



Take on Board Podcast – Episode 359

Transcript – What about...? Karen Tisdell answers so many questions about LinkedIn

Hello, and welcome to the Take on Board Podcast. I'm your host, Helga Svensson. I know that 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 navigate your way onto your first board, your next board, or to build your governance wisdom.

Now, on with the show. Welcome everyone to this Take On It Board event with, next to me on my screen, Karen Tisdall, just here for me. As we get started, as always, 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 elders past and present and any First Nations people we may have here with us today.

I acknowledge their continuing connections to land, waters, skies, culture, and country. I support Voice, Treaty 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. For those of us in Victoria, you will know that we now have a treaty.

Hooray. Well, for those of us in New Zealand, I know you've had one for a very long time, and there may be others around the world as well. So first up, you are all here because Karen is here, and hopefully you've all listened to at least the podcast that we put live a week or two ago, and maybe even her previous one.

Karen's helped thousands of leaders connect the dots between a persuasive profile and high impact content. With a background in writing for entrepreneurs and senior executives, she doesn't just craft your profile, she shows you how to find your target audience and attract the right opportunities with a standout online presence.

There is links, unsurprisingly, to her LinkedIn and to her website over there in the chat. If you haven't already connected, I encourage you to do so, and there is a link to the episode that we did with Karen recently. So the object of today is, as you listen to the podcast, my punt is you have lots of questions about LinkedIn, and this is your opportunity to ask them.

So the first question that we have here, Karen, is can you please explain more about what a cluster of words in your profile means?

I'm actually going to combine that answer with another question, if that's okay, which was a question around how do you manage your past self with where you're at now, because that will answer that question around the cluster of words.

So as somebody who was in recruitment for fourteen years, I can tell you absolutely this is where recruiters live. LinkedIn was actually invented to replace the recruitment model, and it has pretty much succeeded in that people could find people without using recruiters. But it... Recruiters also very quickly realized, I started using it way back in two thousand and five, that this was where you find- People.

So it was all about searching for people. And in recruitment, I started, uh, tinkering with resumes and then started writing LinkedIn profiles way back, uh, 2009, and realized that a lot of people are looking backwards. What have I done? What have I done? Let me tell you everything I've ever done, like it's a customs declaration to get into Western Australia.

And actually, people are not that interested necessarily in every little thing you've done. They just want to know about the parts that you've done that relate to what you want to do next. So the key is always to be looking forward to what it is you want to do And be really bold and be really ambitious with that.

So those of us who are able to change our language and talk about what we want to do in a way that, that's embodying it now, and, and I think actually you teach this in your program, Hota, very well around embodying that, being that future self now, living that. So very much looking at the future, what is it you want?

What are the keywords in all of those board roles or all those executive positions that you're looking for? And then making sure that you've got those in your profile. So the cluster of words are the words that appear in all of your job adverts. And this is where, Helen, your great questions last night when we were DM- IM- IM-ing each other at about 10:15 last night, AI's amazing for you put in all of your adverts.

These are all the adverts I'm interested in, even if they're old, even if they're in a country you, you would never work in, but it's the dream role. What are the common words in all of these? Now look at my resume. Have I got the keywords in there? Now look at my LinkedIn profile. You'll have to down- download it as a PDF.

Have I got the keywords in there? And how do I put them in there not as a list, but in sentences and story format? Because story format's really important to the human who wants a story, and it's also really important to the machine as well, which is looking at natural language search. So if you were just putting a list, those words are not going to show, or they won't in the future.

LinkedIn's currently transitioning to natural language search, so looking at, uh, large language models. So when we're thinking about the past and the future, we need to think about what is it that I want to do. The other question I was thinking of is what if you're balancing two different things? What if you're, you know, you're running your own business and you want board roles?

What if you're balancing a career where you need to be the spokesperson for your organisation, but you also want more board roles? So again, you, you can use data for that, and you can put all of the data into AI and tell me where's the sweet spot. So when I say think sweet spot, I literally think in Venn diagrams.

So these are all of the keywords that show up in your day job. So this is the role where you're the spokesperson for the organisation, you're the CEO or COO or... So those are all of the keywords for those roles. And then these are all of the role-- keywords for your board roles. And of course, that means strategy.

It means overseeing, not being in the doing. It means governance. It means putting in place structures. It means risk. It means innovation. It means, um, you know, all of those things. So what is a sweet spot between what it is you do in your day job, which is often where your unique value proposition lies as a board member- And what are those keywords for your board role?

This is your cluster

That is awesome. And it is tricky, I think, for people. So I'm going to tick off a few of the questions here, because certainly you've talked about cluster there. In fact, Liz, I'm going to get you if you- wherever you are there. Liz, if you can say your name, what board roles you're on, and if there's anything else from your question that hasn't been answered.

Liz, over to you.

Hi, I'm Liz. Um, I'm not on a board at the moment, but I'm looking for board roles, but also looking for a new job. So just wondering how to structure the LinkedIn page for both of those things, I suppose. And I think those keywords helps, but also are there any other things on the page I should be looking at?

Absolutely. So what I would also do is to make sure that you can maximize the keywords, and so it's immediately obvious that you're looking for a new role. I would insert a new position stating that you're looking for a new role. Now, I'm not too sure whether I would put that green ribbon around saying open to work.

