

# WINNING LEADS AND CLIENTS ON LINKEDIN: A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR B2B GROWTH AND PROFILE OPTIMISATION

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## Abstract

This paper offers authors LinkedIn framework and explores the strategic use of LinkedIn as a platform for B2B lead generation and client acquisition. Though it is the biggest professional network in the world, many companies and individuals' underuse or ignore LinkedIn because of ignorance of its strategic possibilities. By means of a hybrid research strategy comprising longitudinal platform analytics, a survey of 12 LinkedIn profiles, and autoethnographic insights, this study reveals main success drivers: profile clarity, content consistency, focused communication, and organized funnel design. Correlation analysis shows that perceived trust and profile understanding are much influenced by aspects such as banner usefulness and headline clarity. Comparative data over two years show that using a disciplined LinkedIn approach greatly increases lead flow and engagement. Not only a social presence, the report ends with useful, research-based advice for people looking to use LinkedIn as a company development engine.

**Keywords:** LinkedIn, B2B marketing, Profile optimization, Lead generation, Social selling.

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.24818/beman/2025.S.I.5-11>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Even with almost a billion users worldwide, many professionals still find LinkedIn misinterpreted and underused. LinkedIn is set differently; it is a professional marketplace rather than a social network while students and casual users go toward visual platforms like Instagram or TikTok (Barbu, 2018; Popescu, Bunea, Medințu, & Mazilu, 2021).

Many people view LinkedIn more as a digital résumé than as a tool for strategic storytelling. Profiles often fail by being either overwhelming or lacking clarity, a "motley buffet" or "empty plate," both of which confuse and deter involvement, as Cooley (Cooley, 2020) argues.

The fallout is not just related to reputation. Particularly for disadvantaged groups and professionals in transition, Groysberg and Lin (Groysberg & Lin, 2023) really show that a more thorough and strategically organized LinkedIn presence corresponds with 4–6% higher earnings and more incoming possibilities. LinkedIn's own data (LinkedIn Corporation, 2025) shows that, trusted by recruiters, corporate leaders, and B2B buyers equally, the site continues to be the most often utilized digital area for career-related activity.

### 1.1 Research problem

Despite LinkedIn's professional relevance, most users do not treat their profiles as lead-generation funnels. The problem lies in poor profile positioning, unstructured messaging, and underutilization of features like banners, CTAs, and content cadence.

### 1.2 Motivation

As a practitioner working at the intersection of engineering, marketing, and digital positioning, the author observed that even highly qualified professionals and businesses often fail to translate expertise into opportunity via LinkedIn. This gap between capability and visibility became the core motivation for this research.

### 1.3 Target audience

This study is intended for B2B professionals, consultants, SMEs, and solopreneurs who rely on digital presence for business development. It also serves communication strategists, marketers, and career advisors seeking to understand the tangible mechanics of LinkedIn positioning.

### 1.4 Research path

To address the research problem, the paper uses a mixed-method approach:

- A survey of 12 LinkedIn profiles evaluated by 36 participants
- Autoethnographic analysis of the author's profile performance
- Longitudinal platform analytics over a 24-month period

These methods provide both quantitative and qualitative insights into what makes a LinkedIn profile high-converting and trustworthy—and how these traits can be systematically built.

## 2. THE ROLE OF LINKEDIN IN B2B LEAD GENERATION

LinkedIn has developed much beyond its beginnings as a digital résumé tool. From awareness to conversion, it is now central in the whole B2B buyer process. According to Tudoran (Tudoran, 2018), the modern buyer path is self-driven; over 70% of buyers seek online before contacting anyone, so early interaction depends on visibility and clarity.

Social media has evolved from a complementary tool to a central driver in digital sales funnels. Kiselicki et al. (2021) show that while Facebook produced the highest number of leads, LinkedIn generated the highest conversion rate (22.79%), confirming its efficiency in B2B contexts.

Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) and solopreneurs, who frequently lack big marketing teams and must thus rely instead on strategic positioning and social selling to start business interactions, especially bear this in mind (Tudoran, 2018; Fraccastoro, Gabrielsson, & Bolman P, 2021). Recent case study research by Spilotro et al. (2023) also confirms that LinkedIn can be a strategic digital marketing tool for SMEs seeking international expansion.

Particularly for foreign SMEs, Fraccastoro et al. (Fraccastoro, Gabrielsson, & Bolman P, 2021) demonstrate that LinkedIn is ingrained across three key phases of the B2B funnel: prospecting, lead nurturing, and relationship maintenance. It provides a direct route of communication as well as a visibility aid.

Though its potential is great, many users—especially in academia or among students—still find LinkedIn's goal unclear. Ring (Ring, 2020) and Popescu et al. (Popescu, Bunea, Medințu, & Mazilu, 2021) underline how rare students view LinkedIn as useful for academic development or career advancement, so highlighting a disparity in platform view between casual users and business professionals.

By demonstrating that most LinkedIn users treat the network passively, utilizing it for job seeking or keeping in touch with contacts — not appreciating its value for trust-building and business acquisition — Sundström et al. (Sundström, Alm, Larsson, & Dahlin, 2020) further highlight this gap. This study aims to exactly fix this misalignment.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

This study uses platform analytics, autoethnographic reflection, and a qualitative survey to examine how LinkedIn profiles affect client acquisition, trust, and perspective.

We cite Cortez et al. (Cortez, Johnston, & Dastidar, 2023), who investigated how LinkedIn content and profiles impact B2B engagement and sales, therefore justifying the use of profile evaluations as a legitimate study technique. Their research validates how directly user impression and lead generation are impacted by profile completeness, clarity, and structure.

Likewise, Tobback (Tobback, 2019) examined LinkedIn summaries for how experts apply self-praise techniques. Her results support the inclusion of trustworthiness, profile clarity, and positioning strength as measured factors — fundamental features in the survey framework devised for this paper.

We leverage Davis et al. (Davis, Wolff, Forret, & Sullivan, 2020), who discovered that LinkedIn activity is tightly linked with job advancement, to improve the correlation study. Their empirical results confirm the analytical structure of the survey's incorporation of engagement signals and profile trust markers.

The profile clarity survey was conducted using Google Forms. 36 participants assessed 12 LinkedIn profiles based on 12 clarity-related variables (e.g. perceived trustworthiness, offer visibility, headline usefulness). Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation analysis were used to interpret the relationships between profile elements and user responses. To complement the survey, the author's personal LinkedIn data was evaluated using AuthoredUp, a content performance plugin. This tool enabled a readability audit across 720 posts from last 2 years, using the Automated Readability Index (ARI) to correlate content clarity with engagement metrics (reactions, comments, shares).

This research guides the development of the survey questions as well as the justification for assessing value communication, CTA visibility, and profile clarity as important LinkedIn business levers.

#### 4. PROFILE OPTIMIZATION AND POSITIONING STRATEGY

A well-optimized LinkedIn profile serves as a digital store that not only presents who you are but also fosters trust and motivates activity. As Saeidi and Hollensen (Saeidi & Hollensen, 2024) underline, LinkedIn-based lead creation is built on profile clarity. Starting with profile optimization, their six-stage system directly complements the methodical approach described in this part.

Cortez et al. (Cortez, Johnston, & Dastidar, 2023) underline even more how views and conversions are generated by profiles with clear images, powerful summaries, and offer-driven featured sections. These results reinforce the advice to create banners, headlines, and CTAs not as decorations but rather as strategic tools guiding a visitor across a decision-making process.

Groysberg and Lin (Groysberg & Lin, 2023) discovered in support of this perspective that profiles with more thorough and precisely expressed value propositions pay noticeably greater remuneration during job changes. Although their research mostly addresses pay, the fundamental discovery relates equally to B2B lead generation: initial impressions convert when clarity is strong.

