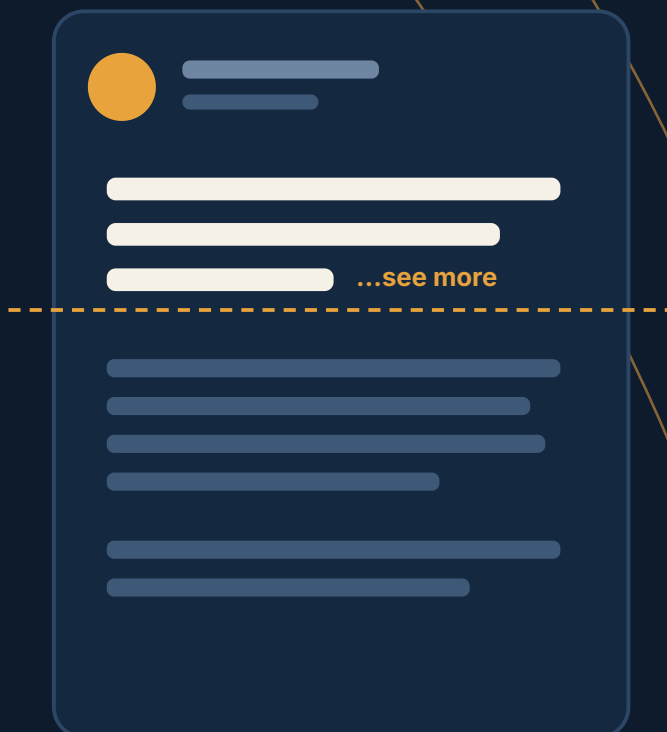


FREE FIELD GUIDE · 2026 EDITION

The LinkedIn Posting Cheat Sheet

Hooks that earn the click, formats that earn the save,
and a weekly rhythm you can keep. Built from
published 2026 data, not guesswork.



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What LinkedIn rewards, in one page

LinkedIn doesn't publish its formula. What it does show, and what large public datasets back up, points the same way: posts win when people stop, read, save and talk.

1

Stop the scroll

Dwell time is a passive signal LinkedIn measures: how long someone reads before moving on. A strong first two lines and a post that rewards reading both raise it.

2

Earn the save

An analysis of 3M+ posts reported by Hootsuite found a save can drive about 5x the reach of a like and about 2x a comment. Write things worth keeping: frameworks, checklists, templates.

3

Start the talk

Comments are active signals. Ask one specific question people can answer in a sentence. Then reply to every comment; replies count as conversation too.

THE MENTAL MODEL

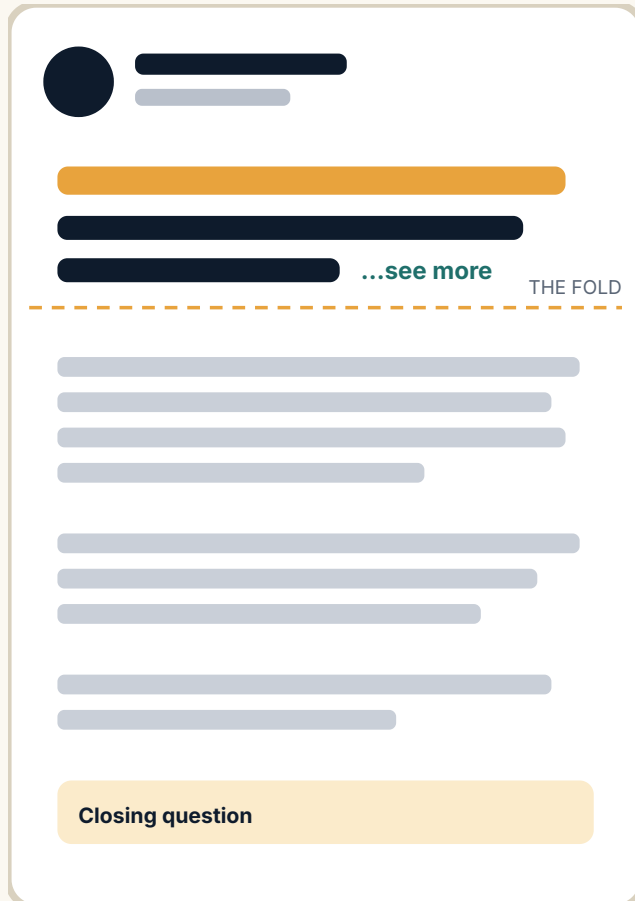


Posts are judged for days, not minutes. Hootsuite notes LinkedIn keeps evaluating a post over time, so it can resurface in feeds days later. The first hour helps, but it is not the whole game.

