

LinkedIn Rolls Out “Stories” – Now What?

LinkedIn continued its expansion into the younger market this month with the launch of “Stories.” This Snapchat-meets-LinkedIn move brings creative functionality to LinkedIn, which has traditionally been viewed as a business-only social media platform. According to LinkedIn, Stories are still being tested and are only available in certain countries, so expect upgrades and changes over the next several months.

What do professional services marketers need to know about LinkedIn Stories, and how can they leverage this feature to their firm’s benefit? Here’s an overview of Stories and my analysis of how this might affect professional services marketing.



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What Are LinkedIn Stories?

Stories are animated posts built from a user’s images or videos that are stored in their phone’s photo library or captured with the camera in real time, and then overlaid with optional “badges” and text. They appear at the top of the LinkedIn app feed for 24 hours – and then disappear. The concept is to share visual content in a clever way without linking to web content or adding to your profile’s library of posts.

The idea for Stories dates back to 2012, when Snapchat introduced the first generation of ephemeral social media content. Baffled by the apparent ridiculousness of the idea, many predicted an early demise. However, the social media platform hit more than 100 million users in just four years and now boasts more than 298 million daily active users. Other platforms have jumped on the bandwagon with similar forms of ephemeral content, including Instagram and Facebook.

Why Use Disappearing Social Media Content?

Before we explore how LinkedIn Stories might apply to professional services industries, let’s look at why people have gravitated to disappearing content. Ephemeral content gives a glimpse into someone’s daily life in an authentic way without the distraction of comments or links to other content. In this way, Stories can strengthen social bonds in the real world with real people. You also don’t have to think about how your content is being catalogued because the stories are only temporary.

While Stories often appeal to a younger generation, they are growing in popularity among an older demographic. According to statistics, [almost half of Instagram’s 130 million active users are over 34 years old](#), an age group that is prominently represented on LinkedIn. It’s likely that these users’ ephemeral content habits will carry over to the more-professional platform.

How Lawyers and Accountants Can Use LinkedIn Stories

Stories provide a way for professionals to shape their social media images in a clever and authentic way, positioning themselves as approachable and relatable to people who might otherwise think of them as distant and inaccessible.

Scanning my LinkedIn feed for marketing professionals using Stories, I quickly realized that the adoption level is still somewhat limited. In true form, though, legal marketing guru [Roy Sexton](#) has already started sharing Stories. I asked for his thoughts about where Stories will take us.

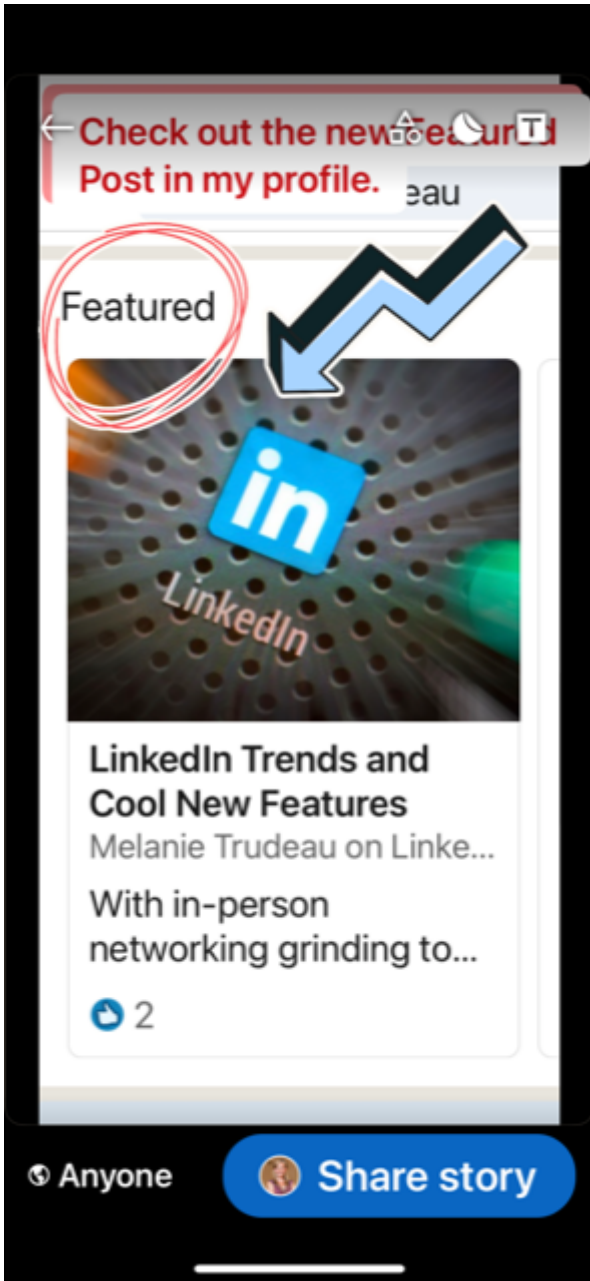
It is interesting how these different platforms borrow concepts from one another. I do think we will be in a bit of a trial-and-error phase with how Stories are used on LinkedIn. That said, I predict they will be as positively disruptive here as they have been on other platforms. Currently, I am using it to drive people to content I have pinned to my profile. I think the ability to include images, and particularly video, will be powerful. The cut and paste doesn't work at all, which is frustrating. And there's no way to include links in the Story. That said, I would encourage people – as I do in all things social media – not to be afraid to experiment and benchmark what other people are doing that you like. I would lean into the visual, and if you can pull an image or a screen grab from an article and direct people to the content, use it as a form of advertisement for material you want people to see.

