



Marketing Whyzze Guide

How I Created My First **Viral LinkedIn** Post (and how you can too)

**In June 2020
D.P. (During
Pandemic) I
achieved
LinkedIn
virality.**



Prior to June 2020 I had a little over 700 LinkedIn connections and I'd posted on the platform a total of three times.

Yes, you read that correctly.

Even though I've had a LinkedIn profile since 2008 I've been more of a lurker/cheerleader. Meaning, I like and comment on others' posts but I don't post regularly myself. My previous three posts received very limited engagement - as in, under 30 likes and one or two comments.

This lack of activity will be relevant later on.

I had a reason to create a [LinkedIn post](#) in June because of an exciting announcement.

I'm the Business Strategy host of a new business reality show called [Werrrk!](#) with Mailchimp and Scout Productions, creators of the new Queer Eye, and Season 1 was launching.

I was supposed to be helping promote the show launch to my "followers".

The problem was, I didn't have a particularly large social following and I wasn't very active on any social platform. However, being that I'm a Business Strategist and this is a business-related show, I figured I'd find my most engaged audience on LinkedIn.

Now, before you throw your hands in the air and say, *"Well, of course your post went viral! You had a huge announcement with a big name company."*

Just hear me out.

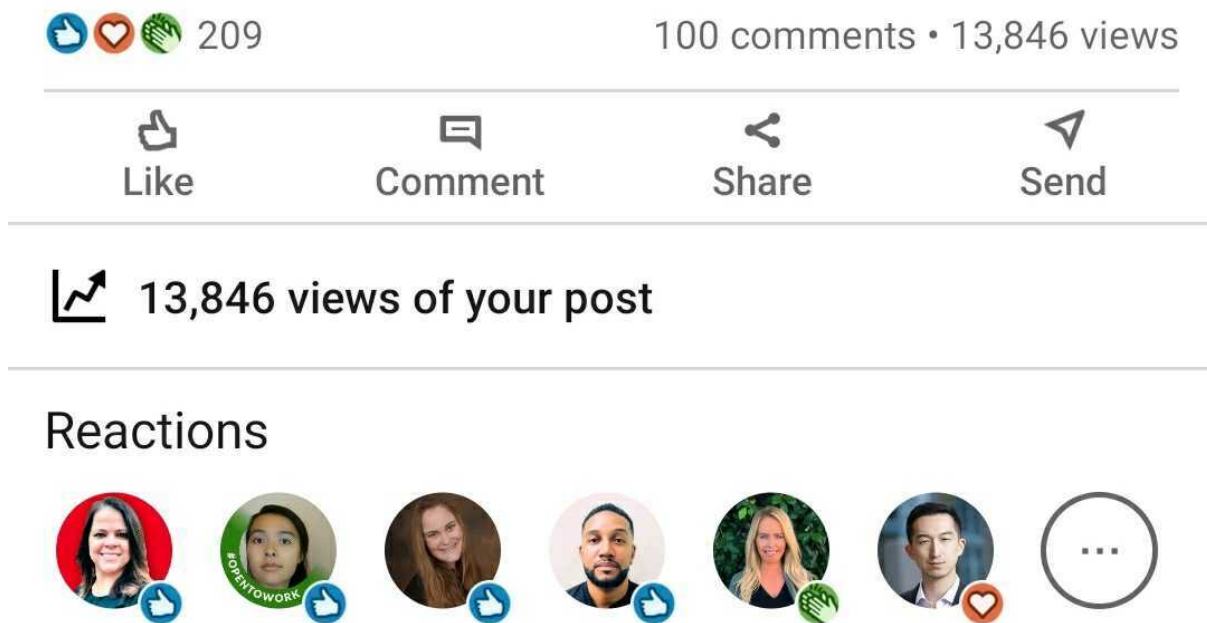
Even though Mailchimp's business page has almost a million LinkedIn followers, most of their posts only average between 20 to 30 likes. So, name dropping their company or my partnership with them wouldn't have helped much.

In fact, tagging people and companies can hurt your chances for virality - I'll explain more on this later as well.

As for the announcement itself, unless you follow me on LinkedIn and know me personally (or had a vested interest in the show), you probably wouldn't care.

That being the case, I put on my "marketing strategy" hat and researched the hell out of how to make social content, LinkedIn specifically, go viral.