Gary Vaynerchuk (Vaynerchuk, 2024) also stresses this change: "Your LinkedIn profile isn't a resume." He advises seeing your profile as a content-driven asset, one that draws the appropriate audience by means of storytelling, specificity, and social proof.

Even LinkedIn's official policies (LinkedIn Corporation, 2025) underline the need for completing important sections (headline, about, featured) with a clear offer and client-oriented structure. These platform insights help to reinforce the tactical elements advised here: CTA alignment, banner clarity, headline message, and profile photo placement.

## 5. KEY ELEMENTS OF LINKEDIN STRATEGY

Beyond profile optimization, LinkedIn success depends on a deeper knowledge of platform dynamics, audience behaviour, and strategic design of every engagement. Five fundamental elements in this part help to translate visibility into business results:

### 5.1 Understanding the ICP (Ideal Customer Profile)

Knowing who you serve starts you on clarity. Effective lead generation begins with client targeting—not content—according to Saeidi and Hollensen (Saeidi & Hollensen, 2024). Even excellent content fails without a clear ICP. Your profile, material, and outreach should respond to three points: who you help; what you help them achieve; why you're the right person to do it.

### 5.2 Algorithm awareness

Gary Vaynerchuk (Vaynerchuk, 2024) underlines that LinkedIn is an algorithm-driven attention economy, not only a venue to broadcast. Knowing platform mechanics is essential: overuse of hashtags can limit reach; early involvement increases post-distribution; LinkedIn fines too many outgoing links (Saeidi & Hollensen, 2024).

Success results from matching your material to the algorithm's preferences for relevancy, clarity, and engagement.

### 5.3 Content design

Before a conversation ever begins, content determines your credibility. Utz and Breuer's (Utz & Breuer, 2019) research shows that, only when content is strategic, both passive (scrolling) and active (posting) LinkedIn usage results in actual commercial gains.

### 5.4 Your post should

- Be written at ARI < 8 readability level.
- Hook attention in the first three lines.

- Focus on insight and value, not self-promotion.
- Use carousel PDFs, native posts, or storytelling.

Barbu (Barbu, 2018) notes that although younger consumers gravitate toward Instagram and TikTok, professionals flock to LinkedIn for answers—not for fun. This emphasizes the need for simplicity and accuracy in material, as they are so fundamental.

### 5.5 Communication and outreach

Involvement does not cease at publication. The commerce takes place in the comments and DMs. As Utz and Breuer (Utz & Breuer, 2019) discovered, motivations for leads are not just content but also networking perspective.

- Comments should add value, not just react.
- DMs must open a conversation, not pitch a product.
- Focus on building relationships first.

For best conversion, Saeidi and Hollensen (Saeidi & Hollensen, 2024) advise matching material with focused outreach. This supports the approach of considering outreach as a trust-building rather than a sales tool.

### 5.6 Funnel design and conversion

Good content and a strong profile mean nothing without a conversion route. Your funnel should help guests move from awareness → trust → action. Cortez et al. (Cortez, Johnston, & Dastidar, 2023) contend that engagement is much influenced by profile completeness—which includes banner, blue link, and CTAs—especially in terms of

Every touch point - post, comment, profile, CTA - must reinforce the same message. This is "storytelling with a commercial backbone," Vaynerchuk (Vaynerchuk, 2024) says, drawing them in then pointing them where to go.

## 6. SURVEY RESULTS

Twelve real-world LinkedIn profiles from the AEC and ICT industries were qualitatively surveyed to see how effectively they convey professional value. Twenty volunteers assessed these profiles in relation to visibility, clarity, dependability, and perceived value.

### 6.1 Survey methodology

36 participants were shown screenshots of 12 LinkedIn profiles and asked 12 targeted questions, including:

1. What does this person do?
2. What kind of offer do they have?
3. Who do they help?
4. How clearly can you tell how they help?
5. What industry are they in?
6. What is their CTA?
7. Is the banner helpful?
8. Is the headline helpful?
9. Would you contact them for this service?
10. Do they seem trustworthy?
11. How long did it take to understand what they do?
12. What problem does their service/product solve?

