

Executive social visibility:

A powerful communications strategy

Ogilvy

“The **reputation**
of a company’s
leadership
is directly
responsible
for **44%** of a
company’s
market value,”

Reported Forbes magazine in 2018.

Executive social visibility:

a powerful communications strategy

An organisation's key individuals have always been crucial to its fortunes. More recently, a company's social media profile has also become a fundamental determinant of its success.

However, only recently has it become clear how these two factors – social media and executive leadership – can be strategically combined to drive positioning and corporate messaging.

Today, reputations are built on social media, so it's ironic that many corporate leaders maintain extremely low social-media visibility profiles, or avoid it altogether.

“The reputation of a company's leadership is directly responsible for 44% of a company's market value,” reported Forbes magazine in 2018.

When social media was still taking shape as a viable communication channel, it was understandable that executives were reluctant to enter the environment without the requisite experience, in case they might do more harm than good.

However, as social media has matured, the voice of corporate leaders have become integral to brand communications.

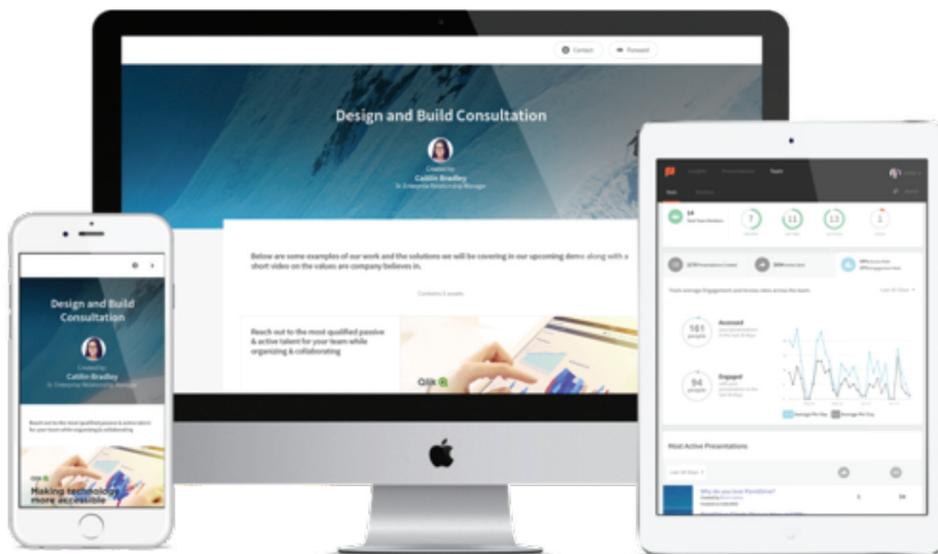
The social power of the leader

Executive social visibility is a powerful strategic tool in driving messaging and brand positioning.

There are indeed risks to taking the plunge into social media, but the good news is that executive visibility in social is now an established media field, and expert teams can manage an exec's social presence for maximum impact.

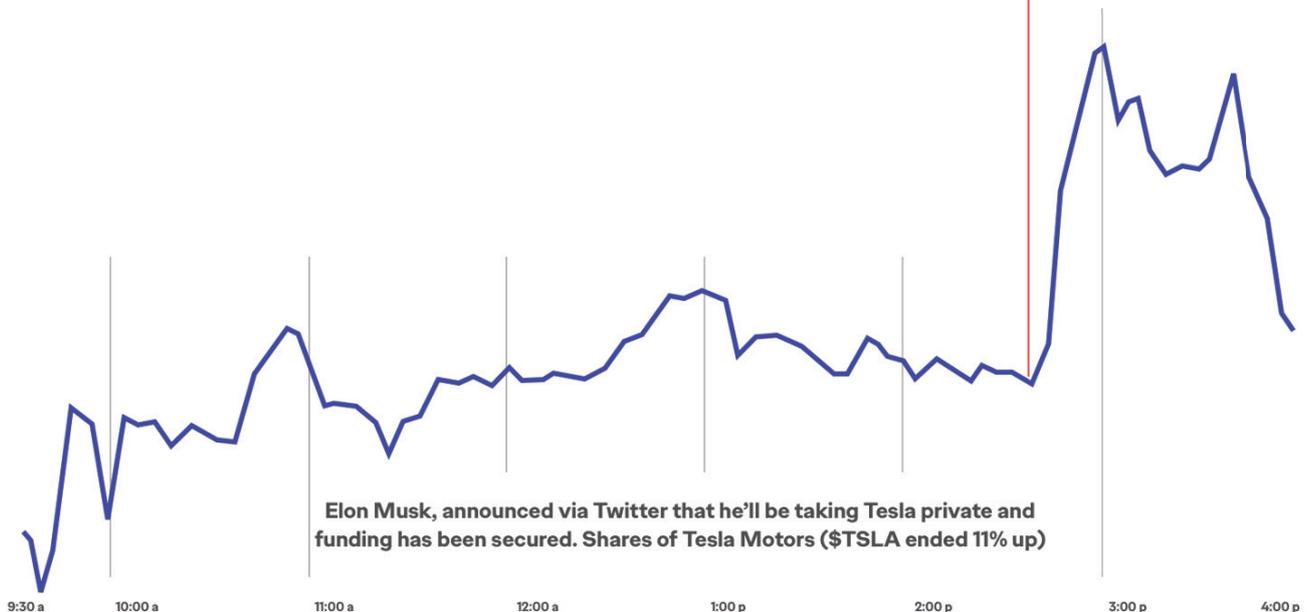
This is also an opportunity to expand reach. By effectively using social channels, an executive becomes a leader not just of his or her company, but of a community, a sector, even a society at large.

