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LinkedIn's "cringe" personal posts actually work, study of 116,000 posts finds

Posts about something the writer actually did earn about a third more reactions, and first lines written as "I" or "we" add about 19%, while writing at the reader ("you should...") costs about 10%.

13 October 2026: The personal LinkedIn posts that people love to mock are the ones that work. Posts in which the writer describes something they actually did, saw or went through earn about a third more reactions than the same person's other posts, a study of more than 116,000 posts has found.

The study, by LinkedIn content studio Flypost, compared the posts of 2,400+ B2B professionals with each person's own other posts, so the results show what a style of post does rather than who tends to write it. It was first run in July 2026 and repeated in October on the latest 12 months of posts. Flypost sells LinkedIn content software.

Key findings

1. **Personal stories win.** Personal-story posts earned about a third more reactions than the same person's other posts, for 3 in 4 people.
2. **Write about yourself, not at the reader.** First lines using "I", "my", "we" or "our" earned about 19% more reactions; openers built on "you" and "your" cost about 10%.
3. **Show, don't preach.** Generic advice with no story or specific detail earned about 13% fewer reactions.
4. **Images help, timing doesn't.** Image posts earned about 35% more than text; posting at the weekend instead of midweek made no meaningful difference.

"The posts people roll their eyes at are the ones that work. Readers would rather hear what happened to you than be told what to do."

Sam Cassman, founder, Flypost

About the study

Flypost analysed 116,000+ original LinkedIn posts published between October 2025 and September 2026 by 2,400+ English-speaking B2B creators (1,000 to 500,000 followers), drawn from 2,500 tracked across the US, UK, Canada, Australia, Europe and elsewhere. Posts are public and were collected through a third-party data provider. Each finding compares a creator's posts that used a tactic with their own posts that didn't, and measures reactions and comments, not impressions. Posts were labelled as personal stories by an AI model (Gemini 3.7 Flash) for April to September 2026; a hand check of 30 randomly chosen posts agreed with 26. The study was not independently reviewed. Full method, limits and charts: <https://www.flypost.io/learn/linkedin-algorithm-study-data>

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Notes to editors

1. **Full methodology** is on the study page above, including exclusions (reposts, posts under 14 days old) and the July 2026 first run.
2. **Findings table** (each creator compared with their own posts; 95% interval; share of creators who did better):

Tactic	Effect on reactions	Interval	Creators	Did better
Personal story (Apr–Sep 2026)	+33%	+29% to +38%	1,549	75%
Image vs text-only	+35%	+30% to +41%	1,047	73%
"I/my/we/our" in first line	+19%	+16% to +21%	1,734	69%
Concrete detail (Apr–Sep 2026)	+15%	+12% to +18%	1,000	62%
Generic, no story or detail (Apr–Sep 2026)	–13%	–16% to –10%	955	37%
"You/your" in first line	–10%	–12% to –8%	1,382	35%
1–2 hashtags	no change	–3% to +4%	907	51%
3–5 hashtags	–8%	–11% to –3%	971	44%
Question as first line	–17%	–19% to –11%	685	31%
Link in a normal post	–13%	–16% to –10%	1,366	40%
Weekend vs weekday	+3%	0% to +6%	1,211	54%
"Comment KEYWORD", Apr to early Jul 2026	+13%	0% to +27%	177	58%
"Comment KEYWORD", mid Jul to Sep 2026	–24%	–39% to –5%	120	36%
Poll vs text-only	–58%	–69% to –50%	47	9%

3. **Where the advice we tested is published:** Sprout Social's LinkedIn hashtag guide ("three to five hashtags per post", May 2026): <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/linkedin-hashtags/> ; Hootsuite's hashtag and algorithm guides: <https://blog.hootsuite.com/linkedin-hashtags/> and <https://blog.hootsuite.com/linkedin-algorithm/> ; Buffer's best time to post on LinkedIn (July 2026): <https://buffer.com/resources/best-time-to-post-on-linkedin/> . The 60% link-penalty figure: Forbes, 30 July 2026, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jodiecook/2026/07/30/the-linkedin-link-penalty-cutting-your-reach-by-60/>
4. **Other published estimates:** MagicPost on "comment KEYWORD" posts (30 September 2026): <https://magicpost.in/studies/linkedin-comment-bait>
5. **Assets** (charts, data table, headshot, logo): <https://www.flypost.io/press/linkedin-study-2026>
6. **Interviews:** Sam Cassman, founder of Flypost, is available for interview.
7. **About Flypost:** Flypost is a LinkedIn content studio that turns a company's own material (posts, transcripts, case studies) into LinkedIn posts, carousels and articles. <https://www.flypost.io>
8. **Media contact:** Sam Cassman, sam@flypost.io. Phone available on request.