These questions were developed with reference to Cortez et al. (Cortez, Johnston, & Dastidar, 2023), Tobback (Tobback, 2019), and Cooley (Cooley, 2020), who stress the need of clarity, value signalling, and purposeful self-presentation on LinkedIn.

## 6.2 Key findings

- Only 3 out of 12 profiles were rated as “very clear” in their offer.
- 5 profiles showed confusion about their ICP — confirming the strategic gap outlined by Saeidi & Hollensen (Saeidi & Hollensen, 2024).
- 6 profiles took users more than 10 seconds to understand — risky, given that users spend only 16 seconds on a profile before their first click.
- Only 4 profiles had a visible, clear CTA in the first scroll area.

This fits Ring (Ring, 2020), who discovered most users—especially non-strategic ones—view LinkedIn as a digital CV rather than a positioning tool.

## 6.3 Banner and headline analysis

Behavioural research shows users spend ~7 seconds on a banner before moving to the headline. Our survey validates this:

TABLE 1. CLARITY SCORE

Variable	Correlation with Clarity Score
Headline helpfulness	$r = 0.81$
Banner helpfulness	$r = 0.71$
Speed of understanding	$r = 0.60$
Trustworthiness	$r = 0.52$

Source: Authors' research

## 6.4 Interpretation

- The headline is the clearest driver of perceived clarity.
- The banner acts as an effective visual anchor.
- Speed of understanding (<5 seconds) is a practical benchmark for profile clarity.
- Trust follows clarity — a concept underlined by Tobback (Tobback, 2019), who demonstrated how indirect clues and organized storytelling start impression management.

## 6.5 Implications

- Profile clarity is not subjective — it's measurable.
- Clear, fast-to-understand profiles scored higher on trust and contact intent.
- Profiles with well-positioned CTAs in the banner or featured section were more likely to be considered "business-ready".

Younger or academic users sometimes underuse LinkedIn for strategic positioning, as Popescu et al. (Popescu, Bunea, Medințu, & Mazilu, 2021) and Barbu (Barbu, 2018) both point out. For professionals and B2B service providers especially, this emphasizes the need for profile optimization. As Cooley (Cooley, 2020) puts it: "A LinkedIn profile is not about who you are. It's about how you help others get what they want."

## 7. LINKEDIN ANALYTICS & COMPARATIVE PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Using AuthoredUp, a content analytics plugin, a comparison study of the author's personal LinkedIn performance over two timeframes was done in order to assess the concrete influence of implementing the suggested LinkedIn strategy.

TABLE 2. LINKEDIN PERFORMANCE

Metric	Change (%) Year-over-Year Performance (365 Days Comparison)	Change (%) Quarterly Performance (Last 90 Days vs. Previous 90 Days)
Impressions	+ 4.4%	+ 13%
Reactions	+ 68%	+ 27%
Comments	+ 198%	+ 92%
Shares	+ 128%	- 5,1%
Total Engagements	+ 84%	+ 36%
Engagement Rate	+ 76%	+ 20%

Source: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/nikola-jovic-bim/>



### 7.1 Year-over-year performance (365 days comparison)

Interpretation: Engagement measures exhibited exponential expansion while impressions grew only somewhat. This implies that results depend more on content quality and profile clarity than only visibility (Groysberg & Lin, 2023).