A highly visible leader is also in a position to shape the fortunes of his or her organisation, or to position it within society.



The social power of the leader

For example, when Tesla CEO Elon Musk took to **Twitter** in 2013 to imply that he was about to take the company private, his tweet immediately **boosted Tesla's share price by 11%**. Five years later, he was on the other side of the coin, making a disparaging remark about the Securities Exchange Commission and **causing a 7% drop** in the share price.



A programmatic approach

At Ogilvy, our **Executive Visibility In Social** proposition is specifically focused on **building the social presence** and following of key executives. We help them become **thought leaders** in their industries through their own social channels and can help drive commercial value through lead generation for the organisation.

As thought leadership is a public relations competence, the executive social media programme happens in **collaboration** with our **PR & Influence team** as part of the greater thought-leadership agenda for the company.

These programmes can help achieve both company and personal objectives. For the organisation, executive social presence can help personify the brand, improve its reputation,

attract and inspire talent, generate leads and mitigate risks. For the individual, it can solidify their position as the face of their company and as a thought leader in their industry, as well as growing their personal network.

Organisational social media literacy is now a source of **competitive advantage**, which makes it **not only advantageous**, but **imperative** for **senior leaders** to be active and transparent on social media.

Social media is also a **vital tool** for **humanising a brand** and building the authenticity that consumers look for in an organisation these days. A person tweeting from their own perspective will always resonate more powerfully with other users than an impersonal “@TheCompany” account.

Core competencies

At Ogilvy, we've managed to combine three of our core competencies – in **data, media** and **creative** – in devising our **Executive Visibility in Social Product**. Our data expertise allows us to combine audience intelligence with natural-language insights, platform intelligence and competitor & category analysis.

Our **expertise in media** means we can identify and target relevant audiences with original content from the executive,

to attract potential **customers** and **partners**, and combine the executive's media planning activities with those of the brand.

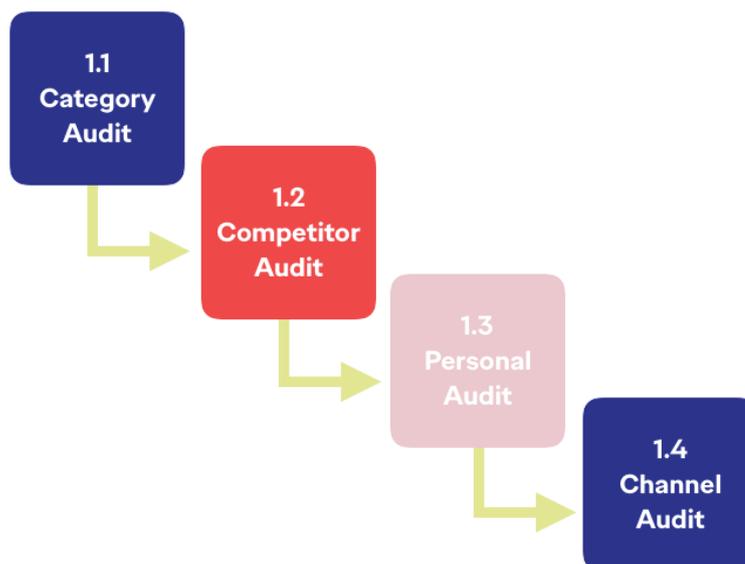
Our **creative capabilities** enable us to create the kind of newsfeeds that cut through the clutter and also strengthen the executive's own personal brand in alignment with the values of the business.

Our executive visibility programme is made up of five phases.



Discover

It begins with a discovery phase geared to gaining an understanding of key objectives. This involves audits of the category, the competition and finally, the executive's personal account if one exists. This will likely include a social listening exercise, and an assessment of the right data sources to look at. From here, recommendations are made around changes that need to be implemented to an existing profile or for setting up a new account.



Define

The second phase addresses the four key elements of establishing a leadership brand. We look at the appeal of the individual – what attracts people to them. Then we identify their specific area of expertise and what gives them credibility. The third element of the defining phase

involves mapping the individual’s sphere of influence, and the communities they are already active in. Finally, we determine which method of communication they are most comfortable with – long form, tweets, or LinkedIn discussions, for instance.



The development phase of the process starts with identifying the mission and purpose of the programme. From here, we identify the most suitable tone of voice and the main content pillars that the executive wants to address with the programme. We also identify a social

distribution matrix and the response protocols we plan to follow for optimal dialogue. We devise a measurement framework to determine how best to use data and analytics to assess the programme and enhance its effectiveness.

