



Take on Board Podcast – Episode 353

Transcript – Karen Tisdell wants to help you maximise your LinkedIn profile

Welcome to the Take on Board podcast. Being on a board can be an incredibly valuable, interesting, and exciting experience, yet it can also be lonely, challenging, and let's face it pretty hard. So here at Take on Board, I'll bring you weekly tips, tricks and advice to help you navigate your way onto a board, onto your next board, and to build your governance wisdom now on with the show.

Today on the Take on Board podcast, I'm speaking with Karen Tisdell again about LinkedIn. I had Karen on the podcast, oh gosh, a couple of years ago now, and this is an updated episode. And indeed, folks, uh, there is an event coming up, Karen, so as you are listening to this episode today, all of those questions that you've got, note 'em down, mentally, note them, whatever it may be, because either next week or the week after, you'll get to come along and ask all of those questions.

Now. Before we dive on into the conversation today, I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet. For me, I am on the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation and I pay my respects to elder's past and present. I acknowledge their continuing connection to land, waters, skies, culture, and country.

I support voice, treat, and truth for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia. And I encourage others in the Take on Board community to do the same. Now, let me tell you about Karen. As I said, a former guest of the show, I might say you're a friend of the show, Karen. Karen moved out of recruitment to work directly with individuals in 2009 and has helped board members and senior leaders use LinkedIn to build trust, build visibility, and build the relationships that are open doors ever since.

She loves working with board directors. That's why we've got it here because board careers are built not just on capability, but on connection. Oh, yes. So welcome back to the Take on Board podcast. Karen, thrilled to be here, darling, in from Gadigal Country. So thrilled to be with you. Fabulous. So good to have you here.

So as always, I really want to dive on into LinkedIn and why it's such an awesome, valuable tool for board directors. But as always, before we go there, let's dig a little bit deeper about you. Can you tell me a story about young Karen that tells us a little bit about how you got to where you are today? In our last podcast episode quite a few years ago, I shared a story about how when I was young, I really wanted to be a.

A biographer, but Right. As if I was that person. So be that ghost writer and I'm living that dream now. But something that I, I think is, is important to me, and, and I think it's important to a lot of, um, a lot of people, is to find the why. Why do we do what we do? Uh, why do we gravitate towards the board roles that we do and in the work that we do?

And, um, for me, it's got a lot to do with my dad. So I love LinkedIn because. My dad taught me really young the value of connection. So he, uh, went to a school which didn't offer high school matriculation like, um, university, uh, entrance. So it was a high school, but it didn't offer university entrance examinations.

So he was expected to work in a factory his entire life there was not that option to go to university, and yet he had the most extraordinary career and studied later, but. He had these wonderful adventures overseas and he would return to the family home and he would sit down and he'd tell us at the family table about all of these incredible experiences he'd had and he'd seen, and the work that he'd done.

And he would always say at the end, and that wouldn't have happened if it hadn't been for Pete Ambrose or Tim Pine, and he would name the people who helped him to secure these contracts. So I learned really young. That capability's great, but who you know makes a difference, um, to our success. And that's what I love about LinkedIn is I love thinking of it as that address book of everybody you could ever want to know.

I love that. Oh, your dad sounds like a awesome person as well. That building those connections as he travels the world and still talking about those connections, which is also. Know, just, yeah, I can totally see how you ended up doing what you are doing. Then Karen, you said part of what you love about uh, LinkedIn is the story you got from your dad.

And for some reason my brain went straight to my uncle who uses LinkedIn, but I must be said, doesn't love it. And indeed, when I asked him about it, he said, what? LinkedIn? I thought it.

Anyway, LinkedIn. Oh, that is so going to stick with me. There you go. Linkin. He hadn't quite got the concept of what it was all about. It's good on him anyway. Excellent. Alright, well with that beautiful why in mind, and I'm sure you use some of that when you are talking to people about how to use their LinkedIn or LinkedIn, how to make LinkedIn work for you.

