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HOSTED BY DEBBIE ALBERT

Episode 124: LinkedIn (Part 3 of 3): How “Vendor Agnostic” Content on LinkedIn Keeps You Top of Mind

Guest: Brynne Tilman, CEO, Social Sales Link

This is Prove It. A podcast for impatient business owners overwhelmed marketers and PR practitioners with no time for podcasts. In just 10 minutes they answer 3 questions and offer proof of what's working in marketing communications today. Here's Debbie Albert, President of Albert Communications.

Debbie: This episode of " Prove It" is the third in a three-part series looking at LinkedIn, which is so important in all of our businesses. It is the platform for B2B marketing and sales and our guest for all three episodes is Brynne Tillman, the CEO of Social Sales Link. If you haven't yet listened to Brynne's first two episodes about updating your LinkedIn profile from a resume to a resource, and then the second one about leveraging your LinkedIn contacts, I strongly suggest you invest the time to do that.

Both episodes are chock full of insider information from LinkedIn. I think you'll find them really useful.

This episode is about what Brynn calls being “vendor agnostic with your content” to stay top of mind on LinkedIn. And when she told me that's what she wanted to talk about, I asked her what the hell ‘vendor agnostic’ means. So, sit back and listen and Brynne, are you ready to get started?

Brynne: Absolutely Debbie, always ready.

Debbie: Okay. So, the first question is **what the hell do you mean by being ‘vendor agnostic’ with your content?**

Brynne: Great question. So, “vendor agnostic” means that the insights and value that you provide do not rely on them hiring you to actually be of value. So, a lot of times we talk about content and the only way they can really get value might create curiosity. The only way they'd ever get value is to talk with you or hire you. So, vendor agnostic content means if they never heard of you again or talk to you or did anything else that they had “aha” implementable moments from that piece of content.



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Debbie: Which that, in and of itself, puts you top-of-mind.

Brynne: Absolutely. And the interesting thing is, the more you pitch in your content, the more you repel your viewers, your readers. The more you provide insights and value. It's like dropping bread crumbs, right? They go closer to your solution with so much value that they can't wait to jump on a call with you because they know if you can do this right online, imagine what a call would be like.

Debbie: So, what kind of content works best with this philosophy and why? What does work and what doesn't work?

Brynne: Well, there are so many different kinds of content today. A podcast like this is content; webinars are content, mini videos are content. Obviously, blog posts infographics-- just a quick little tip, insights on somebody else's talk. I have a connection who must spend his whole life listening to TED talks, but pulls out two or three tips from a whole TED Talk and then all around leadership, because that's what he coaches and so it's not even his leadership content, but he pulls out one to three little tips and shares at along with the Ted Talk.

And I look at that and his insights are brilliant on what he gained out of the video that he shared. I love that. So, you don't even have to have original content to be original as long as you're adding your insights on top of that.

Debbie: And people do that with all sorts of content, create content. It used to be called plagiarism, now, it's content creation. You read an article, you give your insights on it and post it in your creating new content for your LinkedIn feed.

Brynne: Yeah. And as long as you're linking back to that original article, they're thrilled because you're driving traffic for them. So, it's completely legitimate. So, those are all really great things.

On LinkedIn right now, video is hot, hot, hot. They have what's called "me video". It's not a link to YouTube. You have to upload a video that's anywhere from 6 seconds to 10 minutes. And because it's relatively new, I keep saying it's new, it's not as new as it used to be.

But LinkedIn gives it a little bit more push in its algorithm. And so, if you get a few people looking, that video has really had a long life in the news feed of your connections.



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Debbie: That's great to know. Is there any kind of content that you wouldn't use in this way?

Brynne: Cat videos?

Debbie: Okay. I'm with you there.

Brynne: This is not Facebook. You've got to make sure we keep this B2B or even if it's B2C, but it's business value. If you want cat videos, go to Facebook, go to Instagram. This is not the place for it.

Debbie: So, what percentage of your content should be vendor agnostic? Is it the 80/20 rule?