So, what helped me get just under 14,000 views, over 200 likes, and 100 comments on my fourth LinkedIn post in 12 years?



Here's a complete breakdown of how I achieved LinkedIn post virality and how you can too:

The 10 Steps I Took To Get My LinkedIn Post to Go Viral



Craft a Post For Others, Not Yourself

The first thing most people want to do when they achieve something noteworthy - get mentioned in the press, get asked to speak, or become the host of a new business reality show - is tell as many people as possible.

The problem is, they make the announcement about them. Like I mentioned earlier, unless people know you personally or have a strong interest in the outcome they won't particularly care.

So, step one is making them care by making your post more about them ("them" being whoever your target audience is) and less about you. Bonus points if you make the topic something a variety of people from different walks of life can relate to.

When I crafted my announcement post, unemployment was a hot topic in the U.S.; depending on when you're reading this it may still be a hot topic. Lots of professionals, from executives to interns can relate to this.

10 Steps to a Viral LinkedIn Post

Therefore, I started my post off with this sentence:

"Four years ago I got laid off."

I then went on to share my very real and kinda vulnerable experience of going from laid off to TV show host. I also included "give back" offers based on my expertise and a call to action that told people what I wanted them to do next (i.e. watch the show and share my message).

Both the offers and the CTA were made with others in mind. For example, I didn't tell people to watch the show because of me. I told them to watch it for them.

Offer 1: If you're in need of a feel-good reality show about experts helping struggling #smallbusiness owners and their teams, check out my new show Werrrk!...

...Ask: Lastly, if you know someone who could benefit from one of these offers, mention them or simply leave a comment so they see this post.

Which brings me to Step #2.

#2

Make People Feel Something

...as long as it's genuine.

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If you're a LinkedIn regular, chances are you've encountered "broetry" - those long, story-like posts written in one-sentence chunks that start off with a completely unbelievable or incredibly tragic scroll-stopping opening line.

Something like: 'I knew it was over for me when I lost three million dollars of my client's money while gambling' or 'I almost lost my life embezzling from a drug lord'.

But somehow everything always works out by the end of the post 🙄

Don't be that guy.

Do speak from the heart, be transparent, and appropriately vulnerable. In his book, *Talk Like Ted*, Carmine Gallo says the most popular Ted Talks of all time consist of communication patterns that are approximately

- **65% pathos** (appeal to emotion)
- **25% logos** (rational logic, data, and facts)
- **10% ethos** (credibility factors).

Obviously these percentages aren't exact. The point is, the more you appeal to emotion the more your message will resonate with others. Include facts to support your position, then sprinkle in a few points that help people know they can trust you.

The bottom line is don't just give people information - *I'm speaking at X conference about how to manage remote teams* - give them a reason to care. For example:

“Speak from the heart, be transparent, & appropriately vulnerable”

Did you know that a person's answers to these three questions on how to manage a remote team can tell you more about their leadership style than their entire work history?

- 1. Is it more important the hours your employees work or what they accomplish during the day regardless of when they do it?*
- 2. Should you require your employees to show their face on video conference meetings or leave it up to the individual?*
- 3. What's the number one way to keep your remote team productive and happy?*

Feeling brave? Share your answers. Also, if you're interested in how the most successful leaders with the highest-performing and most satisfied teams answer these questions, I'll be sharing this and more at X Conference...

Get them to nod in agreement, feel outrage at an injustice, take a stand for a cause, or pique their personal interest.

#3

Get Early Engagement

Here's the first algorithm "trick" if you will. As you know, social platforms want sustained interest and eyeballs. They measure this via engagement, or how long people stay on the platform and what they do while they're there.

Likes and comments on a LinkedIn post signal to the algo-bots that a particular piece of content is keeping people interested.

💡 **TIP:** While 'likes' and 'comments' are helpful, surprisingly, I found several articles that said **sharing** a post on LinkedIn isn't an engagement signal like it is on other social platforms. Conversely, sharing actually weakens the original post's engagement.

To strengthen the signal, you want to get engagement very early on after posting, like within the first 10 minutes or less. In order to ensure early engagement, I reached out to 37 of my closest friends and colleagues a few days before I planned to post and asked if they'd help me promote my launch announcement as soon as I announced it.

I then created a short and sweet Google Doc with hyperlinks to my social media posts and simple directions on how to engage:

10 Steps to a Viral LinkedIn Post

Thank you so much! I appreciate you.

