

THE PLAYBOOK SERIES · NO. 02

The Content Pillar Planning Guide

Define your pillars, plan 90 days, and write posts that build authority — and pipeline.

How to use this guide

Most executives post whatever comes to mind, then wonder why nothing compounds. This guide replaces guesswork with a system you can run in under three hours a week.

What you'll build

- A set of 3–5 content pillars drawn from your own expertise
- A 90-day editorial calendar you can batch in one sitting
- A reusable library of hooks, CTAs, and post formats

Who it's for

- Founders and executives building authority on LinkedIn
- GTM and marketing leaders who own a personal brand
- Anyone tired of posting into the void

The promise: By the last page you'll never stare at a blank post again. You'll know exactly what to write, which bucket it belongs to, and how to open it so the right people stop scrolling.

Work through it front to back once, then keep it open as a reference while you plan each month.

THE PROBLEM

Why most executive content fails

It's rarely a talent problem. It's a **system** problem — random topics, inconsistent posting, and openings that never earn the second line.

2–5_{/wk}

posting cadence the algorithm consistently rewards for reach and engagement

40%+

of B2B deals stall on internal misalignment — thought leadership aligns the hidden buyers

2–3_x

the reach document & carousel posts earn vs. average — if you have pillars to fill them

Sources: Buffer analysis of 2M+ LinkedIn posts; 2025 Edelman × LinkedIn B2B Thought Leadership Impact Report; Social Media Today format benchmarks.

The fix isn't posting more. It's posting on purpose. Pillars give you a repeatable set of topics, a sustainable cadence, and a reason for the right people to keep showing up.

SECTION ONE

The Pillar Principle

Why narrowing your topics is what grows your reach — not shrinks it.

01

Why narrow beats broad

Counter-intuitive but true: the fastest way to grow an audience is to say a few things repeatedly, not many things once.

Pillars are the 3–5 themes you want to be known for. They give your audience a reason to follow — they know what they'll get — and they give the algorithm a consistent signal about who to show you to. Post about everything and you're memorable to no one.

Scattered

- A new topic every post
- No throughline to follow
- Audience never learns what you're for
- Every post starts from zero

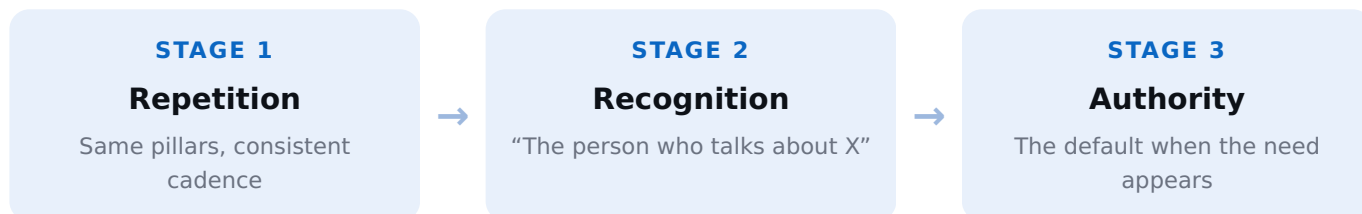
Pillared

- 3–5 themes on rotation
- Recognizable point of view
- Each post reinforces the last
- Ideas compound into authority

Rule of thumb: if you can't name your pillars in one breath, neither can your audience. Pick the few you'd happily talk about for a year.

The compounding math of pillars

Authority isn't built in one viral post. It's built by the same few ideas, repeated until your name and your topic become the same thought.



Every post inside a pillar is a deposit into the same account. A scattered feed spreads those deposits across a dozen accounts that never grow. That's why a focused creator posting three times a week will out-compound a prolific one posting about everything.

Format multiplier: because pillars repeat, you can turn each into a document or carousel — the formats that earn roughly 2-3× the reach of an average post. One pillar becomes an endless series.

Source: Social Media Today / Buffer LinkedIn format benchmarks.

