat a pile of likes.

6

Personality

Logos don't sell services, people do. Write how you speak and let your face be part of the brand.

Why all six? Because they compound. Every week you show up makes the next post easier to write, every useful post gives someone a reason to follow, and every colleague who joins in doubles who sees it. You don't have to start all six on Monday — the plan on page 44 spreads them across a quarter.

01

The content creation habit.

Showing up beats showing off. We have the numbers to prove it.

Consistency

PILLAR 01 / 06

Almost nobody is consistent. That's your opening.

Building an audience comes down to consistency, and tangled up with it, volume. When we looked at 488 LinkedIn company pages, 221 of them — very nearly half — managed to publish in fewer than a quarter of the weeks in a year. So simply turning up every week already puts you ahead of most of your market, and it costs you nothing but the habit.

So what has to be consistent? Two things.

Rhythm. Posting every week at a steady rate. Never leaving a gap. It's how you get remembered, and — as the next page shows — how the algorithm decides you're worth distributing.

Style. The language you use, the visuals, the tone of voice. Vaguer and harder to grasp. We'll come back to it at the end of this pillar.

A content calendar gets you both. It lets you plan ahead, batch your work and park good ideas for later. List the moments coming up: a launch, a new hire, the tax deadline your clients dread. Plot them. Then add extra slots for pure value posts. That's the difference between posting weekly and scrolling for an inspirational quote at 11pm.

18%

of company pages manage to post once a week, every week. Do that and you're in the top fifth.

10×

the yearly impressions of a page that posts sporadically. Same content, better rhythm.

18mo

Give it eighteen months before you judge the results. At six months you're still building the habit; at twelve it's only starting to compound.

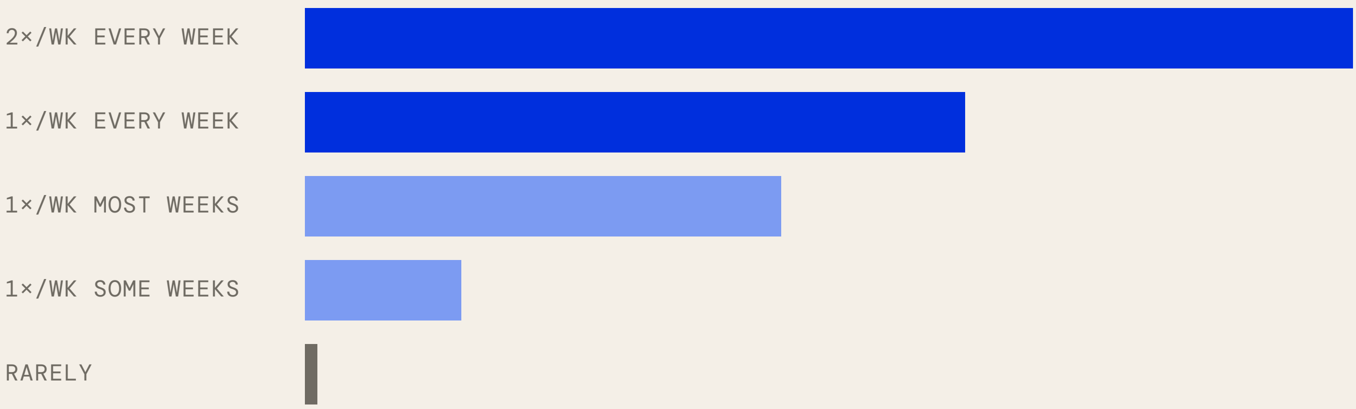
We tracked 488 company pages for a year.

We tracked every LinkedIn company page posting through our platform from March 2025 to February 2026: 488 pages, 43,738 posts. Then we grouped them by one number — the share of weeks in which they published at least one post. All figures are medians, so a handful of outliers can't flatter them.

POSTING PATTERN	PAGES	IMPR./POST	ENG./POST	IMPR./YEAR	FOLLOWERS
2× / week, every week	30	237	3.7	49,385	+330
1× / week, every week	58	250	8.0	31,135	+202
1× / week, most weeks	78	233	5.9	22,435	+106
1× / week, some weeks	101	106	2.7	7,377	+55
Rarely (under 25% of weeks)	221	23	0.4	588	+6

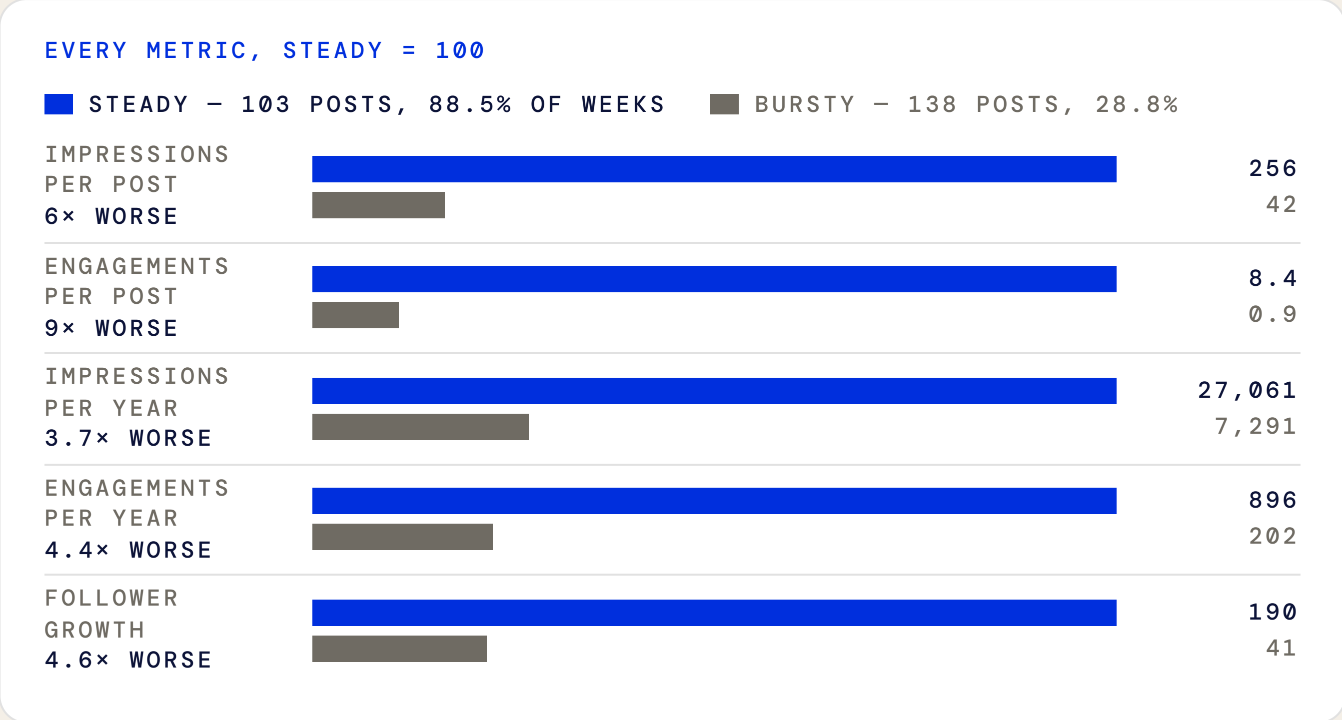
WILLOW LINKEDIN RESEARCH REPORT, MARCH 2026 · MEDIANS PER GROUP · EVERY WEEK = 80–100% OF WEEKS · MOST WEEKS = 50–79% · SOME WEEKS = 25–49%