Where should we start this conversation? I think around the changes that have happened since we spoke last time. So last time we spoke a lot about. LinkedIn profiles and I went back and listened to that episode because I, I know you had quite a lot of people did tune in and, um, I'm still getting people who reach out for three years later or, or whatever it's been, so, and it's still a timeless episode.

I still believe that the things we spoke about then the fundamentals around how to present two or three different things on your profile, whether you're a consultant who's. Building that portfolio career or whatever it is you are doing. I think a lot of that, I know a lot of that is still very relevant.

So I think a, a conversation today that can add to that is really around what's changed and what's changed is really how well AI's changed our world, right? So LinkedIn is now using large language models, which means. It's not so important to have the exact right word in your profile, but it is important to have clusters of words in your profile, and I'm still not seeing them on people's profiles at all.

I also believe that Instagram's changed our world. I, um, and I'm saying that as by the way, somebody who doesn't use Instagram, so, um, me either. I think that be a fun conversation. So I know, I think I may be the only woman in Australia doesn't use Instagram, but I. I think a lot of people think about LinkedIn as if it's Instagram and they have to create content in order to get connections and actually creating content's.

Great. Um, it reminds people who you are. It can be a bit like showing a movie to an empty theatre. You really need to have those connections. You really need to nurture those connections. So large language models have changed the game by making sure that we do need to have the right key clusters of keywords for our profile.

That's new. But large language models and thinking about it like Instagram, a lot of people are creating content about all sorts of stuff that's not related to what it is they do. So I think an interesting conversation today is around. Do you need to create content? And how do you build those relationships online?

You know, we spoke about voice notes last time and following up with people, but I still don't think people are proactive enough in reaching out and growing their network. Don't you think, you know, what are you finding in your Take on Board communities? Well that's so, oh, it's so interesting. You talk about, you know, the connections and the following.

Um, I probably said this last time, I will only connect with people on LinkedIn if I know them. So, and I like you, I'm not on Instagram, right? So what I'm about to say might be completely wrong, uh, because I'm not a user of Instagram, but my impression of Instagram is that it's about building your followers and it's all about, and that's not an actual connection.

Whereas my use of LinkedIn is all about actual connections, like people I actually know. So that's, and again, I don't use Insta, so I could be completely wrong. About whether that's the difference or not, but I feel like LinkedIn, I don't want to build a LinkedIn community, my community on LinkedIn. I don't want it to just be people.

I dunno, I fi I feel like LinkedIn is a much closer connection than something like Insta. Yeah. A a again, I don't use Instagram, but I, I think there's a yes and a no on that. So, uh, or a yes. And if you like. I think it's really important. Like I I was wondering if you did still build relationships through people on LinkedIn by saying, you know, thank you for your invitation to connect.

Would you, uh, be open to a a 10 to 15 minute conversation? Here's my Calendly link. I was wondering if you still did that, and it's great that you do because it's a good way of taking people offline. But if people are feeling overwhelmed with the work that they've got and they're like, I don't have time to.

Meet everybody that I connect with and. I, I don't feel confident in doing that. So I, I don't have the space. I'm, I'm traveling soon, so I just, I, I don't want to do that. I still think it's important to reach out and grow those relationships. I grew my business, my LinkedIn profile, writing business way back 17 years ago, um, when I was on maternity leave, um, with little babies, and I, I couldn't jump on video because.

Uh, a, it didn't exist, but if it did exist, you know, I was constantly covered in baby vomit at the time. So what I love about LinkedIn is that you can do it in your PJs and you can build acquaintances here and then nurture those relationships by liking and commenting. On people's content. You know, we've got the bell feature now that we didn't used to have before, which we'll send you a notification every time.

What? What's the bell feature? I don't even know that I love the bell feature. So a great way of building relationships is to comment on other people's content, but not randomly. Ha being intentional behind who it is that you want to see in your feed. So I think if, if we are scrolling through the feed, um, we are being irritated and we're also at LinkedIn's Mercy.