SECTION TWO

The Four Content Buckets

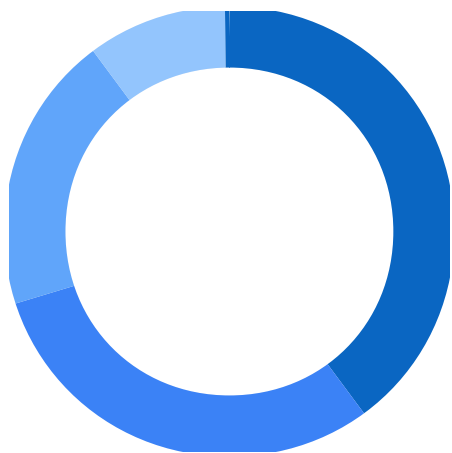
Market POV, Operator Lessons, Frameworks, and Proof — the full range of what makes a buyer trust you.

02

THE FRAMEWORK

The 40 / 30 / 20 / 10 mix

Rotate through four buckets and you cover the full range of what earns trust: point of view, credibility, usefulness, and proof.



40% **Market POV** — where the industry is heading

30% **Operator Lessons** — what you've learned doing the work

20% **Frameworks** — how you think, made repeatable

10% **Proof** — evidence that it works

Why this ratio: lead with POV and lessons — that's what builds the relationship. Keep proof to about 10 percent; it lands hardest once you've already earned attention with the other three.

Market POV

Take a clear stance on where your industry is heading.

This is where authority is built. Buyers follow people who see around corners, not people who echo the consensus. A strong POV is polarizing on purpose — it filters for the audience you actually want and gives them a flag to rally around.

Example hooks

“Everyone’s still hiring more SDRs. Here’s why that’s the wrong move in 2026.”

“Unpopular opinion: your pipeline problem is a positioning problem.”

“The advice to ‘post more’ is quietly killing your brand. Do this instead.”

Idea prompts

- A belief most of your peers get wrong
- A trend you’re betting on for next year
- A piece of common advice you’d retire

Format tip

POV posts do well as short, punchy text. Lead with the stance in the first line; save the nuance for the body.

Operator Lessons

Share what you've learned actually doing the work.

This bucket makes you human and relatable — the reason people feel like they know you. Mistakes, hard calls, and behind-the-scenes decisions outperform polished wins because they're specific, honest, and hard to fake.

Example hooks

"We lost a \$200K deal last quarter. The post-mortem changed how I run every deal since."

"I promoted the wrong person. Here's what it taught me about hiring."

"Three years ago I gave this advice. I was wrong. Here's the update."

Idea prompts

- A mistake that taught you something
- A hard decision and how you made it
- A number you're proud (or nervous) to share

Format tip

Story format shines here. A short narrative with one clear lesson at the end travels further than a list.

Frameworks

Turn how you think into a named, reusable model.

Frameworks get saved and shared — the highest-leverage format for reach. When you name your thinking (“the 3-touchpoint rule”), you make it memorable, quotable, and yours. This is where pillars turn into carousels.

Example hooks

“The 3-touchpoint rule: how to warm a prospect before you ever pitch.”

“My 5-part framework for a profile that converts visitors into DMs.”

“The 40/30/20/10 content mix I use to never run out of ideas.”

Idea prompts

- A repeatable process you use
- A checklist you’d hand a new hire
- A rule of thumb you live by

Format tip

Frameworks are made for carousels and documents — one slide per step. This is your highest-reach format.

Proof

Show the evidence that your approach works.

Results, client wins, and case studies — used sparingly. Proof lands hardest after you’ve earned trust with the other three buckets. Frame it around the client’s transformation, not your victory lap.

Example hooks

“A client went from 5 profile views a week to 60. Here’s the exact change we made.”

“How a founder booked 12 sales calls from one LinkedIn post.”

“90 days, one system, 3× inbound. The before-and-after.”

Idea prompts

- A client result you can anonymize
- A before/after you’re proud of
- A testimonial with a specific number

Format tip

Anchor proof to a number and a timeframe. “3× in 90 days” beats “great results” every time.

SECTION THREE

The 90-Day Calendar

A cadence a busy operator can actually sustain — and a plan you can batch in one sitting.

Your weekly template

Consistency beats intensity. Two to five posts a week, every week, will outperform a heroic burst followed by silence.

