Microsoft

Microsoft Case Study:

Full funnel marketing in action

LinkedIn

Marketing a vision of technology

Today's tech marketers are selling more than just licenses and solutions – and they are selling to more than just traditional IT decision-makers.

Learn how Microsoft has motivated businesses as a whole around the difference their solutions can make.

The Big Picture

Business software is now every employee's business. Today's IT purchases aren't decided by a single IT buyer working to a functional brief. They are influenced by a broad buying committee, with four out of five employees playing some role at some stage.

When it comes to business software, 80% of those who influence a purchase exert that influence at the needs stage. Tech marketers can't afford to jump straight into a conversation about functional benefits. They must first inspire employees at all levels about why those features matter.

At the same time, tech marketers know that helping sales close deals is no longer enough. Their customers are always assessing, always benchmarking their technology against their peers, and always on the look-out for other options. Securing long-term revenues means focusing on lifetime value – for both their business and their customers.

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When it comes to business software

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need to be inspired at the needs stage.

Microsoft is working with LinkedIn on a new approach to marketing workplace software that can engage and inspire across businesses as a whole. It's focused not just on selling software licenses – but on continually growing the value customers get from them.

The Campaign Objective

The Microsoft 365 suite contains some productivity tools that are familiar to businesses the world over, with names like Office, PowerPoint and Word, but it has now evolved into a complete, intelligent solution, including Office 365, Windows 10, and Enterprise Mobility + Security, that empowers everyone to be creative and work together, securely.

However, Microsoft knew that many customers were only leveraging a tiny proportion of this software's potential. To unlock more value from its workplace solutions, it needed to do more than sell licenses. **The challenge was to drive behaviour change at scale by engaging customers with a new culture of work.**

This new strategy put traditional tech marketing objectives in a different light. It was important to generate leads and drive new customer acquisition, but equally important to make sure that those buying a software license were fully engaged with how they could use it. Customer lifetime value depended on building interest in new ways of working first.

"We're not just selling Microsoft 365. We're selling a holistic workplace solution. We know that the more businesses use it, the more they will gain in terms of efficiency, productivity and their ability to focus on the core of what they do. That's why the starting point for this campaign has to be establishing a new culture of work. We want companies to really understand the value of working in this new way. Our end objective isn't just to sell to them – it's to give them solutions that they don't want to be without."

Johanna Winqvist
Integrated Marketing Manager, Microsoft

Microsoft LinkedIn

The Target Audience

Today Microsoft's sales teams are focused on helping customers to embrace a new culture of work and this involves engaging a far broader range of decision-makers and influencers within a business, beyond just the IT department.

It was vital that the marketing Microsoft developed supported this change by engaging on a business-wide level – and leading with business-wide benefits.

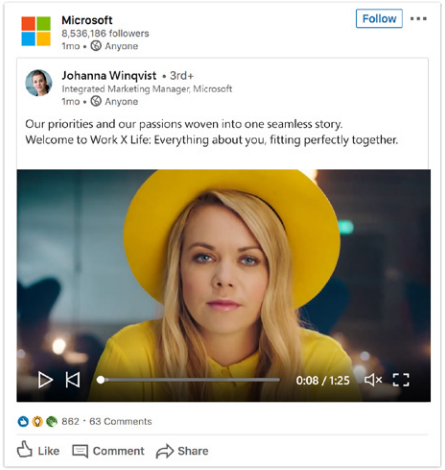
The campaign achieved this through a deliberately broad approach to targeting that used LinkedIn to generate mass reach among potential influencers and decision-makers at businesses of 50 employees or more. As audience members engaged with the new culture of work, Microsoft responded by using LinkedIn to target them with increasingly tailored content that fitted their specific function and role.

"The changing workplace is creating new demands of businesses as a whole – and that means we need to talk to a far wider group of stakeholders within those businesses. We need the ability to build awareness around the culture of work at scale first – and then engage people in different roles around the needs that they have."