So LinkedIn's telling us what it wants us to see and we will see Abts in there. And I think a better strategy is to reach out, proactively connect with everybody that you want to know. Thank them for sending them an invitation to connect. So have a a once a fortnight habit of growing your network with intention.

And then on the alternate fortnight, and I love to do this at the same time every week, so you get kind of like at that itchy jacket feeling if you're not doing it. And then on the alternate fortnight, thank people for connecting. And when you are doing that. Because you've connected to them, you've automatically rung one of their bells.

So on the top right hand corner underneath their banner, you'll see a little bell. If you click on that, you can bring up two bells. If you click on those two bells, that means that every time somebody creates a piece of content. You see it in your notifications page. I did not know that. Now you can train your notifications page.

If your notifications page is saying, Hey, it's so-and-so's birthday, and you're like, I have no interest in birthdays. That just feels weird. Like, that's for Facebook, not for LinkedIn. Um, if that's your stance, then, uh, which it is mine, but it doesn't have to be yours. Um, you know, if you've got things you don't like in, in your notifications, click on the three dots and say, I don't want to see this.

You can train it. So instead of being at the mercy of scrolling through LinkedIn and just seeing advert upon advert or the same people, you're in that echo chamber, you can intentionally ring the bells of people whose content you want to see. And then you get that instant notification. You can be one of the first people to comment on it.

And I like to think of this as like micro posts. So if you are commenting on people's posts, you can. Grow visibility with that person and their audience and it's, it's helping you to grow that bravery muscle. You know, it's really hard to find. Things to create content about. And

now that LinkedIn's got this new algorithm that's trying to form a pattern between what you are creating content about and what your profile's about, you can mislead it all the time.

If you're sitting on say, um, three or five different boards, and those boards are all in different industries, so you're posting about, you know, meat livestock one day and vegetarianism the next, and they're like, oh, what's going on here? You know, it can be quite confusing. So. I think a better strategy can be to make sure that you've got a profile that's built for, for winning people's trust and, and that really presents you appropriately.

It's got the right cluster of words in it, having the right connections, so having the right people and then doing, not posts, but micro posts where you're commenting strategically on people's posts. I want to come to micro posts in a minute, but just before we go there, I want to check on something, connections versus followers.

And does it make a, uh, I mean, I'm guessing it does make a difference, right? But like I say, I will only connect with people that I've met. I know a whole stack of other people. because I don't connect with them. If they, you know, are sitting on the couch covered in baby vomit and don't want to have a meeting with me, they then follow instead.

So can you just talk me through how that plays out in reality? A connection is more valuable than a follower because. If you are connected to somebody, you can slide into each other's dms. Now, nobody in your community's going to be, you know, this is not a sales podcast, so nobody's going to be abusing that, but you've earned that, right?

If you're a connection to slide into each other's dms, if you are going to be, uh, running an event, you can set up a LinkedIn event and invite people to it. So connection is a two-way relationship. You see their content and they're more likely to see. So it's, it's both. If they're following you, they've got less chance of seeing your content in their feed than if they're a connection and you can't see their content.

So it's a one-way relationship. So I would only follow somebody if, um. If I was sitting in your audience's shoes, uh, I would only follow somebody if it's somebody who's only got 300 connections. So, you know, they're a pretty closed book. You know, they only play golf with the same six people every Sunday.

Um, and I would follow them because I would think, oh, this person's not going to accept my invitation to connect, so I need to find somebody who can introduce me. Or find somebody whose name I can use, um, o of course asking for permission. So, you know, I can see Lisa, that, you know, Fred. Um, would it be okay, Lisa?

Um, I, you know, we all connect sometimes with people we don't know, a lot of people do. Um, would it be okay, Lisa, if I used your name in reaching out to Fred? Lisa might say, actually I don't know Fred, um, at, oh, how did I connect with him? Or you could just reach out to Fred and then say, you know, um, Lisa suggested that I, I reach out.