A key point here is the visual component of Stories. Images and videos are the foundation of a good Story, so get ready to use your phone camera in unique ways. Which brings us to the main question ...

What Can LinkedIn Stories Be About?

If you're thinking about dipping your toe into LinkedIn's latest feature, try some of these ideas.

- **Firm culture:** Snap a few pictures of colleagues in the office or on Zoom calls with clever badges and text. Create a video asking people at your firm about their favorite parts of their jobs. This kind of inside look at the office will go a long way toward demonstrating office culture in a real-life way.
- **Community events:** If the firm sponsors a community event or members volunteer for a fundraiser or charitable cause, use visual content in Stories to highlight these efforts.
- **Milestones and recognitions:** If someone at the firm receives an honor or ranking, snap a quick picture and showcase them in a congratulatory post.
- **Presentations:** Take a recent presentation and turn it into a Story by posting a series of slides (but make sure to save them as images).
- **Question of the day:** Ask a question to your LinkedIn followers to generate engagement. At the time of this writing, LinkedIn provides one question each day. As an example, today's question is "How do you get your daily news?"



- **Featured content:** While you can't include links in Stories, you can direct people to find content in your LinkedIn profile. Pointing to your "Featured Posts" is a good place to start. Here's an example of how I created a Story that points to a recent Featured Post. I added a few design features and the text, "Check out the new Featured Post in my profile."

How to Get Started With LinkedIn Stories

LinkedIn's [help section](#) provides the basics for getting started with Stories, but here are a few quick tips.

- You can share Stories for a profile or a company page, but they can only be created, shared and viewed in the mobile app.
- Stories pull visual content from your photo library or your camera in real time. In your phone settings, you have to give LinkedIn access your photo library.

- Badges and text overlays can be added with limited controls for size, color and positioning. In my sample Story, you can see where I've added the red circle swirl, the blue lightning-bolt arrow and the red text at the top.
- You can [view or save a Story](#), but this has to be done in the first 24 hours after posting.
- LinkedIn Insights shows how many unique views you get on a Story. You may also see your viewer's name, known job title and current company, depending on their privacy settings, but the metrics will only be available for the 24 hours the Story is up.

While LinkedIn still has a ways to go in expanding the functionality of Stories, it's worth tapping into your creative side and experimenting with new ways to showcase your firm or your own personal brand. To learn about other recent updates to LinkedIn, read my previous post, [LinkedIn Trends and Cool New Features](#), or reach out to me, [Melanie Trudeau](#), at mtrudeau@jaffepr.com.