I'm not personally fond of that, but that's probably me being a little bit old-fashioned perhaps. But having a position, a new role, that says, "I'm seeking the right role, right challenge, where I'll be doing this and I'll be using my previous experience in" And so you take all of the key achievements from your previous experience and put them in the language of what it is you want to do next.

So making sure that you're showing your past successes in overseeing what- uh, whatever else it is you've done, and just telling that in a couple of paragraphs, "I'm looking for a new role. This is my email address" and putting your email address in that experience section as well. And that will make sure that when somebody's looking at your profile, they're skimming through it and, "Oh, she's already employed."

Like, because- It's not very easy to see that end date. It's not very easy to see at a glance who's currently working and who's not. If you put that in there, and you, you make it like I'm looking for my next challenge, I'm looking for the right role, these are some of the things that I'm interested in. But you make it...

You come from a, a s- place of confidence, and it comes from a place of I'm looking for the right position, and this is my dream role. Not, "Oh, I'm really desperate," of course. You really need to own that confidence.

That's great. Thanks, Karen. Alice, you've asked a question about former you and career change.

Can I ask, Alice, that you take yourself off mute, introduce yourself, and just add anything that hasn't already been answered?

Um, hi, I'm Alice Chiu. I'm on one board and one working committee, about to pause my board career for a little bit. I'm in the middle of a big career change, so from a corporate role into a completely different sector.

So that's where is a slight difference of how do I position myself as entrant to the new sector while retaining hopefully some of the good things I've done. I like the Venn diagram. I think that has helped. But if there's anything else, would love to hear your thoughts.

Yeah, absolutely. So I wrote an About section for somebody who I've actually got permission to use, I just can't remember his complete last name, which is so annoying, and it was a while back.

And he was transitioning from defense into aerospace, so very similar but different. Never worked in aerospace before. All of his career was in defense, and it was a tricky transition, so he, he wanted to really show that aerospace was-- he wasn't settling by moving to an organisation that was smaller and coming out of, of defense.

But actually, he was pursuing something that he'd always been really interested in, which was innovative technology, which was a company that lived by its values, which was an organisation that cared about its partners really deeply. So again, a little bit like that Venn diagram, he-- we did a lot of work around, uh, when I was writing his About section, what is it that you're excited about, and how is that using what you've done in the past to project into the future?

I've also seen Helen Wiseman, um, who, whose profile I have not written, but I've seen her do a couple of really great job announcements where she's talked about, "I've just joined a board of a hospital." And she's got nothing to do with health at all, ever. But she started telling this really great story about how she got hit by a bicycle when she was young, and she got taken to this hospital, and then her father was dying, and her father was cared for in his last final days in that hospital.

And so she, she's so thrilled to join the board of this hospital. So she's crafted a story around it. So why does that transition matter? Why do those organisations matter? Why does that

sector matter to you? And if you can't find common ground, is there a story angle? Is there a, uh, thinking of Simon Sinek's why, is there a why that's really deep for you?

Oh, I love it. Thanks, Karen. All right. I really want to get to the network one, but I'm going to-- Brooke, where are you? Brooke, you've also asked a question about, which I think connects to what's just been said

Hi, everybody. Um, so obviously I'm Brooke. I'm not on a board. I'm currently in the Kickstarter program with Helia, so just starting that journey.

So my question was around how you can show your personality while still maintaining your professionalism on LinkedIn, and you've touched on it a little bit, but I'm really curious if there's anything further.

Absolutely. One of my favourite things which we spoke about, uh, you and I, in the breakout room, is the Top Five Gallup CliftonStrengths report, and it is a paid tool.

It costs about \$40 for the Top Five, and that'll give you a really great objective insight into what your qualities are. So way back in the day, decades ago, when I was tweaking resumes to make sure that they aligned exactly with what my client was looking for, with my client's permission I was tweaking resumes, I was always like, "Well, tell me more about what you like."

And people would be like, "I wouldn't know." "Okay, ask your friends." Now we don't need to do that. We've got amazing strengths tools. Another one is VIA, uh, Values in Action. I prefer Gallup because it gives the language of business. So most people who sit on boards are very strategic, and I have almost all my profile writing clients like, "I'm very strategic.

I'm really good at strategy." And we do the top Gallup five, and maybe strategy doesn't show at all, but futuristic does. They have an ability to look around the corner, fascinated in emerging trends. You know, so it, it helps me to exactly nail what makes you you. And a great way of doing that in a way that's professional is, I think, talking in the first person, being personable, being warm, being direct, but also not having lots of adjectives, you know.

I, I think, you know, when you have lots of adjectives or two next to each other... I remember when I was doing a writing course, uh, two adjectives next to each other can make you look very emotional, was what my tutor used to always say. You know, "Karen, drop the adjectives. It makes you look too reactive." And just state what it is you do quite simply, and words like, "I'm excited by," you know, and, "I'm often described as."

You know, I think Alistair is a great example of this. Sorry, Alistair, I feel like I'm co-hosting with you, I've mentioned you so many times. But a great example of capturing that personality. What I'm not seeing enough in there is those keywords around governance and what it is you bring to the board and, and the sector and industry experience.

And I think Linda Fox, again, is a really great example of what are your nouns, what are your keywords that AI's telling you is common in all of these job adverts? And then look at the

Gallup. Okay, where's your personality showing up there? Why is this interesting? And going back to Helen Wiseman's story, maybe it's a personal why that links you to what it is you do.