Don't rely on tricks. LinkedIn's own ranking research (LiRank, 2024) describes predicting several actions per post: like, comment, share, long dwell, click. Nobody outside can see the weights. Write for people and these signals follow.

Win the first three lines

Only the opening shows until someone taps "see more". Everything below the fold is read by people who already chose to stay.



Hook **ABOVE THE FOLD**

One idea, one tension, one reason to keep reading. Roughly 140 characters show on mobile and 210 on desktop, over about three lines.¹

Body

Short lines. One thought per line. White space between ideas. Give the proof, the steps, or the story, then land the point.

Close

End on one question that is easy to answer, or a single next step. Never two asks.

Hard limit

3,000 characters per post.¹ Most strong posts use far less.

DO

- Lead with the result, then explain.
- Be specific: a number, a place, a time.
- Write at one reader, in plain words.
- Cut your first paragraph. Start at the second.

SKIP

- "I'm excited to announce" openers.
- Hooks the body never pays off.
- Walls of text with no line breaks.
- Five hashtags. One to three is plenty.

Check your fold before you post. Real fold position depends on line wraps, so measure it. The free LinkedIn Post Previewer at linkedin.irfumafazath.net shows exactly where "see more" lands.

12 hook formulas to fill in

Pick one, swap the brackets for your real detail. The hook must be true. Specific beats clever.

1 The result first
I [did X] in [time]. Here's exactly how.

2 The mistake
The costliest [job/campaign] mistake I made: [one line].

3 The contrarian take
Most people say [common advice]. I think it's backwards.

4 The number
[Specific number] [things] taught me more than [big thing].

5 The before and after
Before: [pain]. After: [outcome]. The one change: [change].

6 The checklist
Before you [action], run this [N]-point check.

7 The honest admission
I was wrong about [belief]. Here's what changed my mind.

8 The teardown
I looked at [N] [posts/CVs/pages]. [Pattern] kept showing up.

9 The question
What would you do if [real scenario]?

10 The story cut
The meeting was going badly. Then [one specific moment].

11 The template
Steal this [email / CV line / outreach message].

12 The myth
"[Common claim]" is a myth. The evidence says [fact].

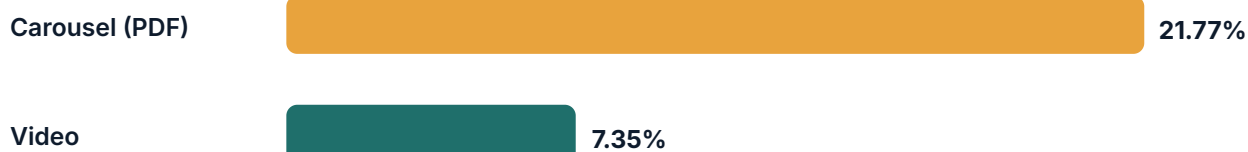
REWRITE TEST

Write the hook five different ways. Read them aloud. Keep the one that makes you curious about the next line.

Carousels lead. Plain text still works.

Document (PDF) posts, the format people call carousels, top the published benchmarks. Two studies, two methods, same direction.

MEDIAN ENGAGEMENT RATE, LINKEDIN (BUFFER)



Buffer: carousels earn 196% more than video and 585% more than text posts. Bars drawn to scale.

SECOND SOURCE

7.00%

Socialinsider's 2026 benchmark: native documents lead with a 7.00% average engagement rate, up 14% year on year, against 5.20% across all formats.

WHY THEY LIKELY WORK

Each swipe is a deliberate action, and the content suits saving. That is our reading, not a finding of either study. Different studies measure engagement differently, so compare within a study, not across them.

The 8-slide carousel skeleton

Slide	Job
1	Hook headline. Promise one outcome. Big type, no clutter.
2	Why it matters, in one sentence.
3-6	One idea per slide. A short headline, one line of support, one visual.
7	The recap or the template people will save.
8	One ask: follow, comment a keyword, or save it.

Practical rules: one idea per slide, large readable type on a phone, consistent colours, and a caption that works even if nobody swipes.

Post less than you fear, more than you think

Buffer's analysis of 2M+ posts from 94,000+ LinkedIn accounts found 2 to 5 posts per week is the sweet spot for reach and engagement without burnout. Going from 1 to 2-5 posts a week is where distribution jumps.

