



BlackLine and LinkedIn: Driving Webinar Registrations with LinkedIn Sponsored InMail

“For our webinar featuring our client PepsiCo, LinkedIn drove 60% of all registrations. More importantly, with LinkedIn, we’re getting higher-quality leads than with any other channel.”



Brandee Sanders
Director, Digital Marketing
BlackLine

Going global with digital marketing

A leading provider of cloud-based accounting and financial software, BlackLine – part of the Fortune Cloud 100 list – recently became a publicly traded company on NASDAQ. With a 50% year-over-year growth rate, the company is encouraging every business unit to maximize their contributions to the organization.

The digital marketing team, led by Brandee Sanders, is looking to lead the charge by expanding its global digital footprint, especially in APAC. “We’re branching out all our pay-per-click (PPC) campaigns globally,” says Sanders, “and we’re developing new content marketing.”

Webinars in particular are core to BlackLine’s top-of-funnel marketing and awareness-building efforts. LinkedIn has helped BlackLine find the right audience for these webinars, through its powerful ad targeting capabilities; reach audiences in the right way, with Sponsored InMail; and then keep reinforcing their message over time, with Sponsored Content.

Challenge

- Drive webinar registrations
- Increase content marketing engagement
- Ensure qualified leads within the right audiences

Solution

- LinkedIn Sponsored InMail
- LinkedIn Sponsored Content

Results from BlackLine promotion featuring PepsiCo client:

- 60% of webinar registrations from LinkedIn campaigns
- 72% open rate and 15% CTR from LinkedIn Sponsored InMail (APAC regions)
- .33% CTR from LinkedIn Sponsored Content

Reaching the right people

In September 2016, BlackLine's APAC team had the opportunity to host a webinar featuring PepsiCo's finance and accounting executives as they discussed their successful experience using BlackLine.

With the BlackLine webinar featuring PepsiCo fast approaching, BlackLine's digital marketing team started by using LinkedIn to target the right audience. "Our target audience is accounting and finance decision-makers, especially CFOs, CAOs, and Controllers," says Rio Iwashita, BlackLine's senior manager of digital and display advertising. "LinkedIn allows us to target by title, geographic location, industry, and more, so we can reach out to exactly the leads we were looking for."

From there, LinkedIn Sponsored InMail was the perfect way to connect with these audiences and drive them to register for the event, sending them personalized, relevant content specifically targeted to grab their attention and pique their interest in attending the webinar. Iwashita adds, "We've also found that Sponsored InMail, as opposed to email, is especially effective at reaching our audiences in APAC, where anti-spam laws tend to be more restrictive."

Hosted just ahead of BlackLine's IPO, the BlackLine webinar featuring PepsiCo was a huge success, attracting more than 500 registrations - of these, LinkedIn contributed more than 60%. "And the quality of the leads we're getting from LinkedIn is consistently higher than any other platform," adds Iwashita.

Building on success with content marketing

Recognizing the quality of LinkedIn-generated leads, BlackLine management doubled down on its content marketing efforts and hired a content manager to reinforce messaging and build awareness using LinkedIn Sponsored Content. "Our new hire has helped us beef up our messaging," says Sanders. "We're paying close attention to our content mix, making sure we're covering the whole funnel." They've continued to optimize their content marketing strategy and have established a 4:1 ratio of thought-leadership to product-focused content. "People on LinkedIn are power users and can be advocates for your brand," says Sanders. "We're talking to a broader range of people on LinkedIn, including finance and accounting influencers, who can really amplify BlackLine's story to a wider audience." Today, BlackLine has more than 10,000 followers on its LinkedIn Company Page, helping the brand engage valuable prospects and decision-makers with relevant content.

How does BlackLine ensure their content stays effective? If the digital marketing team could give one tip, it would be this: "Don't be afraid to fail," says Sanders. "If you have an ad, and it performs poorly, instead of killing it, go back, and try and understand why it failed. And then A/B test like crazy to find the winners."

Looking back, 2016 was a dynamic year for BlackLine, with an IPO and a lot of explosive growth the company only wants to keep building on. With LinkedIn, BlackLine is confident they can continue the momentum, driving a steady stream of high-quality leads brought in by the right content at the right time.

Sponsored InMail

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn Sponsored InMail email. On the left, it's from Todd Hunt, VP, General Manager APAC at BlackLine. The subject is "PepsiCo's Journey". The body text invites finance leaders from PepsiCo to a webinar on September 28, 2016, at 11 am (AEST). It lists benefits like eliminating spreadsheets, automating manual accounting functions, and accelerating close cycles. A "Register Today" button is at the bottom. On the right, there's a banner for "Modern Finance Transformation Story" with a "REGISTER FOR WEBINAR" button and links for "About", "Feedback", "Privacy & Terms", and "LinkedIn LinkedIn Corp. © 2016".

Sponsored Content

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn Sponsored Content post. It's titled "BlackLine shared:" and has a "Follow" button. The text says "Examining the role of finance automation in their organization becomes more important for finance teams anticipating acquisitions: <http://bit.ly/2d9ew5Q>". Below is a video thumbnail of a man in a suit. To the right, the text reads "CFO Survey Results Expose A Greater Need for Automation | BlackLine Magazine" and "blackline.com • Deloitte's CFO Survey 2016 Q2 found that CFOs' outlook on revenue growth has improved, and ...". At the bottom, it says "Like • Comment • Share • 41 1".

Sponsored Content

The screenshot shows another LinkedIn Sponsored Content post. It's titled "BlackLine shared:" and has a "Follow" button and "26d" (26 days) old. The text says "What is Robotic Process Automation and how does it change the role of the accountant? <http://bit.ly/2dpHX00>". Below is a video thumbnail of a robotic hand. To the right, the text reads "What Robotic Process Automation Really Means for Accountants | BlackLine" and "blackline.com • Robotic Process Automation is not replacing accountants, but evolving their role and augmenti...". At the bottom, it says "Like • Comment • Share • 85 5".

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