soft at home

How Can SoftAtHome Increase its Social Media Presence on LinkedIn?

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Date: **14 September 2020**
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Word count: **10,931**

Executive summary

Social media have developed to be an integral part of each business' existence. As SoftAtHome is working on revamping its LinkedIn strategy, it became evident that the company needed assistance in defining what a proper approach would be. Therefore, this research paper focuses on answering the following central question: *How can SoftAtHome increase its social media presence on LinkedIn?*

Literature review has served as building blocks for this research and involved secondary research methods, such as: professional websites, expert blogs, e-books, scientific papers, etc. it must be pointed out that a custom-made field research had been conducted, which included updating SoftAtHome's LinkedIn company page with information about current affairs, company news, partner collaborations, products or services. In addition, an operationalization table was designed and an interview with SoftAtHome's top executive was conducted in order to gain more insights and provide the company with useful recommendations.   All three sections (field research, operationalization table and the interview) were based on Five Steps of Social Media Engagement theory by Khederchah.

The outcome of the field research includes such recommendations as: designating a dedicated person to handle the social media strategy, conducting a full SWOT analysis of social media usage, posting content more frequently, as well as, trying new ways of creating content. It is clear that the company's engagement rate on LinkedIn is not as bad as one might have assumed. It actually scores above average with 6.23%. In addition, in order to define what type of content is engaging the audience, it is advised to conduct a more thorough research, for an extended period of time, and spending some money on paid campaigns with LinkedIn. This way, SoftAtHome would be able to measure engagement on different types of content and choose the most effective one for inclusion in their revamped social media plan. With the pandemic taking over the 2020 it is, therefore, important to create an appealing social media strategy, that would ensure the continuity of doing business in the online reality by SoftAtHome.

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1. Introduction

Social media have become an essential part of each company's corporate life. Now more than ever social media defines, or at least has a significant influence, on a company's success or failure. This report investigates ways SoftAtHome can utilize in order to increase its presence on LinkedIn and ways to engage LinkedIn users. As Leonardi, Huysman and Steinfield (2013) stated in their article on social media in the enterprise: "(…) rather than functioning as a channel through which communication travels, enterprise social media operate as a platform upon which social interaction occurs." What is more, they also claim that there are two dominant ways in which social media is being used by organizations. First way "is for organizational communication with external parties, such as customers, vendors, and the public at large." What they mean by that, is that most companies promote their business on social networking platforms, such as Facebook or Twitter. The second way, "less commonly studied way in which organizations have employed social media platforms is for internal communication and social interaction within the enterprise." While the authors state that enterprise social media has no distinction between social networking platforms but are a part of the combined enterprise social media; Joel Postman (2009) in his book Social Media Goes Corporate, states that "social media are a set of tools to add to the corporate communications mix." Postman adds, that "social media enables genuine, 1:1 conversation with consumers." This is an important point of view, as it shows that social media has now a significant place in the corporate communications strategy. Through engaging with "influencers", an organization can increase its brand awareness and can show their stakeholders but also to the public that it is "connected to, and interested in, what's going on outside the company's four walls. Consumers also recognize that social media is a new direction for corporate communications and see companies that use social media as creative, willing to take risks, and forward thinking." (Postman, J. 2009, p.3). The above examples only show that the social media importance in the corporate life has been on the rise in the past two decades.

The purpose of this research was to try out various techniques on the company's LinkedIn page and see which of them have the most engagement. Choosing the right type of posts would mean having a blue print for future posts and, hopefully, having SoftAtHome placed as one of the key thought leaders within the industry.

1.1. Problem definition

SoftAtHome, created in 2007, is a French software company, specialised in the digital home. According to a statement on the company's website "SoftAtHome provides software products for

connectivity, pay TV, Home Networking and the Smart Home. SoftAtHome solutions are deployed with major operators in over 20 million homes in more than 18 countries."

The company is dedicated to "design products for operators to deliver the best connectivity and Digital Home applications possible to their subscribers, making homes smarter." (SoftAtHome, n.d.)

SoftAtHome helps service providers make the home smarter through implementing Home Automation, Energy Management or Home Monitoring Services. (SoftAtHome, n.d.)

In 2018 the company has acquired V3D, a leading expert in Telecom data analytics and have started actively pursuing its presence in North America.

For the last couple of years SoftAtHome has been working on improving their social media image, however, when talking about the company's social media strategy, one of the management's wishes has been to improve the engagement on LinkedIn. The reason behind this is to create more opportunities for lead generation which, in turn could be a way of identifying potential new customers. Having a corporate LinkedIn profile where followers and their networks can attract active participation has been one of SoftAtHome objectives for the past couple of years. Hence, the aim of this paper is to examine various techniques that could increase the company's social media presence with focus on LinkedIn. In addition, the paper will also pay attention to how to engage its audience on social media and ensure the generation of new sales leads and to steer the company towards becoming a respected thought leader within the industry.

1.2. Research question and sub-questions

The central question of this dissertation is: **How can SoftAtHome increase its social media presence on LinkedIn?**

In order to answer the central question, the following sub-questions have been therefore developed:

1. *What is social media and how business are using it?*
2. *What is engagement and what it means on LinkedIn?*
3. *What is LinkedIn?*
4. *What is SoftAtHome's current state of social media engagement?*
5. *What are best practices with regards to community engagement?*
6. *What are current opportunities and threats when using social media by SoftAtHome?*
7. *What are next steps for SoftAtHome's Marketing Communications team?*

8. *What is, suggested, SoftAtHome's new LinkedIn strategy?*
9. *What SoftAtHome can define as a successful LinkedIn strategy?*
10. *Going forward, what types of social media posts should SoftAtHome focus on?*

The above sub-topics have been specifically selected to help answer the central question. It is of great importance that the reader can comprehend various topics, theories and definitions described in this paper.

1.3. Scope of research

The main motive for this research is to investigate the ways SoftAtHome could enlarge their social media appearance through engagement and to answer the central research question: How can SoftAtHome increase its social media presence on LinkedIn?

A French company, SoftAtHome, was chosen to be the subject of this research. In addition, SoftAtHome's Vice President of Marketing was interviewed, for the purpose of gaining more insights into the company's approach to social media, with focus on LinkedIn.

The main goal of this paper is to make recommendations to SoftAtHome on how the company could grow its social media presence by focusing on engagement with its followers on LinkedIn as well as improve their social media marketing by refining the company's corporate LinkedIn presence.

Therefore, a field research has been developed and performed on SoftAtHome's LinkedIn company page, with a focus on organization's engagement with its audience. Hence, the company's audience is the main participant of the field study. By observing their responses to SoftAtHome's updates during the period from 22 April until 3 July 2020, it was possible to determine behaviour of the company's followers, the way they interacted, and see the types of posts that have had the most impact on them. The key reason for conducting this field study, was to measure various interactions between SoftAtHome and its LinkedIn audience, which would aid a development of a new LinkedIn strategy.

Through sharing SoftAtHome's expertise and thought leadership via company page I will be able to measure SoftAtHome's follower's engagement and answer the questions included in the operationalization table. However, LinkedIn Stories is only in a test phase, just in a couple of countries, so this feature could be explored in more detail once it has been fully released.
In addition to the above, I am planning on interviewing SoftAtHome's Chief Marketing Officer, Arnaud Bensaid, with the questions included in the operationalisation table.

1.4. Report structure

This paper consists of the following six sections, namely: Introduction, Theoretical Framework, Methodology, Empirical Data, Results, Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations.

The Introduction gives an overview of the problem SoftAtHome has been struggling with and the background information on the company's social media communication. Then, theoretical framework will be discussed, explaining the concept of social media, social media marketing, engagement, LinkedIn elements and theories related to it. After that, the methodology is described, including the ways all the research has been conducted and motivation for choosing certain sources. Next, results of the research result are examined. Subsequently, a discussion of the research results takes place, and then recommendations will be provided as to how SoftAtHome could plan its LinkedIn engagement expansion and, thus, increase its social media presence.

2. Theoretical framework

The main focus of this chapter is social media marketing and engagement and the theories related to it. All these topics are relevant in order to be able to answer the central research question. Once we can understand what engagement means to SoftAtHome, we will be capable of making proper recommendations to the company on the ways they can improve its social media presence on LinkedIn. Through comparing various theories, we will be able to comprehend them and prepare a proper strategy, which SoftAtHome could then implement on LinkedIn. That is why it is important to do the literature review and field study, and by doing all this it will let me answer sub-questions 1,2, and 3.

2.1. What is social media and how companies are using it?

According to Ahlqvist, Back, Halonen, Heinonen social media is: "the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks" (2008, p.13).

Social media, in various forms and shapes, have been constantly expanding. There are endless platforms where people or businesses can get together and interact with each other. As illustrated, Figure 1, the so-called Conversation Prism 5.0 gathers various social media platforms in one place. As explained by Brian Solis, world-renowned digital analyst:

> The Conversation Prism is meant to help viewers better understand and appreciate the state of "the statusphere," and how it's evolving so that they may play a productive and defining role in shaping how business, educational organizations, governments, and everyday people engage, communicate and build mutually-beneficial communities." (Solis, 2017, "The 2017 Social Media Universe in One Infographic: Introducing The Conversation Prism 5.0").
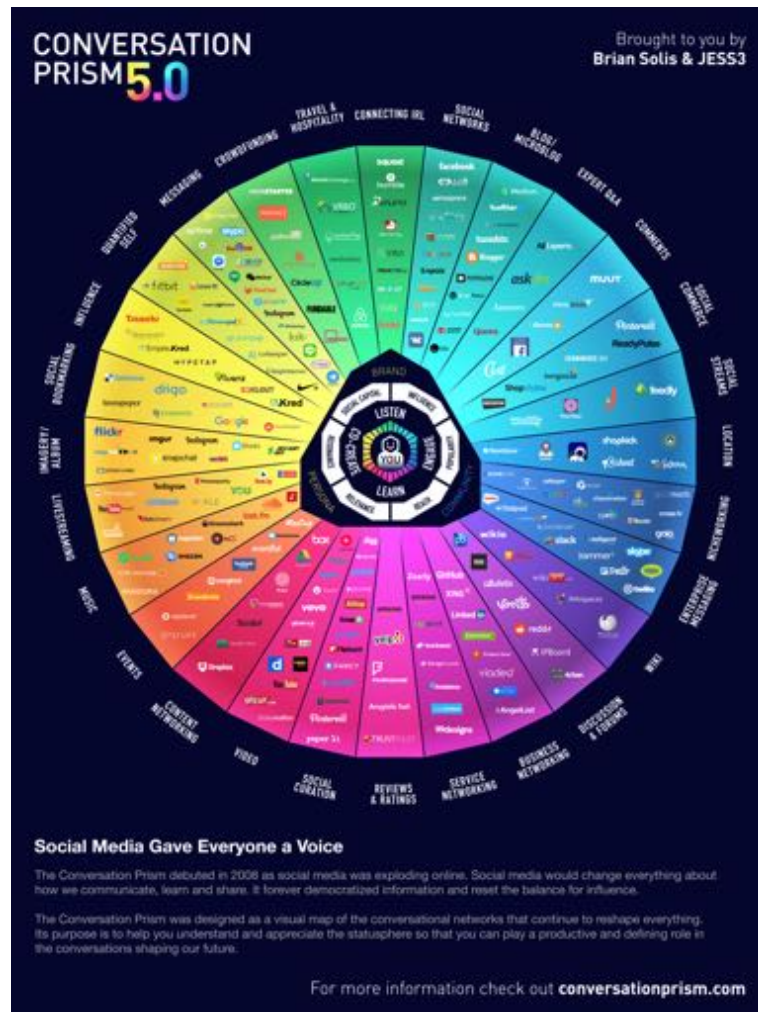
Figure 1: Social Media Prism 5.0 (Jess3 & Solis, 2017)

The Prism shows 28 forms of social media and the platforms that have been developed to accommodate them. It is obvious that some platforms are more popular than others. From my professional view, when it comes to businesses within the Technology, Media, and Telecom sector (TMT), companies are making the most use of the following:

- Blogs like Medium,
- Social networks, such as Facebook,
- Business networking, like LinkedIn,
- Video: Vimeo or YouYube,
- Content networking: Dropbox or Google Drive,
- Events, such as Eventbrite,
- Livestreaming: Instagram, Facebook Live,
- Social bookmarking: Evernote,
- Messaging: Skype, WhatsApp.

However, the core four values, namely: listen, engage, learn and co-create are true for an individual as well as a brand or community.

The Conversation Prism 5.0. has been used as one of the theories in order to study SoftAtHome.

2.1.1. Social media versus brand recognition

In today's world most of our lives revolve online. Whether it be connecting with our families and friends on Facebook, goofing around on TikTok, snapping amazing images and posting them on Instagram, chatting away on WhatsApp or connecting with professionals on LinkedIn. These are just a few examples of what we can do.
Social media are there to ensure our online persona is accessible and out there. Also, social media platforms are a way to build your online brand, let it be personal or business.

Social media platforms are there to help consumers share information, opinions, ideas. They empower users to raise their voice about their experiences with various brands, products or services, openly in public. Those public messages enhance the market visibility, resulting in customers' greater potential of negotiation. (Constantinides & Fountain, 2007; Ind & Riondon, 2001).

2.1.2. Social media marketing – what does it mean?
Nowadays, companies are using social media marketing as one of the ways to promote their services or products; meaning, they use social media platforms and websites in order to do that. Social media marketing has become an important part of a company's life and companies with big budget even create their own department, dedicated to social media marketing. However, in most companies this falls under the Marketing department.

According to Felix, Rauschnabel and Hinsch, "Social media marketing is the use of social media platforms and websites to promote a product or service" (2016). It is also known as e-marketing or digital marketing.

As stated by Margaret Rouse, technical writer and content marketer for WhatIS.com, the goal of social media marketing (SMM) is "to produce content that users will share with their social network to help a company increase brand exposure and broaden customer reach."

2.1.3. What does social media community mean?

As stated by Evan LePage, in his blog post about building social media community,

> An engaged social media community is integral to your success online.
> (…) Your social media community isn't just composed of prospective
> buyers; it's also full of potential advocates – the people who will spread
> your message beyond your reachto their own networks. (Hootsuite,
> 2014, "The 3 stages of building social media community," para.1).

The above statement proves that social media community plays an important role in a company's success, as it is a part of an online business life and definitely contributing to its overall life. Social media community share some common characteristics, such as:

- interact online and therefore are active,
- share common interest, common domain,
- form relationships which give a sense of community.

2.1.4. What are the possibilities of creating a social community on LinkedIn?

There are various ways of creating social community on LinkedIn. One of the most common one is to create a group on LinkedIn that is focused around the core activity or primary theme of one's company. It is a place where members of such group have a common interest and have a feeling of belonging or feel encouraged to share their thoughts and ideas.