Develop

EXECUTIVE VISIBILITY PLAYBOOK

3.1. Program Mission/Purpose

3.2. Tone of Voice & Persona

3.3. Social Content

3.4. Social Distribution

3.5. Response Protocol

3.6. Data & Analytics

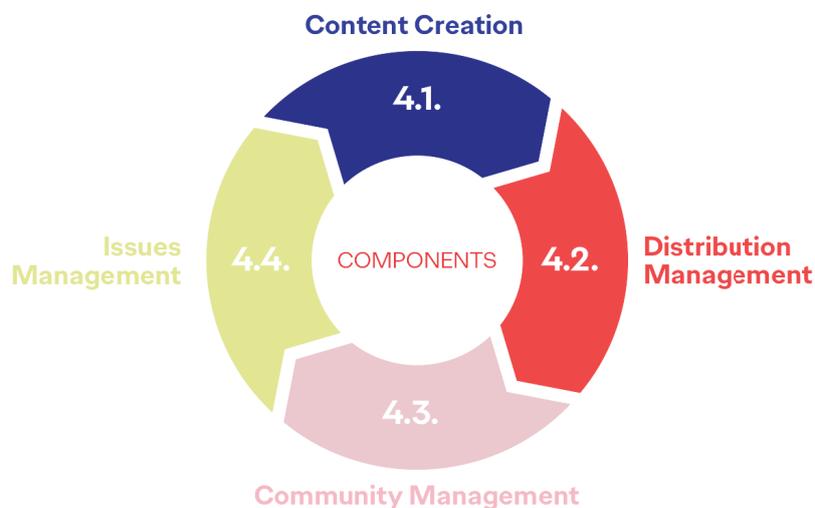
Activate

From here, we move into the Activation phase. This comprises an ongoing, agile process of content creation to position the executive as a thought leader in their category.

We devise a distribution strategy fusing organic and paid distribution to ensure content appears on the right platforms, is relevant to the executive's followers, and targets the right audience and encourages engagement.

Executives enjoy the same level of sophisticated institutional support in terms of community management, and issues response protocols and analytics.

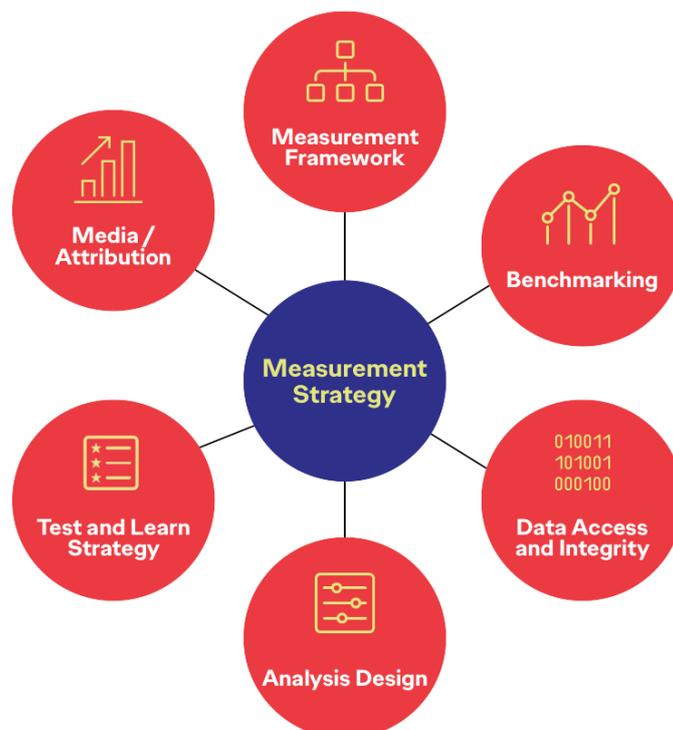
They can also opt to use LinkedIn as part of their programme, including LinkedIn Elevate, which offers a more professional way to deliver personalized content and drives greater engagement.



Measure

The final phase of the executive social visibility programme involves measuring the results of the programme, with a built-in reporting-and-analysis framework so that recommendations can be made, and there can be continuous content and distribution improvements in real time.

Enhancing executive visibility in social has already yielded significant measurable results for us and our clients. A CMO of a major professional-services firm was able to grow her Twitter audience from 0 to 41 000 in two years, and enhance her influence to the point where she was named one of the most influential CMOs on social media by Forbes magazine.



Conclusion

Ultimately, **senior executives** are in an **ideal position** to answer the consumer cry for business transparency, engagement, and authenticity on social media.

They are also able to **directly influence** broader audience attitudes as well as **pivotal decisions** about their brand through their social-media presence.

By finding the **right partners**, who are able to combine media, strategic and creative expertise, it is possible to **optimise** this powerful position. Mindful, strategic use of social media to enhance **executive visibility** is a powerful tool to shape the influence and standing of any brand, in any sector. In today's media environment, no organisation can afford to overlook this.

Christophe Chantraine
Managing Director – Social Lab South Africa
christophe.chantraine@ogilvy.co.za

Nick Bedford
Business Development Director
nick.bedford@ogilvy.co.za