- [LinkedIn Post](#): (like and leave a comment - no need to share)
- [Instagram Post](#): (like, comment and/or share)
- [Facebook](#) Post: (like, comment, and/or share)
- [Twitter](#) Post: (like, comment, and/or retweet)

Lastly, since Google Doc URLs are as long as CVS Pharmacy receipts, I used a link shortener* to condense the link and make it more copy/paste friendly. (<https://rb.gy/du5hsd>)

*Try bit.ly or Rebrandly

At 8am sharp on June 25, 2020 I posted my announcement then sent my Google Doc to my 37 "promotion assistants".

#4

Diversify Your Network

While it doesn't seem like a lot, those 37 people set off a viral chain reaction based on one key characteristic - they were a super diverse group.

Here's some free Wharton School education I picked up from Jonah Berger's Coursera course on viral marketing.*

*In March 2020 the course was being offered for free.

“The more diverse your network, the higher your chance for virality.”

A viral concept Berger teaches in his video lessons centers around how network diversity can increase virality.

Essentially, the more diverse a group of people are and the more diverse your ties are to the individuals in the group, the higher your chance for virality.

A lot of people confuse this concept of social epidemics (how information and ideas spread between people) with network effect (a product or service gaining in value as the number of people using it increases). So, let me break it down:

Typically, when you share information with people extremely similar to you and who you have strong ties with, your message doesn't go far. Unless you have a huge network the message stays within your homogenous, tightly-knit group.

This is because you all think similarly and know the same people. Once you share something there's either little impetus to share outside of the network or, because everyone knows each other, the information quickly makes the rounds to the same small group of people.

However, when you share information with a diverse group of people who you have strong, medium, *and* weak ties with, their extended networks likely include people you don't already

10 Steps to a Viral LinkedIn Post

know. Therefore, when they share, the content reaches new people and possibly even entirely new groups of people versus your single network.

My group of 37 friends and colleagues included people from the startup community, the education field, the entertainment industry, retirees, executives, non-tech professionals, stay-at-home parents, couples, singles, and other cultural, demo- and sociographic differences.

Some of these people I speak with and/or see all the time (strong ties). Some I interact with less frequently (medium ties). And some I interact with infrequently, only in group settings, or for professional collaborations (weak ties). Yet they're all people I know and have a genuine relationship with and felt comfortable asking for support.

#5

Keep the Engagement Going


Similar to point #3, engagement signals interest. Even if that engagement is your own.


Therefore, whenever someone left a comment on my post I'd like and respond to their comment because LinkedIn shares this activity (e.g. your activity is shared with your followers and the activity of anyone who engages with your post is shared with their followers). This is all done via

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the newsfeed and it helps increase the reach of the original post.




Stephanie Burns Robertozzi loves this





Misti Cain
Founder at Whyzze | Business Strategy Host on Werrrk! | Techstars All-Star M...
1mo • Edited • 


Four years ago I got laid off. It stung my pride, bruised my ego, and other negative emotions that tend to follow rejection.


Today, I'm proud to announce I'm the host of Werrrk!, [Mailchimp](#)'s newest business reality show. ...see more


 209 • 100 Comments

 Like

 Comment


 Share


 Send



 13,841 views of your post in the feed




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Add a comment... 

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This allows your post to receive views from followers you're not even connected to.

Another thing I did was space out my engagement.

Even if I got a notification that someone left a comment, I'd sometimes wait to respond. This way I could engage throughout the day and continue sending "interest" signals to the algo-bots. I can't say this made a difference but it felt logical. #YMMV

#6

Use Hashtags to Your Advantage

Like other social platforms, LinkedIn allows you to use hashtags. In my research, there were suggestions to use tags sparingly. More than one article said to use no more than three hashtags so that's what I did. I even made sure to use hashtags that directly correlated to my post's topic.

I read that adding hashtags with no context can look lazy or spammy and that LinkedIn's algorithm stops "irrelevant, low-quality, and spammy content from reaching a user's feed."

Because I didn't want to risk looking spammy, I used the hashtags as part of my copy as opposed to including them at the end of my post.

I also searched "most popular hashtags". Like keywords, high-volume hashtags can affect your ability to rank or, in this case, get visibility. So, I used hashtags that were medium to lower-ish in popularity.

#7

Tag People and Companies Strategically

As you know, spam is a big problem in almost every digital medium. For example, those people who get a hold of your email address and spam your inbox (looking at you Prince of Nigeria).