FIGURE 1 — YEARLY IMPRESSIONS BY TIER



More posts don't help if you post them in bursts.

This is the finding that surprised us most. We compared two groups with roughly the same output — one publishing steadily across most weeks, the other cramming a third more content into a quarter of them. The bursty group lost on every single metric.



> **The algorithm doesn't count your posts. It tracks your rhythm.**

RULE 01

Once a week, every week

Non-negotiable. This alone puts you in the top 18% of pages.

RULE 02

Twice if you can hold it

5% less reach per post, but 59% more visibility and 63% more followers per year.

RULE 03

Never trade rhythm for volume

Consistency at 1× always beats inconsistency at 2×.

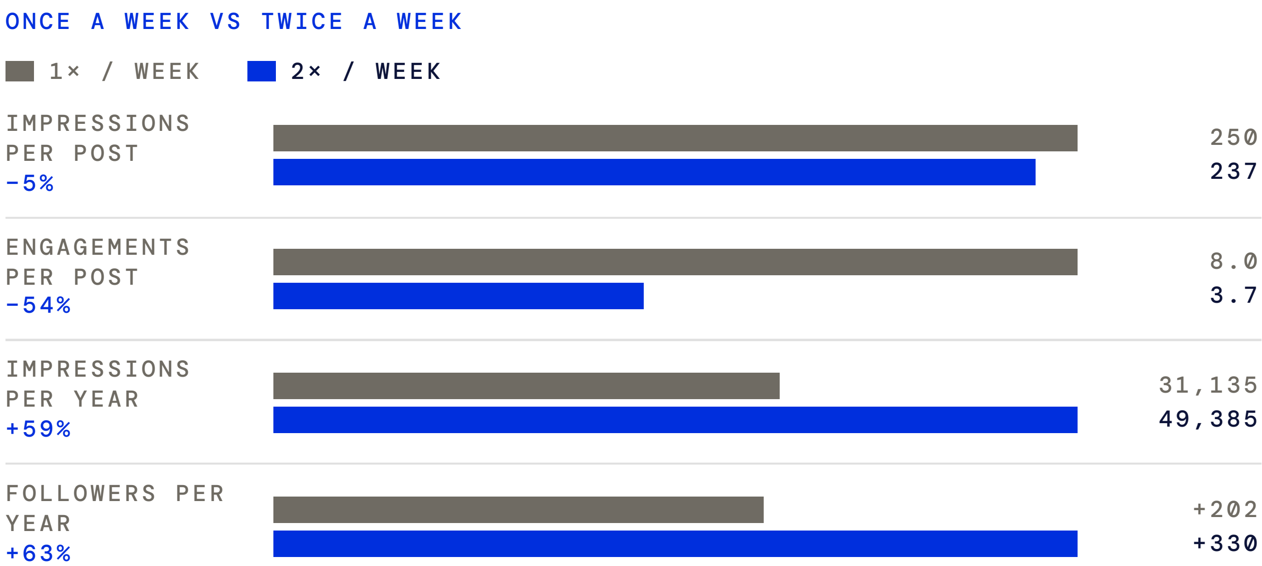
Post twice a week, on one platform.

Our answer used to be "4–5 times a week, but 2–3 quality posts beat 4 mediocre ones." We were half right. The data says something simpler: **once a week without fail, then twice if you can sustain it forever.** Anything beyond that is optimisation, not foundation.

Note the word forever. A page that fires off two posts a week for two months and then goes quiet ends up further behind than one that quietly turns up every Tuesday for two years.

So choose the pace you can still hold in the busiest month of your year, not the pace that flatters you in January.

And crush one channel at a time. Spreading yourself across every platform at once rarely works, because each wants a different kind of post — you can't drop a blog link on Instagram and expect anything to happen. Pick the platform where your buyers already are, get to weekly there, and only then add a second. For nearly every business reading this, that's LinkedIn.



Posting twice spreads a page's finite reach over more posts, so each one dips a little. Across a year that trade pays: 59% more visibility and 63% more followers.

FIRST-MOVER ADVANTAGE

New formats still get more reach than established ones. Whatever LinkedIn or Instagram has just launched, try it early — that window closes fast.

THE HONEST TEST

If you can't commit to two good posts a week, you certainly won't manage four. Fill fewer slots, fill them well, never leave one empty.

The three that matter most.

LinkedIn START HERE

Still the platform for B2B and expertise-driven businesses, now by some distance. Two things changed since the last edition: reach got harder as the feed filled up, but LinkedIn also became a genuine search engine — people look up problems, services and suppliers inside it, and your old posts keep resurfacing.

Post native: text with a simple image, short video, document carousels, and — new since the last edition — **collaborative posts** written with a colleague or a client (page 29). And ignore the old trick of hiding links in the first comment — that advice is out of date. LinkedIn now suppresses links buried in comments, so you lose the click and the reach. Put it in the post and write copy good enough to carry it.

Instagram

Works if you have team buzz or something visual to sell — real estate, architecture, design, hospitality. An office and a few laptops gets boring fast. That said, plenty of lawyers and accountants do well here answering one client question at a time on short vertical video.

Reels are the reach engine. Carousels are for saving. And a growing share of what happens here happens in DMs and shares, not public comments — which means your best post may look quiet.

Facebook

Overlooked, and still useful if you sell locally or to an older demographic. Organic page reach is poor, so treat it as two things: somewhere groups and local community still work, and the cheapest ad inventory you can buy.

The rule holds: faces or entertainment. Can you deliver that week in, week out? If not, don't make it your first channel.

