Drivers of engagement on LinkedIn: uncovering the role of employees as spokespersons

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Paper from the EMAC Regional 2021 Conference, Warsaw, September 22-24, 2021

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Abstract

This study explores drivers of customer engagement with corporate brands on LinkedIn and tests a theoretical model linking thinking processes and post source characteristics to engagement. The design employs an exploratory content analysis of 788 LinkedIn posts and an experimental research design (N=334). Findings show that content with an informational purpose and posts created or shared by employees, rather than company pages, result in greater engagement rates. Drawing from attribution and source credibility theories the study also tests a model of serial mediation to explain source effects on engagement. Findings show that dispositional attributions of an employee's branded post lead to higher engagement and that both source trustworthiness and identification mediate the relationship between attribution style and engagement.