Um, a deep obsession. Can you link it to a childhood interest? I recently wrote a profile for somebody who loves hiking and, uh, thinks nothing of doing a 100-kilometer run over, like, two days or something. I mean, just, you know, but that's also so intrinsic to how she runs her-- I don't have permission to share her profile, to how she runs her business as a CEO.

It's so core to her approach with everything, slow and steady and keeping your eye on the, on the goal all the time and in all conditions.

Hooray, I finally got to this question. I love it. It doesn't have a name against it, but I'm going to ask it anyway because I love it so much. Karen, how can you leverage your network on LinkedIn to assist with board searches?

Well, I believe, as the Karen, that a friend is someone who stabs you in the front So when looking at all of your profiles last night and sending you all invitations to connect, I was looking for what are the common issues here that I'm seeing? One of them is that very few of you have detailed in your experience section what it is you bring to those roles.

Many of you don't have descriptions at all sitting in there, and it's a really important part for keywords. But what I'm seeing as well is that some of you have got quite decent number of connections, like large, like three thousand, and some of you have tiny connections. There's a lot-- not a lot of middle ground, interestingly.

So I, I don't see a lot of people sitting at about the one thousand five hundred mark, which is what I expected. Some of you got very, very small network. So first you have to grow your network, and you have to have a habit of thanking people for connecting with you. It's as simple as a thank you for connecting because you could have a very large network but not have those relationships.

And I think actually nobody does this better than you because you take conversations offline. So it's all about trying to take those conversations offline as much as possible. If you're not taking conversations offline, you're not deepening those relationships. So thinking about LinkedIn as the starting point, you've got to grow your network.

You've got to have at least over five hundred, but I really would be looking at about fifteen hundred plus because not everybody's looking for the right board member right now. So lots of relevant connections. Thank everybody for those invites to connect, and then try and move them offline. Can you have a coffee with them, whether it's virtual or otherwise?

And in that, mention that you're looking for board roles. And get out your pen and paper at the end of the, the coffee and just say, "I've loved chatting with you today. Yeah, I'm looking for board roles. Is there anybody else that you recommend I'd be speaking with?" Or something like that, and sit there with your pen poised.

Don't get out your phone. Do a pen and paper kind of thing, you know? So ask that. Look at people who you know in common. "Oh, I can see you know this person, Cindy. You know,

Cindy, I can see you're connected to Sally, but we all sometimes connect with people we don't know. Is it okay if I reach out to Sally and use your name?"

And then you say to Sally, "Hey, Sally. Cindy recommended I, I reach out and connect with you." Not quite the whole truth, but, "Cindy recommended that I, I connect with you. She thought we might have some things in common." You know, so you don't- not overdoing it. You're not being that lion in the long grass jumping on, on a wounded zebra going, "Ooh, have you got a board role?"

You know, it's very light, you know? And then, "Thanks for connecting." And then a, you know, "Look, I happen to be in Canberra next week. Do you have time to catch up for a coffee? I'll be there on Thursday. Have you got any space? Oh, you don't. Okay. Let me know if you're up for a Zoom sometime."

I can't resist adding on a little bit of that one as well, Karen, because it's, uh, my bread and butter.

Folks, I would just really recommend making sure you're not that person that just says, "I want to join a board." Be clear on what sort of board you are looking for. Be clear on the skills that you can lend to that board so that you are not just scattergunning every board member in town saying, "Hi, I want to be on a board.

Can you help me?" That's not helpful. So yeah, be clear about what your ask is, and be targeted in that so that you're not just scattergunning. All right, Sue, could you introduce yourself and ask your question?

Hi, I'm Sue Burgess, and I'm on... I've just newly joined the Australian Nurses Memorial Centre board after a extensive career working at the Shrine of Remembrance.

I'm also on the Education Network Committee for the Australian Museums and Galleries Association. I've done that committee for quite some time. My question, can you talk about the type of content creation that is valuable for building your profile? And the reason I'm asking that is I have a former colleague who uses LinkedIn like a, I, I'd almost say in a salesman sort of way.

Posts really good questions, but it just... And there's always very sort of staged photographs of himself in his work location, and it's just incredibly cheesy. And I sort of wonder, is that the sort of content that's good? I'm suspecting not by the look on your face, but that's really where the question's coming from.

I've only just learned to sell on LinkedIn, and that's something that's quite new to me, despite the fact that I've been creating content regularly ever since I could, which is what, way back in 2014. Content is not the most important thing. The most important thing is to have a profile that you're proud of, that has lots of keywords, and to have the right network.

Having the right network has never been more critical because LinkedIn are moving to natural language selection, and they are removing some of the search filters. So you have a limited time to grow your network, even with LinkedIn free, by clicking keywords in the se- a

keyword in the search bar, or just click Enter, and then clicking on People, and then clicking All Filters.

So if we think of those three pillars, your profile, the people you need to know, and posting, I would put posting last. When I sell on LinkedIn, I do so very... I hope it's subtly or tongue in cheek at the very bottom of the post. I think the best content is to think of content as a conversation. So what is it that is happening in your industry, in your space?

What are the connections that you're making? What are the innovations that are happening? What are the things you're not sure of and you want to have a dialogue around? So it's not treating content as if it's a broadcast, but treating it like it's conversation. I'm currently ghostwriting some articles for a CEO, and I'm actually really loving it, but it's because I've already worked with him, so I know him really well, and I like him.