One channel first. Get to weekly on LinkedIn, hold it for three months, and only then decide whether Instagram or Facebook earns your time.

You probably don't need these.

But you should know what they're for, so you can decline them on purpose rather than out of confusion.

TikTok	Not just for dancing teenagers, and increasingly used as a search engine by anyone under 35. Real B2B traction exists in recruitment, finance explainers and trades — but it demands a volume of video most professional firms can't sustain. Its EU status has been politically wobbly.
YouTube & Shorts	The most underrated channel for expertise businesses. Nothing else you make keeps earning attention for three years. If you already record webinars or client explainers, you have a channel and don't know it.
X	Tweet constantly and ride trends no longer applies to most businesses. Audiences have fragmented and brand safety is a real question for a professional firm. Keep an existing following warm; don't start from zero.
Threads & Bluesky	Where much of the old X conversation went. Threads is easy to run alongside Instagram and still generous to new accounts. Bluesky is smaller but clusters tightly around specific professional niches.
Reddit	Not a posting channel but a listening one — and now a major source of what AI assistants say about your industry. Answer as a human, never as a brand. Marketing gets punished here.
Newsletters DO THIS ONE	Technically not social media, which is why it kept falling off lists like this one. It shouldn't. You own the audience, no algorithm sits in between, and a monthly send costs you one repurposed post.

A note on being early. Every platform is generous to new accounts and new formats, then stops. That's a real advantage, but only if you can keep the channel alive after the honeymoon.

Repeat yourself on purpose.

A gazillion brands are competing for the same attention, so making your message stick has never been harder — and it will never be this easy again either.

Build a persona. If you've been in business a while, ask a few customers how they see you. What words come into their heads? That's your starting point, and usually more interesting than anything you'd write about yourself.

Then the visual side. Skip the full brand guide. A colour palette and a few repeatable elements — shapes, the way you crop photos — will carry you. Brighter colours stand out more easily, but stay sober if your business calls for it.

One warning we'd add now: consistent doesn't mean templated. In our own experiment the heavily designed visuals — billboards, graffiti walls, dense compositions — lost every time to a photo with one line of text on it. Keep the palette, drop the ornament.

And keep it real. Photograph your own people, your own office, your own work — even badly. Readers now spot a generated image instantly, and the giveaway is always the same: it tries too hard. Too much detail, too much gloss, nobody you recognise. That said, AI genuinely earns its place in the quieter jobs. It builds a clean carousel or turns a table into a readable infographic in minutes, provided you know the tools and you edit what comes back. Use it to lay things out. Don't use it to invent a workplace you don't have.

DO

- Keep the same colours every time
- Shoot your own people and your own work
- Write text you'd read at a glance on a phone
- Show faces wherever you can
- Let AI lay out carousels and infographics

DON'T

- Stock handshakes and generated "teams"
- Anything glossier than your actual office
- Dense infographics read on a phone
- A new visual style every month
- A logo where a person should be

HASHTAGS — WHAT CHANGED

THE OLD ADVICE

Add a block of five to ten hashtags to every post. Research the popular ones in your niche. Keep a saved list to paste in.

WHAT TO DO IN 2026

Hashtags no longer drive discovery on LinkedIn — hashtag following is gone and the feed is interest-based. Use none, or one or two that genuinely describe the topic. On Instagram and TikTok they still help a little, but the words in your caption matter far more. Write for a search box, not for a tag.

Five businesses that never missed a week.

Four customers, four sizes of business, one shared habit.

Axis Group

HR FIRM · 102% CONSISTENCY

408,984 IMPRESSIONS

+2,588 FOLLOWERS

695 posts over the year. The strongest absolute numbers in our customer base, built on a rhythm they never broke.

Red Poppy

RECRUITMENT · 2 PEOPLE

88,754 IMPRESSIONS

+330 FOLLOWERS

291 posts from a two-person agency. Proof that this is a discipline problem, not a headcount problem.

Itineris

UTILITIES SOFTWARE

+48% AUDIENCE / YEAR

37,052 ENGAGEMENTS

Nearly 25,000 followers — and an employee advocacy programme that helped fill functional analyst roles, a notoriously hard profile to recruit.

Pono

SOLO HR CONSULTANCY

56 WEEKS, NO MISSES

+31% PAGE AUDIENCE

One person, through holidays and busy client periods. 4,135 engagements and over 500 link clicks — from posting every single week, not from posting more.

Recovery is possible. High Touch Executive Search lost its rhythm entirely when coaches changed, rebuilt to 73% consistency, and grew to 6,302 followers — up 1,004. It took sustained effort before the results came back. They always do, and always slower than you'd like.

02

Give first, ask later.

You sell expertise. Sitting on it doesn't prove you have any.

Value

PILLAR 02 / 06

What are you doing with all that knowledge?

This pillar is about social media, but really it goes to the core of everything you do. Website, marketing, life in general: create value for people first. Especially if you want their money, their email address or their time.

This should be easy for you. You're in the service business. You sell expertise, know-how, or you sell to people keen to learn something new. So what are you doing with all that knowledge? Sitting on it? Keeping it behind closed doors until someone pays?

Best example: you're reading it. We could charge for this e-book, or for the webinars we run. We don't.

The easiest way to start is to look at your current clients. What keeps them up at night? What do they ask you every week? What problems are you already solving? Throw all of that out there.

Start simple: a weekly tip, or answer one client question a week. Make it personal. A step up: write the blog. Turn what you know into a guide. Or take out your phone and interview a colleague about the thing they're best at.

> You shouldn't be selling expertise using the word "expertise". Show every day that you're the expert.

Weekly tip
One thing you know that a client doesn't.

Client question
Answered in public, in plain language.

The mistake
Something you got wrong, and what you'd do now.

The teardown
A real case, anonymised, with the numbers.

Respect the platform you're on.

All that value can be repurposed across channels — but not by pasting the same link everywhere. Keep people inside the platform where you can. Say a colleague writes a genuinely clear article on a change in the law. Here's the same piece of value, five ways.

LINKEDIN	Write the substance into the post itself — name the three things that change for the reader — and keep the link right there with it. Burying it in the first comment used to buy you reach; today LinkedIn hides those links and you lose both. Or skip the link and turn the whole piece into a document carousel, which people still swipe to the end.
SHORT VIDEO	Sixty seconds of the author explaining it to camera, subtitled. The same clip serves Reels, Shorts, TikTok and LinkedIn. This is the highest-leverage thing on this page.
INSTAGRAM	Summarise it. Text on a plain background, spread across a story or a short carousel. Save-worthy, not clever.
FACEBOOK	A photo of the colleague who wrote it, with "this week's tip" and the short version. Faces, remember.
NEWSLETTER	The full thing, sent to the people who already trust you. The only version no algorithm can throttle.