2.1.5. Conclusion social media

As Neal Schaffer says in his podcast #140, "You got to be in the platform to know what works. (…) You have to be an active user, you have to want to use the social network and use it on a daily basis and engage on a daily basis and become part of the community if you want it to work for your business." It is important to note that creating a group on LinkedIn is not enough to build a community. It is only one of the steps towards designing it. When looking from business perspective, you need to actively interact with people within that community and create a feeling of belonging where they can freely share their views and suggestions.

2.2. What is engagement and what it means on LinkedIn?

First of all, we need to understand what social media engagement means. According to Patti Neumann (2018), "Engagement simply means getting your fans to do something in response to your post.

- Like
- Comment
- Click to open picture
- Click on Link
- Share."

Internet Marketing Inc. (afterwards referred to as IMI) states that "engagement is a way to measure your fans' personal connections with your brand, which ultimately leads to more success on and off your social media channels." (2016, para. 6). What is more, the IMI weblog states, that "While your follower count is not necessarily a good measure of social media success, engagement is a much better way to gauge the impact your company is actually making in the social sphere." This shows that engagement is the right tool for SoftAtHome to measure the impact the company is creating on its social media channels, i.e. LinkedIn.

As Elad Yom-Tov has stated in his book, *Measuring User Engagement* (2014) "User engagement refers to the quality of the user experience that emphasizes the positive aspects of interacting with an online application and, in particular, the desire to use that application longer."

A number of authors suggest that engagement is an ongoing process of cyclical nature (e.g. Bowden, 2009), and measuring engagement at several points in time should enhance the understanding of this enduring phenomenon.

In the world where social media is omnipresent, more and more companies realize that, in order for their social media strategy to be successful, ensuring social media engagement with its audience is a must. As it was earlier stated, the purpose of this paper is to find out how SoftAtHome can increase its social media presence on LinkedIn. Engagement is one way of doing so, and it not only means creating a dialog with the audience coming across SoftAtHome's posts, but also realizing how many people each LinkedIn post managed to reach. It becomes apparent that engagement becomes an important tool in business marketing. It not only helps develop significant social media relationships with prospects and current patrons but also ensures that, the ones that follow the company page on social media platforms respond to or become involved with SoftAtHome's online post. What is more, with the updated LinkedIn reaction feature, updates from SoftAtHome can now benefit from this

feature and boost its engagement not only with a simple like but with a wider variety of audience's reactions.

As the below graphic shows (Figure 2), being hands-on, is the way to increase engagement. One of the fundamental steps, a company could do, is to listen to its audience. First and foremost, one must be aware of what their community is talking about, the trends that are being followed and discussed. Hence, monitoring the conversations is an important first phase to understand how to make engagement a success. Secondly, where there is action, there should be a reaction, therefore, an organization should become a part of the discussion and come up with proper responses to the topics concerning them. Next, according to Khederchah's graphic, a company should share some positive comments or best practises. Fourthly, it is important to shape company's social media strategy by creating some original content, becoming a thought leader within the area of their expertise. Last but not least, the fifth step is to lead a community by bringing together an audience where there is a mutual interaction, i.e. engagement between the two parties.

In addition, for the purpose of this paper, Khederchah's Five Steps of Social Media Engagement is the model that forms the basis for the field research and the operationalization table (Chapter 4).

Figure 2: Five Steps of Social Media Engagement. (Khederchah, 2016)

2.2.1.   Conclusion engagement

It becomes evident that engagement has become an important tool in business marketing. Companies need to find new ways for their audiences to respond to their posts and, ideally, they will respond in one of the following ways:

- Like,
- Comment,
- Click to open a picture,
- Click on link,
- Share.

As Neal Schaffer, global educator, social media strategy consultant and author, says in one of his podcasts, "every social network is different and you need be part of that community." It is obvious that, by being part of such community a person will be able to better engage and create interactions, which might turn into leads and, finally, into sales.

It is important, therefore, to make sure you listen to your audience, as this will define the type of response which, in turn should provoke public to engage even more with your business.

More importantly, study shows that followers, on social media, are more responsive to corporate updates that are concise, include either a photograph, infographic or a video and a link to an external page. All these things have an impact on engagement, and people are more prone to respond to posts with visual aids. According to 3M research, a company that came up with post-it notes, "we can process visuals 60,000 times faster than text." Additionally, the Social Science Research Network, stated that 65% of population are visual learners, which only justifies the use of graphics in social media posts.

2.3. What is LinkedIn?

LinkedIn is one of many social media platforms. According to LinkedIn's description on their website, LinkedIn is "the world's largest professional network with more than 610 million users in over 200 countries." (LinkedIn, n.d.). In December 2016, LinkedIn was acquired by Microsoft.

As stated by Josh Gallant in his blog, "of all B2B leads coming from social media, LinkedIn is responsible for 80%. That's 4 out of every 5 leads coming from LinkedIn." (2020). This kind of information should be particularly interesting to SoftAtHome, since the company is planning to expand its presence on that social media site.

2.3.1.   What is the mission and vision of LinkedIn?

LinkedIn's vision is to "create economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce." As the LinkedIn name suggests, its mission is to link various professionals, in order to "make them more productive and successful." (LinkedIn, n.d.)

2.3.2.   What types of content exist on LinkedIn?

There are various ways of engaging with audience on LinkedIn. Below is a run-down of possibilities to do that:
- Status updates on your own (personal) profile,
- Company page updates,
- Writing articles (posted as personal articled and not as business),
- Video updates,
- Photographic updates, including description.

Most recently, LinkedIn updated its reaction features. Before, it was only possible to 'like' a post, and now, one can not only like but also celebrate, love, find a post insightful or be curious. Figure 3 illustrates the reactions that are now available on the social network. As described by Petherick, "LinkedIn Reactions is a set of lightweight expressions that offer members a way to more easily participate in conversations and communicate with their network." (2019). For many, this latest update is long overdue but definitely a welcomed option. It shows that LinkedIn is listening to its users and making interactions more targeted and diverse.

Figure 3: LinkedIn reactions features. (Petherick, 2019)

2.3.3.　Conclusion LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a social network, launched on May 5, 2003. It brings together professionals from all over the world to connect them and help them flourish. Having a successful business account on LinkedIn, means to provide value by regularly posting engaging content. The content must be, however, interesting to the audience, important to them and show a way of solving their problem.

According to LinkedIn (2017), over 80% of B2B leads generated by social media come from LinkedIn, and 94% of B2B marketers use LinkedIn to distribute content. This shows that the social media platform, when it comes to professional outreach, is one of the most effective ones and that a company trying to make an impact should spend a fair amount of time to target a carefully chosen audience with a carefully outlined content. In addition, designing new reaction features allows the whole LinkedIn community to be more interactive and engaging.

2.4. What is SoftAtHome's current state of social media engagement?

SoftAtHome has joined social media in April 2011 and the platform that was used to promote the company was, indeed, LinkedIn. Since June 2012, SoftAtHome is also proudly represented on Twitter. The beginnings have been quite humble, as the company did not have a Communications department; there was only one marketing person back then who did not have the time to focus on developing a proper social media strategy. There were more important things to focus on than social media. Until, in 2012, an external public relations boutique agency has been brought onboard. What has followed, was a period of self-reflection (company-wise), rethinking the whole marketing and communications strategy as well as the company messaging. All this has helped to shift SoftAtHome's brand needle and put the company on the radar of the industry media, as well as analysts' firms.

What is more, the company began to receive some brand recognition and the company's both social media platforms have started to gain followers. SoftAtHome's LinkedIn profile is followed by more than 2500 people, and their Twitter account tops nearly a thousand.

When it comes to social media updates and overall audience engagement, one can argue that SoftAtHome is doing reasonably well. Most of the LinkedIn posts have nearly five per cent engagement rate (SoftAtHome's LinkedIn analytics page).

However, the company's wish is to improve it and move forward with a solid social media strategy, where engagement would turn into lead generation and this would turn into a sale. This research paper is one way to help SoftAtHome achieve their goal.

2.4.1.   Conclusion to SoftAtHome's current state of social media engagement

To conclude this sub-chapter, it is apparent that, SoftAtHome is a company that is engaging in social media activities and tries to keep up with the latest technology developments when it comes to communicating with their audience. However, it is also clear that SoftAtHome needs to invest more resources into social media and work on their social media strategy, in order to be more successful. Hence, to better engage with their target group, that would lead to creating more opportunities to gain new prospects, which would result in closing a deal, i.e. sale.

2.5. What are best practices with regards to community engagement?

When looking at what are best practices with regards to community engagement, one might want to understand a social media strategy. One of the strategies, SoftAtHome could consider when revamping its social media strategy, is the rule of thirds (Figure 11). According to Walker (2016, p. 786),

> "The rule of thirds encourages a more well-rounded social media content strategy to both promote and better engage with social media communities. The rule states that a third of social content aims to promote the business, a third of social content should share ideas and stories. From thought leaders in your industry, and the final third of social content should be based on personal interactions and building a personal brand."

Therefore, it is important to balance SoftAtHome's social media posts, endorse the things that others have done, curate relevant news, and limit the promotion of the business.

Figure 4: Rule of thirds. (Walker, 2016)

In addition, according to Quick Sprout, a company helping business grow their online presence and traffic, "LinkedIn has 3x higher visitor-to-lead conversion rate than Twitter and Facebook." (2013). Quick Sprout also suggests that in order to increase LinkedIn engagement, a company should follow these steps:

- Focus on when to post – they suggest posting each morning from Monday till Friday.
- Focus on post frequency – they claim that having 20 posts in a month will help a business reach 60% of a unique audience on a monthly basis.
- Focus on what to post – it is important to be aware of what other members are interested in. Are they interested in your product and services or do they want to hear more industry insights?
- Focus on content type – Quick Sprout also states that including a link in a post can drive 200% more engagement, while incorporating images drives 98% comment rate, and by connecting a video, share-rate can increase by 75%.

2.5.1. Conclusion to best practices to community engagement

There many ways to engage a community on social media platforms. However, the two introduced in this paper seem to be the most universal. Hence, utilizing the rule of thirds in SoftAtHome's social media strategy might be a good starting point in rethinking it.

2.6. What are current threats and opportunities when using social media by SoftAtHome?

After an internal analysis of SoftAtHome's social media strategy, it is apparent that it needs to be revamped. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to take a look at the threats and opportunities when it comes to using social media platforms, especially LinkedIn, by SoftAtHome's team. This exercise will help clarify the direction the company should take in order to prepare new, fresh social media strategy.

What is more, the purpose of performing what we can call a "half-SWOT" approach (Figure 4) is to aid the corporate marketing team with some reflection on the organization's threats and opportunities. This analysis has been done in order to help SoftAtHome identify their challenges and help them make better strategic planning decisions when it comes to marketing and communications matters. In addition, when executing an internal, full SWOT analysis, the below outline could be considered and added to the matrix. This, in turn, could serve as a starting point for a discussion on identifying the company's marketing objectives.

Threats	Opportunities
Damage to brand reputation	Reaching the right audience
Limited audience reach	Engaging with its customers, prospects and employees
Over-reliance on one platform	Creating new leads
Revealing too much of the company condition	Higher brand awareness

Table 1: Threats and opportunities when using social media by SoftAtHome

As it can be seen on Figure 4, the threats when using social media by SoftAtHome, include:
- Damage to brand reputation,
- Limited audience reach,
- Over-reliance on one platform,
- Revealing too much of the company condition.

Whereas, the opportunities can be listed as follows:
- Reaching the right audience,
- Engaging with its customers, prospects and employees,
- Creating new leads,
- Higher brand awareness.

Thinking about improving SoftAtHome's social media strategy, we can see that some of the opportunities could mitigate the threats. However, this will be discussed in more detail in the recommendation section of this paper (Chapter 6).

2.6.1. Conclusion to what are current threats and opportunities when using social media by SoftAtHome

As indicated above, SoftAtHome's social media strategy needs to be improved. Defining threats and opportunities for using social media is therefore a good first step in order to prepare an improved social media communication plan, that could be implemented by the company's marketing team.

2.7. Operationalization table

As Matthew DeCarlo states in his book, Scientific Inquiry in Social Work (2018, p. 242), "operationalization is a process by which researches conducting quantitative research spell out precisely how a concept will be measured and how to interpret that measure."

For the purpose of this paper, and as mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, Five Steps of Social Media Engagement by Khederchah (2016) has formed the basis for the operationalization table, as shown on Figure 2. The operationalization table consists of five various variables, namely:

- Listen,
- Respond,
- Share,
- Shape,
- Lead.

Each variable has been defined and then, various questions have been formed. These questions had been helpful in completing the field research which, in turn, has been used in finalizing the operationalization table and posed as results to the test group. In addition, the questions have been answered by SoftAtHome's VP Marketing and were included in the test group's results. Moreover, by analysing the field research and including the findings in the operationalization table, we can draw following conclusions:

- Listen – this objective was met during the test period, as the company posts were initially designed for the audience that was working from home due to the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus. In addition, as it is shown on Figure 6, and appendix 2, the very post that was included in the field research was solely dedicated to the situation and how resilient all the SoftAtHome employees have been through that. As Figure 6 shows, the number of impressions of this post has reached 1,841. However, when looking at the next post, shared

nine days later, only gained 690 impressions. As a matter of fact, the next three posts haven't crossed 1,000-barrier impressions. Was it because SoftAtHome did not listen to its audience? Highly unlikely, the reasons why could be plenty.

- Respond – this variable could be associated with reactions (Figure 8) on LinkedIn. During the field research period, SoftAtHome, as a company, did not respond to any posts, however, the company's employees were encouraged and did participated in commenting.

- Share – this engagement technique is clearly linked with shares from the field research. Figure 9 indicates that during the time of the research, only one post has been shared more than 10 times. It is important to note, as the update relates to a collaboration with a high-profile customer, namely, Deutsche Telekom. As DT is a one of the world's leading telecoms companies, there was no other option for such update not to be widely shared, commented or clicked on.

- Shape – as described in the operationalization table, a company should start to shape its own strategy by creating original content, own branding, or thought leadership. SoftAtHome have clearly embraced this feature, as all the published content during the test period have been specifically created for the company. Maybe with one exception, the announcement of IBC Show cancellation was not an original post but an acknowledgement of annulment of an important event off SoftAtHome's, and the whole industry, calendar.

- Lead – as defined in the operationalization table, ultimately, a company should be able to lead a build a community and build an audience that would react to your posts, i.e. engage with you. This can be related to the engagement rate, measured during the field research. When following the logic of the abovementioned characteristics, one might think the engagement rate should be high on posts with the highest number of impressions, clicks, shares. Unfortunately, this is not the case. LinkedIn defines engagement rate as "the number of interactions plus the number of clicks and followers acquired, divided by the number of impressions." The post with the highest engagement rate was the very first update included in the field research, please refer to Figure 10 for reference.