He works in not-for-profits, all about making a massive difference. So I, I really love the work he's doing. But I've just noticed our articles are not doing very well because he's like, "Oh, Karen's got this. I don't need to be commenting on other people's posts. I don't need to be contributing to conversations."

So people are commenting on the articles that I've written for him, and he's not even responding. If you don't give, you don't get. Like Helga said, you don't want to be that person saying, "Hey, do you have a board role?" But you want to be that person saying, "Oh, my gosh, it's so good to meet you. You know what? I think I know somebody that, that you might benefit from meeting."

Can you introduce people to each other? Can you turn up to every, every coffee connection with a book and just say, "Look, I really appreciate your time. I think you might find this book helpful. It's about X, Y, Z. I, I really loved it. I'm looking for the right board role," that sort of thing. But what can you give?

And I think content needs to give, and it needs to be conversational, not salesy.

All right. I'm going to ask Mel's question because I can see she has just stepped away. Mel asks, "How do you balance paid work and board roles in the same LinkedIn profile?" You've touched on this already, but yeah, what additional tips might you have there?

A lot of people don't realize that you can actually change the order of your LinkedIn profile. So make sure that you've got the order of your position descriptions really well.

So Karen, I think you've already touched on this, but I'll just see if there's anything else that you wanted to add. Alice asks, "If I'm trying to build a profile in a completely new area, career changing, and I want to build content, is LinkedIn a good place to start?"

I think that part of the question that I find really interesting is, "And I want to build content." So I'm assuming she means create content that goes into the feed. Yes, LinkedIn is a fantastic place to share your message, but people don't find you by the content you produce. That's a very new thing for LinkedIn is to start putting people that you don't know who are suggested to you in your feed.

So you will see it sometimes, but it's still very rare. Typically, when you have somebody in your feed that you don't know, it's usually because they've paid lots of money to LinkedIn to get your eyeballs, to get your attention, so it's usually advertising. So we tend to skim over people we don't know and just look for people we do know.

So the best way of actually lifting your visibility, yes, is LinkedIn But counterintuitively, it's not by creating content. This is not Instagram. You don't get followers, or you shouldn't get followers. You shouldn't be creating content and then people see you. It's just not how LinkedIn works. Instead, it's about reaching out and building your audience, building your connections, and building your community.

And so doing that, you need to be thinking about- conversations. Not just connecting with people, but really nurturing those relationships, trying to take them offline, trying to have conversations with these people, trying to meet them, thinking about what you can give to them. Who have a once-a-week block?

Who can you introduce people to? How can you be helpful to other people? And then creating content that reminds people who you are. But the key is to actually meet them first.

Kai asks, "How do you keep your LinkedIn relevant if you're looking at multiple different jobs? Do you keep updating it to the most relevant for the job you're doing?"

There's always what I think of as clusters of words. So there's always words that sit around your job, so there's never a set of keywords that are specific for just one, one job and just one role. There... And if you look at all of your different job adverts for roles that you are interested in, what are the common roles?

What are... uh, common words, sorry, that you're seeing in, in all of those job adverts? Years ago, I would print them off, and I would literally underline them, and I would underline them first, and then I would go through and highlight them. And I started with the underlining because when I was highlighting, I found I was sort of highlighting every second word.

But when I'd read all of them, I was actually going, "No, these are the words." But now we've got AI. We can just feed all of those job adverts into AI and say, "What are the common words? What are the common themes?" And then look at the job adverts and go, "Okay, I can see that the common themes are actually all very operational, but I really do want to be on boards, and that's not represented in this, these advert subsets."

So what are the keywords that I would see on board roles? And think, "Okay, what is it that I want to do? What am I being pulled towards?" And making sure that you're really capturing what excites you. Too many of us talk about what we have done or what we can do, not what we want to do and not what we enjoy.

Rebecca Bliss asks, "Is reaching out to recruiters via LinkedIn worthwhile? What's the best way to go about it?"

It depends, and it depends on whether you're in a niche sector and whether you've already got a strong network or not. So if you've got a strong network, go there first. So I get requests, particularly in January, every January, and I really should've written an article about this.

Every January, I get people reach out to me saying, "Do you know a recruiter?" You know, given your background in recruitment, and that I've spoken at a few recruitment events and, and for people on boards in that space and stuff, "Can you introduce me to a recruiter?" But I'm always like, "No, build that network first," because the moment you meet a recruiter, if they put you forward for a role, there's a fee attached to you.

So if you can instead find out who else is sitting on the board of the roles th- of the organisations that you want to work for, and can you meet them online on LinkedIn? Can you take that connection offline? And then find a way of positioning yourself where you're showing why you're interested and why you'd be of value, but also what can you give to that person.

So it's a fair exchange. You never want to be that take, take, take sort of person. You want to be a giver as well. So I would only go to recruiters, uh, and it's not that recruiters are bad I've been- used to be one. But when there's the Shrek, you know, all of the, the really top executive search firms, if you get an introduction, fantastic, but it certainly would not be my first place to start.

My first place would be to start with growing your network And getting direct introductions and only doing recruiters if somebody's-- if they're a real executive search firm and somebody said, "You really need to speak to my executive search person."

So Karen, there's a bunch of questions here about profiles.

So Kristen asks, and I know you've touched on this, Kristen asks, "Do you restructure your LinkedIn profile when seeking board positions from your career profile to an area that you want to shift towards?" I know you've touched on that. There's a question here about tailoring LinkedIn profile for job and board roles at the same time.