That's how you build a reputation. One piece of thinking, five appearances, one week of work you'd have done anyway.

Your posts are search results now.

The biggest shift since the last edition isn't a new platform. It's where people go when they have a question. Many no longer start at Google. They search inside LinkedIn, inside TikTok, or they ask an AI assistant — and the answer is assembled from whatever is publicly written about your subject.

Which means a post has two lives. The first is the day you publish, when the feed decides how many people see it. The second lasts for years, every time someone searches the thing you wrote about.

This changes how you write. A post titled "Some thoughts on last week" has no second life. A post that opens "Three things that change for Belgian employers in the new pension rules" will still be found in eighteen months.

It also raises the value of the boring stuff — the plainly named explainer, the FAQ, the "how does X actually work" post. Those don't win the feed. They win the search.

WRITE SO YOU CAN BE FOUND

- Use the words your clients use, not your industry's
- Name the thing in the first line
- Put the actual terms on screen in video
- Answer one specific question per post
- Say the country or sector out loud

WHY THIS FAVOURS YOU

Big competitors win Google with budget. Nobody can buy their way into being the clearest answer to a narrow professional question.

If you're the only accountant in your region who has plainly explained a rule that scares people, you will be the answer — in LinkedIn search, and in whatever assistant your client asks instead.

Write for the person searching in a year, not just the person scrolling today.

AI removes the excuse, not the work.

The last edition didn't mention AI once. Now it's in every tool you touch, including ours. So let's be precise about what it's good for, because the gap between the two lists below is where most businesses are currently wasting their time.

AI handles the part you hate. It turns a rambling voice note into a structured draft, slices a long article into five posts, offers ten angles when you can't find one, tidies your grammar in a second language and writes your subtitles. That's real leverage, and it's why "I don't have time" no longer holds up.

What it cannot do is have your opinion, remember the client meeting, or know which of your failures is worth admitting in public. The raw material has to come from you. It always did.

There's a real risk in it, too. Feeds are filling up with posts that are competent, frictionless and utterly forgettable. Write like everybody else and you'll have spent real effort to become invisible. Fluency never set anyone apart — having something specific to say does.

LET IT DO THIS

- Turn a voice note into a first draft
- Split one article into a month of posts
- Give you ten angles on a topic
- Tighten a caption you've overwritten
- Write alt text and subtitles
- Translate, and check your second language

NEVER LET IT DO THIS

- Invent an opinion you don't hold
- Produce a stat, date or case you haven't checked
- Write about a client without their sign-off
- Fabricate an image of your team or work
- Reply to comments on your behalf
- Publish anything you haven't read out loud

Disclose generated images

EU rules now expect synthetic media to be labelled, and platforms are auto-tagging it. If it's AI-made, say so. If it's your team, prove it's your team.

The one rule that survives

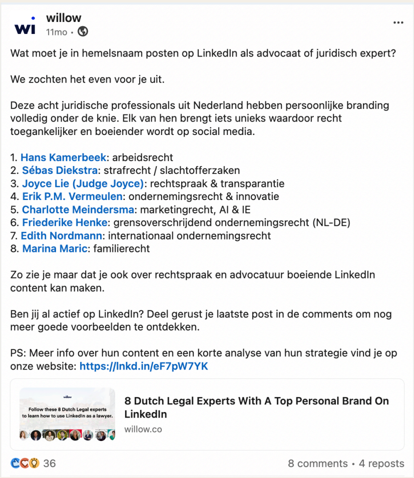
Would you be comfortable if a client asked "did you write this yourself?" If the honest answer is awkward, rewrite it.

What giving first actually looks like.

Three shapes that keep working. None of them needs a designer, and none of them takes more than twenty minutes.

THE PLAIN ANSWER

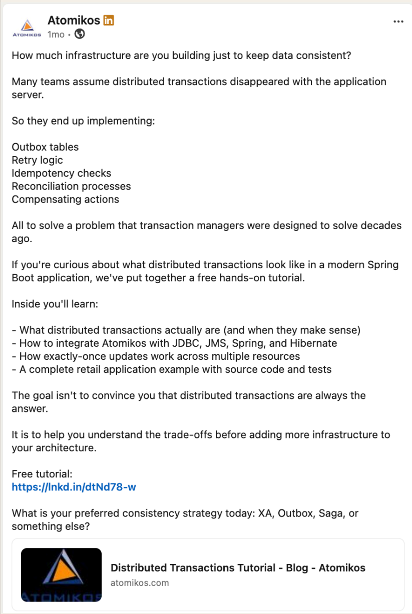
Name the thing in line one



The question is named in line one, then answered in full. Still findable in a year, because nothing is teased.

PLATFORM-NATIVE

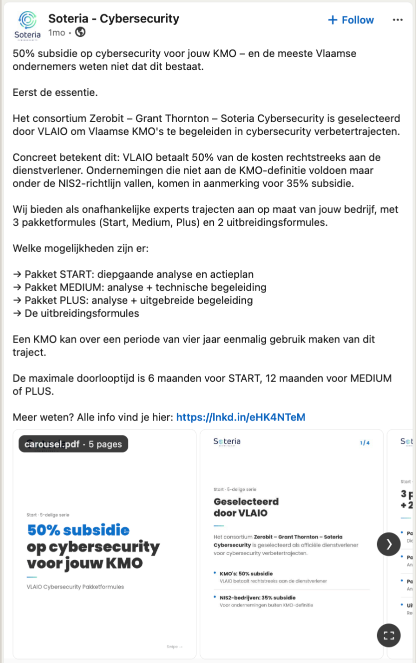
Keep the substance in the post



The useful part sits in the post itself, list and all, with the link beside it — and it ends with a question back.

THE VALUE CAROUSEL

One idea per slide, big type



Five slides, no ornament — the subsidy is the value, the packages come after. Simple beats designed.

A caveat from our own data. Seven of nine people in our October experiment had a carousel among their best posts — but most of those were also their first post of the month, when colleagues were paying most attention. Carousels are worth doing. Don't assume they're magic.

03

Mix it up, keep it fresh.

Plain cereal gets boring. So does a feed of nothing but company news.

Content mix

PILLAR 03 / 06

What to post.