	Variable	Definition	Questions	Results Test Group
5 S T E P S OF S O C I A L	LISTEN	Organization should listen to what their audience has to say; what issues do they have; various discussions they are having, understand what themes are trending at any given moment.	1. What SoftAtHome can do to ensure it is listening to its audience? 2. How would SoftAtHome understand what are currently trending themes on LinkedIn? 3. Who, within the company, should be the "listener"?	1. Talking with its customers, partners, prospects. 2. Trendy themes are not the ones SoftAtHome works on. SaH is looking at what people in its network are posting and this is a way to identify trendy themes. 3. Everybody within the company has a role to play. R&D & CTO are looking out for technical trends, marketing and sales screening for customer announcements. There is a designated Product Board at SaH, which also a place to share market and tech benchmarks.

M E D I A	RESPOND	A company should be able to respond to their audience's issues and discussions or even be a part of it, all with its own voice.	4. How can SoftAtHome become a part of its audience's discussions? 5. What type of tone of voice should SoftAtHome assume on their social media channels?	4. Becoming a thought leader on a specific topic within the industry and posting regularly. 5. Any tone would work. Need to find the right balance.
E N G A G E M E N T	SHARE	Organization should be able to share, not only its own, comments, posts, but also from others and share that with its audience.	6. What kind of content should SoftAtHome share with their audience? 7. How frequent should the posts be? 8. What could be a common indicator for all social media posts?	6. Talk about SaH customer's success. However, it is easier said than done. Most of the customers want to keep the credit for what they are doing. 7. To be visible, minimum once a week. 8. Not easy to define, as including only a number of clicks would be too easy and not really business oriented.
	SHAPE	A company should start to shape its own strategy by creating original content, own branding, or thought leadership.	9. How SoftAtHome's strategy could be reflected in social media posts? 10. What type of thought leadership should SoftAtHome adopt in order to build a community?	9. Making sure to talk about strategy at least once a month. 10. By becoming a thought leader in one topic. However, it is difficult to define it, as SaH is involved in so many markets.

			11. How SoftAtHome's products/solutions could be utilized to shape its social media strategy?	11. By creating and proving a value to SaH customers.
	LEAD	Ultimately, a company should be able to lead a build a community and build an audience that would react to your posts, i.e. engage with you.	12. How can SoftAtHome ensure some form of engagement from its audience? 13. What if SoftAtHome could build its own community on LinkedIn?	12. Ideally, the customers should be helping SaH by creating testimonials. 13. Great idea, however it requires a lot of effort and seeing SaH has many different products, building its own community is a challenge.

Table 2: Operationalization table

3. Methodology

This chapter of the paper describes various research methods that were used for the purpose of gathering data and analysis. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001), research is a process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting data in order to understand a phenomenon. It can also be mistaken for gathering information, documenting facts, and rummaging for information.

The aim of this paper is to address a practical research problem, investigate and apply various theories for social media marketing and engagement on SoftAtHome's LinkedIn company page, and compare which approach was the most successful one. What is more, after completing the comparison of the applied theories, this paper will be able to answer the central research question and make recommendations to SoftAtHome with suggestions on which model is best to use moving forward with the company's social media marketing and engagement strategy.

3.1. Literature review

The building blocks for this research was done mainly through literature review. This research method is comprised of secondary research and consists of professional websites, expert blogs, e-books, scientific papers or previously conducted research. In addition, a lot of desk research has been done, too, especially when looking for credible sources.

For this paper, various definitions as well as aspects of social media marketing and engagement have been chosen, to show how diverse these are and why they are relevant to SoftAtHome. The theories mentioned in this document have the best chance of being effective and this is what the French company is looking for.

The key motivation for choosing the sources described in this paper was to include industry influencers, like Brian Solis, prominent academic studies, such as Journal of Business Research and numerous recognized books, blogs, web pages or infographics.

It needs to be stressed that the theories and the authors who created them are well-known and widely respected experts in the field of digital marketing, hence the theories described are credible and carry weight.

Various theories are described further in this paper and one of them will be tested out on SoftAtHome's LinkedIn company page. The main reason for this, is to investigate how new type of

updates is going to perform against the older ones. Another motive for executing the defined theories by means of LinkedIn posts, is to see which of them are the most successful, and, therefore can be implemented into the company's social media communication strategy. In addition, this paper, specifically its outcomes and recommendations, can serve as a blueprint to other businesses as to how to improve one's LinkedIn engagement.

The below table lists the sources that have had the most impact when writing this paper.

Neumann, P. (2018). *What Exactly is Social Media Engagement? Why do I Need it?* [Weblog]	This blog by Patti Neumann has been a very useful source when working on this paper. It helped to clarify the meaning of engagement and showed a simple way of what online audience needs to be doing in order to engage with one's brand. This weblog was helpful in answering the following sub-question: What is engagement and what is means on LinkedIn?
LinkedIn weblog	Since this paper revolves around LinkedIn, its native sources had to be included. LinkedIn is actually a very rich source, with good tips on how to be more engaging, and not only, on their platform.
Khederchah, A. (2016). *5 Steps of Social Media Engagement*	This post by Khederchah has formed the basis of the field research, so it is only fair, to list it here, and it also was helpful in answering the sub-question on what is engagement and what it means on LinkedIn.
Solis, B. (2017). *The 2017 Social Media Universe in One Infographic: Introducing The Conversation Prism 5.0.* [LinkedIn article].	The Conversation Prism 5.0 is a great tool when looking on the variety of social media platforms and help in deciding where a company should be present, in order to make the most of its knowledge as well as ensuring better engagement. This chart was helpful in answering the sub-question on what is social media and how companies are using it. Many businesses rely on Mr. Solis' research and this chart is definitely one of the most

	comprehensive tools, listing all the social media platforms where companies can participate in a dialogue with other.
Walker, R. (2016). *B2B Social Media. The Complete Guide to Developing a B2B Social Media Strategy (Plus a Case Study).*	This book by Mr. Walker has helped in answering the sub-question related to best practices with regards to community engagement. There were a lot of interesting topics covered in this book and the author is a specialist in digital marketing.
Gillett, R. (2014). *Why we're more likely to remember content with images and video (infographic).*	This article has had an added value when answering the sub-question about engagement, and had an interesting statistics from a research conducted by 3M corporation.

Table 3: List of main sources used in this paper

3.2. Field research

For the purpose of this paper a specific, bespoke field research will be conducted, which will include updating SoftAtHome's LinkedIn company page with information about current affairs, company news, partner collaborations, products or services.

The field research was conducted between 22 April and 3 July 2020, and consists of data collected out of 11 LinkedIn updates. In that time, the company has focused on updating its audience with posts about the current affairs, mainly how Covid-19 is affecting people's ability to work from home or how it relates to what the company core business is; latest news about collaboration with SoftAtHome's partners and customers were also promoted.

In order to be able to answer the central research question, the need to measure SoftAtHome's LinkedIn audience interactions was required. The objective was to formulate each post slightly different, but trying to be consistent in a way they look to the audience, i.e. each should have a visual included, which would help in grabbing people's attention and ensuring an interaction from their site. In addition, the field research included an operationalization table, where various questions and definitions were posed. The results were obtained through SoftAtHome's LinkedIn status updates. What is more, the results of the collected data have been analysed using Excel. First, all the data from the interaction has been entered and then charts have been created, in order to be able to better investigate the amassed information.

It must be pointed out that the posts should be informative, include pictures or short videos. Then, the updates were compared and we will be able to see which of them have had the most engagement from amongst its followers. This will form a basis for recommendations as to how to approach a social media plan, which will be tailored to the company's needs. Additionally, by conducting the field research by means of custom-made LinkedIn posts, the data will be reliable and serve as a good first step to benchmarking SoftAtHome's LinkedIn strategy. Therefore, it is important to mention that the main idea behind the field research was to help the company create a template for future posts. What is more, this design could be applied by other business as well, not only by SoftAtHome.

Furthermore, an interview with SoftAtHome's VP Marketing, Mr. Arnaud Bensaid, was conducted, with the aim of gaining direct insights into the company stance on social media, especially his viewpoint on how the company is listening, responding, sharing, shaping and leading on its social media channels, but mainly on LinkedIn. It is worth noticing, that the interview questions have been based on the operationalization table, and the answers were compared with the findings from the data collected during the field study.

3.3. Theories used to study the organization

The *Five Steps of Social Media Engagement* by Aboud Khederchah (2016) is the key theory used in this research, to study SoftAtHome. This theory talks about the importance of reaching business goals by engaging through social media with one's audience. The main engagement techniques are:

- Listen,
- Respond,
- Share,
- Shape,
- Lead.

The second model used to study SoftAtHome was, the so called, Conversation Prism 5.0 (Figure 1), created together by Brian Solis and Jess3. This visual map is there to help businesses "appreciate the state of *the statusphere*, and how it's evolving." (Solis, 2017, "The 2017 Social Media Universe in One Infographic: Introducing The Conversation Prism 5.0"). The Conversation Prism represents various social media platforms, and companies which would like to participate in a dialogue with other, like minded businesses, can easily navigate through this chart and see where they can make the most impact.

4. Results

This chapter presents the results of the field research, which was performed by placing regular LinkedIn updates on the SoftAtHome's company page. The field research exercise has been conducted between 22 April and 3 July 2020. In accordance with the operationalization table, various questions were posed, that were based on the Five Steps of Social Media Engagement concept by Aboud Khederchah (2016). In addition to the above, in order to receive more insights into the company's objectives when it comes to the social media engagement, and specifically, engagement on LinkedIn, an interview with SoftAtHome's Vice President of Marketing has been conducted.

4.1. Field Research

This section of the report describes the way in which the data has been collected, the purpose of conducting the field research and its reliability.

In order to be able to properly answer the central question, which is: *How can SoftAtHome increase its social media presence on LinkedIn*, a field research had to be designed. The main advantage in conducting the field research was the ability of having access to SoftAtHome's LinkedIn company page as one of the administrators. Therefore, due to having a direct entryway to businesses LinkedIn page, the collection of the data was much easier and faster to obtain.

The field research design was based on Five Steps of Social Media Engagement by Aboud Khederchah (Figure 2). It consists of the following areas: listen, respond, share, shape, and lead.

When collecting the data from the field research, it can be observed that there have been 11 LinkedIn posts that were considered in the field research. Hence, it can be concluded that the gathered data points are quite reliable and can serve as a starting point for suggesting recommendations (Chapter 5) to SoftAtHome. Since all updates posted during the field research period included a visual, a link, hashtags, the effect of not having any was not measured.

When amassing the data, the first thing that can be observed is, that from the evaluated posts, the following information can be retrieved:

- Number of impressions,
- Number of clicks,
- Number of reactions,
- Number of shares,

- Engagement rate.

As it can be seen, Figure 5 is showing the number of impressions for the updates that have been researched in the period between 22 April and 3 July 2020.
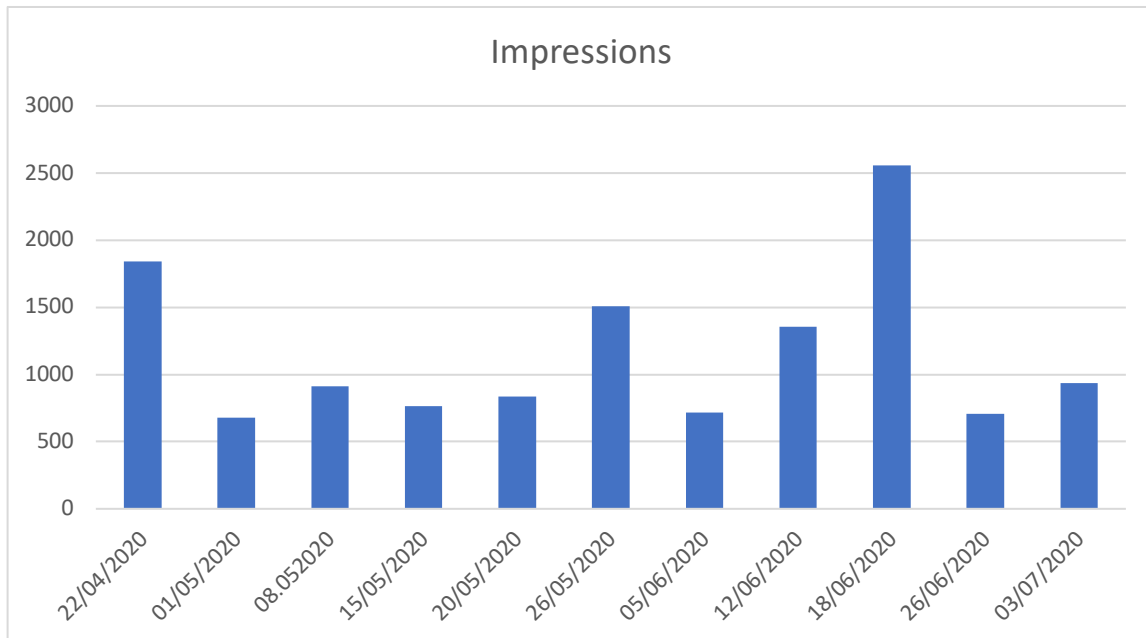

Figure 5: SoftAtHome LinkedIn field research analysis: Impressions

It is evident that posts about collaboration with SoftAtHome's customer and partners gather the most impressions, clicks and reactions, with posts from the following dates (starting with a post that scored best):

- 18 June 2020 – a post about SoftAtHome's software powering Deutsche Telekom's mini smart speaker received 2,557 impressions, 80 reactions, 131 clicks and 12 shares.
- 22 April 2020 – a post talking about the current world-wide situation, namely coronavirus. This post has gained 1,841 impressions, 37 reactions, 211 clicks and one share.
- 26 May 2020 – a post about SoftAtHome's collaboration with Reference Design Kit (RDK). This post has gathered 1,506 impressions, 24 reactions, 42 clicks and five shares.
- 12 June 2020 – a post about SoftAtHome's contribution to the open source community. This post has gained 1,355 impressions, 25 reactions, 63 clicks and five shares.

It can be noted that a post about SoftAtHome's software powering Deutsche Telekom's mini smart speaker has obtained 2,557 impressions, and this was the update with the highest number of impressions, whereas the second highest score was 1,841 impressions (Figure 5).

