

SESSION 2

BUILDING INDIVIDUAL INFLUENCE ON



Facilitator: Vanessa Lustosa

A man with a beard and long hair tied back, wearing a black and white checkered shirt, is adjusting a red smartphone mounted on a silver tripod. He is in a modern, brightly lit room with a wooden desk, a yellow container, and a palette in the foreground. The background features a white wall with a geometric pattern and a tall white cabinet.

Who influences you?

1. Which LinkedIn voice do you trust?
2. What makes them credible / engaging?

Why LinkedIn over other platforms?

- Social media focused in professional identity (not entertainment)
- Intent-driven audience (career, business, learning)
- Content has longer lifespan

@ Threads

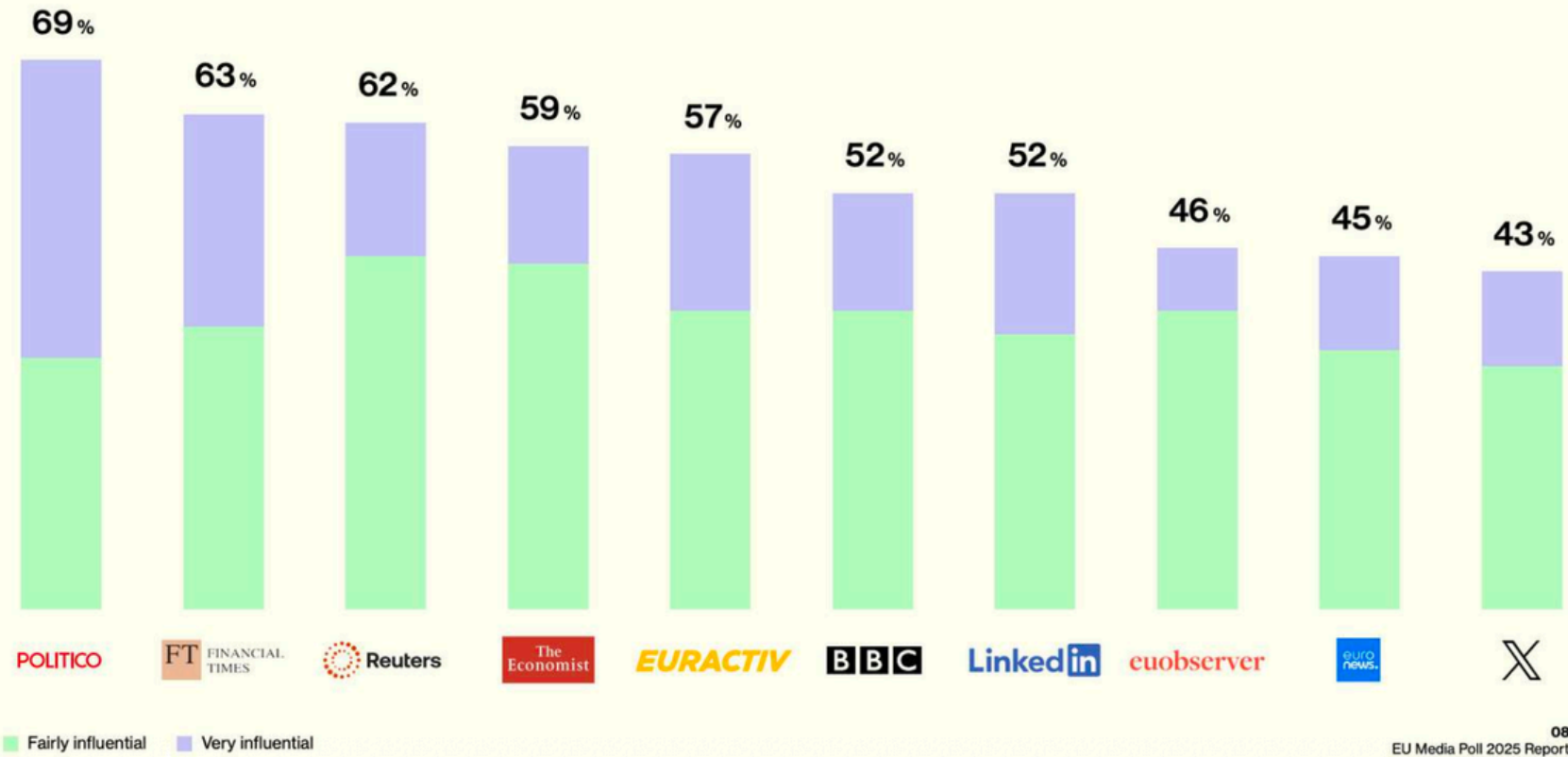


🎵 TikTok

Most Influential News Sources TOP 10

POLITICO has retained the top spot as the most influential media source for EU news. POLITICO is also much more likely to be seen as 'very influential' than any other source.

The Financial Times and Reuters also hold considerable sway, with at least six in 10 EU decision-makers considering them influential.



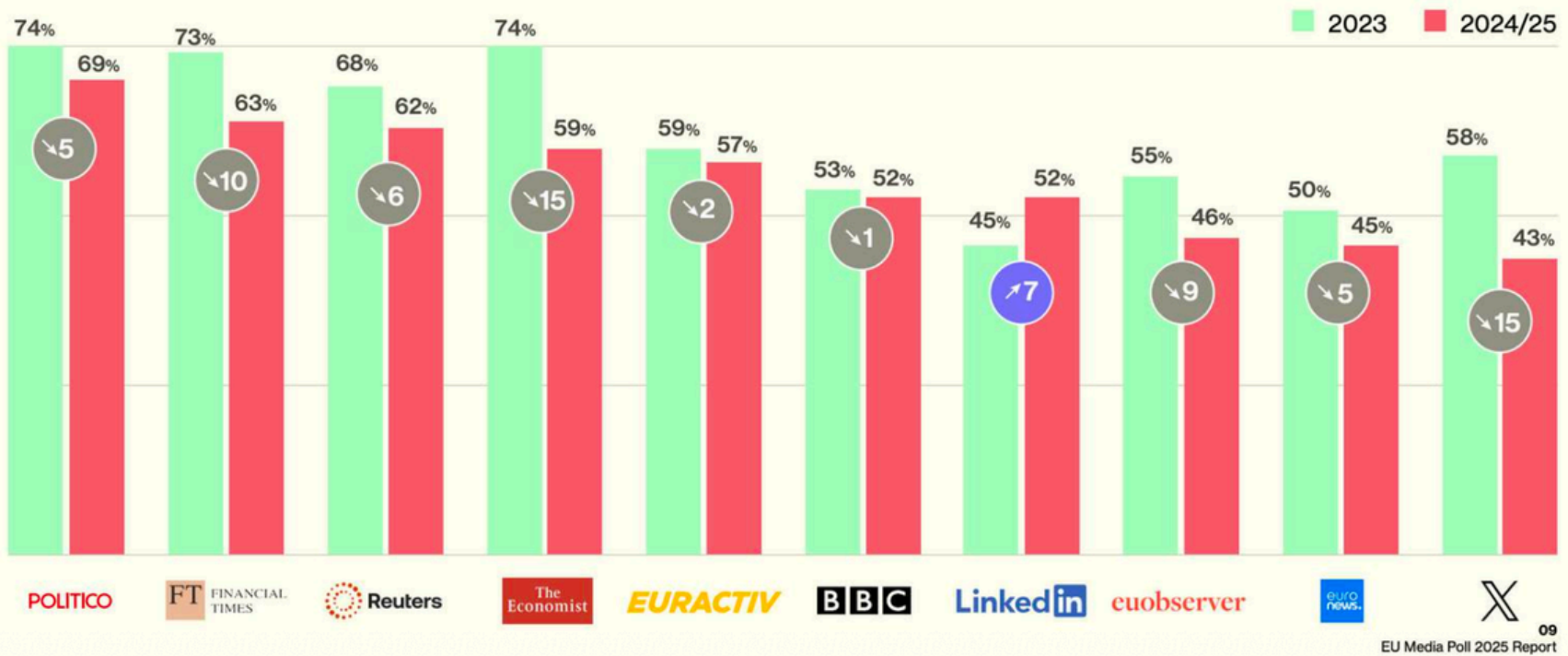
Most Influential News Sources Comparison

This year's top spot, POLITICO, registered a decrease of five percentage points compared to the previous poll.