In fact, there is a question about even what is a LinkedIn profile. So the question is, when you talk about a LinkedIn profile, what do you mean specifically? Is it the bio section? We also have a question about should you change your LinkedIn profile regularly, the photo and so on. So there's a whole bunch of things about the profile.

So I'm going to get you to dive into what is a LinkedIn profile, should you change it regularly, where do you focus?

LinkedIn profile is everything that sits within your URL, and your URL is the website address that sits underneath your tabs. So you know how we've all got multiple tabs open . You know, we, we might have sort of a, you know, a spreadsheet tab, and we might have Google, and we might have some sort of AI, and we might have our calendar and our email, and maybe a couple of emails tabs open.

Underneath that sits your LinkedIn URL, and if you haven't customized it, it's got a whole load of random numbers on, after it. So do make sure that you change that so it looks nice and neat. And it's everything that sits under there, from the banner that sits behind your profile photo, which only affects the human, doesn't affect your search, to your profile photo, to your About section, the bio section.

I don't think of it as a, a bio section because a bio is more a board bio, and this is an About section. It's about you. It's where you are in conversation with people. You've got 2,600 characters there. It's a lot of space, so use it. You can do bullet points. Nobody's going to read it, but they will skim it, and the machine will read it.

So you need to have keywords in there, and they need to be in sentence format, not bullet points. And then all of your experience sections, make sure you've got descriptions in your experience sections. Um, make sure you've got all of that, the whole thing. And make sure that you put your board roles in your experience sections, not in your volunteer roles, because they'll get more visibility in the experience section, both from a human perspective but also from the machine perspective.

The headline, the bit that sits underneath your name, is less important now than it used to be. LinkedIn are actually looking more at your experience section and the titles of your experience section and what you've got in your About section. But humans look at, at the headline as well. It's the bit that sits underneath your name, follows you everywhere.

So make sure that you optimize all of that completely. How often should you change it? I set myself a, a calendar reminder note. It used to be every three months, but now I just do it every six months because I've been writing LinkedIn profiles since 2009, so business hasn't really changed much. And that one-trick pony who still loves what I do.

So I, I just look at it every six months and just go, "Okay, you know, what's, what do I need to get in here? Oh my gosh, you know, I, I now teach people in a one-hour session how to use AI to do their own LinkedIn profile and, and their own content," and I haven't even mentioned that in my About section. So, you know, I look at it every six months and tweak it.

Changing your profile photo is not actually something I would recommend doing often, because people tend to remember you a certain way. You know, I always remember you because of the red, you know? And so I remember you a certain way, and if suddenly you look different every couple of months, I'm just not recogni- that doesn't reconcile with the Karen Chisnell that I, I met, you know?

So you don't want to keep the same photo forever because otherwise people will be like, "Oh my gosh, you really don't look like you did, uh, 20-odd years ago." Um you know, nobody wants to be that person. But I, I wouldn't actually change your ph- profile photo that often.

All righty. So there is a bunch of questions, and I'm going to chunk these together as well.

There's a bunch of questions about content, essentially. So Kin asks, "How do you choose what topics you post on your LinkedIn, and how do you choose the micro topics? How do you keep the topics and the feed clean when you've got multiple hats?" Rebecca asks, "I don't have time to post lots of content and new posts.

Is having a good profile enough?" So that's connected to the content as well. "How do you balance the way you use LinkedIn and post as well as remaining authentic?" So yeah, there's a whole bunch of stuff about, you know, can you comment on the length of posts? I'm starting to see very long-form posts. Do they get traction?

So yeah, there's a bunch of questions here about posting, connecting, micro content and so on. What's the best way of doing it? So what's your advice there?

So it's not enough to just have a LinkedIn profile. You do have to have a network, and not just be connecting to people, but be messaging people, be DM'ing people in a way that's very light.

"I remember we connected recently, and I remember that you were in the environmental space, and I saw this article and I thought you might find it interesting. May have already read it, but I've, I've dropped it here." So what can you give? What can you give? What can you give? In really light, not asking a lot of people.

That is enough. Creating content will help deepen how people think of you and if they remember you. So it is helpful, but we have to remember not everybody's looking through the feed. So it's never going to be seen by everybody, and that can be quite comforting. You know, I'm creating, uh, got a piece of content going out recently because it's on a specific day that's very important to me and my family.

It's very off-topic. It's very raw. It's very emotional. I'm almost vomiting in my mouth as I think about publishing it, so I've just scheduled it, so it's just going to go out. So it's not the sort of thing I'd normally do, but I feel it's important to have that voice. But I'm also very reassured that not many people are going to see it.

You know, it's going to blip out, and my whole network won't see it. So, so it reminds people you exist, but we shouldn't sort of overthink it too much. In terms of what to write about, that's really tricky for people who are sitting on multiple boards, particularly if they're in multiple sectors. So if you're sitting on different boards that are all around the health, biotech, med tech, health sort of space, you know, if you've got a sector that's so huge that you're sitting on boards all within that, that's fantastic.

Then I think you know what it is you can post about. Similarly, if it's all about sort of environmental things, then there's a lot of different boards within that. But if, like many of my clients, you're sitting on a number of boards, then there might be a sport here, and then there might be an ASX role there, and then there might be this here, and you've got all these different roles, maybe all different not-for-profits or a mix of not-for-profits and profits and, and you think, "Oh, what do I...