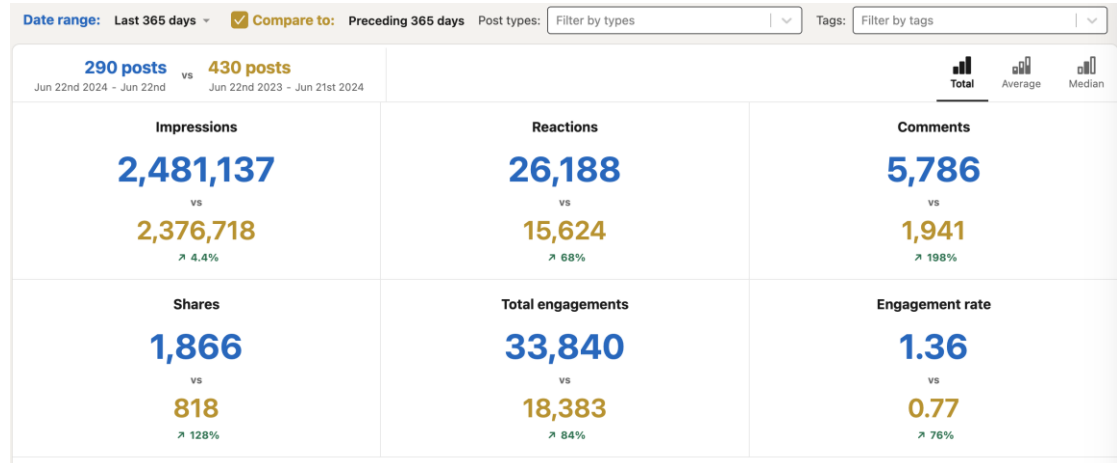


FIGURE 1. YEAR-OVER-YEAR PERFORMANCE (365 DAYS COMPARISON)

Source: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/nikola-jovic-bim/>

### 7.2 Quarterly performance (last 90 days vs. previous 90 days)

Though post-type variation accounts for a little decline in shares, the large gain in comments and engagement rate validates growing audience resonance.

Saeidi & Hollensen (Saeidi & Hollensen, 2024) underline that the particular structure used here is clear, problem-solving, continuous outreach, which increases LinkedIn performance.



FIGURE 2. 90 DAYS PERFORMANCE

Source: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/nikola-jovic-bim/>

### 7.3 Readability and engagement

720 posts were evaluated using AuthorUp's readability tracking by their Automated Readability Index (ARI). Posts below ARI 8—that is, legible by 11–14-year-olds—had noticeably more interaction.