There has been a decrease in the influence of most sources; some of the biggest changes are from The Financial Times (down 10 points) and The Economist (down 15 points).

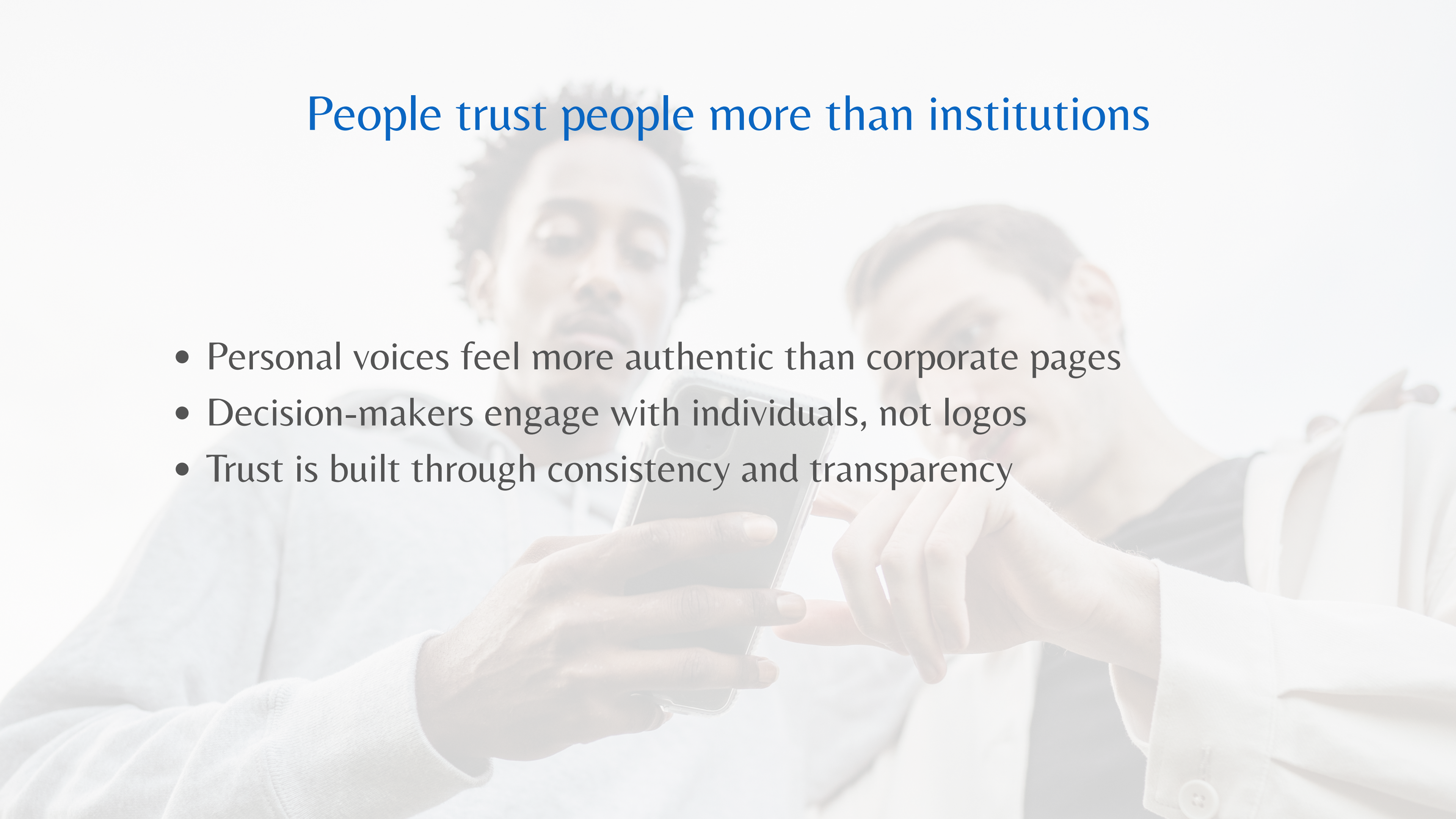
The BBC and Euractiv are notable for their consistency, with only a slight decrease in influence.