I can't speak about?" Then it all comes back to being genuine, and it all comes back to being you. Who are you? What do you care about? I'm posting something quite raw recent, uh, soon. It feels a little bit like therapy from a stage, and I'm so not comfortable with it. But I'm also aware that people want to see that bleeding authenticity.

So I'll do that occasionally, but I keep it very sparse, and it's not something I recommend people do a lot of it because I think it can be quite triggering. This is not the space for it. That's Facebook. But I think it is about being in conversation with the themes and the ideas that you're seeing.

Reading Harvard Business Review is wonderful because it gives me so many ideas. I'm like, "Oh my gosh, this is what people are talking about. This is what's topical." You know, if Harvard Business Review are publishing it, they've done a lot of data studies to show that's what people want to read So when you read that article and you find that insightful, add your own spin and create a piece of content about it.

So, but it's got to come from you and what's, uh, common in all of your roles, and what's common in all of your roles might be you and what you bring and what your expertise is. So perhaps that's future facing, perhaps it's, um, an ability to connect dots that others can't see. Perhaps it's around governance.

Perhaps it's around risk. Perhaps it's about risk as an opportunity to innovate. What is your thing? And be specific about it. Put it on a Post-It note, stick it on your wall. That's a content pillar, and if you have only three, four content pillars or only one, that's okay. What you don't want to have is you don't want to have sort of five, six, because that's really confusing.

All right. I know you've touched on this, but I'm going to pop together a couple of questions around connections, best practices for nurturing LinkedIn connections. You talked about doing follow-up on the initial podcast. How do you... advice on how to do it. Are we using LinkedIn to meet people in real life?

What's the protocol? And also on connections, is it okay to cull people, to remove connections you don't know in order to curate the feed? And a final one here, do you connect with just anyone or just who you know? I've got some thoughts about this as well, but there's a whole bunch around connections.

What's your thoughts about who do you bring in and how do you nurture?

I would like you to start with that last one. I'm sure we're very aligned on this. Do you connect only with people you know, and, you know? Yeah, tell me about that.

I only connect with people I know. So folks, if you reach out to me on LinkedIn and I haven't already met you, or if I have met you and maybe can't recall because it was a bit fleeting, I always send a message to the person.

So Karen, it wouldn't be you because I do know you, but if Karen reached out and said, just with a click connection, I would respond to Karen saying, "Hi, Karen. Thanks for your

invitation to connect. I only connect with people I know, and I don't think I know you. So if you'd like to catch up with me for a virtual cuppa, here's a link to make a time."

And then I'll connect after that, and I will not connect with them until they show up to the virtual cuppa. It's not even just making the time, because people make the time and then don't show up, which, folks, is a little bit frustrating, although sometimes it's a tech fail. I mean, you've talked, LinkedIn is not Instagram.

I'm not on Instagram. But for me, this is not about having a quintillion connections. This is about having close connections, not broad connections. So I want to know everybody and I want to know a bit about them, and that makes it much... The other part of the question about nurturing, it makes it easier to nurture them because you know these people.

They're not just a click. So yeah, that's my answer, Karen.

But you're lucky because you have a podcast, an established podcast that's been around for a long time. You've been running communities for-

But Karen, this has been my view long before the podcast. I have had a podcast for seven years, and I've been on LinkedIn for about 20 years, and it's always been my view, and it's always been I'll catch up.

It has b- it's actually been e- easier post-pandemic because it's easier to catch up with people, but yeah, it's always been my view.

However, if we think of LinkedIn as marketing, it ... remember my roots are in recruitment pimping. So there's inbound sales and there's outbound sales. So you get a lot of incoming invitations to connect from people who sit on multiple boards or want to sit on multiple boards, and they're incoming.

So you screen them, and I advocate for that. You do not want to be connecting with everybody. If you're not too sure, if they feel dodgy, trust your gut. If you feel, if they feel dodgy, they probably are dodgy. If, if they look like they're a mortgage broker that's going to try and sell you a house, they're probably going to try and sell you a house.

You know, so if there's somebody on the other side of the world that frankly you're never going to go to that country, you're unlikely to sit on the board of, of a, somebody in that country, why connect with them? So think about the circles that you want to be in. But that's for the incoming, and I bet you get a lot of incoming, even pre-podcast, because you're a relationship builder.

You know people, you know the right people. You've got a lot of wisdom and, and people know that. You're visible, so you get a lot of incoming. A lot of people don't get a lot of great incoming and, and myself, I've moved from, I know it's only Perth, Perth to Melbourne to Sydney, and when I started in Sydney running my own business, I did not know anybody.

My husband knew one person I ... and I met his girlfriend, and, and we didn't really click. So, you know, so I didn't know anybody, so I had to grow my network with the right people. So I

had to reach out to people I didn't know, so I had to be in service of my future self. Who did my future self want to deal with?

I was writing a lot of profiles for a lot of technical people, really technical people, in 2009, '10, '11, '12, '13, like just engineers and highly technical people. But the clients I loved the most were the ones that had had non-linear careers, that had, "I've been a marketer, and then I've sat on, uh ... done HR, and then I've been chief operations officer, and now I want to sit on a few boards, but I don't know what my unique value proposition is."

After years of helping people shape their unique value proposition, they're the exciting ones. So I thought, "Well, if I want more clients, I need to connect- With those people. I need to be in service of my future self. But it's not enough to just connect. You've got to then nurture those relationships. So that could be taking it offline."