When looking at Figure 6, the number of clicks on the measured posts, it can be observed that the very first post that was measured has obtained the most clicks. This is the post from 22 April, talking about the current world-wide situation, namely, the spread of coronavirus and how SoftAtHome employees have manged to adapt to the situation they found themselves in. Post next in line, scored only 131 clicks.
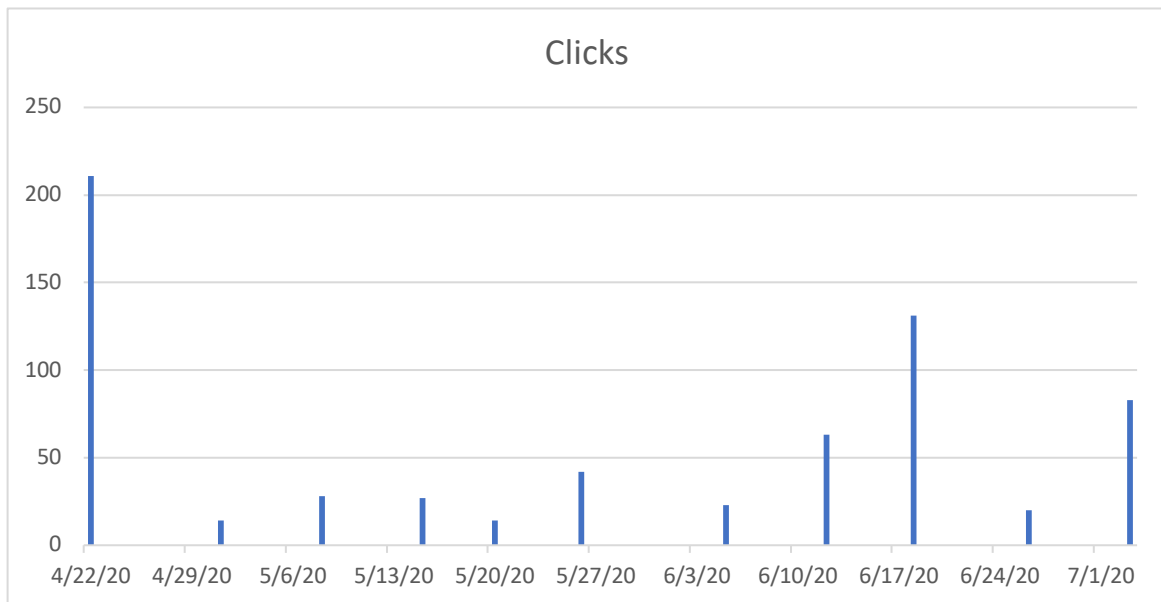
Figure 6: SoftAtHome LinkedIn field research analysis: Clicks

Moving on, the post with the highest number of reactions has been a post talking about one of SoftAtHome's clients' success, namely, releasing DT's mini smart speaker. This update has garnered 80 reactions (Figure 7).
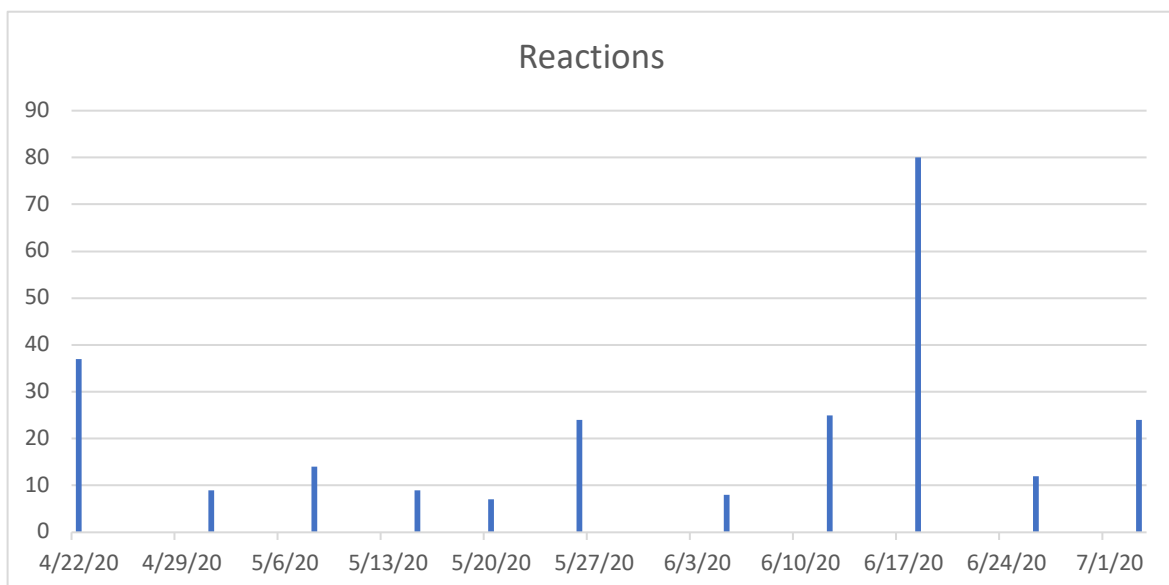
Figure 7: SoftAtHome LinkedIn field research analysis: Reactions

When looking at a post with the highest share score, it can be observed that, yet again, the Deutsche Telekom's post has beaten all the other measured posts. With 12 shares, it scored tremendously well, where the second-best score was only 5!
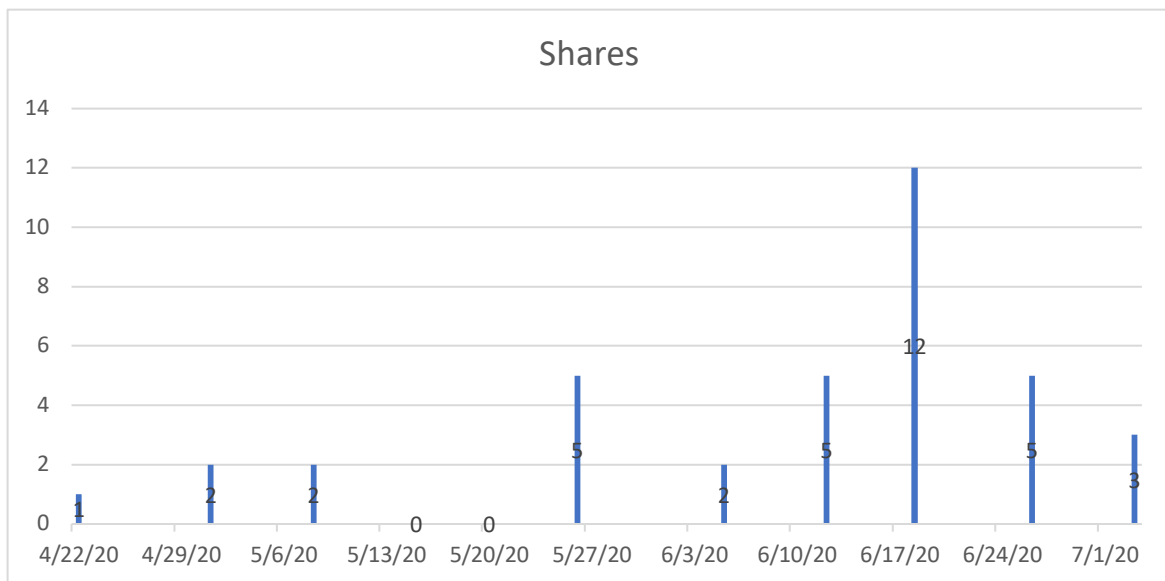
Figure 8: SoftAtHome LinkedIn field research analysis: Shares

Now, moving on to another interesting point, the engagement rate (Figure 9). It is worth pointing out that engagement rate is a key marker on LinkedIn in order to tell you "how well individuals interact with your LinkedIn content. Engagement rate is an indicator of whether individuals find your content interesting, resonant, and worth interacting with," says Aamplify (n.d.), a digital product marketing company.
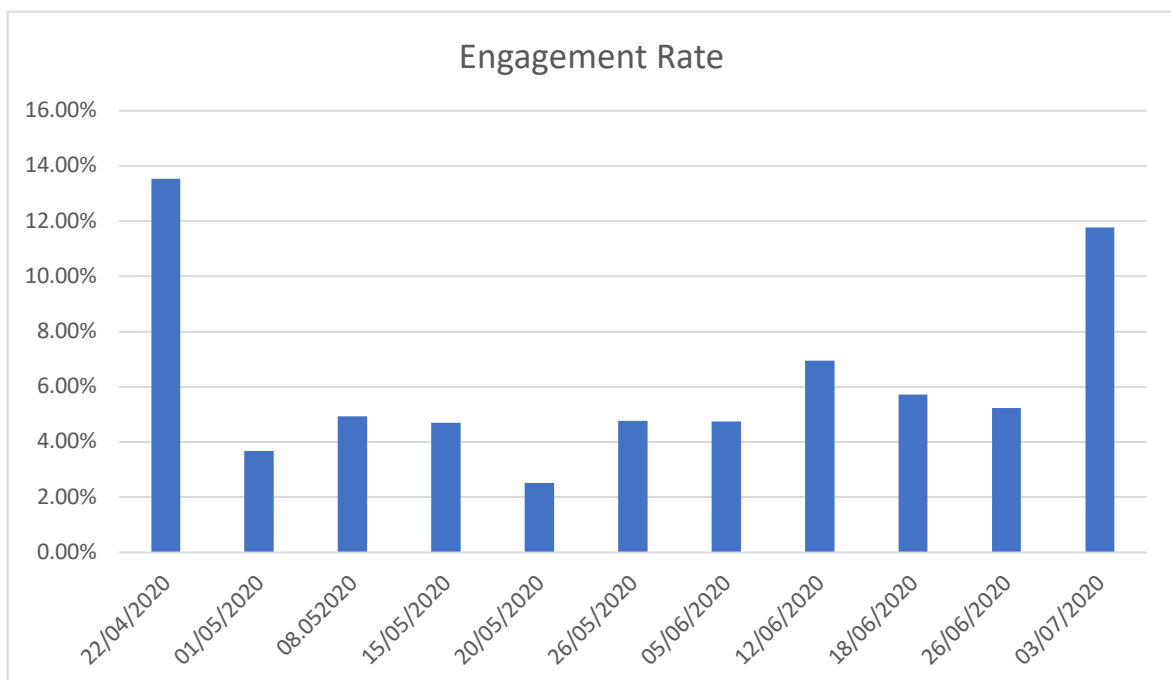
Figure 9: SoftAtHome LinkedIn field research analysis: Engagement Rate

Figure 9, illustrates the percentage of engagement rate on SoftAtHome's LinkedIn company page, in the period when the field research took place.

When looking at SoftAtHome's LinkedIn posts test period it can be noted that, out of all 11-measured updates, the lowest has had 2,51% and the highest 13,53% engagement rate (Figure 9). What is worth noting is, that there was not a single post that would score less than 2 per cent.

4.2. Interview with Arnaud Bensaid

Another research tool used to analyse SoftAtHome's social media presence, with a focus on LinkedIn was an interview with Mr. Arnaud Bensaid, Vice President of Marketing at SoftAtHome.
The interview was in a form of question-answer via e-mail, as during the outbreak of coronavirus no travel was allowed at the time. What is more, due to a busy schedule of Mr. Bensaid, he thought the best way was to answer all the questions through e-mail.

The questions posed to Mr. Bensaid were based on the questions included in the operationalization table (Table 1). All of them were focused around the *5 Steps of Social Media Engagement* theory by Khederchah, and included questions about SoftAtHome's approach to the following social media engagement pyramid:

- Listening,
- Respond,
- Share,
- Shape,
- Lead.

There were 13 questions presented to Mr. Bensaid on all five engagement techniques. What is apparent, is that in his answers, the VP Marketing admitted that SoftAtHome has no dedicated team to focus on developing social media strategy, or as he put it "there is no organised process of gathering all this information into a shared view of the market." However, there are resources within the company that are monitoring and updating the social media channels. In addition, on questions related to the *listening* part, Mr. Bensaid said one important thing, "SoftAtHome is listening to its audience with its ecosystem (not by listening to social media)." This is a powerful statement, and should be considered when working on creating, better yet, updating the company's social media strategy.

On questions about how the company could become a part of its audience's discussion or type of tone it should assume, he replied that "becoming a thought leader by posting regularly could help, but it requires time and energy," and that "any tone could work."

On the topic related to the type of content, their frequency and what should be a common indicator for all social media posts, Mr. Bensaid, again said an interesting thing, "Number of RFP's received (Request for Proposal), number of contracts signed (…) Number of clicks is too easy, and not really business oriented."

On the matter of topics which could be shaping SoftAtHome's social media strategy the VP stated that it is difficult to shape the thought leadership on the company social media channels, as they have products on various markets and just "creating a market for us has not been successful so far."

Last but not least, when answering the questions about engaging the audience, Mr. Bensaid thinks that their customers should get involved by, for example, giving testimonials.

When it comes to building a LinkedIn community, he stated that it requires a lot of effort, especially when having multiple products.

5. Discussion

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the results from the previous chapter. In addition, a discussion on what SoftAtHome, as an organisation, can do in order to improve its social media presence on LinkedIn, and, what are key points to pay attention to when thinking of crafting a social media strategy. What is more, the following, remaining sub-questions will be answered:

7. *What are next steps for SoftAtHome's Marketing Communications team?*
8. *What is, suggested, SoftAtHome's new LinkedIn strategy?*
9. *What SoftAtHome can define as a successful LinkedIn strategy?*
10. *Going forward, what types of social media posts should SoftAtHome focus on?*

5.1. Analysis of the field research

For the purpose of this paper, the data from the period between 22 April and 3 July 2020 has been collected. Figures 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 show the data of the company status updates in this time-frame.

In order to understand what impressions, clicks, shares, reactions and engagement rate mean on LinkedIn, let us have a look at how LinkedIn defines all these terms.

According to LinkedIn (n.d.), "impressions is the number of times each update is visible for at least 300 milliseconds with at least 50% in view on a (signed in) member's device screen or browser window. Clicks are "the number of clicks on your content, company name, or logo by a (signed in) member." Reactions are "the number of times people have applied a Like, Celebrate, Love, Insightful, or Curious in response to your update." Shares is "the number of times your update has been shared."

Whereas, the engagement rate is described as follows: "This percentage shows the number of interactions plus the number of clicks and followers acquired, divided by the number of impressions." Reactions, comments, and shares is "the number of reactions, comments, and times your content was shared by members, including direct sponsored videos posts."

When looking at Figure 5, number of impressions, it is worth pointing out that all the posts measured in the test period did not score lower than 500 impressions. Post that reached 2,557, the highest number of impressions, was a post talking about SoftAtHome;s software powering Deutsche Telekom's mini smart speaker. What is more, next post with a high number was an update about the

current situation, affecting the entire world, namely Covid-19. Third place belongs, again, to a post announcing a partnership with RDK. This shows, that posts referring to SoftAtHome's clients and new partnerships are the posts the company should focus on when revamping their social media strategy.

What is interesting to note is that Figures 5 and 6, impressions and clicks, are correlated; the same is true for reactions and shares, Figures 6 and 7. When we lay both graphs over each other, we can clearly see that the peaks are occurring in the same time frame.

When looking at Figure 6, number of clicks, it is clear that a post with the highest number of clicks was related to the current situation affecting everybody on the globe. It was a well-timed update, posted in a period when many people were looking for comfort.

Figure 7 illustrates the number of reactions each post has gathered. What is clear, is that, again, posts that scored highest are related to customers and collaborations.

In addition, Figures 5 and 6 are visibly aligned, which can mean that certain company status updates on LinkedIn are better at engaging audience than others. Why would it be? Some deeper analysis of the data needs to be performed.