Well, social media isn't immune to spam issues either. Therefore, protocols have been designed to spot and limit the amount of spam people are subjected to.

Therefore, tag people and companies wisely. If you tag someone (or dozens of people) and they don't engage with your post, it can send signals to the LinkedIn algo-bots that you might be a spammer. I say "can" and "might" because there are other factors to consider.

For example, the 'You-Might-Be-A-Spammer' flag is lowered if you and the person you tagged engage with each other regularly, you work for the company you're tagging, or your post is getting a high amount of engagement from others.

This last factor can give your post the green light since other people are finding value in your post even if the tagged person(s) or company doesn't.



The “Write-Post-Edit” Link Sharing Method

When it comes to adding a link to your post I found the “write-post-edit” method to be a debated topic.

Some sources argue that LinkedIn penalizes you (i.e. limits your post’s reach) for adding links in your post - both links that take users off of the platform as well as links to LinkedIn articles on the platform. Some say that LinkedIn only penalizes links that take users off the platform. Some say LinkedIn used to penalize you for this but doesn’t anymore. Others say to link your heart out because there’s no link penalty at all.

To be on the safe side, I followed the “Write-Post-Edit” method for adding an external link to my post.

The method is exactly what it sounds like:

- Write your post minus the link
- Publish your post
- Then select “Edit Post” from your post’s menu options and add your external link
- Save your changes

10 Steps to a Viral LinkedIn Post

According to the “Write-Post-Edit” ~~Legend~~ Method, you can publish your post then immediately edit it and add your link, no waiting required. Allegedly, the LinkedIn algobots only pay attention to your originally published content.

Whether this is a myth or a tried and true penalty-avoiding method remains to be seen.

NOTE: Be sure to add any media (images or videos) you want included to your original post. You can’t add media afterwards when you edit/update a post. And the open graph meta tags from your link addition won’t pull the image in either.



Accept Invites and Send a Message

If you have any connection request invites you haven’t responded to, take the time to respond to them now. And don’t just accept the invite and move on. Send a message too.

I have a template response I send to strangers who send me an invite to connect but don’t include a message. I thank them for reaching out and ask what prompted them to do so. This does a few things:

10 Steps to a Viral LinkedIn Post

- Accepting an invite adds a new follower to your network
- Sending your new contact a message with a question prompts them to respond
- When/if they do respond, the LinkedIn algo-bots take this as a sign you and this contact want to see each other's posts so your content is shown near the top in their newsfeed and vice versa.
- If your new contact never responds it's probably a sign they're not interested in authentically networking or have no intention of engaging. You're free to remove them as a connection.

#10

Miscellaneous Mentions

There are a few other things I could have experimented with including:

- **Post Length:** Some sources said to use every single one of the allowable 1300 characters, some said to keep it short and sweet.
- **Media:** The decision to add a photo versus a video versus text only.
- **Post Timing:** The best time of day and best day of the week to post.

10 Steps to a Viral LinkedIn Post

I saw viral posts on LinkedIn that were a combination of lengths, media vs text only, and timing so I just did what I wanted when it came to these three areas.

Lastly, most all of the advice on LinkedIn virality seemed to agree that you can go from Princess to Pauper post-to-post.

LinkedIn doesn't auto-magically penalize or reward you for any of your previous posts.

That means, if you're like me and haven't posted much (or at all) in over a decade, you can still achieve LinkedIn virality on your first, second, or even fourth post.

That being said, having a viral post doesn't mean you'll get that reach every time. Like the cheese in the *Farmer in the Dell* childhood singalong, each post's merit stands alone.

So, there you have it. My 10-Step guide to how I achieved LinkedIn virality.

Because the digital landscape changes rapidly, some of these tips may be obsolete by the time you read them. However, feel free to try what works, tweak what doesn't, and shoot me a message if you have other tips.

You made it all the way to the bottom of this guide so I'm assuming you're into professional improvement. If that's true, you're my kind of people 😎 (...ok, let's be honest, more like → 🧐).

For more step-by-step, actionable ways to increase your success - whether that's successful marketing strategies, leadership strategies, or strategies on how to start and grow a profitable business you actually enjoy running - join me and others like you in the Whyzze Business Community.

Check out what it's about at getwhyzze.com/community.

Cheers to Wise Growth!



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