Um, I actually don't take a lot of my relationships offline. I teach that to other people. If you're looking for a board role, you just cannot have too many coffees. I've got a spreadsheet that I can share with people, which I call the success matrix. How many people are you actually connecting with? Are you taking them offline?

Are you thanking them for the connection? Are you building those relationships? Are you having those coffees? So I don't have many coffees for me personally, but what I do do is if I'm in the city for a day, I'm going, "Okay, who are all the people that I can catch up with? Who are the relationships that I can nurture?"

If I'm going interstate, if I'm going to a conference, I will never go to a conference without going, "Are you going to this conference? It'd be great to put a face to the name." So if you've got specific sectors and industries, you know, never go to a conference without spending six, seven weeks out just looking at everybody who's in that space, who's in that area.

"Are you going to this conference? I'm going to be in your city. Can we catch up?" That sort of thing. I find it much easier to get coffees with people from conferences or, "I'm going to be interstate for a couple of days. Do you have time for a coffee?" So trying to take that offline and being that giver.

"Here's an article I thought you might find helpful." Not written by me, because that would be really annoying, but, "Here's a podcast episode from Take on Board that talks about this. I remember from looking at your profile, um, you might find that helpful." Sending podcast links is so great because it's so personalized.

Yeah. It's building the real connection, not just the clicks.

Not just the clicks, not just connecting with everybody, but really thinking who's your community and, and building your own community and thinking about your community as who's your personal board of advisors, so that when you are stuck with a question, as I was recently, because I submitted my tax return, like right on the last of my business tax return, right until like about a week before.

I'm going, "Okay, I know my accountant's going to slug me for this and he's so busy. Ooh, I know a couple of tax accountants I can ask these questions." You know? So who can I tap into? Whose smarts can I tap into, and what's my role in that? How can I give to them? How can I introduce people to each other? Via LinkedIn you can have two people in the same message, and I don't do introductions via email because I just think, oh, people don't always know where to go with that.

Like, oh, okay, now I'm sort of forced to have a coffee. But I can say on LinkedIn, "Hi, I can see that you're doing some great work in this. I've recently connected with this person who's also doing some great work. So I recently connected some research academics around education doing some really interesting work around AI assessment in education.

You're both doing work in this space at opposite ends of the country. You two should meet." So they can connect with each other and not DM, not have to have coffees if that feels uncomfortable. They can check out each other's profiles. Just helping others to grow is a real gift.

Yes, absolutely All right.

We are finally getting to the end of the questions. There are a few bits and bobs we won't get a chance to touch on, but we're almost there. So there's a couple of questions here, Karen, about LinkedIn Premium. Basically, is it worth it in terms of contacting or connecting with people?

No, it's not.

I'm a heavy LinkedIn user, and I've never been LinkedIn Premium.

Really? That's amazing. Okay. So LinkedIn Premium Career is very helpful if you're a job seeker, and what makes it helpful is that you can see if you've got the right keywords in your resume, and you can see what skills, what keywords other people have got when-- who are applying. So what that will help you to inform whether your resume is way off the mark when you're applying through LinkedIn.

So Premium Career is helpful. LinkedIn Premium Business is helpful because you can see who's looked at your profile, which is only effective if you're going to be creating content and that sort of thing, so you're quite out there, and you're quite loud, and then you can see who's looking at your profile, and you're making the time to look at those people.

And if they feel right to you, reach out and send them an invitation to connect. LinkedIn Premium gives you an ability to personalize invitations to connect. However, many people-- Uh, so without LinkedIn Premium, you can't personalize many invitations at all. I think you've only got two personalized invitations to connect a month.

But it's that follow-up. You know, you just click Connect, and then you say-- You know, I, I said to somebody recently, because I do have Premium, so I usually personalize. I'm like, "Oh, I'm, I'm sorry, I, I can't remember how, why we connected. Um, I don't think we've ever met." I'm good with faces. I am. Any ideas sort of thing.

And he and I sort of exchanged quite a few conversations because I was just open and honest about it, so. But make sure that you're making that time to thank people for those connections. So Premium will also give you more searches under the People tab. So this is where you're putting a keyword in the search bar, and then you're clicking on People, and then you're clicking on All Filters, and you're searching by second who are the people like-- people who know somebody I know.

You're searching by location. You're searching by industry, and right at the very bottom, you're searching by title. That's a fantastic tool. You've got unlimited company searches, so you can just go, "Who are the boards that I want to sit on?" And then click on Employees and then go, "Okay, who are, who are the employees there?"

And find them that way. So-

But I, I can do that, I think. I'm pretty sure I can click on Organisations and see the employees there

Yes, you can. Anybody can do that. So anybody can do a company search, but a- an actual people search where you're searching straight on people, not by company, you've got two of those a month, and I think that's enough.

Having a once a fortnight habit of connecting with all of the right people, and then on the alternate week thanking people for those invitations to connect, that's key, and then nurturing those relationships. One of the questions, uh, I know Helen had was can we automate that? Is there a way that we can use AI to automate that?

I would never automate relationships. Relationships are built one sentence at a time, and it is in breach of LinkedIn's terms, so-

And you can tell. You can tell when it's automated. You're just like, "No, not interested. I'm interested in connections." This is not Instagram. This is a connection field, and you can leave it to your AI bot, but your AI bot is not you.

