

INTERNET

Ritz-Carlton starts LinkedIn conversations to generate digital relationships

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Ritz-Carlton, Abu Dhabi, Grand Canal

By NANCY BUCKLEY

The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company is sparking conversation on LinkedIn to communicate the hotel brand's customer experiences to small businesses.

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Luxury Daily

The 100-word thought-provoking posts will ignite conversation between the brand and its followers. The project will likely gain a greater following of business professionals and create strong relationships with small businesses in or around the brand's locations.

"While an unusual choice for social conversation in today's market, LinkedIn is a solid channel for The Ritz-Carlton to establish further its reputation as a leader in the luxury sector," said [Taylor Rains](#), Charleston-based luxury brand consultant.

"By leading the conversation and offering its insights to the community at large, The Ritz-Carlton is solidifying its position at the top among industry professionals," he said.

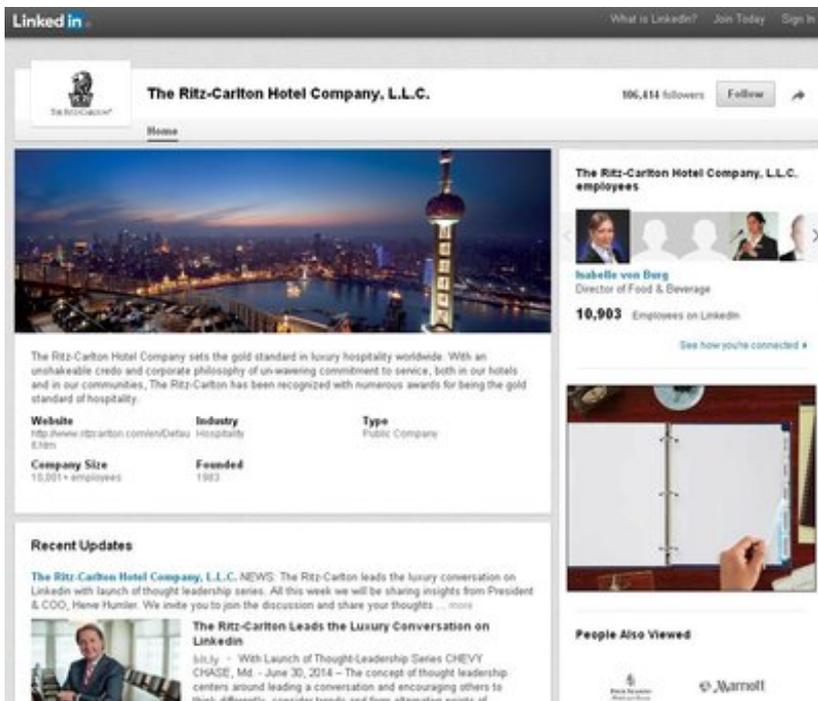
Mr. Rains is not affiliated with Ritz-Carlton but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

The Ritz-Carlton was unable to respond by press deadline.

Conversation starter

There will be five, 100-word posts per week sparking a conversation among followers. The objective is to share the brand's knowledge and insight with its LinkedIn community.

As of press time the brand had 106,394 followers on LinkedIn. However, there are more than 300 million global users of the social media platform.



Ritz-Carlton's LinkedIn

The series will highlight individuals who are leaders in operational, marketing, sales, human resources, social responsibility, digital, social media, legal and financial aspects of business. Also, the global business of the brand will be kept in mind.

LinkedIn digitally connects brands with consumers and businesses around the world. The nature of the social media platform creates a ground for business discussions at a professional caliber.

The thought provoking posts will come from 30 of The Ritz-Carlton's global leaders, presenting a platform with international expertise. The content will also be mobile-optimized to adhere the mobile audience of LinkedIn, which is nearly half the users.

Conversation will encourage followers to think differently and consider trends and points of view from different perspectives.

Social interactions

Social conversations allow consumers, enthusiasts and the brand to connect around one subject. Social media platforms facilitate these discussions.

For instance, social networking and imagery-based inspiration board tool Pinterest allows consumers to browse a wide array of products and includes the option to seamlessly connect to a brand's Web site where items can be explored further, potentially

leading to a purchase.

Pinterest's format works well for brands aiming to appeal to aspirational consumers while still maintaining a sense of community with enthusiasts. For jewelry and watch brands that have a wide range of faithful and aspirational consumers, the channel is useful to generate conversation and awareness without overtly pushing commerce ([see story](#)).

Similarly, Italian fashion label Giorgio Armani held its fourth live Tweet Talks event in Milan during home furnishing show Salone del Mobile.

Scheduled for April 10, the Tweet Talk centered on the topic "Fashion versus Design," and included expert panelists in fashion, architecture and home décor. This Twitter conversation was timed to coincide with the brand's new Armani Casa Web site, and the traffic to the Tweet Talks microsite may have helped to drive views for the home site ([see story](#)).

The conversation between a brand and the consumer creates a stronger bond and facilitates the consumer's interaction with products. The Ritz-Carlton's LinkedIn dialogue will join business professionals, consumers, brand enthusiasts and the company.

"From a purely functional perspective, engaging in conversation online that is deemed relevant serves to boost the brand's overall visibility relative to travel/tourism and the luxury industry as a whole," Mr. Rains said.

"On LinkedIn alone that increase in visibility can serve to promote group or corporate sales, a highly lucrative segment for hotels," he said.

"As an indirect benefit, by establishing their reputation among the next generation of luxury professionals, The Ritz-Carlton is doing its part to demonstrate its continued relevance in today's market."

Final Take

Nancy Buckley, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/qJN7uKbiTe0](https://www.youtube.com/embed/qJN7uKbiTe0)

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