LinkedIn was the only news source in the top ten that saw its influence rise (up 7 points).



People trust people more than institutions

- Personal voices feel more authentic than corporate pages
- Decision-makers engage with individuals, not logos
- Trust is built through consistency and transparency



Visibility is not vanity

- Visibility = credibility + opportunity, not ego
- Individual voices shape reputation and influence
- If you're not visible, others define your narrative



Breakout rooms

1. What unique perspective do I bring?
2. What topics do colleagues already ask me about?
3. What conversations do I want to shape?

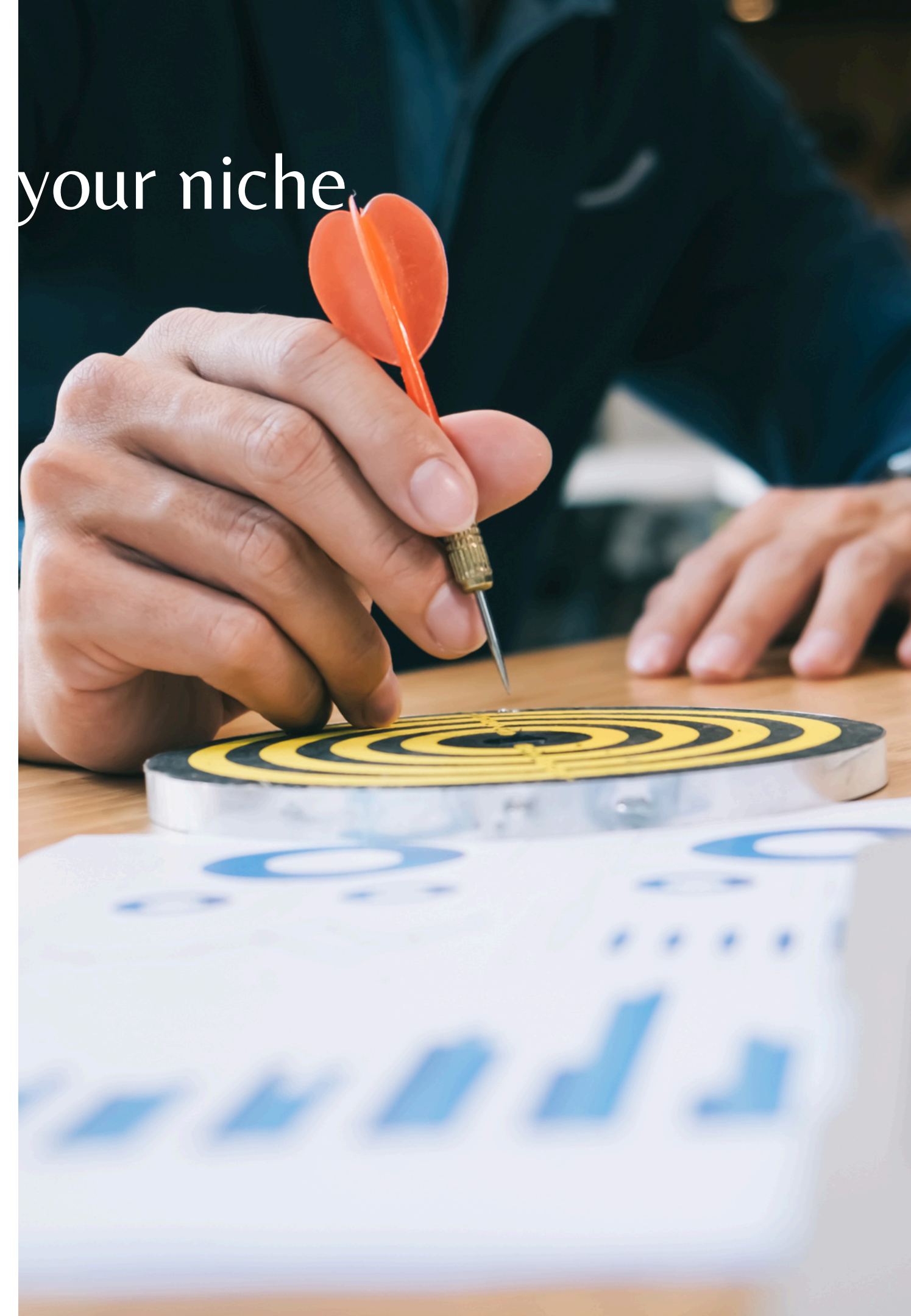


10 min

Finding your voice and defining your niche

- What do you want to be known for?
- Building clarity, not noise
- The niche is not your job title, it's the angle you choose.

Your niche =
what you know +
what you've lived +
what people need



Influence vs Personal Branding

- Personal branding = what you define
- Influence = what others perceive



Personal branding: optimize your profile

- Write a headline that goes beyond your job title. Instead of: “Research Officer at ABC”, try: “Agroecology researcher | Food systems transformation | Helping bridge science and practice”
- Use a professional, approachable profile photo. Avoid: cropped group photos, sunglasses, blurry images.
- Use the banner to reinforce your expertise: what visual represents the work you want to be known for?
- Write an About section
- Create content before you need influence: people build expertise publicly by sharing experiences, questions, learnings, observations...

Examples

Sebastien Roumegous

Strong example of becoming known for a very specific niche: regenerative agriculture and agroecological transition