And your AI bot won't remember, "Oh, that person's in education and doing some work around AI assessments, and I think I saw somebody the other day who's also doing that." So it's not going to connect those dots. It's not going to know how you can add value. It's, it's not going to see the posts that that person just did that you went, "Oh my gosh, this person's such an advocate for wo- women, and I really love that they're doing work around DV."

It's not going to see all of that. So make it human. Be human. Yes, it's time-consuming. Yes, it's tedious, but these are people, so dial up that curiosity in, in others.

Adele has asked about recommendations. Do recommendations have any weight coming from someone who finds it toe-curlingly awkward to ask? That's Adele, by the way.

I don't. I ask for them all the time. So what's your view about recommendations?

Well, I just got one today, so I think that clocks my 181st recommendations. So do I believe in recommendations? Yes, I do, but I run my business. I'm not looking for board roles, and nobody would ever put me on a board because I'm mathematically stupid.

I've, I'd have no idea if we're ever making money or not, can't read a P&L sheet, no matter how much training I've had. So for me, it matters, but if you're looking for a role and you're looking for board roles, recommendations, yeah, nice to have, but you don't need them. Instead, I would invest that time in actually building relationships and building goodwill.

I never, ever ask people through that, ask people for a recommendation on LinkedIn. I never do that. Instead, for me, when I have people say, "Oh, that was amazing," or, "Oh my gosh, you've added such a difference to me," with a smile and a wink, you can put that in writing if you like. So I just keep it really light.

I just put it out there.

All right. So Sarah has asked about, this is back on content, if people are making disrespectful comments on your post, do you respond or ignore or block or something else?

What do you do? Tell me.

Oh, look, so first up- I think because I keep my network close, it is less likely to happen, quite frankly.

Because, I mean, anyone can comment anywhere, but because I only connect with people that I know, therefore things only get pushed out to people who are a bit closer, so it's less likely. However, if it does, I definitely do not respond. And I generally... I think you can delete comments on your own posts, and I would delete, and block, and report.

I mean, if it's, inverted commas, just disrespectful, depends on what that means. But if it's offensive, I will block and report.

Yeah, absolutely. I tend not to delete. I very rarely ever get anything. But a client of mine is sitting on a board that's doing some work around what is gender and, and advocating for non-binary people.

And so an issue that's quite close to my heart is I, I have a child that is in that. So they get trolled quite a lot. And you can delete the comments, but actually, let's think about content as conversations. If you've got somebody who leaves a horrible comment on it, don't respond. Don't feed the trolls.

But you know what? Your audience will. Your audience will jump on, and they'll see that comment, and they'll say, "How dare you say this? Da, da, da. I have a child too." You know, that was me. So you'll go on, and you'll, you'll comment on that. And then somebody else will comment on it, and somebody else will comment on it.

That drives up the views of the post. If you are polarizing people, you're leaving a mark. Your, your content will do better.

I think that's true. And I think for me, then it's that line between is it, inverted commas, just disrespectful or is it offensive? All right, final question. And this is just about LinkedIn more broadly.

Are more people using LinkedIn these days compared to, I don't know, 5 years ago, 10 years ago? And do you know of the stats on LinkedIn usage?

Yeah. Historically, we were sitting at 14.5 million or four- 14.4 million LinkedIn member profiles here in Australia. So just in Australia. So not Australia and New Zealand, just Australia.

So now I cannot remember the latest stats. I remember seeing them, and I remember thinking, "Wow, I wonder if 100 of those profiles are my, my little old 80-year-old mother trying to figure out what on earth I do for a living." And she set up multiple profiles, because some people do have multiple profiles.

So LinkedIn is already very widespread. It has been for ages. What's been really interesting is, I've mentioned education a couple of times because I've got a lot of clients in that sector, is a lot of teachers, principals moving onto LinkedIn. A lot of people who were previously in retail businesses that are now moving to online stores, that are also moving to LinkedIn.

So we're seeing new cohorts joining LinkedIn, but at executive level it's been widespread for many years. What is a new change, um, is that we are now at saturation point of most people having LinkedIn Premium when they're at executive level, and yet having no idea why they've got it, and not utilizing all of the bells and whistles and being charged a fortune.

And that means that LinkedIn is launching Business All In One. So knowing that it's at that near saturation level for LinkedIn Premium usage, it's removing some of the filters that are available under all filters, which is why I cannot stress how important it is to grow your network while you still can and before you get charged for it.

And then it's introducing natural language search, so you can search by keywords in the filter, removing a lot of those things under all filters. And then if you want all filters, you have to pay for Business All In One, which is about three times the price of Premium.

That is a beautiful way to finish it here.

Karen, thank you so much. Folks, if you need LinkedIn help, go see Karen. She is a superstar friend of the Take on Board community. So thank you so much for, as I say, the podcast a few years ago, the podcast a few weeks ago, for joining us at this event this morning, for spending another 45 minutes to answer all of the questions.

I think we have exhaustively done them all. Thank you, Karen. You are a superstar, so thank you so much for being with us here today.

Thank you so much. I love that we're both so aligned on the importance of growing community, because it couldn't matter more for female startups. So thank you.

So that's a wrap for the Take on Board podcast today.

Thank you for being here and for being part of the community. I do this podcast because I love bringing good women and gender diverse peoples 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 in Facebook to find us.

Or you might like to let me know your email address, and you'll then have the Take on Board times and the Take on Board community's digest delivered straight to your inbox. You'll also get advance notice of events and programs so you can meet others in the community. Finally, I'd really love it if you could do some of the podcast things.

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