You need a mix to hold your audience's interest. The old LinkedIn playbook told you to share four pieces of other people's content for every one of yours. That was advice from a time when there wasn't enough content to fill the timelines. Ignore it. Use thirds.

THE RULE OF THIRDS

1/3 ● **Original**

Your own thinking and your own work. Tips, case studies, explainers, employee stories, results.

1/3 ● **Curated**

Articles, videos and industry news worth your audience's time — always with your two cents on top.

1/3 ● **Social**

Sharing a colleague's post, amplifying a client, joining a conversation properly. Not broadcasting.

TWO WAYS TO NEVER RUN OUT

DJ'ing — curate properly

Millions of articles get published every day, and unless you're in a tiny niche, a lot are relevant to your audience. Gather the best. Write your two cents on top. Share.

Go further: turn one curated article into several posts, or use it as the prompt for your own. Always credit the original.

Repurpose your own website

A lot of people forget they already have good content on their site, that they already paid for. It's a matter of recasting it for social.

And if you shared a blog once, you were being shy. Chances are slim all your followers saw it. Post it again.

Keep the ask rare. The sales pitch belongs in your own third, and even there it's the exception. If every post has a call to action, the mix has already failed.

Short video is the default now, not the experiment.

In the last edition, video was a "try it if you're brave" suggestion. That's no longer honest. Vertical video under a minute is the format every platform pushes hardest, and the only one where a small business can still reach people who don't follow it.

The good news, if you run a professional services firm, is that the bar on production quality sits far lower than you fear — and far higher on clarity. Grab a phone, find decent light, add subtitles and stick to one idea. That's the whole recipe. A partner talking straight to camera in their own office will beat the polished corporate version almost every time.

The practical trick is to record in batches. Sit down once a month with a list of ten client questions and answer them one after another. Ten clips, one hour, three months of content across four platforms.

And subtitle everything. Most people watch on mute, and captions are also what makes a video findable in search.

THE 60-SECOND TEMPLATE

0-3s	Say the question out loud
3-10s	Why it matters to them
10-50s	The answer, in three points
50-60s	What to do next

DON'T OVERTHINK

Phone, held vertically, at eye level

A window behind the camera, not behind you

Subtitles, always

No intro animation, ever

One take is fine. Two is plenty.

If you only change one thing after reading this book: batch-record ten one-minute answers to real client questions.

What 180 posts in one month taught us.

Through October, nine of us each posted about a customer case study every weekday. We varied format, caption length, links, tagging and visual style deliberately. Some of it confirmed what we tell clients. Some of it embarrassed us.

CONFIRMED

Story first beat everything

Nearly every top post opened with a short personal angle before getting to the result. Posts that opened promotionally struggled to earn a single comment.

CONFIRMED

Shorter captions reached more people

Around ten lines outperformed captions twice that length, across every profile. Less to read means more people start reading.

DISPROVED

Elaborate visuals lost

We tried billboards, graffiti walls, infographics. They consistently underperformed a photo with text on it. This one genuinely surprised us.

DISPROVED

Flooding the feed didn't work

The goal was to bombard the algorithm. Reach collapsed in weeks three and four — volume without rhythm again.

THE FINDING THAT MATTERS MOST

Comments were the single strongest driver of reach

Posts with even one or two comments routinely beat posts with far more likes and none. When our internal commenting dropped off in week three, everyone's reach fell with it — whatever they posted. It's the most actionable finding in the study, and it costs nothing.

TAGS	Not a deciding factor either way. They don't hurt; don't rely on them.
LINKS	Fine when engagement is healthy. Clicks stayed modest throughout — set expectations accordingly.
YOUR NETWORK	Who you're connected to shaped which industries saw the post far more than format or caption did.

One story, three versions.

The same customer story across a month. Nobody notices the repetition. Everybody notices you.

WEEK 1 — THE STORY

Open with the person

"Marie runs a two-person recruitment agency. She told us she had given up on LinkedIn twice before..."

A person, a problem, a short human opening. The result comes at the end, not the top.

WEEK 2 — THE VIDEO

Sixty seconds to camera

"Why did a two-person agency out-post firms ten times their size? One thing: they never skipped a week."

The same story, told out loud. Subtitled, one take, phone held vertically. Ten minutes of work.

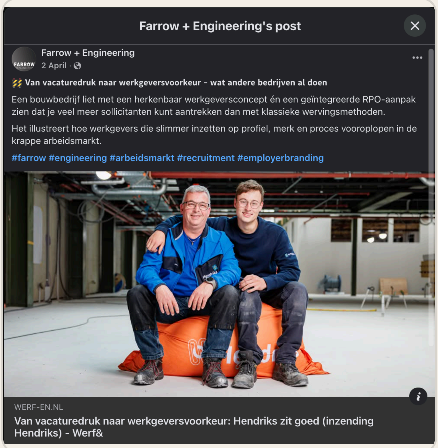
WEEK 4 — THE NUMBERS

Result first this time

"291 posts. 88,754 impressions. 330 new followers. Two people, no marketing department."

For everyone who skipped the story. One clean stat, big type, no chart needed.

THE REAL THING



A customer story in the wild: a construction firm that drew 116% more applicants. Faces first, numbers in the article.

Curating counts as content. An industry article with three lines of your own opinion on top is a legitimate post — and the fastest one you'll ever make.

04

People buy from people.

Not from brands. And your colleagues already have the audience you're trying to build.

Employees

PILLAR 04 / 06

Your biggest asset already has an audience.

It's safe to say most of your employees are on social media. Which means your colleagues hold thousands of combined connections between them — many more than your company page will ever have, and considerably more trusted. Personal profiles reach several times more people than business pages do.

So encouraging your team to take part is one of the few genuinely free ways to increase your reach. It's also one of the most awkward, because you're asking people to do something slightly exposing on the company's behalf.

Which is why it's worth writing a short social guide. Not a policy — search for social media policies online and you'll find documents from big corporations that are genuinely frightening. Your colleagues are career professionals who know how to behave and respect the company's reputation. Treat them that way.

In a nutshell: share things that make you look like an expert, show that it's good to work here, and engage with our content and with other people. That's the whole guide.

LEVEL 01

Put them in the content

Start this week. People love to see people — posts with faces work on every platform. Behind the scenes, a colleague sharing a tip each month, team moments as they happen. They don't have to post anything themselves.

LEVEL 02

Get them engaging early

When the page posts, make sure the team knows. The first hour matters most. A comment from a colleague is worth many times a like. Our own data showed reach for everyone falling the moment internal commenting stopped.