- Clear positioning
- Educational content
- Consistent expertise

Yodit Kebede

Focuses on food systems transformation, agroecology, resilience, policy. Excellent example of translating research into accessible content

- Thought leadership
- Evidence-based content
- Research communication

Examples

Elodie Bouscarat

Strong communicator in the European agroecology ecosystem who combines advocacy, events, communication and food systems transformation.

- Personal branding in sustainability
- Community engagement
- Making complex topics accessible

Vatsoa Rakotondrazafy

Strong professional following around small-scale fisheries, coastal communities, and sustainable resource management. She regularly shares field experiences and advocacy work for fishers.

- Consistent focus
- Community-centered storytelling
- Sharing field realities

Content pillars

- Pillar 1: Your expertise: what you know professionally
- Pillar 2: Your experience: what you've lived or done
- Pillar 3: Your insights: what you observe in your industry
- Pillar 4: Your opinions: how you see things



Tone and style

What words you want people to associate with your content?

- ☐ Expert
- ☐ Practical
- ☐ Educational
- ☐ Inspiring
- ☐ Analytical
- ☐ Straightforward
- ☐ Creative
- ☐ Thought-provoking
- ☐ Friendly



Clear



Human



Consistent

Practical posting tips

Make it easy to read

- Clarity > complexity
- Short paragraphs
- One idea per post
- Media supports message



#glfafrica #rangelandsmatter #treespeopleplanet | Eliane Ubalijoro

It is always exciting to be surrounded by passionate people, especially young people who are caring and advocating for Africa and our landscapes. Yesterday, we opened GLF Africa 2026, with a focus on rangelands, ecosystems that cover 54...