Um, we've got this and this in common. Uh, I appreciate being connected to you. Now let's move to you. You talked about, how did you put it? Micro posting. Yes, so this is comments on other people's content. So, um, creating content is great, but it, it, it's tricky. It it, and it's

fraught with so many different issues around confusing your audience if you're posting about a wide array of things.

And it's also not actually how LinkedIn works. This is not Instagram. You don't have to create content in order to get followers. And actually you don't want followers. You want connections. Real connections. Worthy connections. People who you can build that relationship with, people who you can have a coffee with eventually.

That's what you are moving towards, commenting on people's posts. It's a good thing to do because, um, you're putting yourself out there publicly. You're growing your bravery muscle, but it's also a gift to the other person. You know, um, I dunno if you've watched the new Avatar movie, it's probably not so new now actually.

But anyway, the latest avatar movie and there's, they really emphasized through it. I don't really recommend it. The first one was much better, but they really emphasize in both, you know, the I see you, I see you. And I think the greatest gift you can ever give somebody is. I see you. It's one of the many things I love about your, the opening of your podcast is you always talk about recognizing the lands that we're on, recognizing, um, our indigenous native holders of this land, and recognizing that the land's not unseen.

So it's unseated, so it's always I see you and that matters. So commenting on people's post is a, I see you. I'm interested in you. I'm interested in what you have to say. And I think that's such a gift to people. Absolutely. And particularly, I think you said this earlier, particularly when it's done. Um, I mean I have started to see not so much because, probably because I have a close more closed connection loop, but I have started to see quite frankly, AI slop being, and this is by people who are not connected to me, but you can tell it's ai because it's summarizing what I've.

Said, oh, it's so interesting that you just said blah, blah, blah, and it's exactly what I've said, and I just delete those comments. I'm like, I'm not giving you the traction that you want from doing this, but most people do not do that. And when there is a beautifully well thought out, reflected comment on something you've posted, you're right.

It is a beautiful gift and often starts a whole different conversation as well. That can happen in the comments about how whatever it is that. People have been posting is taken in reality. How have you seen this play out in reality? Is there any stories you can share of how playing with LinkedIn is, is?

Turning out in, in the real world. I recently had something arrive in the Post, which was a, uh, a, a booklet, um, from the Churchill Fellowship. So one of my clients, Robert Erhart, um, was awarded the Churchill Fellowship and he sent it to me, um, with a lovely thank you note and said, you know. He thought his LinkedIn profile played a real part of it.

So Dr. Robert Erhart has really, uh, I, I, I don't think he'd mind me saying this. He has struggled to put himself out there on content and in the public forum. Being the noisiest person in the room is just not his style. Um, he's full of heart and he really wants to be very

genuine. And, um, and like many of us, he's like, oh, if I put out content, what will they think here?

So he's done a really great job of. Building his network, um, making sure that he's got a profile that represents him and growing his, his network and, and growing those right relationships and creating comments on other people's content with thought with heart. Um. As you said, not AI slop. You know, I've seen quite a lot of AI comments, not on my post, but on other people's posts.

Again, I think it's about having that right community, um, and being selective, but open-minded with who you. Connect with. So even though I quite have quite a large number of connections, I don't see much of it on my content, but I do see it on other people's, and I think it falls into two brackets. I think there are people who are literally using an illegal software to comment on certain people's posts.

Um, and I say legal because it is actually against LinkedIn's terms. So, um, so it's not something that I recommend doing at all. Uh, then I think there are also people who maybe lack confidence in creating content, uh, comments. So I think a lot of people are sort of writing what they'd want to say, or I imagine they're writing what they want to say and then putting it into clawed and saying, you know, can you reword this?

And then attaching it as a comment. But I think. As you've said, it's that authenticity and I think Robert, uh, Kat's had really great success because he's him, you know, he's, he's always himself, he's always. Just so authentic and so real. It's interesting hearing about, you know, Robert, the person you were just reflecting on, and as somebody who's done a Churchill, I mean, he undoubtedly has some incredible wisdom and stories and lessons.