3x

a sustainable starting cadence for most executives — one post per weekday you're active

<3hrs

a week to run the whole system once your pillars and template are set

A default posting week

Day	Bucket	Your topic
Monday	Market POV	
Tuesday	Framework	
Wednesday	Operator Lesson	
Thursday	Proof / POV	
Friday	Operator Lesson	

Print this page and fill the right column each week. Rotate buckets so no theme goes stale.

THE PLAN

90 days, one sitting

A quarter is 13 weeks. Map your buckets across them once, then batch the writing so you're never scrambling day-of.

W1	W2	W3	W4	W5	W6	W7	W8	W9	W10	W11	W12	W13
□□□	□□□	□□□	□□□	□□□	□□□	□□□	□□□	□□□	□□□	□□□	□□□	□□□

Each □ is one planned post slot. Assign a bucket to each; fill topics during your batch session.

The batch workflow



Do this monthly. One two-hour batch session produces a month of posts. That's the difference between a system and a scramble.

SECTION FOUR

Hooks That Stop the Scroll

The first line is almost the whole job. Here's the science — and five formulas that earn the second line.

The science of the hook

Your opening line does almost all the work. Get it wrong and the best post in the world dies at 200 views.

~200_{ch}

only about three lines show above the “...see more” fold — that’s your whole shot

~2_{sec}

how long a reader takes to decide whether to stop or keep scrolling

95%

how much of a post’s success practitioners attribute to the opening line

Sources: LinkedIn publishing best-practice guidance; practitioner benchmarks on first-line retention.

Write the hook last, and write ten. Draft the post, then spend real time on the opening. The first line is a headline — treat it like one.

Five hooks that work

Steal these structures. Swap the brackets for your specifics — the more concrete, the harder they hit.

The Contrarian · “Everyone believes [X]. They’re wrong.”
“Everyone says post daily. That’s how you burn out and say nothing.”

The Number · “[N] [things] that [outcome].”
“4 content buckets that killed my writer’s block for good.”

The Mistake · “I [did X]. It cost me [Y].”
“I posted for a year with no strategy. It cost me 12 months of pipeline.”

The How-To · “How to [outcome] without [pain].”
“How to build authority on LinkedIn without living on it.”

The Callout · “If you’re [audience], read this.”
“If you’re a founder posting into the void, this is for you.”

One rule: the first line should open a gap the reader needs to close — curiosity, tension, or a bold claim. Never a summary.

SECTIONS FIVE & SIX

Convert & Compound

Turn attention into conversations, and one idea into a week of content.

05

Soft CTAs that drive DMs

The difference between a post that gets likes and one that fills your inbox is how you close it. Invite a response — don't demand an action.

Weak CTA	Strong soft CTA
"DM me to learn more."	"Curious how this maps to your team? Tell me where you're stuck."
"Book a call today!"	"What would you add to this list?"
"Like and share."	"If this was useful, I write about it weekly — follow along."

Do

- Ask a genuine question
- Invite a specific reply
- Make the next step feel small

Avoid

- Pitching in the post itself
- Multiple competing CTAs
- "Link in comments" with no reason to click

The move: a soft CTA gets the right person to raise their hand — in public or your inbox. That's the doorway to a real conversation, and a booked call.

One idea → five posts

You don't need a new idea every day. You need one strong idea and five ways to tell it.

- **The text post** — the core argument, punchy and short
- **The carousel** — the same idea as a step-by-step document
- **The story** — the moment that led you to the idea
- **The data point** — one stat that proves it, with your take
- **The question** — flip it and ask your audience

Your first 30 days

- ☐ Write down your 3-5 pillars
- ☐ Assign each to a bucket (POV / Lessons / Frameworks / Proof)
- ☐ Brain-dump 30 topics across the four buckets
- ☐ Draft 10 hooks using the five formulas
- ☐ Batch-write your first two weeks in one session
- ☐ Schedule 3 posts a week and track what lands

THE LAST PAGE · THE FIRST MOVE

Visibility creates opportunity.

You've got the whole engine — pillars, cadence, hooks, and the loop that compounds them. Now go get seen.

THE WHOLE PROGRAM, ONE PLACE

visibilitycreatesopportunity.com