LEVEL 03

Grow thought leaders

Harder, and dependent on your culture. Colleagues sharing industry news, their opinions on it, their wins and their failures at work. Everyone has something to say. Let them be vocal about the work they do.

It cuts both ways. You get authentic content; your colleagues get the sense they're trusted with something. They start treating their own profile as a long-term investment — and people who've built something at your company are less inclined to go and rebuild it somewhere else.

Two names reach two networks.

This didn't exist when we wrote the last edition, and it's the single most useful new mechanic for a business like yours. A collaborative post carries more than one author — and it lands in the feeds of everybody's network, not just the person who typed it.

Think about what that does for a small firm. Two colleagues with 1,500 connections each publish one post together, and it starts life in front of both audiences at once. Bring a client in as co-author on a case study and it travels through their network as well, carrying their implied endorsement with it — and that's the part no budget buys.

It also solves the awkwardness of level three. A colleague who would never write a solo thought-leadership post will happily co-sign one with you. The exposure is shared, the credit is shared, and the confidence tends to follow.

The same logic applies to Instagram, where a collaborative post shows up on both accounts' grids. If you do anything with a partner, a supplier or a client — an event, a joint project, a launch — that's the format.

WORTH CO-AUTHORING

- A case study, with the client
- An event recap, with the co-host
- A project win, with the colleague who did it
- A joint announcement with a partner firm
- A new hire post, with the new hire
- A webinar, with your guest

GET IT RIGHT

- Ask first, always — it's their feed too
- Agree the wording before you publish
- Two authors is plenty; five is a committee
- Both of you reply to comments
- Don't co-author anything promotional
- Never surprise a client with it

The cheapest reach available to a small firm is a second name on the post.

One caution

Because it appears on someone else's profile, a co-authored post is held to a higher standard than your own. If you wouldn't be proud to have it on your feed for the next three years, don't ask someone else to host it.

Why advocacy programmes stall.

Every business we work with agrees employee advocacy is a good idea. Most never get it running, for the same three reasons.

OBJECTION 01

"I don't know what to say"

Don't ask people to write. Ask them a question and record the answer. Or send them a draft they can edit — most people will happily post something they've adjusted, and will never post something from scratch. Give them the first line and they'll write the rest.

OBJECTION 02

"It feels like homework"

Because it usually is presented as one. Never mandate it, never track it as a KPI, never make it a line in someone's review. What works instead: a short weekly nudge with one link and one suggested comment, and public credit when someone's post does well. Our own experiment lost momentum precisely when the nudges stopped.

OBJECTION 03

"What if I say the wrong thing?"

One page. What's confidential, what needs a client's approval, who to ask when unsure, and an explicit promise that nobody gets in trouble for a good-faith mistake. That last line does more for participation than the other three combined.

It's a hiring channel too

Itineris used consistent posting plus employee advocacy to fill functional analyst roles — a profile notoriously hard to recruit. Candidates read your team's feeds, not your careers page.

Start with three people

Not the whole company. Three willing colleagues who post monthly will outperform a mandatory programme every time — and they make it look normal for everyone else.

Four ways to put your people in the feed.

Four real posts, in rough order of how hard they are to pull off. The third did not exist when we wrote the previous edition.

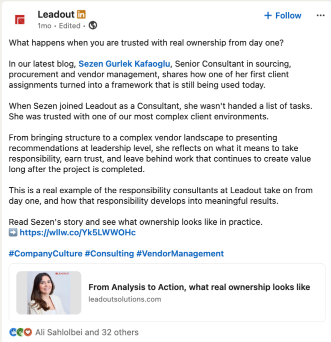
01 — EASIEST

Celebrate someone

A "Meet the team" carousel on a co-founder. Faces work on every platform, and nobody had to write anything themselves.

02

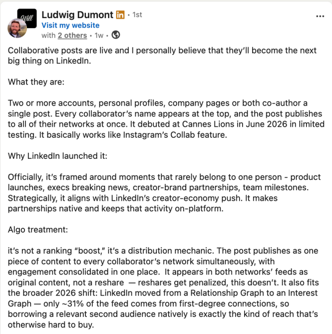
Tell an employee story



Why she joined, what she built, the trust that came with it. What working with you is like, without ever saying "great culture".

03 NEW

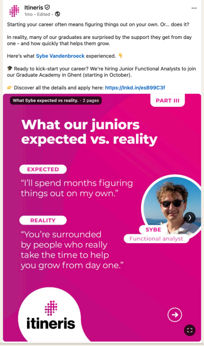
The collaborative post



Two names in the byline, two networks in the reach. Best on case studies and anything you did with someone else.

04 — THE PAYOFF

It becomes a hiring channel



Itineris' expected-vs-reality series feeds straight into vacancies — candidates read your team's feeds, not your careers page.

Putting a human face on your company is the main differentiator available to you in a crowded market. Not your service list. Not your logo. The hardest version — a colleague sharing their own opinion on their own profile — starts with three willing people, never a company mandate.

05

A two-way street.

Social media is all about the social. You have to actually be social.

Engage

PILLAR 05 / 06

Comments are the currency.

We'll risk sounding like a broken record: social media turns on the social part. Likes, comments, shares and clicks make up the micro-currency of the whole thing, and you earn them by joining conversations rather than announcing into them. Count your followers all you like — the number means nothing until you've built a group of people who actually care.

And of that currency, one denomination is worth far more than the rest. Our own experiment made this unambiguous: posts with even one or two comments routinely outperformed posts with many more likes and no comments. When our team's commenting dropped off halfway through the month, everybody's reach fell — regardless of what they posted.

So the work splits in two: comment, and reply. Every time you weigh in on somebody else's post you pull another set of eyes back towards you. And every comment you leave sitting unanswered on your own post throws away reach you'd already earned. We did exactly that, and it cost us.

Set aside thirty minutes to an hour a week. Or, if you're already scrolling too much anyway, make it a habit to engage instead of lurking.

THE WEEKLY HOUR

- Comment on posts from the leading people in your field
- Interact whenever a client posts something
- Answer every comment on your own posts, same day
- Ask a question back, so the thread continues
- Join the groups where your buyers are

A COMMENT THAT WORKS

"Great post" does nothing for anybody. A comment earns attention when it adds something: an example from your own work, a respectful disagreement, or the detail the author left out.

Two or three sentences is the sweet spot. If it's good, it gets more attention than most of your own posts do.

One comment beats ten likes. Two beat a hundred.

UPDATED ADVICE

We used to say "urge your network to engage right after you post". Still true — but ask for a comment, not a like, and don't send a group message asking twelve people to do it at once. Platforms recognise coordinated pods, and they're not gentle about it.