Figure 9 shows data that is a proof that SoftAtHome's LinkedIn audience is engaging in what the company is doing. However, in order to have a more reliable data, a period of longer research is required. On the other hand, the filed research results did show that SoftAtHome's social media communication strategy is not in a bad shape at all. Nevertheless, it is worth stating that, when measuring the average percentage of the engagement rate for the researched time it can be observed that it is way above average with 6,23%. This measurement, according to Mindi Rosser, LinkedIn B2B pipeline product Expert, when answering a question related to what are average or excellent engagement rates for a company profile on LinkedIn on Quora (a question-and-answer platform), "it appears the average engagement rate on LinkedIn company pages ranges between .05% - 1.09% for B2B companies." Mindi also mentions that, in order to define what to a company average and excellent engagement rate means, one needs to "benchmark your engagement rates for 60-90 days" (2016). It would be, however, interesting to see how the company engagement rate would score with the status updates being more frequent.

When analysing the interview with Mr. Bensaid, a picture starts to emerge, and it is evident that SoftAtHome has a long road ahead when it comes to reshaping its social media strategy. As VP Marketing said, there is no dedicated employee focusing its efforts on social media approach. First,

it needs to be acknowledged that there is an issue with it and, secondly, there needs to be a will in setting new objectives, related to LinkedIn strategy. Once the marketing team is on board, then a brainstorm session should take place, during which fresh ideas can be introduced and a planning could kick off.

Since the research only focused on gathering data, there was no way of measuring the type of social media that the company should focus on. However, when taking engagement rate and reactions into account, posts with visuals, links, praising customer successes and, indirectly, their own, partnerships, are the types of posts SoftAtHome should keep on focusing on.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

The aim of this paper was to address a practical research problem, investigate and apply various theories for social media marketing and engagement on SoftAtHome's LinkedIn company page, and compare which approach was the most successful one. All of the above was to help to answer the central research question: *How can SoftAtHome increase its social media presence on LinkedIn?* What is more, with the pandemic taking over the world this year, it is important to create an appealing social media strategy, that would ensure the continuity of doing business in the digital reality.

According to Rich Walker (2016), "LinkedIn still reportedly outperforms other social media sites, driving over 80% of all B2B social media leads and convincing 63% of B2B marketers to judge LinkedIn as the most effective social media platform for lead generation," (p. 343).

The operationalization table was a good idea to use as one of the methods, however, the field research has carried more weight. Operationalization table allowed for a deeper insight into SoftAtHome's approach to social media strategy. Supported by the interview with the company's VP Marketing, Mr. Arnaud Bensaid, it showed that SoftAtHome needs to rethink its social media strategy and requires a wider support from its employees to make sure it can be considered a thought leader within the industry. There is a lot of work that needs to be done and the marketing department should be the one to initialize it. As Mr. Bensaid admitted, during the interview, SoftAtHome does not have any personnel dedicated to driving the social media strategy. If the company is serious about improving their social media presence, it is only wise to recommend to SoftAtHome to think of and ensure there will be a dedicated team member, taking care of social media.
In addition, there needs to be a clear plan, first of all, of how to approach the topic, and then, once that is defined, a detailed, step-by-step long-term strategy of how to conquer LinkedIn and meet the most important objectives.

Furthermore, the interview with Mr. Bensaid showed that the company "is listening to its audience with its ecosystem (not by listening to social media)." This can mean that by being more focused on what the industry and their clients have to say, creating content for social media is only to be more tactical and poised. What is more, Mr. Bensaid's comment is clearly related to the Khederchah's model, who states that the very first step in achieving social media engagement, one must start by listening to its audience, issues, influencers or trending topics. Hence, what is recommended is, to balance SoftAtHome's social media posts, endorse the things that others have done, curate relevant news, and limit the promotion of the business. Consequently, focus on the rule of thirds (Figure 11). This way, the company updates will become more balanced and ensure that the topics selected for a

discussion are in accordance with what their audience's is susceptible to. This is the second step out of five, presented by Khederchah's theory.

It is important to highlight that, in order to increase its social media presence on LinkedIn, SoftAtHome needs to perform a SWOT analysis. Earlier, in chapter 2.5. opportunities and threats were discussed, this included the following threats when using social media by SoftAtHome:

- Damage to brand reputation,
- Limited audience reach,
- Over-reliance on one platform,
- Revealing too much of the company condition.

The opportunities:

- Reaching the right audience,
- Engaging with its customers, prospects and employees,
- Creating new leads,
- Higher brand awareness.

When working on LinkedIn strategy the strengths and weaknesses should also be taken into account, which would allow to work on a comprehensive plan.

In addition, another suggestion could be, for SoftAtHome to be more daring with their content creation, meaning, try new ways of producing content. One of such techniques could be designing an infographic related to SoftAtHome's products, services or any issues, currently capturing the industry news. Such a way of sharing knowledge might be appreciated by the company's peers; and, who knows, SoftAtHome might go viral because of it. Thus, the company might definitely increase its social media presence by creating a unique content.

The field research has proved that, on average, when it comes to engagement rate, content including video links was performing better than a content with only a static visual. As Figure 9 shows, two posts with engagement rate above 10 per cent were the very first post measured and the last one. The last post was the only one containing video. While the update from 22 April 2020 did not include any video, possible explanation for such a noble performance might be that it was within the first month after the lockdown has started and people were yearning for some positive news. Hence, the post scoring 13,53% was quite an achievement. Therefore, it would be recommended that SoftAtHome starts posting more video content, as the research has shown that such posts definitely raise engagement rate.

Even though the engagement rate for SoftAtHome is well above the average (6.23%), the company should keep up the good work and continue creating posts that highlight their customers, as a chance of a post being noticed by a wider group on LinkedIn is twice as big as when not mentioning any customers. Therefore, sharing not only posts, but also comments and topic expertise is a key to keeping up with the obtained engagement rate. This supports the third step in Khederchah's theory, that in order to become an engaging company on social media, one needs to share various content. In addition, this also can be linked to Khederchah's fourth step, shape, meaning sharing original content and points of view is also of importance to the audience.

Nevertheless, in order to define what type of content is engaging its audience, SoftAtHome would need to conduct a deeper research, for an extended period of time, with more frequent posts. It is understandable that the company can't post videos all the time, so it may be worth to reserve a small budget and try to conduct a paid campaign on LinkedIn. Ideally, there would be multiple campaigns with the intention of measuring engagement on various type of content, and then choosing the most effective ones and including them in the company's social media strategy. This leads to

Last but not least, an important factor to make all the above recommendations work, is to designate a dedicated team member who would be solely responsible for monitoring social media, LinkedIn in this case. This person would need to make sure the company participates in relevant discussions, curates meaningful news, and involves SoftAtHome followers into direct interaction.

The field research has shown that, clearly, putting further efforts in creating more engagement with SoftAtHome's social media audience is the way forward and, therefore, increase the company's social media presence on LinkedIn. However, achieving the fifth step in Khederchah's theory, becoming a leader, is one of the toughest ones, as in order to build a community and lead "it requires a lot of effort, especially when having multiple products," as Mr. Bensaid stated when answering our interview questions. Hence, this move is certainly the most challenging one for SoftAtHome but not unreachable.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

THE **HAGUE**

UNIVERSITY OF
APPLIED SCIENCES

European Studies Student Ethics Form

Your name: Marta Twardowska

Supervisor: dr. Agota Szabo

Instructions:

Before completing this form you should read the APA Ethics Code (http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx). If you are planning research with human subjects, you should also look at the sample consent form available in the Final Project and Dissertation Guide.

a. Read section 2 that your supervisor will have to sign. Make sure that you cover all these issues in section 1.
b. Complete section 1 and, if you are using human subjects, section 2, of this form, and sign it.
c. Ask your project supervisor to read these sections (and the draft consent form if you have one) and ask him/her to sign the form.
d. Always append this signed form as an appendix to your dissertation. This is a knock-out criterium; if not included the Final Project/Dissertation is awarded an NVD.

Section 1. Project Outline (to be completed by student)

(i) **Title of Project:** How can SoftAtHome Increase its Social Media Presence on LinkedIn?
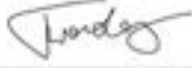
(ii) **Aims of project:**

The purpose of this research was to try out various techniques on SoftAtHome's LinkedIn page and see which of them have the most engagement. Choosing the right type of posts would mean having a blue print for future posts and, hopefully, having SoftAtHome placed as one of the key thought leaders within the industry.

(iii) Will you involve other people in your project – e.g. via formal or informal interviews, group discussions, questionnaires, internet surveys etc. (Note: if you are using data that has already been collected by another researcher – e.g. recordings or transcripts of conversations given to you by your supervisor, you should answer 'NO' to this question.)

Yes ○

If yes: you should complete the section 2 of this form.

If no: you should now sign the statement below and return the form to your supervisor. You have completed this form.

This project is not designed to include research with human subjects . I understand that I do not have ethical clearance to interview people (formally or informally) about the topic of my research, to carry out internet research (e.g. on chat rooms or discussion boards) or in any other way to use people as subjects in my research.

Student's signature _____ Date _____ 10/09/2020

Section 2 *Complete this section only if you answered YES to question (iii) above.*

(i) What will the participants have to do? (v. brief outline of procedure):
The participants will take part in a digital interview (via e-mail). In addition, the company that is being researched, LinkedIn company page will be used as the main platform in a field study.

(ii) What sort of people will the participants be and how will they be recruited?
The interviewee is a Vice President Marketing at SoftAtHome. Since I work with SoftAtHome, I was able to ask Arnaud over the phone to participate and then an e-mail with questions was sent to him.

(iii) What sort of stimuli or materials will your participants be exposed to? Tick the appropriate boxes and then state what they are in the space below

- [ ] Questionnaires
- [x] Pictures
- [ ] Sounds
- [x] Words
- [x] Other

(iv) Consent: Informed consent must be obtained for all participants before they take part in your project. By means of an informed consent form you should state what participants will be doing, drawing attention to anything they could conceivably object to subsequently. You should also state how they can withdraw from the study at any time and the measures you are taking to ensure the confidentiality of data. A standard informed consent form is available in the Dissertation Manual. Appendix the Informed Consent Form to your Final Project/Dissertation as well.

(vi) What procedures will you follow in order to guarantee the confidentiality of participants' data?

Student's signature: Date 10/09/2020

Supervisor's signature: dr. Agota Szabo   Date 10/09/2020

(if satisfied with the proposed procedures)

Appendix 2

Informed Consent Form, signed by Arnaud Bensaid, VP Marketing at SoftAtHome
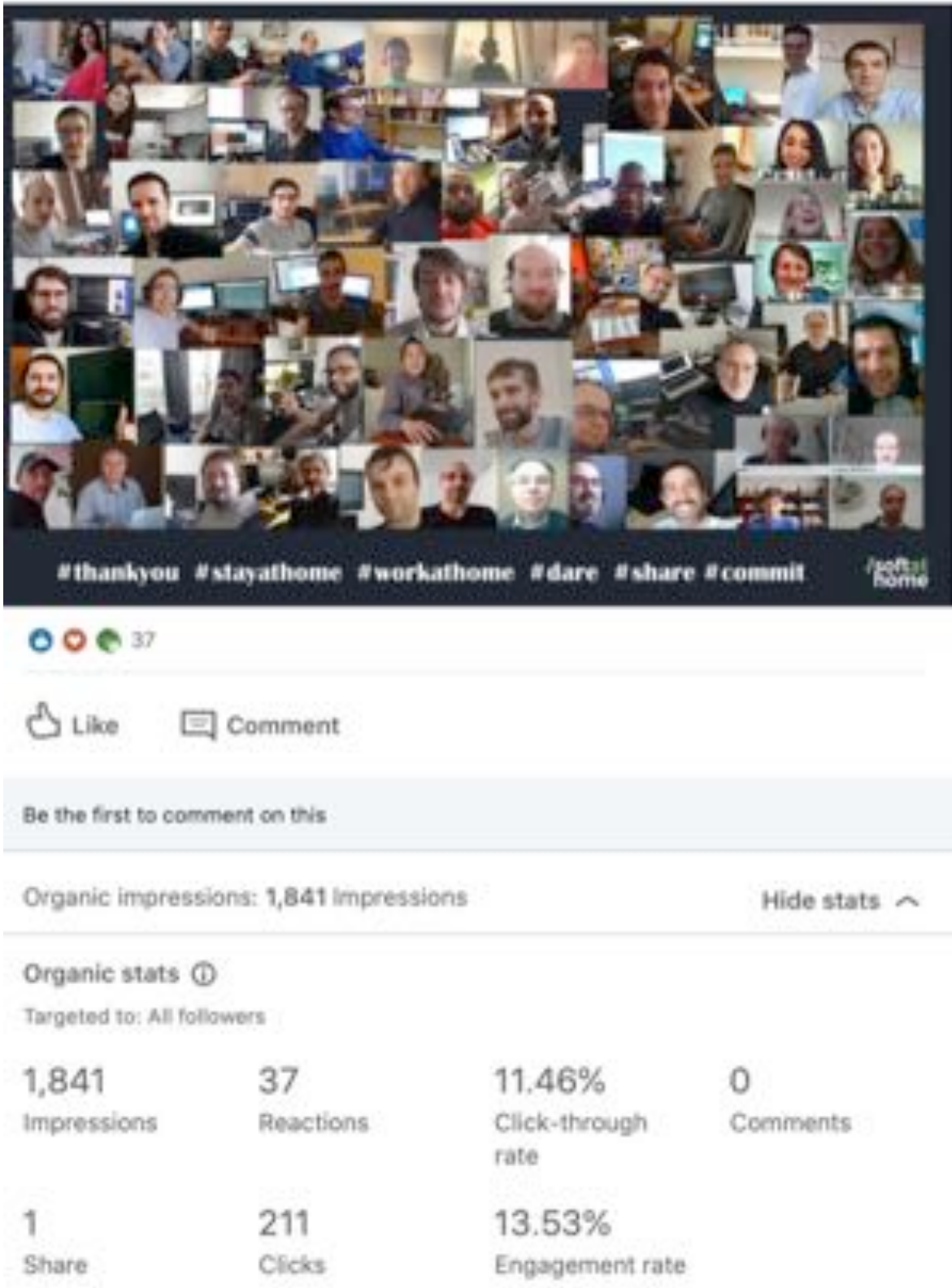
Appendix 3