Share and learn from. So it's so interesting. I mean, you, you see the people who get awarded the Churchills every year and you're like, wow, they're amazing and so good. They're putting themselves out there. It's so good to hear that. They're also sometimes a bit, oh my God, do I really have to put myself out there?

Yeah, that they're human too. And I think, yes. Where he feels that his LinkedIn profile helped him was you've only got so much space to talk about what it is you do and your background. So he used LinkedIn as a, this is my, my resume for the scholarship for the fellowship. So when you've got such a limited space, just a LinkedIn URL.

Will help people to see so much and help people to see the relationships that you hold. And, you know, Robert's similar to, uh, I think a lot of board members in that he's very driven by purpose. You know, especially when you're joining those boards that maybe don't pay, um, you join because you want to make that difference.

And, and for Robert, it's all about the cause. It's all about. Making that difference, not about putting himself out there. And so that's where I think, you know, it's great to create content, but um, doesn't always sit with everybody's comfort level. Yes. Well, and, and so that's, like I say, it's interesting then, I mean, having done a, him, having done a Churchill, I'm sure he

has a whole bunch of, I don't know, original content, I guess personally done content that it could push out there.

But it's interesting to hear that you don't have to do that. You can be thoughtfully, genuinely, you know, respectfully chiming in on other people's content. And I think what I'm hearing is that's almost as valuable. So it is, yeah. Great. Yeah, and it it, like I say, you, you often see some really interesting conversations happening in the comments.

So it is like, or sometimes like a whole new conversation than what was posted originally. So that's, oh, okay. That's good to know. This is not about individual profiles, so it might not be your bailiwick, but I have to ask, and I think I asked this last time as well, LinkedIn groups. I have a Facebook group for the Take on Board community.

It is a group, uh, it's probably less. Valuable I think, than it was when we originally spoke a couple of years ago. because Facebook, oh, anyway, so I also have a LinkedIn group and I wish it was better, but it's, LinkedIn just does not seem to nurture their groups. Is that, that, that's how it feels to me as a user of, do you have any, any insights about LinkedIn groups?

Yes, they're terrible. So that's not an insight, I'm afraid. There there is, there is no insights there. So LinkedIn groups are terrible. LinkedIn as a company, um, have been a little bit like an overzealous, uh, real estate developer. Um, so if we think of LinkedIn as originally being just like a little fishing shack, um, where.

That room that the one room that you had was all about searching for people. Then in 2014 you could create content as well. So that was a huge extension to this house. And then they thought, oh, and then we'll add this. And it had, you know, but it, it all started really as, as a way of searching for people.

The job sport didn't even exist until about, uh, 18 months after. So it's just been building extra rooms and groups is something that it built and. Unfortunately to be very critical of LinkedIn, because I don't work for LinkedIn, it keeps building all these rooms as opposed to going back and renovating some of the old ones.

Like if you could just fix groups, can you imagine how good that would be for people? But instead they're like, no, we'll do video and no, you can do this and no, you can do that. So they keep adding on extra rooms. Um, which may also explain why you've got, you know, a bit of a proliferation of LinkedIn trainers now because it's not an easy.

Space to navigate, you know, and, and as somebody who's been with it, right, since 2005, I've seen every new room added, and some of them have a lot of promise. Like groups, like the services page, which no services page promised, it would be like Airtasker, and it's just a waste of time, you know, but that's why I keep bringing things back to the three Ps.

Um, thinking about your profile, your people, and your posting. And that posting doesn't have to be posting. It could be micro posting. So we think about it in the three Ps. We just think about those three rooms and um, and try and ignore the rest. I'm afraid. Okay. No, that's all right. I will have to it. It's, Ooh, it frustrates me.