Being part of the conversation.

None of this is content creation. All of it moves your numbers, and none of it takes longer than a coffee.

COMMENT

Add an example, not applause

"We tried this with a two-person agency last year — the thing that finally worked was dropping from four posts a week to one they never missed."

Two or three sentences is the sweet spot. A good comment gets more attention than most of your own posts.

REPLY

Answer your own thread, same day

Every reply is a second chance at reach. We left comments unanswered during our October experiment and watched what it cost us.

And ask a question back, so the thread keeps going.

SHOW UP

Be there when a client posts

The cheapest account management there is — and their whole network sees you doing it.

Groups and DMs matter too. A quiet post is not always a dead one.

One comment beats ten likes. Two beat a hundred.

06

Cut through the noise.

Logos don't sell services. People, reputation and expertise do.

Personality

PILLAR 06 / 06

Stop hiding behind the logo.

So many business owners hide themselves and their team behind their logo. We get it — it feels safe. Putting content out there can be genuinely uncomfortable. But again: logos don't sell services. People, personal reputation and expertise do.

Having a personal brand is almost more important than your business pages — for job hunting, for running your own business, at any stage of a career. It's what separates you from the pack.

Personal profiles do win. They reach further, they earn more comments, and people would rather hear from a person than a logo. Lead with yours.

But somewhere along the way that turned into "the company page is dead," and owners started letting theirs rot. Our own numbers say otherwise: across our October test the company page actually averaged more impressions per post than the nine personal profiles did. A neglected page also costs you elsewhere — it's the first thing a buyer checks, the page candidates read before they apply, and the one that surfaces when somebody searches your name.

The two do different jobs, because they hold different rooms. Your business following is mostly customers, new, current and past. Your personal profile mixes a few customers with peers, friends and forgotten classmates.

See the difference? Your business page needs content that out-teaches your competitors on the problems your customers face: "how to negotiate a good mortgage with a bank". Your personal page can be about the industry itself: "how we automated our mortgage workflow".

Today personal brands are becoming more important than your business brand.

BUSINESS PAGE

Mostly customers. Out-teach your competitors on the problem the customer has. Also the page that shows up when someone checks you out before buying.

PERSONAL PROFILE

Customers, peers, and people who knew you before this. Talk about the craft, the journey and the industry — not the service list.

RUN BOTH

Lead with the personal profile, but keep the page alive. It's still where buyers and candidates go looking, and it outperformed our personal profiles on average impressions.

Write the way you actually talk.

This phrase gets thrown around as if its meaning were obvious. It isn't. Businesses still hide behind big words and robotic language, and it only pushes their audience further away.

Where to start? Cut your sentences as if somebody paid you €100 for every word you removed. Own your mistakes, at least the ones you clearly learned from. Talk to your followers instead of announcing at them from a speaker mounted high up a tower. And write the way you speak — read it aloud, and you'll hear where you slipped into corporate.

On personal pages, sharing personal things matters. To be clear, we're not suggesting a nonstop stream of puppy photos or personal opinions on LinkedIn. We mean tying personal stories into the business content you share. Your successes and failures. A journey. Your actual opinion. What your daily life looks like, inside and outside work.

You have a real power here to show transparency and bring out the best in others. Set the example and your team will follow it.

WRITE LIKE THIS

- Short sentences. Then a shorter one.
- The word you'd use in a meeting
- "We got this wrong" when you did
- One idea per post
- Read it out loud before publishing

NOT LIKE THIS

- "We are thrilled to announce"
- "Leveraging synergies"
- "Reach out to learn more"
- Three hashtags of pure hope
- Anything you'd never say out loud

In all seriousness: have some fun.

WHY THIS MATTERS MORE NOW

Feeds are filling with content that is fluent, correct and completely anonymous. A specific human voice is no longer just nicer to read. It's the only thing that identifies you as a person at all.

Four posts that show who you are.

All four are harder than a company update. All four outperform one.

PERSONAL STORY

Make the point through something real

"I lost a client in 2019 because I never followed up on a quote. It is why we now answer every message the same day."

A business point delivered through something that actually happened to you.

CLEAR LANGUAGE

Say it the way you would out loud

"Nee zeggen is je sterkste recruitmenttool." Blunt opener, short lines, zero corporate padding. Read yours aloud and you will hear the difference.

A CAUSE YOU BACK

Only the ones you would give time to

A law firm adopting bee colonies: what they did, who keeps the bees, and a joke to close. Not a logo change — and readers can tell.

SOMETHING CREATIVE

One post a month with no objective

The office dog. A terrible first attempt. A joke about your own industry.

Often the ones people remember, and the ones colleagues actually share.

Feeds are filling with content that is fluent, correct and completely anonymous. A specific human voice is the only thing that identifies you as a person at all.

Organic earns the trust. Paid buys the attention.

However many followers you gather, you're ultimately trying to turn them into customers. But keep the asking to roughly one post in seven — push harder than that and people stop reading altogether. That's where advertising earns its place: paid social lets you go straight at the right audience without wearing out the people who already follow you.

Organic is everything else — the posts you make every week to grow your audience, impress them and persuade them. Same goes for people considering applying to work with you.

Running ads with no organic presence will hurt you. People check before they buy, and they trust a business with a real, living social presence far more than they trust the ad itself. An ad that leads to an empty page is worse than no ad.

Posting with no ads is risky too. Organic page reach on most platforms is now a small fraction of your followers. The honest way to think about it: organic builds the trust, paid buys the attention, and neither works properly alone.

ORGANIC DOES THIS

- Builds the trust that makes the ad work
- Proves you exist and are competent
- Keeps working years later, in search
- Attracts people who want to work for you
- Costs time, not money

PAID DOES THIS

- Reaches people who've never heard of you
- Puts your best organic post in front of more of them
- Works on a deadline, which organic doesn't
- Gives you clean data on what messaging lands
- Costs money, not time

The cheapest ad you'll ever run is money behind the organic post that already worked.

WITH A SMALL BUDGET

Don't build a campaign. Take the post from the last three months that got the most comments, put a modest amount behind it aimed at your ideal customer, and watch what happens. That's a complete strategy for most businesses this size.

What posting can — and can't — do.

WHAT IT CAN DO

Deepen the relationship with current customers

Most of your followers are friends, peers and existing clients. They want to be informed, entertained and taught something. Be a good host.

Influence the buying decision, massively

People check you out before they buy. A thousand signs pointing at an empty, dated storefront still lose you the sale.