SoftAtHome LinkedIn statistics for period 22 April to 3 July 2020

Posted by Marta Twardowska • 5/1/2020 • ⌁ Sponsor now   •••
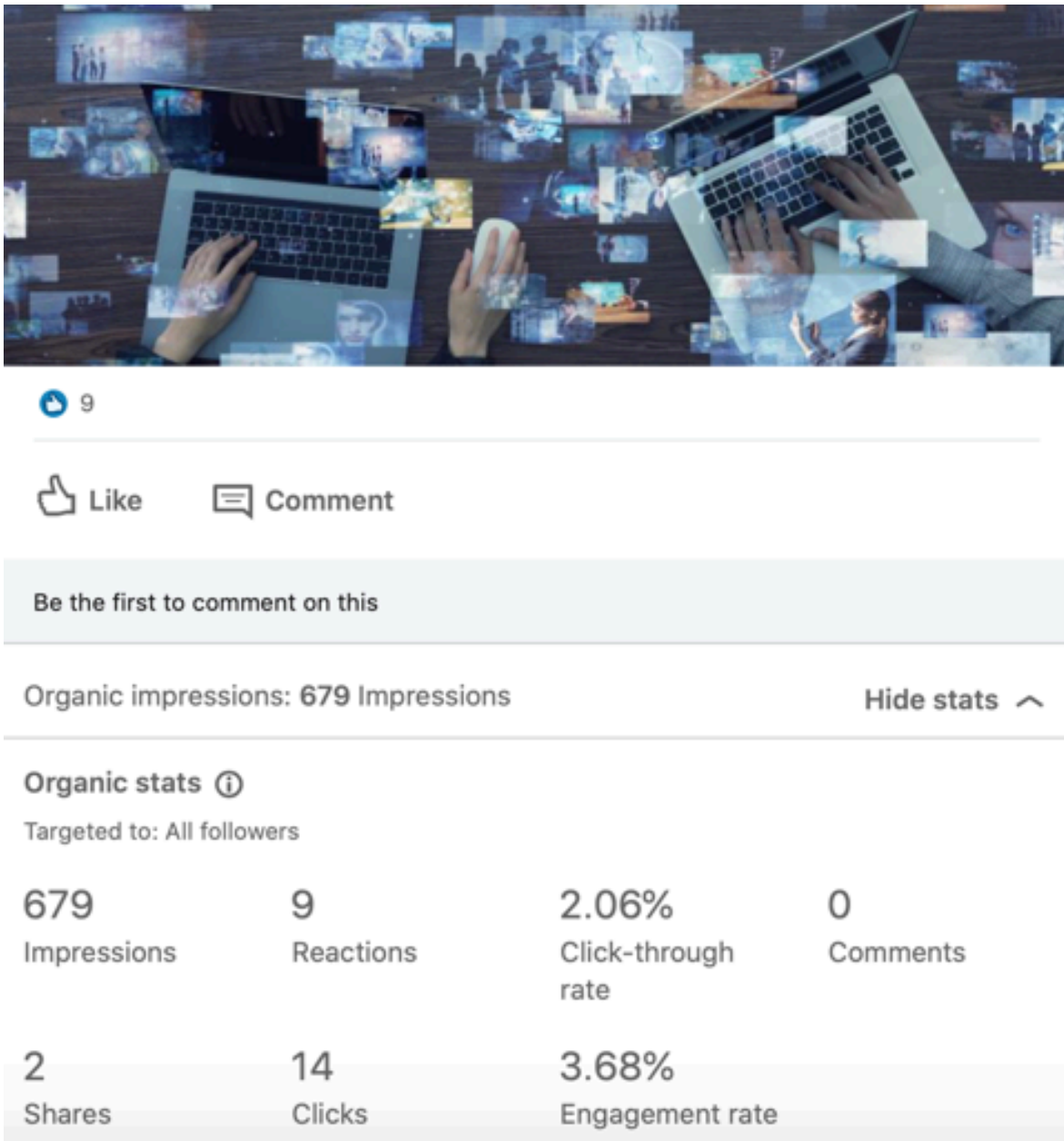

SoftAtHome
/soft at home
2,520 followers
3mo • 🌐

It's been over a month, and the Internet has held up. #Data volumes for video
and other #IP services have mushroomed (#Comcast, for example, saw a 33%
overall increase upstream and 13% downstream).
Networks cope with peak usage by design, and #CDNs absorb peaks. CDNs
can even share infrastructure among clients who experience peaks at different
times. But with most of us at home, peak usage has moved from the usual
evening to all day, every day. The cancellation of sporting events has, however,
pushed consumption from #livecontent to #ondemand content that
compresses better, for lower bandwidth requirements.

#OTT #SVoD services have successfully ramped up, and network resilience
has proven robust throughout the world.
#Live / #linear services represent the ultimate advantage that #broadcast
technologies had over #Internet distribution. But the #covid19 lockdown
shows that the Internet now has the maturity and flexibility to scale
instantaneously. The mixing of live and on-demand content offers new hope to
#Telcos and #MVNOs. In the post-COVID world, they will be racing the OTT
giants to become THE super aggregator. Our watch'ON product with its
advanced interface gives operators the edge they need to compete.
#staysafe #softathome #stayathome

👍 9

👍 Like   💬 Comment

Be the first to comment on this

Organic impressions: **679** Impressions   Hide stats ∧

Organic stats ⓘ
Targeted to: All followers

679	9	2.06%	0
Impressions	Reactions	Click-through rate	Comments

2	14	3.68%
Shares	Clicks	Engagement rate

Posted by Marta Twardowska · 5/8/2020 · ⌁ Sponsor now   •••

SoftAtHome
2,501 followers
2mo · Edited · ☺

The sudden importance of #homenetworksecurity.

Until a few years ago many home gateways were shipped with admin user ID: admin and password "admin". It was always a bad thing to have such weak #security for your home network, but the stakes were never that high.

Even someone eavesdropping your #WiFi couldn't get hold of your banking passwords without also infecting your device with some sort of keylogger.

The risk/reward ratio was rarely attractive enough for hackers to invest time in accessing such environments.

Then #covid19 happened. It's no longer the occasional, unpredictable day working from home but every day. Devices on home-networks use the open #Internet to access sensitive if not secret corporate data. As lockdowns start lifting across the world, we know that the homeworking trend is here to stay.

All of a sudden, the challenge of breaking through #homegateway security measures - even if it's now more complex than admin/admin - has become a lot more appealing to those hackers.

Our clients' end-users can rest assured because their home networks are protected with #secureON, the unique solution that secures all the devices connected at home, as well as the central Internet access point. With #SoftAtHome #staysafe at home.
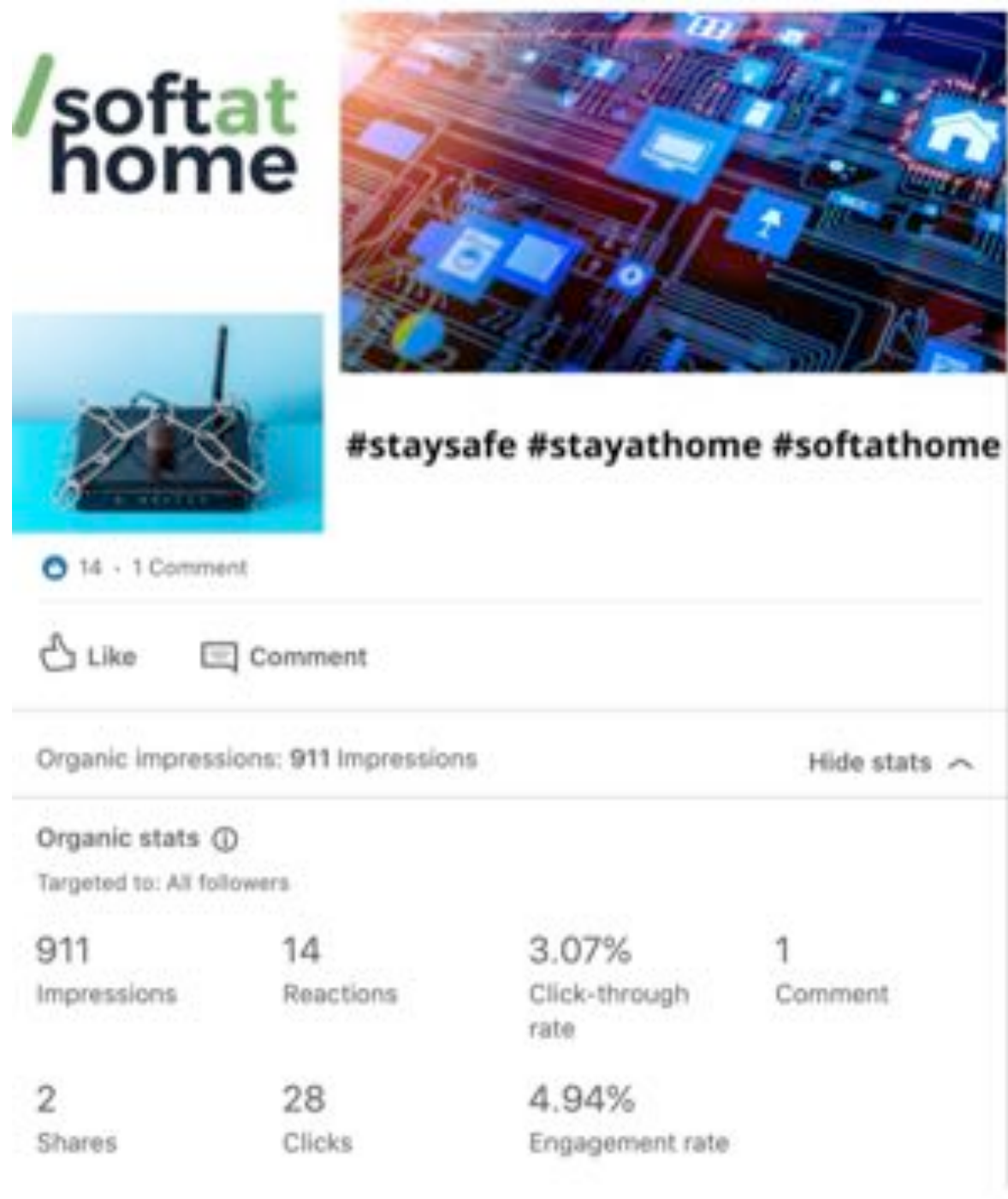
Posted by Marta Twardowska · 5/15/2020 · ⌁ Sponsor now   •••

SoftAtHome
2,546 followers
3mo · ☺

RAN-sharing can help #COVID-stressed #networks

Sharing Radio Access Network (#RAN) infrastructure offers a sustainable way to manage congestion and cost in these difficult times. However, once a subscriber becomes bound to a partner's network, the service provider's traditional monitoring tools go blind.
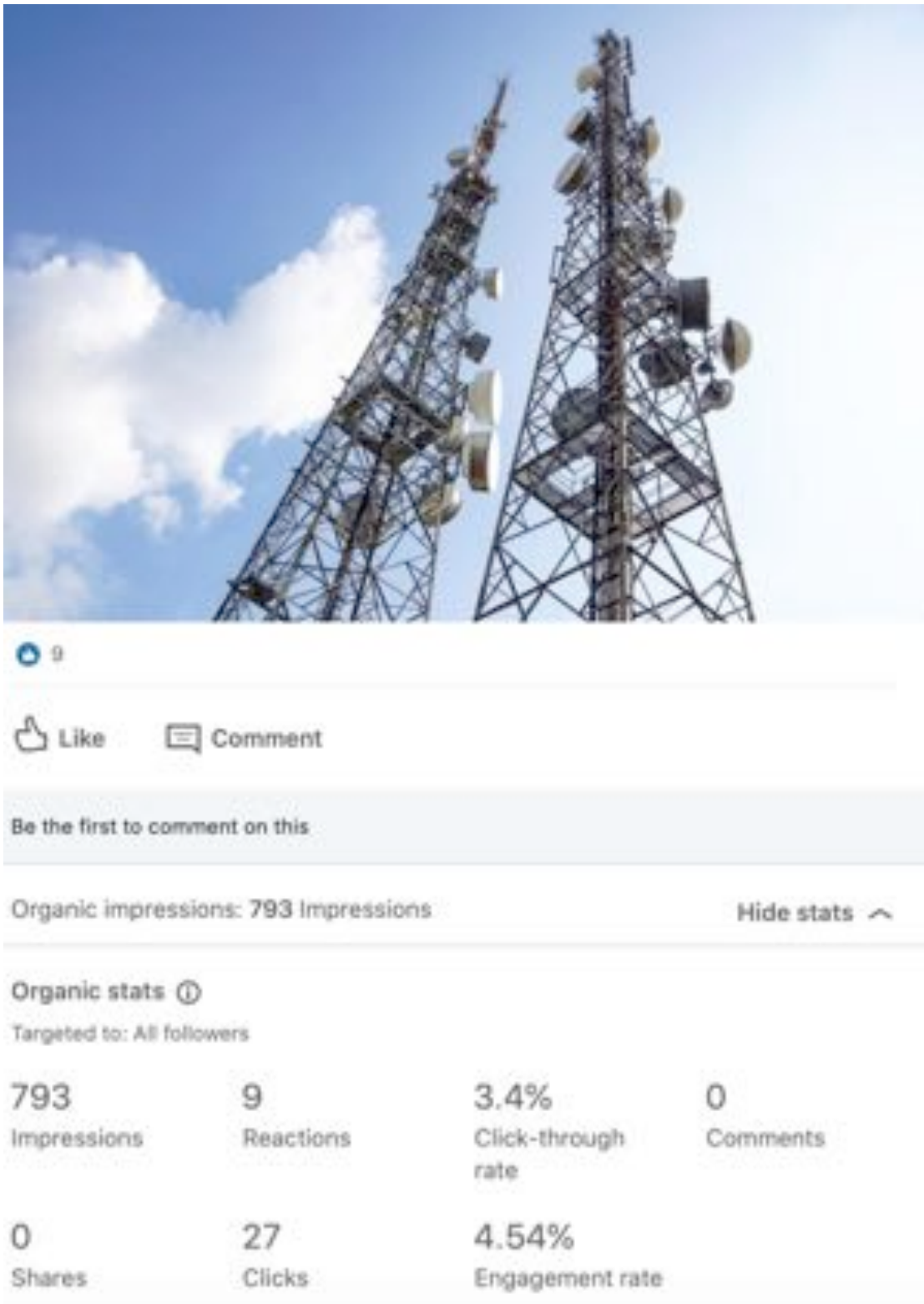
Mobile agents can provide an innovative #monitoring solution that will contain the risk of disagreement between RAN-sharing parties in case of an incident. Agents transparently monitor subscriber's network experience, wherever the service is delivered, sharing only anonymized #data at regular intervals.

Agents can be limited to using less than 3% of device resources to facilitate their acceptance. But just 5% of subscribers accepting the mobile agent on their device is typically enough to monitor 95% of a network.

Once in place, agents create an "always-on" monitoring system, but can also be used for specific campaigns, to root out complex issues or plan for a gradual ending of the current crisis.