No end because I, that's where I want the group to work, and I think it would, anyway. Okay. I will remain frustrated for at least a little while longer. All good. We'll get you back on in a few years and you can hopefully say, oh my God, they've renovated the room. Oh, okay. So. Karen, there is so much in here already.

Uh, as I say, folks, we will be, we have an event with Karen coming up in the next couple of weeks. Um, if you've got this far, you've already listened to this podcast, which is awesome because I want people to listen to the information that we've shared here before coming along to the event so that we can spend more time in q and a in the event.

Uh, so, um, what are the main things you want people to take away from the conversation that we've had today? To think about the clusters of words you've got in your LinkedIn profile. Are they the right words that you need? And don't just put them in your about section or your headline. Um, it is now important to put them in your experience section.

So in your experience section, don't just talk about the board roles you've got and explain what the company does use the words of, of what it is that you bring to those boards. So thinking about the, the profile and the right. All of the right clusters of words. Thinking about the right people and being proactive and reaching out, thinking about your own stance in, um, you know, being selective in terms of who you connect with, but also thinking about your time.

Maybe you could just collect acquaintances with the idea of then slowly going to the whole, Hey, I'm going to this function. Would you have time to meet there? That sort of thing. So just sort of thinking about making sure that you know the right people, um, and being proactive in. Meeting them and then, and then nurturing those relationships.

And I, I hope we get some questions about that. because I've got so much information that I, I can give people around that. And also thinking about micro posts, so creating content's. Great. Um, and again, that's something we can talk, um, at your q and a session about if people are interested. Um. Let's not forget.

Micro posts are so important, um, and they're a gift to other people. They help people to know that they've been seen. Okay, folks, so if you are listening to this before the event, my challenge to you is to do one or two commenting. Do the micro posting that Karen's talking about. Do one or two commenting on somebody else's post, and then you might be able to share some of that experience or ask some questions about it when we come into the event.

I love it. There's, there's the challenge folks. Karen, is there a resource other than this conversation, uh, which people will listen to? Is there a resource you would like to share with the Take on Board community? I have a LinkedIn profile checklist. Um, I haven't yet created a webpage where you've got to add your email address and I have a bit of reluctance around doing it.

Um, so the fact that I've been procrastinating about it for six months is probably a sign. I may never do it because I don't like it when people collect it, my email. So just, I have a

LinkedIn open profile, which means you don't have to be connected to me. In order to send me a message on LinkedIn and say, profile checklist please.

So, uh, I'll send you an invite to connect when I received yours, but you don't have to accept it. I will still send you that profile checklist, so if you'd like that, let me know. And Karen, doesn't it totally make sense that, uh, people need to come to you via LinkedIn to get the info rather than going somewhere else, anywhere?

That actually makes perfect sense to me. So I think just cross it off your list of things to do and just go, oh, no, that's okay. What I'm doing is perfectly aligned with what I do. I love it. Oh, thank you. Thank you so much for coming back and sharing your wisdom and doing this episode. Thank you so much in advance for, um, joining me in a week or two to, uh, deal with questions from the Take on Board community.

Um, thank you for reaching out at the start of the year and say, Hey, why don't I come back? And I'm like, yeah, why don't you come back? So, yeah, thank you for all that you do and all of the incredible wisdom that you share. I really appreciate it, and I know that others in the Take on Board community do too.

So thank you so much for being here. Looking forward to your event. Thank you so much. Thank you. So that's a wrap for the Take on Board podcast today. Thank you so much for being here and being part of the Take on Board community. I do this podcast because I love bringing good women and gender diverse people together.

So I invite you to join us over in the Take on Board Facebook group. An active group that helps supports and cheer squads each other. Just search, Take on Board and Facebook to find us. I'd also really love it if you could do some of the other well podcast things, share the podcast with someone you know who might get some value from our discussions.

Subscribe if you haven't already, and well, I also really love it when people write and review. Thanks again for being part of the Take on Board community. Now go and put these tips, tricks, and advice into action so you can be your best in the boardroom.

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