Let you bump into leads

Now and then a post travels. A stranger sees "Jack commented on this" and notices you exist. Sometimes that's all it takes.

Make people want to work for you

You check out candidates online. They do the same before applying. In tight talent markets this is decisive.

Make sure you're remembered

So that when they need you — or someone asks for a recommendation — you're the name that arrives.

WHAT IT CAN'T DO

Replace your paid marketing

If you're chasing new customers or building recognition from scratch, posting alone won't do it. Search ads work when people are actively looking. Social ads work for the "ah, I needed that" moment.

Magically create leads

Start the six pillars today and nothing happens tomorrow. This is where most of your competitors give up, looking for a 1:1 line between input and output. It takes time — and the influence is genuinely hard to trace.

Fix your company culture

You can look more attractive to candidates, but reality catches up at the interview. If the culture is good, this is easy. If it isn't, fix that first.

Keep going at six months. Keep going at twelve. If it still hasn't moved after eighteen, then look at other paths — but give it those eighteen first.

The rules changed while you were posting.

Not a legal chapter, and not advice — talk to someone qualified if any of this touches your business properly. But four things have changed in the EU since the last edition, and a business owner should know they exist.

01

Label AI-generated media

Synthetic images, voices and video are now expected to be disclosed, and platforms increasingly tag them automatically whether you do or not. Being caught passing off a generated image as your real team is a trust problem long before it's a legal one.

02

Mark anything paid

If you pay someone to post about you — an influencer, a partner, an employee incentive — it has to be visibly marked as advertising. This applies at any size, including a €200 arrangement with a local specialist.

03

Photos of people need consent

Team photos, client events, office footage. Get a simple written yes, and honour it when someone later asks to be taken down — including former employees. One line in the onboarding pack solves this permanently.

04

Client work is confidential by default

Especially for lawyers, accountants and consultants. Case studies, screenshots, numbers, "a client asked me this week" posts — get approval in writing, and be careful with details that identify someone even when the name is removed.

The practical version: ask before you post someone, say when something is paid, say when something is generated, and never publish client detail you haven't cleared. Four habits, no lawyer required.

What changed since the last edition.

If you read the previous version, here's where we'd now tell you something different. The six pillars themselves haven't moved.

TOPIC	WE USED TO SAY	NOW
Hashtags	Add five to ten researched hashtags to every post.	Largely dead for discovery on LinkedIn. One or two descriptive ones at most; the words in your copy do the work.
Frequency	Post 4–5 times a week.	Once a week without fail, twice if sustainable. Rhythm beats volume by 6× on reach per post.
Twitter / X	Tweet often, ride trending topics, use threads.	No longer a default recommendation. Keep an existing audience warm; don't start from zero.
New formats	Try LinkedIn Live, Stories and Events before they lose their shine.	Stories are gone. The principle survives: new formats get more reach. Today that means short video and collaborative posts.
Video	Some lawyers do well with short video on Instagram.	Vertical short video is the default format on every platform. If you do one new thing, do this.
Links	Keep people in the platform; drop the link in the first comment.	Out of date. LinkedIn now suppresses links buried in comments, so you lose the click and the reach. Put it in the post.
Visuals	Agencies deliver stunning visuals, and that's a good thing.	Simple beat elaborate every time in our own test. Shoot real photos; let AI lay out carousels and infographics, never invent a team.
Engagement	Ask your network to engage right after you post.	Ask for comments specifically — and don't coordinate it as a group. Pods are detectable and penalised.
Where people search	Not addressed.	Social platforms and AI assistants are now search engines. Your posts have a second life for years.
AI	Not addressed.	Removes the excuse, not the work. Great for drafting and repurposing; useless for having an opinion.
Co-authoring	Didn't exist.	Collaborative posts put one post in two networks. The cheapest reach available to a small firm.
Company pages	Personal reach is 5× a business page's.	Lead with personal, but "the company page is dead" is a myth — ours averaged more impressions per post than nine personal profiles.
Regulation	Not addressed.	Disclose AI media, mark paid posts, get consent for photos, clear client detail in writing.

To outsource or not to outsource.

A question we've debated for years, mostly while trying to solve it ourselves. Agency and pay per post? Freelancer who can plan and execute? Or a tool each month, done yourself? Our answer is uncomfortably simple: if you — or whoever you hire — isn't going to deliver on all six pillars, you're in for a disappointing ride.

Agencies

Most do an excellent job on creative and will deliver genuinely good visuals. What they can't easily do is understand your specific expertise and personality, and they're slow to react to something happening today rather than next month. Worth knowing too: in our own testing, the elaborately designed visual usually lost to the simple one.

Freelancers

They excel and suffer at the same things as agencies. The odds are better that they'll understand you and your business properly, and you can build a real personal connection — which helps enormously in getting your message across accurately. The risk is capacity: one person, holidays, other clients, and your rhythm depends on them.

Tools

A tool makes you more productive, the way a to-do list does. It combines your channels in one place, tells you what to post and when, and increasingly helps you draft it. But like running shoes and a running app: you still have to do the running. And we all know that once you hit the 5km mark you get addicted, and it starts to feel like a reward.

The decision is yours, and it depends on how much time and effort you're willing to put in. Go it alone — great, as long as you're spending that effort with these six pillars in mind. If not, get an agency, a freelancer, or something that helps you deliver on all six.

The first quarter.

Don't attempt all six pillars at once — you'll stall by week three. Take a quarter over it instead, in this order. Three months sounds slow until you remember that most of your competitors won't last one.

WEEKS 1-2	Pick one platform and leave the others alone. Write down twenty questions your clients actually ask you, then block the same hour every week in your calendar and defend it.
MONTH 1	Publish one post a week, answering one of those questions. Name the topic plainly so it can still be found next year, and reply to every comment the same day.
MONTH 2	Hold the weekly rhythm and start giving half an hour to other people's posts — clients first, then whoever your clients follow. Put a face in at least one post, yours or a colleague's.
MONTH 3	Ask one colleague or client to co-author a post with you. Then sit down for an hour and record ten one-minute answers to the questions on your list.
FROM HERE	Those ten clips feed the next three months across four platforms. Add a second weekly post only once the first one has never slipped.

The only failure mode that matters is a gap. Miss a week and you lose more than the week — you forfeit the rhythm the algorithm had started to trust, and you spend the next month earning it back. Show up every week and it shows up for you.

You want a 6 out of 6?

Planning software to keep your rhythm, AI that helps you make the content, and a human coach who tells you exactly what to post.

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