If you want to learn more about agent-based monitoring for RAN-sharing, let's talk, get in touch here: https://lnkd.in/erEXubw

👍 7

👍 Like   💬 Comment

Be the first to comment on this

Organic impressions: **835** Impressions   Hide stats ⌃

Organic stats ⓘ
Targeted to: All followers

835	7	1.68%	0
Impressions	Reactions	Click-through rate	Comments

| 0	14	2.51%
Shares	Clicks	Engagement rate
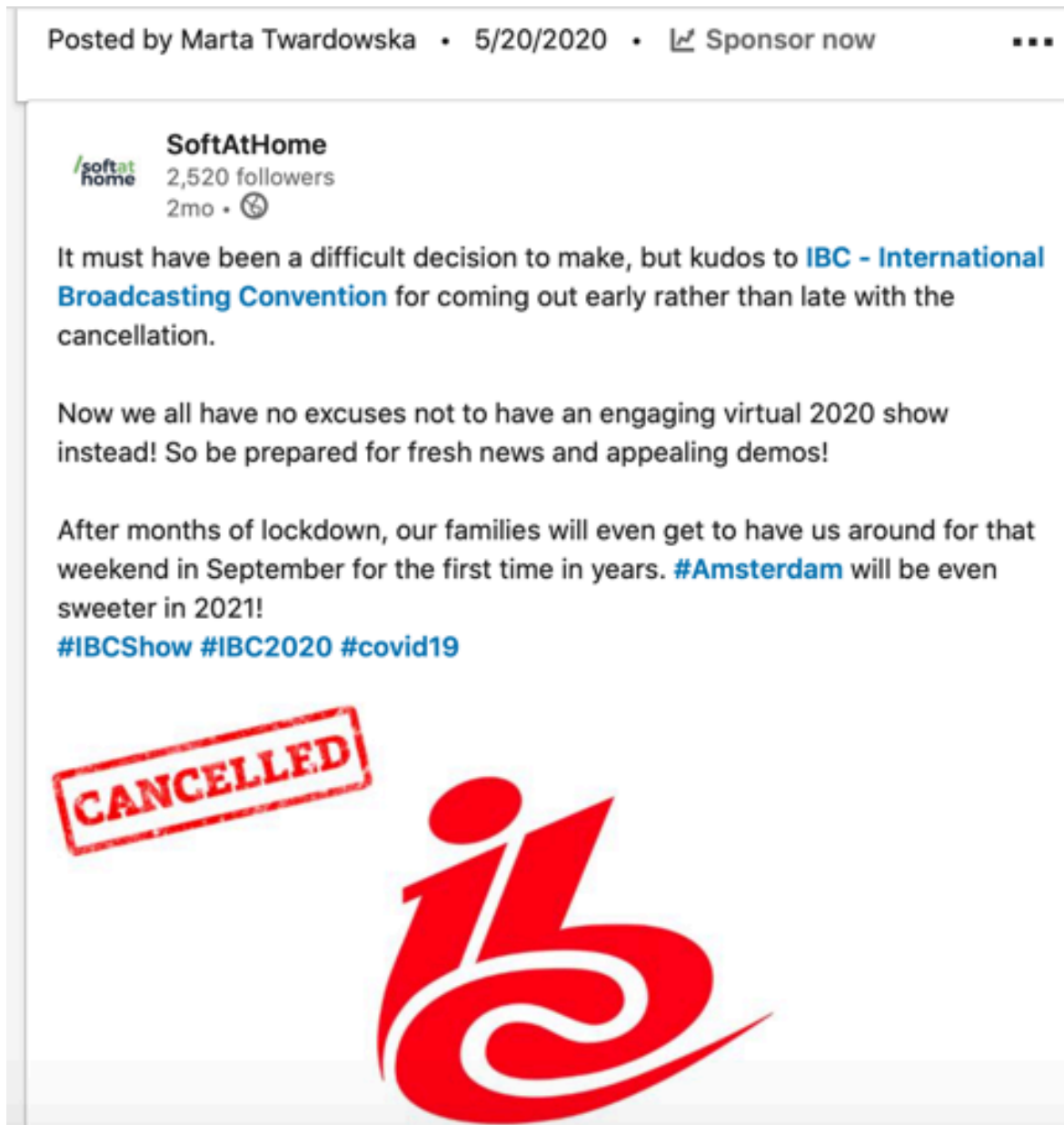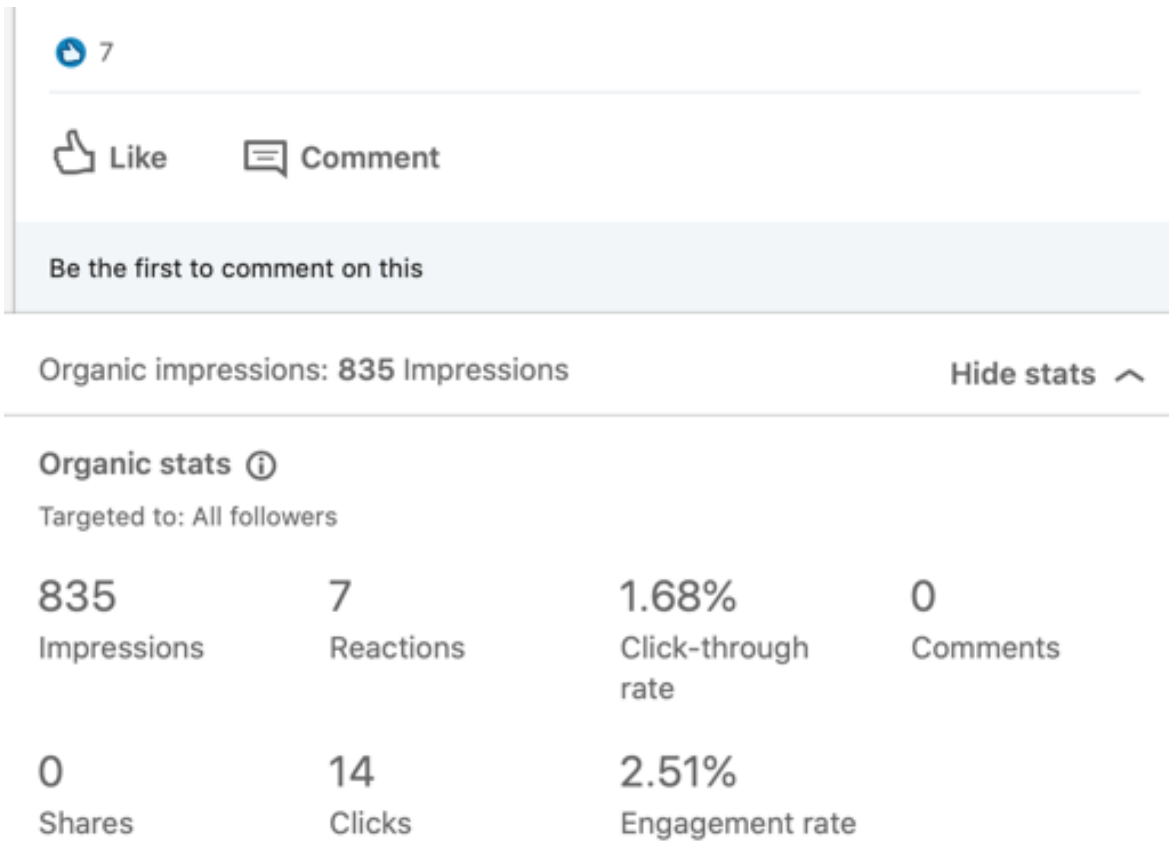
Posted by Marta Twardowska · 5/26/2020 · 🖉 Sponsor now ...

SoftAtHome
2,501 followers
1mo · 🌐

We are happy to share that, together with RDK community, we are working to build a full #RDK #Video based solution, integrating #multicast, #DVB, Live #DASH #streaming, a universal search aggregator, new premium video streaming #apps, #voicecontrol, and our white-label #ImpressioTV #UserExperience
Read the full #pressrelease here: https://lnkd.in/dbQW2hC

🔵🟢 24 · 1 Comment
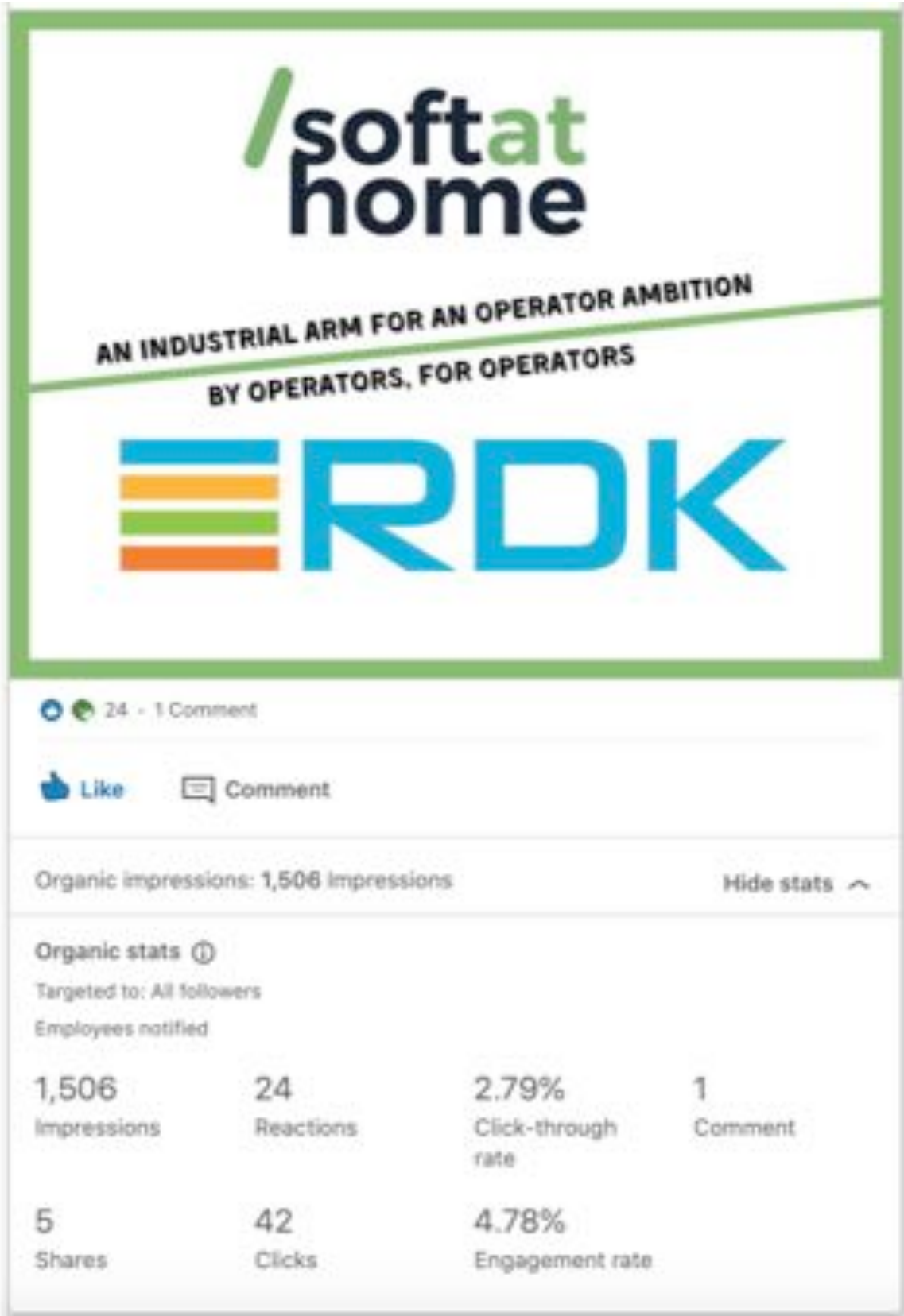
Posted by Marta Twardowska · 6/5/2020 · ⌁ Sponsor now   • • •

SoftAtHome
2,501 followers
1mo · Edited · ☺

The privacy risk of devices at home and the #homenetwork itself has traditionally concerned #personaldata. With more #IoT devices at home, data breaches pose #security risks too, with cameras or smoke detectors needing a higher degree of protection, for example.

Usage of home networks over the last three months has risen dramatically. Work-From-Home (WFH) has seen a seven-fold increase around the world, requiring an even more proactive and holistic approach to privacy.

More robust security brings privacy protection. ANY device that connects to the home network should have a security score. Such security ratings include many aspects like password robustness to identify the infamous '123456' default password for cameras. This security flaw can lead to private videos finding their way online.
From within a home network environment, we must guard #privacy at all costs. The most sensitive personal data should not even leave the home network until it is pre-processed, anonymised and encrypted.
The #HomeGateway sees all traffic and all devices in the home. It, therefore, offers the best location for critical software building block such as a security solution.

If you'd like to know more about how our #secureON home network security solution protect privacy, then drop us a line.
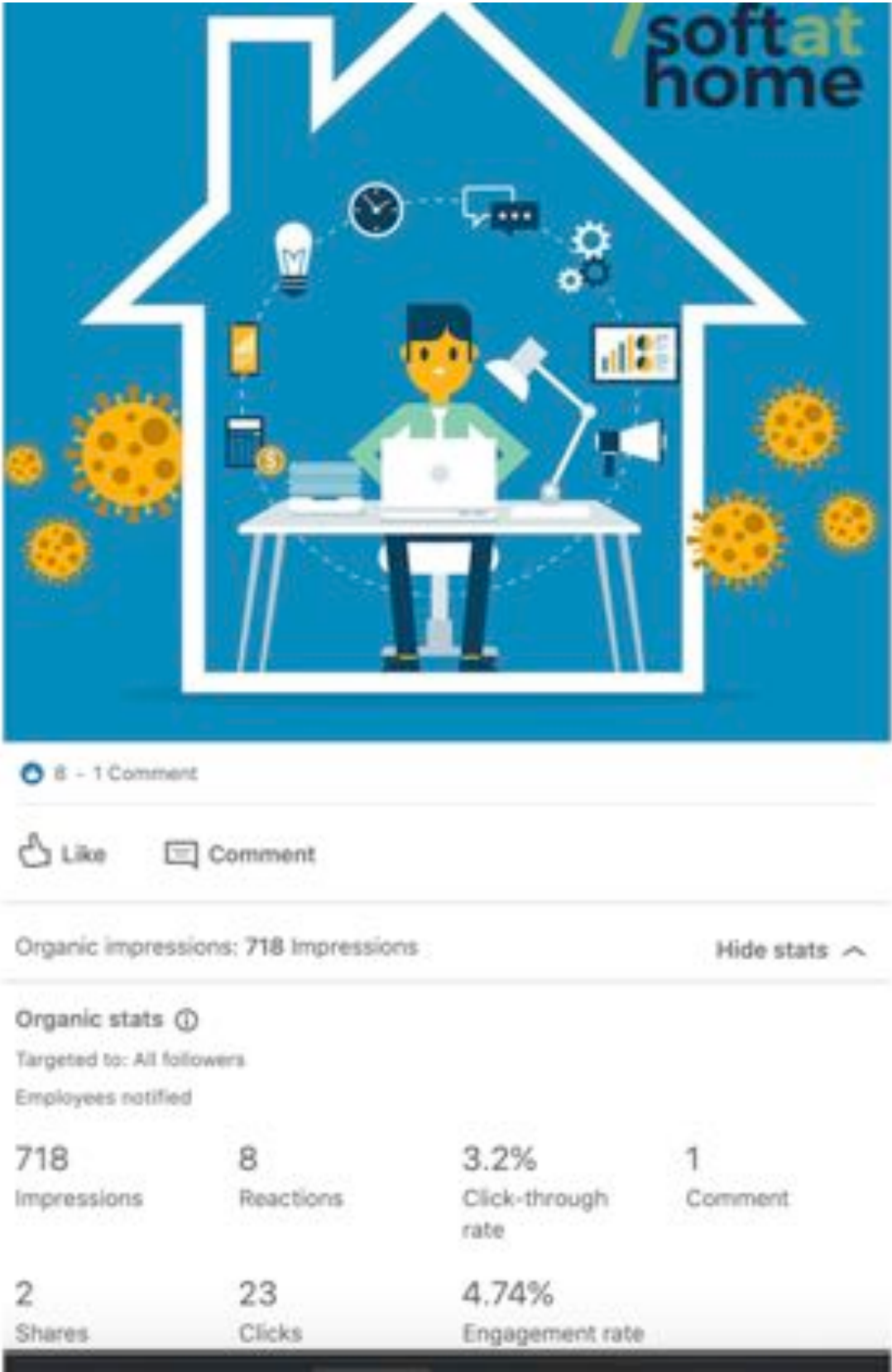
Posted by Marta Twardowska · 6/12/2020 · 📈 Sponsor now   • • •

SoftAtHome
2,501 followers
1mo · ☺

Since our creation, #SoftAtHome has carried out most of its development on the #Linux OS, which was already ahead of the market. The operator culture, in which we work, has been more about interoperability & cooperation than raw competition. Indeed, most of our projects involve several operators with technology partners too. So, sharing source code has always been part of life. We have already open-sourced a large part of our codebase & mainly working in the open.