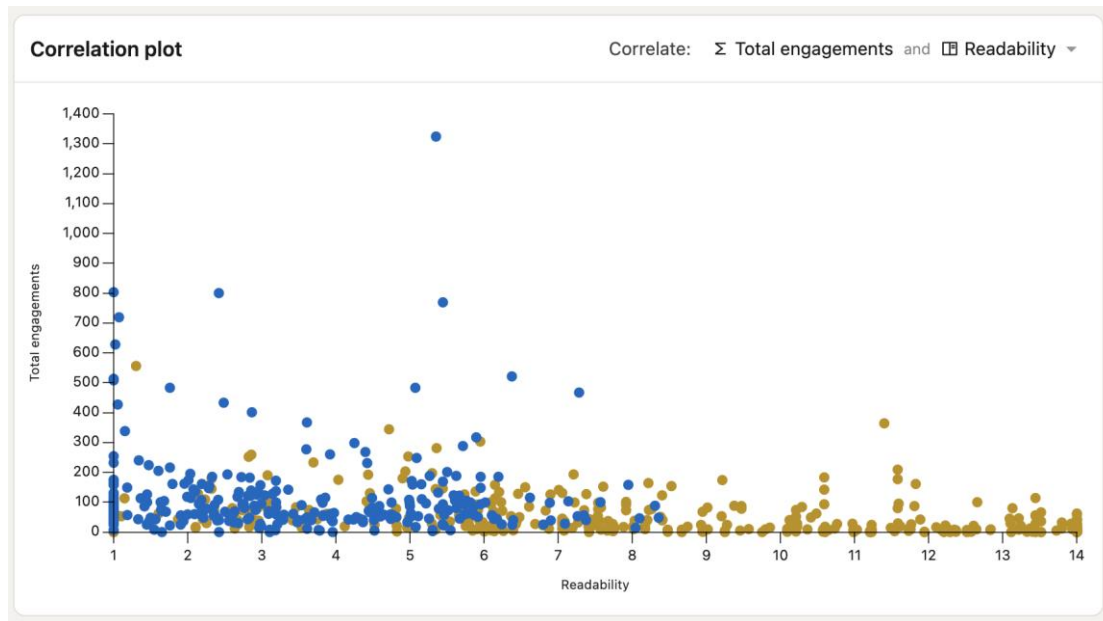


FIGURE 3. CORRELATION TOTAL ENGAGEMENTS AND ARI

Source: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/nikola-jovic-bim/>

TABLE 3. AUTOMATED READABILITY INDEX

Grade	Age	Description
1	3-7	Basic level for those who are still learning to read.
2-5	7-11	Very easy to read.
5-8	11-14	Ideal for average readers.
8-11	14-17	Fairly difficult to read.
11-14	17+	Too hard to read for the majority of readers.

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Automated\\_readability\\_index](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Automated_readability_index)

TABLE 4. AUTOMATED READABILITY INDEX

ARI Range	Avg. Engagement
ARI < 8	High
ARI > 8	Low

Source: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/nikola-jovic-bim/>

This confirms Cooley (Cooley, 2020) and Vaynerchuk (Vaynerchuk, 2024) principle: clarity beats complexity. In content marketing, especially on LinkedIn, "if you confuse, you lose."

Groysberg & Lin (Groysberg & Lin, 2023) also validate this dynamic, showing that clarity and completeness of LinkedIn profiles correlate with higher perceived value, trust, and even compensation.

## 7.4 Brand personality and long-term presence

Cortez & Dastidar (Cortez, Johnston, & Dastidar, 2023) argue that consistent engagement aligned with brand personality traits like competence, sincerity, and excitement leads to better audience retention and professional inquiries. This was reflected in the steady rise in followers, DMs, and inbound leads over the author's 24-month period.

Their research confirms that engagement isn't built by random posting. It's built by strategic, story-driven presence — aligned with a clear value proposition.

## 8. AUTHOR'S LINKEDIN PROFILE FUNNEL: A VISUAL STRATEGY IN ACTION

This part shows how the author's own LinkedIn profile is an example of how to use B2B growth ideas in the real world. By approaching the profile like a landing page instead of a resume, every visual and structural element is set up to build trust, make things clear, and get people to take action.

### 8.1 Optimizing for desktops and mobile devices

People act differently on desktop and mobile devices. Most consumers now use mobile, where important content or CTAs can be hidden under the profile photo. Desktop shows everything, but mobile doesn't. The author's profile was carefully made to be clear in both formats (see Figure 4). No matter what device you use, messaging, CTA, and social proof are always visible.

