

## **Linked to Loyalty**

LinkedIn is regarded a social networking site (SNS) and can be classified as the world's largest professional network. It is said that two new users join every second. Research has indicated that 40 percent of an estimated 364 million registered LinkedIn users check their LinkedIn profile on a daily basis. In South Africa the number of registered LinkedIn users is estimated to be four million.

Thalita Geldenhuys and Charlene Leister, [Master's](#) students in the [Department of Marketing Management](#), were interested in the LinkedIn platform as a means of building a loyal customer base. Their study investigated the relationships between Customer Brand Engagement (CBE), brand experience (BE), and satisfaction as predictors of loyalty on LinkedIn. This study provides an understanding into these constructs' predictability of loyalty on LinkedIn. The results provide marketing professionals with insights into users' opinions on LinkedIn as a professional SNS.

The sample consisted of 293 respondents, all registered South African LinkedIn users. The majority of the respondents indicated that they access their LinkedIn accounts on a monthly basis for less than 10 minutes and mainly use mobile devices to access their accounts. These descriptive results can assist marketers when developing LinkedIn campaigns to run for at least a month, should be responsive in nature to fit mobile devices and has the ability to create short interaction to account for the short time spent on the platform.

The results further found that CBE and satisfaction are the strongest significant predictors of loyalty on LinkedIn. These results illustrate that engaging users on LinkedIn creates a satisfied user which leads to a loyal users of the platform. For marketers this means that LinkedIn as a professional platform has the potential to provide the opportunity to engage users in an effective way to build, manage and create longer-term relationships in a professional network context. Marketers therefore need to understand that CBE accounts for customers' interactive brand-related dynamics and they need to understand what these interactive dynamics mean for their brand on LinkedIn. This is critical as CBE is said to be favourable in terms of performance results and should therefore be a focal area for marketers.

LinkedIn as a platform to engage professional users should be incorporated into marketers' social media strategies but effective engagements should be initiated in this context to create satisfied customers who then become a loyal customer base.

*This research was conducted as part of the fulfilment of the [Master's degree](#) in Marketing Management in 2015 with the [Department of Marketing Management](#) by Thalita Geldenhuys and Charlene Leister under the supervision of [Dr. G. van Heerden](#).*