What makes a successful LinkedIn long-form post

Last year, LinkedIn opened up its publishing platform to all. Since then, we've seen an explosion in these long-form posts. Everyone is trying it, and why not, after all, LinkedIn is the professional social network and we want to expand and influence our business network in order to get more business or land our next job.

The idea, according to the LinkedIn help blog, is to share your expertise. It says:

> *Your long-form posts should share your professional expertise. Write about challenges you've faced, opportunities you've seized, or important trends in your industry.*

And yet, many times people are pushing their products/services/ebooks/webinars on us. Instead of providing information or resources, these people are merely trying to sell us something.

Tell, don't sell

I don't know about you, but I don't like being sold to. If I am shopping for something, I want a salesperson to help me figure out what I should be looking for. I don't want a salesperson to push something.

It's about trust

On LinkedIn, your network is probably composed of people you have worked with or gone to school with, or perhaps met volunteering or through a networking event. Your network is not a bunch of random strangers (or at least, it shouldn't be). You've earned your network's trust. This is why when somebody spams us on LinkedIn we get pretty upset. And this is

why we should get upset when somebody writes a LinkedIn long-form post that is designed solely to sell something.

To stop breaking your network's trust and get their attention instead, write LinkedIn posts that are worthwhile.

What makes a top-performing post?

A read of the top performing posts on LinkedIn shows they share the following characteristics:

- They answer questions (for example a current top post is titled "What makes a leader")
- They give tips
- They have fun headlines
- The have a strong point of view, sometimes controversial
- Having notoriety or celebrity helps (The top post when I looked yesterday was by author Daniel Goleman)

Make your posts work for you

Based on this, here are six tips to make your LinkedIn posts stand out and work for you:

1. Write about a subject you know well. If you are an expert on UX, then write about that instead of the five life lessons you learned from the seminar you attended last week.
2. Share your knowledge/expertise. Don't charge for it by making people pay for your webinar or your ebook.
3. It's not academic writing—make it conversational.
4. Don't rant. There are plenty of other places you can vent—perhaps at your local pub to your friends.
5. Write clearly. Avoid spelling and grammar mistakes by asking someone to edit/proof it.
6. Spend time working on your headline. Think of it as your book cover. If it is appealing, people will read through (and maybe even buy it).

What is your experience with LinkedIn long-form posts? Have you written one? If yes, how did it perform? If no, what has stopped you?