Brynne: So, for me, rarely do I share anything that is not vendor agnostic. A couple of events I'll share, webinars I'll share. Mostly free ones. Rarely do I even share something that someone has to pay for. Unless I'm speaking somewhere, I might share that. If they could sometimes be booking a ticket or be paid but I would say most of the time, it should be vendor agnostic.

Now that said, you should always have a call to action at the bottom of any piece of content. If you have any questions around this, if you're struggling with this, let's chat. Even in a blog post, I'll say even if we never work together, I'm happy to provide insights that can help you on your path.

Debbie: I remember years ago when you would think to add a CTA at the bottom of something looked too salesy and now it looks like a mistake if you don't.

Brynne: It is a mistake and I would never say sign up for a \$99 webinar and a call to action on LinkedIn. My schedule is booked solid with people that got to my content, loved it and want information specific to their environment. My prospects cold call me.

Debbie: So, it's important to have the CTA just so they can find a way to get in touch with you.

Brynne: Absolutely, and the end of a really good piece of content is a perfect way to do that. Also, if your content was completely vendor agnostic, they're much more likely to want to talk to you because they're not feeling the pressure.



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And by the way, that first call is not a sales call. In today's buyers' journey, there is a call before the discovery call. If they reach out and say, "I want to learn more about your products and services" great, but if they reach out because you provided insights and you invited them to learn more insights, then that's the job of that call. And it's really important that you don't breach that trust, that it's not a bait and switch.

Debbie: Oh, yeah, that would be a real turnoff.

Brynne: I can't tell you how many people that do though, which is why I now teach this. Because I think it's so important that you are prepared to ask a few questions about their environment, their challenges and immediately provide vendor agnostic insights, meaning, they can use the tips that you're giving them even if they don't hire you. And then at the end of the call, the job at the end of the call is to sell them on the next step. And that's okay. So how do we do that? We've given them all this value. We remind them.

It's like telling them what you're going to tell them, tell them what you told them. And then say, "You know, this reminds me of a client that had a very similar challenge. I'd love to share with you what we did with them or how we help them. Would that be okay?"

Debbie: That's a wonderful way to lead to the next phone call. But I agree with you. I think that the sales process - and when I left my corporate job and opened my own shop, I would never have believed that I would have turned into a bit of a salesperson - but it is what you do to continue to generate business. But I find that the slower the process goes the better it is.

Brynne: Absolutely, and if they don't feel pressure, at one point they go "okay, okay. I have this a lot. How do I work with you?"

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Debbie: So, wait, we're up to the 'prove it' part because you and I could go off on tangents all day. **Tell us of how someone who was vendor agnostic in their content really became top-of-mind for someone that perhaps led to a business partnership or a new client for them.**

Brynne: Okay, so I had a client that when we started working together had absolutely no content at all and was not a writer. And he actually sold into other coaches. He was a pricing expert, a pricing and positioning expert, but not content, really through



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conversation and negotiation. That was it, negotiating and pricing. And there was nothing other than it said, “Negotiation and pricing coach.”

It was really all he had out there and not a writer. So, what we actually had him do were quick little raw videos with his camera and asked him, just like you had these quick little questions, one question at a time that we're tips.

That is, when someone says to you, “What's your price?” what should I say? And so, then he would answer these quick little tips created about 8 or 10 like 30 to 40-second videos and started putting them out there. And then when he connects with new people, he sends them one of these little 35, 40 second videos and ended up landing a huge contract to teach 150 sales reps how to negotiate better because of that little tip.

Debbie: That's great. And once again, it shows what you said earlier. Video is hot. It's hot in general and it's hot on LinkedIn.

Brynnne: Absolutely and it's converting.

Debbie: Yes, absolutely. Well, Brynnne, we are out of time, I'm sorry to say. I can't thank you enough. This episode and the other two are proof that you are the queen of LinkedIn. Your insights are more valuable than you know, and I hope that you'll come back again with more tips on LinkedIn because I think these episodes are going to be particularly valuable to our listeners. Are you up for the challenge my friend?

Brynnne: Anytime.

Debbie: Well, thank you, and keep your ear out for more episodes of “Prove It” where you'll gain clarity and what's happening in marketing Communications today. Thanks to Brynnne and thanks to all of you for listening.

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