A REALISTIC WEEK (3 POSTS)

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
Plan	Prep: draft hooks, collect proof	Reply to comments, 15 min	POST 1 Teach: a framework or checklist	Engage on 5 posts in your niche	POST 2 Story or lesson learned

BEST TIMES (BUFFER, 4.8M POSTS)

- **Wed 4 pm** strongest slot overall
- Fri 3 pm and 4 pm next
- Window: weekdays 3-8 pm
- Monday and Tuesday are lowest

Times are in your audience's local time. Treat them as a starting point, then check your own analytics.

FIVE CONTENT PILLARS

- **Teach:** how-tos and frameworks
- **Prove:** results and case notes
- **Story:** lessons, mistakes
- **Opinion:** your clear take
- **Personal:** the person behind the work

The 15-minute rule. Be present for the 15 minutes after posting and reply to each comment. Do the same on a handful of posts in your niche before you publish. It builds your reach and your relationships.

The link question, answered with data

"Never put a link in a post" is repeated everywhere. The evidence is more careful than the advice.

WHAT THE DATA SHOWS

- Kliver, 566,957 posts: an attached link preview card had a median 414 impressions vs 795 for posts without one.
- A URL typed into the post text had 858 median impressions, on par with posts with no link.
- Growtempo, 34,000 posts: article shares appeared about 1.5x more often among the weakest posts. LinkedIn has never confirmed a penalty.

WHAT TO DO

- Lead with value that stands alone, without the click.
- When a link matters, put it as plain text in the post or the first comment, not as a preview card.
- Don't make the link the whole post.
- Test on your own audience for a month. Your account is the only sample that matters.

Comment engagement, done right

Moment	What to do
Before you post	Leave 3-5 thoughtful comments on posts from people in your niche. Add a point, not "great post".
First 15 minutes	Reply to every comment. Ask a follow-up question when it fits.
Next 24 hours	Check back twice. Late comments still get seen as the post keeps circulating.
Every week	Note which posts got saves and comments. Repeat the pattern, not the topic.

MYTH

"Engagement pods boost reach."

Empty comments carry little value. Real conversations do.

MYTH

"More hashtags, more reach."

Use one to three relevant tags. Quality of the post matters far more.

MYTH

"Post daily or die."

Consistency at 2-5 a week beats a burst you can't keep.

Two checklists to keep

The post check

- ☐ The first line makes sense without context.
- ☐ The hook is true and the body pays it off.
- ☐ One idea. Not three squeezed together.
- ☐ Short lines with space between ideas.
- ☐ A specific example, number, or name.
- ☐ No filler opener, no buzzword stack.
- ☐ One closing question or one ask.
- ☐ One to three hashtags, if any.
- ☐ Fold checked on mobile.
- ☐ Read it aloud once.

The profile check

- ☐ Clear photo, face visible, plain background.
- ☐ Headline says who you help and how, not just a job title.
- ☐ Banner shows what you do or who you serve.
- ☐ About section opens with the result you create.
- ☐ Featured section holds your best proof or offer.
- ☐ Contact route is easy to find.
- ☐ Your latest 3 posts look like the person in the headline.
- ☐ Custom profile URL is short and clean.

YOUR FIRST 30 DAYS

Week	Focus	Output
1	Fix your profile. Collect 10 story ideas from real work.	Profile updated, idea list
2	Post 2-3 times. Comment on 5 posts per day.	3 posts, ~25 comments
3	Publish your first carousel.	1 carousel, 2 posts
4	Review analytics. Double down on what got saves.	One-page learnings

NOW PUT IT TO WORK

Pick one hook. Post it **this week.**

The best cheat sheet is the one you use. Start with a single post, check the fold, and be there for the first 15 minutes.

FREE TOOL

LinkedIn Post Previewer

See your post on desktop and mobile, with the exact "see more" fold and a character count.

linkedin.irfumafazath.net

WANT IT DONE FOR YOU?

LinkedIn growth for brands and personal profiles

Read how four brand pages were grown on LinkedIn:

irfumafazath.net/work/four-brand-pages-linkedin-growth

Sources. Buffer, best time to post on LinkedIn (4.8M posts, 2026) and how often to post (2M+ posts, 94,000+ accounts); Buffer, best content format by platform; Socialinsider, LinkedIn benchmarks 2026; Hootsuite, LinkedIn algorithm guide; LinkedIn LiRank paper (Feb 2024); Kliver Analytics, external links and reach (566,957 posts); Growtempo, LinkedIn external links (34,000 posts); AuthoredUp, LinkedIn character limits. Studies measure different accounts and methods, so treat figures as guidance. Copyright Irfan Muhammad.