All of our solutions are commercial, but not proprietary. For instance, we shared our TR-069 stack in the open, on #GitHub five years ago. We were part of #WebKit for embedded projects years ago.

There is still a need for a truly "carrier-grade" #gateway stack. To that end, we have already open-sourced several critical components such as Gmap for #homenetwork topology and device databases, or Nemo, for dynamic modelling of network interfaces.

With our partners, we are helping to nurture this new open-source ecosystem so this carrier solution can emerge for the gateway. For this new gateway stack, we are collaborating with prplwrt, #RDKB & Broadband Forum.

Now more than ever operators over the 🌐 realise that it's only through their continued collaboration that they can remain relevant & attractive to subscribers.

Posted by Marta Twardowska • 6/18/2020 • ⊯ Sponsor now   • • •

SoftAtHome
2,501 followers
3w • ☺

We are happy to share that our software is powering the latest Smart Speaker Mini from Deutsche Telekom.

One of the interesting features this mini-Magenta speaker is capable of is the compatibility with #AmazonAlexa.
We were able to create this customised feature for the dual wake-up word to provide DT's customers with a richer #voice experience.

https://lnkd.in/dSjJtsd #smartspeaker #voiceassistant

Deutsche Telekom Launches Smart Speaker Mini Powered by SoftAtHome Technology

Deutsche Telekom Launches Smart Speaker Mini Powered by SoftAtHome Technology

softathome.com • 2 min read

◐ ● ◯ 80 • 3 Comments

Deutsche Telekom Launches Smart Speaker Mini Powered by SoftAtHome Technology

Deutsche Telekom Launches Smart Speaker Mini Powered by SoftAtHome Technology

softathome.com · 2 min read

○ ● ○ 80 · 3 Comments

👍 Like   💬 Comment

Organic impressions: 2,557 Impressions   Hide stats ∧

Organic stats ⓘ

Targeted to: All followers

Employees notified

2,557	0	5.12%	3
Impressions	Reactions	Click-through rate	Comments

12	131	5.71%	
Shares	Clicks	Engagement rate	

Posted by Hélène Vallée ↔ V3D a SoftAtHome company · 6/26/2020 · ...
Sponsor now

SoftAtHome
2,501 followers
2w · Edited · ☺

#QoE audit campaign opportunities as we exit lockdown.

#MobileNetworkOperators have seen their networks put under unusual strain in the last few months. Many subscribers will have changed their habits. As social and travel restrictions are slowly lifted, MNOs must adapt to their new realities. A small window of opportunity exists to shine during the transition, and now is the time for operators to audit their network quality from a genuinely end-user perspective.

Operators work with many network KPIs, but in times of turmoil, only the subscriber's point of view truly matters, and that's what KPI must capture.

If you're an #MNO, you can identify a target group of only a few hundred of your most valuable subscribers. Offer them a sweet deal to install our #eyesOn mobile app on the handset they use every day.
Within days you can start collecting invaluable #data on #coverage, #throughput, #latency, #servicescoring and more.

We can help you qualify the results in a private benchmark so you can identify areas where improvement is required and refocus marketing efforts on your strong points. It is during inflexion points, such as the one we are entering that market share is redistributed. Get in touch with our team to learn more.
#networkperformance #dataanalytics

Posted by Marta Twardowska · 7/3/2020 · ☑ Sponsor now   •••

SoftAtHome
2,501 followers
1w · ☺

To cope with the exceptional #covid19 circumstances, we decided to hold our annual Customer Forum virtually this year. With a dozen presentations, we are happy that this online event was met with understanding from our clients and partners. Our Customer Forum creates an opportunity to share experiences, catch up with our customers on their stories and roadmaps. We are really proud that so many of our customers agreed to share their testimonials on the projects that represent today's market and challenges.

It is an invitation-only event, but you can get a preview of the content here:
https://lnkd.in/dF4ACnV

of our first RDK-based set-top box.

Welcome to our Virtual Customer Forum 2020
customerforum.softathome.com · 3 min read

○ ◉ 24

Welcome to our Virtual Customer Forum 2020

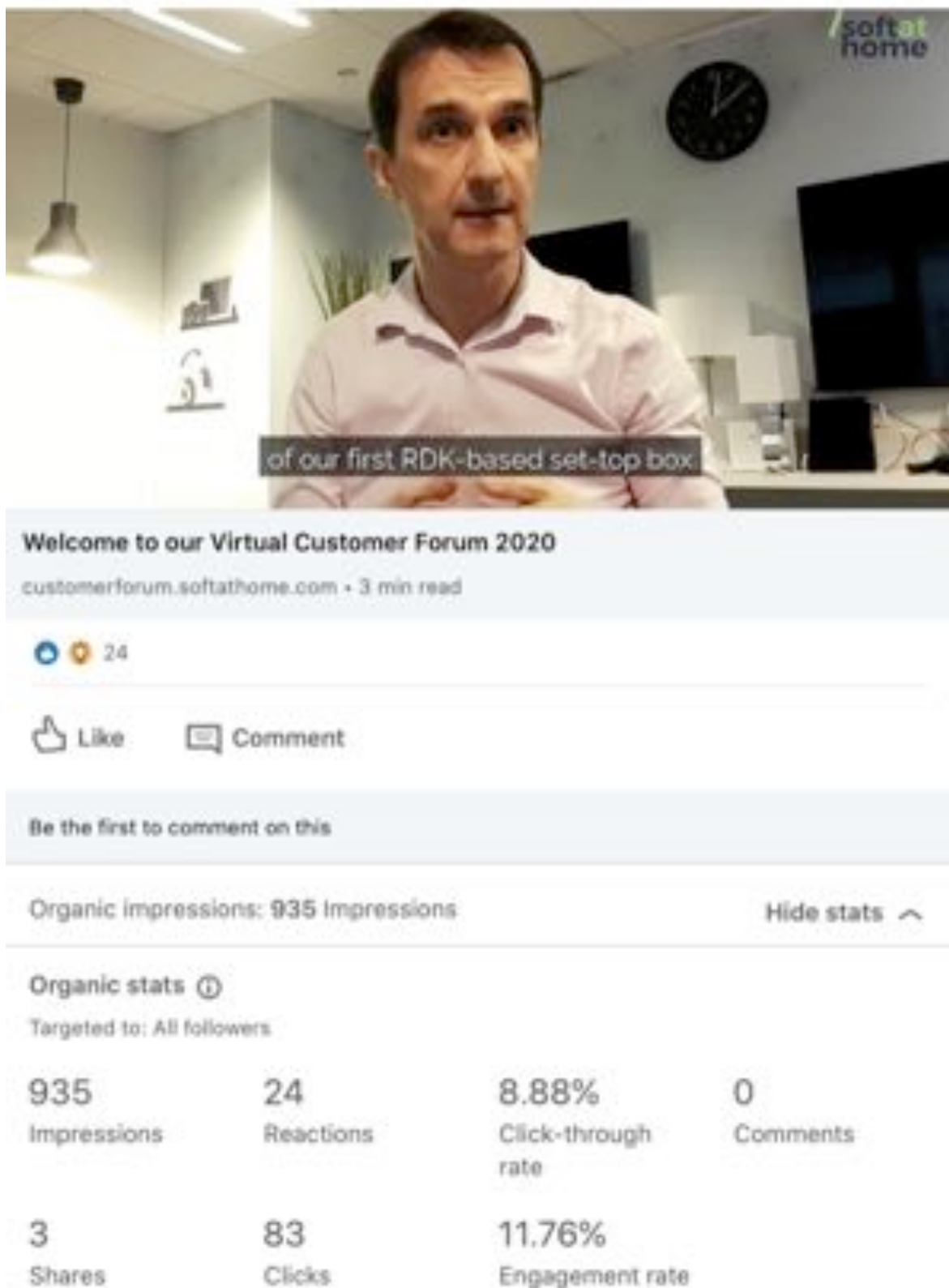customerforum.softathome.com • 3 min read

⬤ 🟡 24

👍 Like   💬 Comment

Be the first to comment on this

Organic impressions: 935 Impressions   Hide stats ⌃

Organic stats ⓘ
Targeted to: All followers

935	24	8.88%	0
Impressions	Reactions	Click-through rate	Comments

3	83	11.76%
Shares	Clicks	Engagement rate

E-mail interview with Arnaud Bensaid, VP Marketing, SoftAtHome

26 May 2020 – e-mail sent to Arnaud Bensaid

Hi Arnaud,

Thank you for agreeing to taking part in my research and helping me finalise my paper. As I mentioned over the phone, I would like to ask you some questions about SoftAtHome's social media engagement. The questions are part of my operationalisation table on 5 steps of social media engagement.

I hope that when I finalise my paper, I will be able to share with you and SoftAtHome some recommendations on how SoftAtHome could increase its social media presence with LinkedIn in mind, and by this, I mean mainly engagement on LinkedIn.

Below are the questions I would like to ask you. Also, below is the operationalisation table that will give you the context for the questions.

Please, feel free to let me know if you prefer to answer them via email or by phone. If the latter, I would like to ask your permission to record it, so I can provide the transcript. Afterwards I will delete the recording.

1. What SoftAtHome can do to ensure it is listening to its audience?

2. How would SoftAtHome understand what are currently trending themes on LinkedIn?

3. Who, within the company, should be the "listener"

4. How can SoftAtHome become a part of its audience's discussions?

5. What type of tone should SoftAtHome assume on their social media channels?

6. What kind of content should SoftAtHome share with their audience?

7. How frequent should the posts be?

8. What could be a common indicator for all social media posts?

9. How SoftAtHome's strategy could be reflected in social media posts?

10. What type of thought leadership should SoftAtHome adopt in order to build a community?

11. How SoftAtHome's products/solutions could be utilized to shape its social media strategy?

12. How can SoftAtHome ensure some form of engagement from its audience?

13. What if SoftAtHome could build its own community on LinkedIn?

Thank you, a lot!

With best wishes,

Marta

===

30 May 2020 – Arnaud answered the e-mail

Marta,

As discussed together, it is not easy to answer your questions as you are probably in a better position to answer some questions

Here my first draft- I available for a quick chat if you want to dig into details

Hope that helps!

Arnaud

1. What SoftAtHome can do to ensure it is listening to its audience?

SoftAtHome is listening to its audience by talking with its ecosystem (not by listening to social media).

We are talking with our customers (they are launching projects on some innovative topics that are not yet visible on social media – they will communicate once it is ready). We are talking with our partners (Chipset vendors have to identify market disruptions years before because developing a new chipset requires 3 years of work! – Hardware Manufacturers – Application developers – Standardization bodies …).

2. How would SoftAtHome understand what are currently trending themes on LinkedIn?

Trending themes are not the one we are currently working on. They are trendy today, but it is the result of years of works in labs.

Answering your questions, we are looking at our LinkedIn page and read the post of our colleagues. We have to tool to identify a trendy topic independently from connected people's posts.

3. Who, within the company, should be the "listener"

Everybody in the company has a role to play:

- R&D & CTO are screening the technical trends,

-marketing and sales are looking at customer announcement,

But indeed, there is no organized process of gathering all this information into a shared view of the market.

Nevertheless, we have governance instances within the company to share our view on products evolutions (Product Board), which is also the place to share market/technology benchmarks.

    4.   How can SoftAtHome become a part of its audience's discussions?

It is a question for you I think.

I would say that becoming a thought leader by posting regularly could help, but it requires time and energy.

5. What type of tone should SoftAtHome assume on their social media channels?

Once again, it is a question for you.

Any tone could work … from a very professional one to a fun one => it is up to the company to decide depending on its identity and image it wants to push on the market

Of course, it you are just "fun", there is a risk that you are not serious (remember fun & serious from ViaccessOrca – being fun only is not the right tone!)

6. What kind of content should SoftAtHome share with their audience?

A question for you.

I would say that I would love to share Customer Successes, but it is not always easy as customers want to keep the credit for what they are doing, which is fair!

7. How frequent should the posts be?

A question for you again ☺

Once a week is a minimum to be visible, I would say.

8. What could be a common indicator for all social media posts?

Number of RFP received / Number of contracts signed.

I understand it is not that easy … but it is the only indicator which is relevant.

Number of clicks is just too easy, and not really business oriented.

9. How SoftAtHome's strategy could be reflected in social media posts?

Ensure that one post per month is dedicated to SoftAtHome strategic topic?

10. What type of thought leadership should SoftAtHome adopt in order to build a community?

Become the leader on one topic, but as we are present on multiple markets (video, Broadband, WiFi, Security, analytics), it is difficult.
Creating a "market for us" have not been successful so far ("Software for Operators, by Operators"?).

11. How SoftAtHome's products/solutions could be utilised to shape its social media strategy?

Not an easy question.
We need to spend more time on value / benefits than technical speech.
Product has no value if you don't prove that it is generating value for customers (and customers don't want to share the value, as they believe that value has been created by them rather than by their supplier).

12. How can SoftAtHome ensure some form of engagement from its audience?

We need customers helping us – Customer testimonies is the key, I think.

13. What if SoftAtHome could build its own community on LinkedIn?

Would be great. What level of effort is required to create this community, once again with so many different products?