

Use LinkedIn Thought Leader Ads to Raise Attorney Profiles

In June 2023, LinkedIn rolled out a new paid feature called Thought Leader Ads that can shine a spotlight on individual professionals and target their content to a user-defined audience. Before this innovation, firms could pay to boost LinkedIn Company Page content but not the content of professionals and staff who work for your organization.

Law firms should see this innovation as an exciting addition to their LinkedIn toolbox. While being able to pay to [boost Company Page content](#) to a targeted audience has long been a useful feature, LinkedIn really is a site devoted more to peer-to-peer connections than brand-to-peer connections because content posted by real humans is perceived as more authentic than content posted by faceless brands. This means you can expect more traction when boosting individual user content over company content.

That said, your thought leaders are extensions of your brand, so Thought Leader Ads really have a dual benefit of doing the heavy lifting of reputation-building for your attorneys as well as brand-building for your law firm.

This article provides information about how law firms can set up LinkedIn Thought Leader Ads, some best practices to consider and the benefits of this new feature.

How to Set Up LinkedIn Thought Leader Ads

LinkedIn makes it relatively easy for a firm to sponsor an attorney's content as a Thought Leader Ad, and the social network provides [helpful instructions about how to set these ads up](#) on the Marketing Solutions section of its site.

That said, here's how to get started with this fairly new type of LinkedIn paid content.

First, you will need to make sure you are set up to operate Campaign Manager on behalf of your firm's Company Page so you can create an ad campaign on LinkedIn. [Here's a helpful video about Campaign Manager](#) with instructions about how to get set up.

Next, you'll want to create a new campaign using the Campaign Manager interface by selecting "Campaign" from the "Create" dropdown menu. Then you'll be prompted to select your objective for your Thought Leader Ad campaign. As of this writing, LinkedIn only allows these types of ads to have one of two objectives: brand awareness and engagement.

Next, you'll want to build your audience. At this point, you should already know exactly what content you want to pay to boost and the type(s) of LinkedIn users you want to target. That will inform how you build out your audience criteria. I won't go into too much detail here about audience-building best practices – you can read a little about our



Keith Ecker

Senior Vice President
Marketing & Branding
573.289.3558
kecker@jaffepr.com

thoughts on the subject in this step-by-step article about setting up a LinkedIn ad campaign. But overall, you will want to hit a sweet spot that is neither too narrow nor too broad. LinkedIn provides forecasting on your anticipated reach as you build your audience, which can be very helpful when trying to hit that Goldilocks zone.

You will also be prompted to select your ad format. As of now, LinkedIn only allows Thought Leader Ads to be formatted as either single-image ads or video ads. That said, these two formats provide ample opportunity when it comes to distributing thought leadership content, from sharing an article or blog post to sharing brief videos of engaging commentary or analysis.

Next, you'll want to set the budget and schedule the campaign. There are too many variables that could impact your budget to provide a best practice here, but LinkedIn has some good information about [budget-setting and scheduling here](#).

Once you've set the budget and scheduling criteria, you will click on the "Next" button, which will lead you to a screen where you can create your ad. This is where the Thought Leader Ad differs significantly from building your typical LinkedIn ad. Here, you'll want to select "Browse existing content," which will then open the Content Library. Next, select "Employee," which will allow you to search for and select the attorney whose content you wish to share.

CRITICAL INFORMATION: You can only promote posts from employees/attorneys who are verified members of LinkedIn. Verified members *must* have the law firm as an active and current job in the experience section of their LinkedIn profiles.

Then, select the "Posts" tab to search for posts by attorney name. Review that lawyer's content for the post you wish to promote as a Thought Leader Ad. Select the desired post, and click "Request approval." This will trigger sending a sponsorship request to that attorney via email, which they will have to approve for you to move forward with the Thought Leader Ad.

You will be notified via Campaign Manager once the attorney approves the sponsorship request, which will then allow you to move forward and launch your ad.

If you've boosted Company Page content in the past, most of these steps will sound familiar, so sponsoring attorney content should be pretty straightforward. For those who are new to LinkedIn advertising, the process is relatively easy, and, once again, LinkedIn provides ample instructions at the Marketing Solutions section of its website.

LinkedIn Thought Leader Ad Best Practices

If you're going to put some money behind sponsoring an attorney's content, you'll want to think strategically to get the most ROI. Here are some best practices to consider when launching LinkedIn Thought Leader Ads.

- **Choose *Who to Sponsor Wisely*:** When selecting which attorney to sponsor, make sure they are an active participant on LinkedIn with a large following. The thought leader you select should be someone who doesn't require poking and prodding to engage on

LinkedIn – they should routinely post and reply to comments on their own.

- **Choose *What to Sponsor Wisely*:** Select content to sponsor that really showcases the attorney's thought leadership. After all, these are called "Thought Leader Ads." Ideally, the content you share will contain some genuine thought leadership, such as analysis on trending topics like a court decision or a new regulation.
- **Choose a Post with a Strong Visual:** If you're doing a single-image ad, i.e., not a video, choose to sponsor an ad that contains a strong visual element. The goal here is to "stop the scroll" so users who are fed your ad actually pause enough to see it.
- **Ensure There's a Call to Action:** Every ad should have a desired next step for the viewer to take. This is your call to action, and for a LinkedIn Thought Leader Ad, that next action will likely be to click through to engage with some type of thought leadership content, e.g., read an article or view a presentation.
- **Include Exclusions When Targeting:** Who *not* to target is just as important as who to target. One strategy I've employed when creating LinkedIn ad audiences is to specify who to exclude, which can help make sure that your efforts aren't watered down by having LinkedIn serve your sponsored post to low-value targets. For example, consider excluding users whose titles include "Business Development" or "Sales." This will help you bypass the many, many LinkedIn users who are only on the site to solicit others for business.

The Benefit of LinkedIn Thought Leader Ads

You might wonder why you'd want to sponsor an attorney's LinkedIn content, especially when you already can boost content shared by your law firm's Company Page.

As mentioned earlier, LinkedIn is more of a peer-to-peer social network. This is evident in the way the algorithm prioritizes user content over company content and how users on the network are much more likely to engage with user-generated posts than company posts. This means that you're likely to get more engagement in the form of reactions, comments and click-throughs with Thought Leader Ads than with boosted Company Page posts.

Part of this phenomenon is due to perceived authenticity by your audience. Authenticity plays well on social media, and as good as your Company Page voice and tone might be, the fact that it is a brand interacting rather than a person reduces the authenticity of your [Company Page content](#). Attorneys, on the other hand, can write posts that let their unique personalities shine through, which increases that authenticity factor.

By sponsoring authentic content to reach a wider, targeted audience, you enhance that attorney's reputation with that audience. This is a valuable relationship-building tool and can play an important role in a buyer's journey if the attorney is adept at [using social media for business development](#).

At the same time, the law firm's brand reputation benefits by being associated with the attorney. Since the attorney is a thought leader and works for your firm, it reflects that your firm has authoritative, industry-leading talent.

Over time, by strategically sponsoring an attorney's content, you can help develop a community around that attorney. This is the ultimate goal of any thought leader. Building

a community around an attorney's reputation as an expert reflects the trust and credibility they have with their audience. And the more trust and credibility they have, the more likely these contacts will turn to them, or refer business to them, when an issue arises that is in their wheelhouse.

Interested in using LinkedIn Thought Leader Ads to boost the visibility and reputation of your attorneys? Contact Keith Ecker, SVP, Marketing & Branding, at kecker@jaffepr.com.