 LinkedIn



Picture: Aleksandra Kuzmanovic



Picture: Aleksandra Kuzmanovic

LinkedIn features and strategic tools

Different formats serve different goals:

- Text posts => most common format for reach and engagement, best for insights, opinions, questions, and short narratives.
- Carousels (PDF posts) => one of the highest-performing formats for education and storytelling. Works well for reports, briefs, and simplified knowledge sharing
- Video trust and human connection => builds stronger trust through voice, presence, and field reality, effective for interviews, project updates, and storytelling from the ground.
- Articles / Newsletter => long-form space for analysis, thought leadership and synthesis. Builds sustained authority over time, it's less viral, but stronger for credibility and depth.

LinkedIn features and strategic tools

Algorithm basics

- Prioritizes early engagement quality (comments > likes)
- Rewards content that keeps people reading and interacting
- Favors consistent posting over viral spikes
- Distributes content based on network relevance first, then broader reach
- Downranks low-value or repetitive engagement bait

What works well in 2026

Content that performs best:

- Clear perspectives, not generic updates
- Human-centered storytelling with professional relevance
- Short, readable formats with strong opening lines
- Practical insights, lessons learned, and “behind-the-scenes” thinking
- Visual formats: carousels, short video, simple graphics

What works less today:

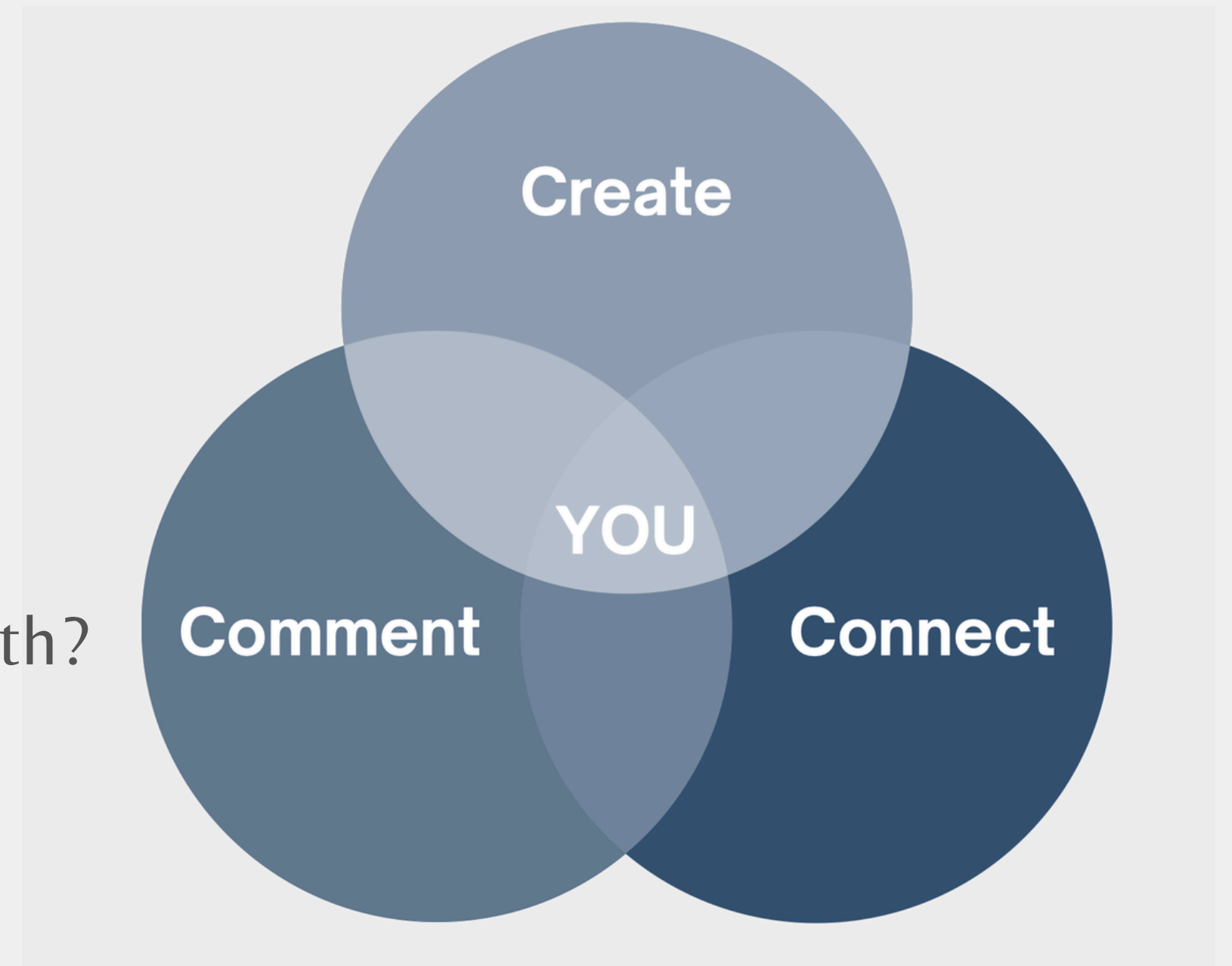
- Overly promotional content
- Engagement bait (“Agree?” / “Thoughts?” without substance)
- Too many hashtags or excessive tagging
- Long institutional statements without narrative or insight