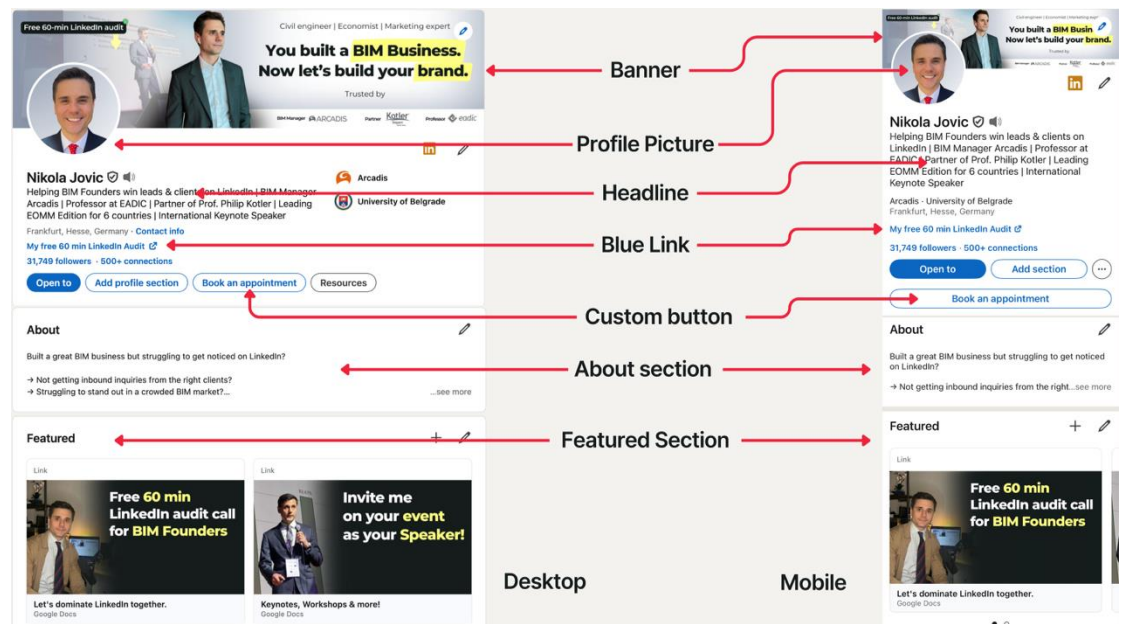


FIGURE 4. LINKEDIN DESKTOP VS. MOBILE  
Source: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/nikola-jovic-bim/>

## 8.2 Important parts of conversion

Profiles that do well tend to follow certain patterns:

- The profile picture is trustworthy because it shows the person smiling and facing forward.
- The headline makes it clear what the ICP, offer, and outcome are.
- The banner graphically reinforces the position and importance.
- The first Featured Section takes you straight to a funnel, like an audit or a booking.

AuthoredUP says that 76% of first clicks go to the first Featured section item, especially on mobile when it's the first link that shows up. This part should have one of the following:

- A free lead magnet.
- A link to book a 1:1 call.
- A landing page.

## 8.3 Strategy for banners and CTAs

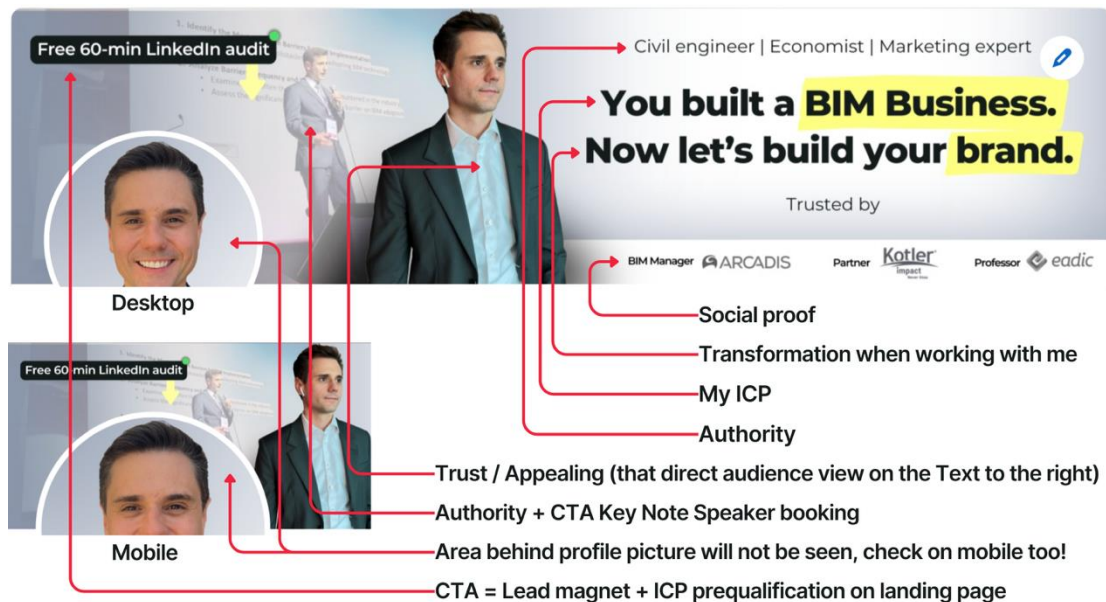


FIGURE 5. LINKEDIN BANNER

Source: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/nikola-jovic-bim/>

The banner is the second most viewed part of the page, after the profile picture. Users spend up to seven seconds looking at it before moving on. The creator made the banner with these main components (Figure 5):

- ICP (Ideal Client) → "You built a BIM Business".
- Transformation → "Now let's build your brand".