Johanna Winqvist
Integrated Marketing Manager, Microsoft

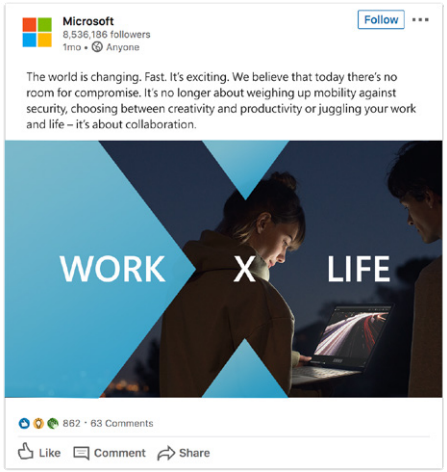
A Customer Journey Built on a Big Idea

Microsoft worked with its agency Wunderman to design a customer journey across three layers. It was an approach designed to pre-qualify the leads generated on LinkedIn. Before prospects had the opportunity to share their details, they were primed with an understanding of how to unlock ongoing value from workplace solutions



In the first layer of activity, Microsoft used **Video for Sponsored Content and Carousel Ads** to set out a vision of a new culture of work: one that empowers creativity and collaboration from anywhere and balances freedom and protection, art and science, work and life.

The campaign used aspirational imagery and thoughtful, concise copy to establish the idea that software should enable a different way of doing things.



The second layer of activity built on initial engagement with the concept of a new culture of work. Microsoft used **Messenger Ads and Sponsored Content** to introduce thought-leadership assets around changing roles in the workplace, the tensions that businesses must resolve as professional life changes, and the role that software can play.

Integrated LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms were used to translate engagement with these assets into qualified leads.

In the final layer, Microsoft tailored content to specific roles and functions, using LinkedIn targeting to demonstrate the value of workplace solutions across all elements of a business – and all those who will be involved in buying, implementing and using software.

"We're creating a journey that our audiences can explore for themselves, while signalling their level of engagement. We're starting with a big idea around the culture of work and how it applies to everyone, and then talking more directly to specific audiences like HR directors, CMOs and SMB owners. We decided we didn't want to send people to solutions-oriented messaging too soon. We don't want to drive leads until those leads are familiar with what we can do for them."

Johanna Winqvist
Integrated Marketing Manager, Microsoft

The Results

Microsoft's awareness-led approach to marketing workplace solutions is driving increased engagement at every stage of the funnel.

The click-through rate (CTR) of 0.65% and engagement rate of 0.73% beat both LinkedIn and Microsoft benchmarks.

Focusing on qualifying leads so that they represent greater lifetime customer value, hasn't reduced the volume of leads that Microsoft generates. The LinkedIn campaign beat all of Microsoft's lead generation targets at a cost per lead (CPL) that is 20% below internal benchmark. Over 84% of all leads generated were net new leads.

The three-layered strategy that Microsoft adopted is delivering tangible results. Targeting audiences with Video for Sponsored Content and Carousel Ads first, increased the Messenger Ads open rate by 23%, and the CTR by 13%. It also reduced CPL by more than half.

"The really exciting thing about these results is that they prove the strategy works. We had set an ambitious target for CPL – and we've beaten it. We've seen strong engagement across different roles, including IT decision-makers, and we're driving the kind of conversations with businesses that we wanted to see."

Johanna Winqvist
Integrated Marketing Manager, Microsoft

1,157,552 Video Views

0.65%
Click-through rate (CTR)

0.73%
engagement rate

Beating LinkedIn and Microsoft benchmarks

20%
below internal benchmark Cost per lead (CPL)

+84%
of all leads were net new leads

+23%
increase in Messenger Ads open rate

+13%
increase in CTR

50%
reduce CPL

Contact

Thank you for reviewing this case study. We are excited to share it with you!

To find out more about how you can leverage LinkedIn to achieve your marketing goals, please do not hesitate to contact your Microsoft account team at LinkedIn:

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About LinkedIn Marketing Solutions

LinkedIn Marketing Solutions is the most effective platform for marketers to authentically connect with professionals, grow their business, and build lasting connections with business decision-makers. Our mission is to be the most effective platform for marketers to engage with the professional audiences that matter most to their business.

More than 700M people worldwide gather on LinkedIn to stay connected and informed, advance their careers, and work smarter. Together they comprise the largest global community of business professionals. These are the decision-makers, influencers, and the leaders of today and tomorrow — precisely the people you want to reach and engage.

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