Building your audience

Growth comes from interaction

- Commenting matters
- Conversations matter
- Visibility starts before posting
- What audience would you like to connect with?





Practical exercise

Step 1 - choose 1 option to focus on, it can be:

- A recent field visit
- A lesson learned from a project
- A misconception in agroecology
- A conference insight
- A policy reaction



Step 2 - use a simple post framework to create your post:

Option 1: Storytelling

- What happened?
- Why did it matter?
- What did you learn?

Option 2: Insight

- A common misconception
- What people miss
- Your perspective

Option 3: Takeaway

- One idea that stayed with you
- Why it matters now
- A question for others

Linkedin influence checklist

- ☐ I am clear on my niche: I know the 2–4 themes I want to be known for in agroecology or my field.
- ☐ I share my own perspective: not only institutional messages, but my analysis, reflections and voice.
- ☐ I focus on clarity over complexity: I avoid jargon and translate ideas into simple, accessible language.
- ☐ I communicate in a human tone: my posts sound like a person talking to other people, not a press release.
- ☐ I share insights, not just updates: I aim to explain what I learned, observed, or think about an issue.
- ☐ I use real experiences: field stories, project lessons, and observations are part of my content.
- ☐ I engage, not just post: I regularly comment, respond, and join conversations in my network.
- ☐ I write for readability: clear structure, short paragraphs, and a strong opening line.
- ☐ I stay consistent: I post regularly enough to build recognition over time, without aiming for perfection.
- ☐ I think in conversations, not broadcasts: my goal is to start dialogue and build trust, not just share information.

Action plan

- 3 topics you can post about
- 1 type of post you want to experiment
- A realistic posting frequency
- 3 people/accounts you want to engage with regularly

LinkedIn Action Plan Template (Individual Exercise)

1) My 3 topics to post about

Think about your expertise, field experience and what you want to be known for.

- Topic 1: _____
- Topic 2: _____
- Topic 3: _____

(Tip: These can be themes like policy insights, field learnings, climate adaptation, agroecology practices, etc.)

2) One type of post I want to experiment with

Choose one format to try in the next month.

- ☐ Short story from the field
- ☐ Opinion / perspective post
- ☐ "What I learned..." reflection
- ☐ Simple explainer (breaking down a concept)
- ☐ Photo + reflection
- ☐ Event or meeting takeaway

3) My realistic posting frequency

Be honest and realistic and remember that consistency matters more than intensity.

- ☐ 1 post per week
- ☐ 1 post every 2 weeks
- ☐ 2 posts per month
- ☐ Other: _____

4) People / accounts I want to engage with regularly

Choose people whose work you want to learn from, contribute to, or be visible to.

- Person / account 1: _____
- Person / account 2: _____
- Person / account 3: _____

QUESTIONS