- Social proof → ARC, Kotler Impact, EADIC.
- Authority visual → Keynote speaker photo.
- Call-to-Action → Free LinkedIn audit.
- Trust positioning → Professional, clean, high-contrast design.

The CTA ("Free 60-min LinkedIn audit") is very important because it is at the top left, where it is most visible on both mobile and desktop, and it goes right along with the profile's value proposition.

#### 8.4 Putting visual trust and clarity into action

As seen in Section 6, being clear makes things easier to understand and builds trust. Profiles should be easy to read (understanding in less than 5 seconds) and CTA has to be clear. Clean mobile presentations are more likely to turn into sales. The author's instance illustrates this effect, showing increased engagement, direct messages, and lead inquiries since the implementation of this funnel layout.

#### 8.5 Things you can do

- Don't think of your profile as a résumé; think of it as a landing page.
- Design for mobile first: what you can see drives clicks.
- Make sure that the banner, title, CTA, and content all say the same thing.
- Don't be creative; be clear. Trust grows when things are simple.
- Test modifications and keep an eye on things like clicks on CTAs, DMs, and conversions.

In summary, strategic design gets you strategic results.

### 9. CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrates that LinkedIn is not just a networking platform — it is a measurable, strategic client acquisition engine when used with intention, clarity, and consistency. Through a combination of personal analytics, profile surveys, and academic research, the following key conclusions were drawn:

#### 9.1 Clarity converts

The clarity of a LinkedIn profile — especially the headline, banner, and featured section — directly correlates with trust, faster comprehension, and engagement. Profiles that clearly state what a user does, who they help, and how to take action (CTA) were perceived as more trustworthy and were more likely to trigger interaction. This insight aligns with the findings of Cortez et al. (Cortez, Johnston, & Dastidar, 2023)

and Tobback (Tobback, 2019), who show that self-presentation and offer clarity influence user perception and engagement.

## 9.2 Strategy drives growth

The growth in engagement (+84% YoY) and improvement in content resonance (+76% engagement rate increase) were not the result of luck or viral content. They were the outcome of applying a structured, repeatable strategy rooted in academic literature and platform understanding — a strategy that mirrors the six-phase framework outlined by Saeidi & Hollensen (Saeidi & Hollensen, 2024). This includes:

- Profile Optimization
- Content Strategy
- Engagement Mechanics
- Targeted Outreach
- Funnel Conversion
- Data Feedback Loops

## 9.3 Digital presence = business ROI

Just as Groysberg & Lin (Groysberg & Lin, 2023) showed that more detailed profiles lead to higher pay for professionals, this research confirms that digital positioning clarity leads to more business leads and client inquiries. Professionals who invest in making their value visible get tangible returns — whether in salary, projects, or brand authority.

## 9.4 Organic wins (but requires skill)

While paid advertising and automation are options on LinkedIn, this study emphasizes the power of organic growth when done right. Referencing Vaynerchuk (Vaynerchuk, 2024), it becomes clear that attention is the currency of LinkedIn — but attention must be earned through storytelling, not just activity.

## 9.5 Final insight

This research was shaped not only by literature but by real-world experimentation. As someone using LinkedIn daily to attract clients and build brand equity in the AEC sector, I've seen firsthand how profile clarity, audience-focused positioning, and consistent content translate into tangible business results.

While many still treat LinkedIn like a CV or vanity tool, this study shows it's a measurable growth engine when used with intent. I believe professionals who learn to articulate their value clearly—and design their profile as a funnel—gain a serious edge in today's digital-first marketplace.



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