3 Steps To Build Your Personal Brand On

SHWETA OJHA

Introduction

I am Shweta Ojha an adventure enthusiast.

My journey from being a homemaker to having more than 7000+ connections and 8000+ organic followers on LinkedIn.

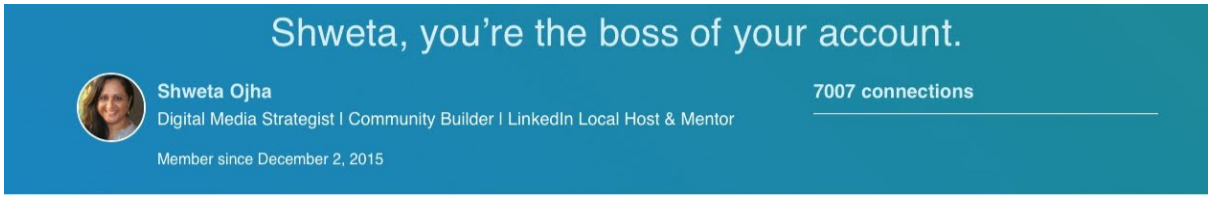
In this handbook, I have shared steps you can follow to create your Personal Brand on LinkedIn. All these tips I have learnt the hard way through my on the job learning.

I have also learnt a lot from other LinkedIn experts which I have implemented and got results.

I have evolved becoming a career woman after being a Homemaker for almost 2 decades.
As life keep giving opportunities, I grab them and that is how I developed as an event host, community leader and digital media strategist.

All this started when I was offered a job as a Business Development Manager in an HR Consulting firm and though I knew nothing about corporate world in the current environment I saw this as an opportunity and took it as challenge.

I was hired in the business development role and my organization worked with Startups and SMEs. I realized that to connect with my Target Audience for business, LinkedIn was the best place. So I created my account in 2015.



Initially, I was only representing my company in my communications/ content.
But later I started sharing with my followers my thoughts, my concerns, my fears, my personal thought process.

In 2018, I joined #linkedinlocal (follow the Hashtag to know more) global community initiative.

I launched Thane Chapter (Mumbai Suburb) #LinkedInLocalThane in November,2018.
I am also mentoring **four** other #linkedinlocal hosts and help them build offline communities in their geographies.

I have loved my transformation journey and I believe I have just started.
I try to upgrade myself every single day.
I passionately love connecting with people, connecting people with other people, connecting people with opportunities and thereby add value in their lives.

I have evolved as an influencer, a community leader and a coach. All this, I have been able to achieve through this amazing LinkedIn platform.

This will work only if you take actions.
So go ahead and explore the immense possibilities LinkedIn brings to you.

Take Advantage of the World's Best Professional Online Network

With more than 660 million members in more than 200 countries and territories globally, LinkedIn is No. 1 social network to build your personal and professional brand.

STEP 1

DETERMINE YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

Who Are You Talking To?

“Marketing to everyone is marketing to no one.”

Knowing who your ideal customers are, and learning how to determine ideal from not ideal, will save you time, money and stress.

So, after you create an account on LinkedIn Or even if you have one already,

DO THIS EXERCISE.

Ask yourself these questions

What is your objective of using LinkedIn?

What do you want to achieve form LinkedIn?

- Want to Generate Business/Leads
- Want to build your Personal Brand
- Want to get a Job

THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT

Not getting clarity on this before you move ahead, is like travelling without any clue about the destination.

Now the question arises, if your focus is not on building your Personal Brand is this book for you?

The answer is **YES**, because If you have a strong Personal Brand it will translate in generating business or getting a dream job. Always remember “People buy you before they buy your product or service”

HOW?

To build your Personal Brand on LinkedIn get clarity about who is your target audience.

If you know where your target is you can aim better, right.

To get clarity ASK YOURSELF THESE TWO QUESTIONS

Who are you?

Whom you can help?

Brief illustration in the table below:

Note: The objective is to be as clear as possible about your niche.

Who Are You?	Who can you help?
Digital Marketing Specialist	Startups, small business owners, freelancers, trainers
Wealth Coach	HNIs, Entrepreneurs, financial planners
Entrepreneur	Other entrepreneurs, Sales, Marketing
Behavioural Trainer	HR heads, Recruitment firms, Individuals
Campaign Builder	Marketing heads, SMEs, digital marketers
Business Coach	Owners, CEOs, Founders
Travel Blogger	Tour companies, hotels, spa owners

The more clearer you are about your niche, the better clarity you have about your Target Audience/ Target Group

Whatever content you put will now be designed to address to your Target Customer. When you have the Target Customer as your connect you are directly addressing them through your content.

STEP 2

LINKEDIN

PROFILE

OPTIMIZATION

WHY?

Your LinkedIn Profile is like your POSTAL ADDRESS, the specific it is the sooner your stuff will reach you.

Content : Build a Star Profile – The process of recreating your profile in a way that you appear in search, and get noticed

HOW?

Let us step by step focus on all the section in a LinkedIn Profile.

Section 1: A Clear RECENT Profile Picture

Clear – Face should be identifiable

Semi- Formal – Brings out the real YOU

Happy – Showcases positive attitude

Here is my current profile pic

Section 2: A Relevant Background Photo

What do you mean by relevant?

Something that resonates with who you are…genuinely

- Relevant in size, clarity and context
- It can be your company poster/ A Quote that you resonate with/ A recent Big Award or Accolade
- Text if any, on your cover photo should be on the right side.

Tip: Canva is a great free tool to create your header graphic. They offer a collection of LinkedIn Banner Templates you can use as inspiration or starting points to create your own background image.

Keep these requirements in mind when creating your background image:

√ The recommended dimensions are 1584 (w) x 396 (h) pixels

√ It must be file type JPG, GIF or PNG

√ Your image can be no larger than 8MB

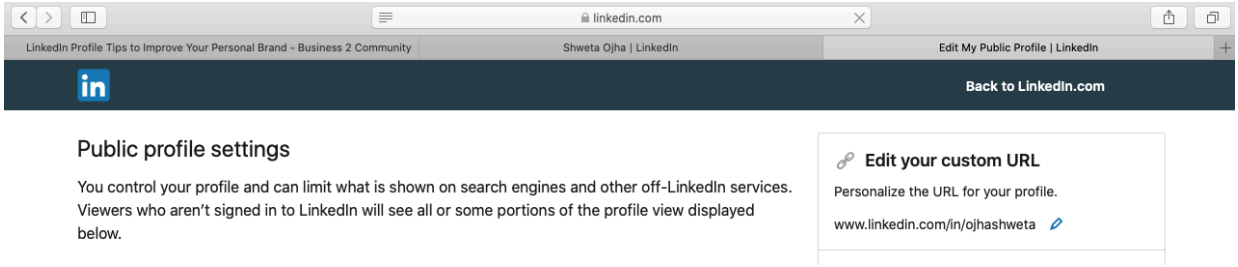
Here is my recent background pic. It's a picture of my latest LinkedIn Local Event.

Section 3: Customize your LinkedIn URL

Make your personal profile look more professional (and much easier to share) by customising your LinkedIn public profile URL.

Instead of a URL with a million confusing numbers at the end, it will look nice and clean like this: www.linkedin.com/in/ojhashweta

Customise your URL by going here and modifying your public profile URL on the right-hand side.



Section 4: Headline

Headline is what makes your profile searchable.

Your headline is what appears directly below your photo on LinkedIn. The default is your current job title.

Rather than just stating your title, you should include information that will entice potential visitors to want to find out more about you. Be explicit about you can help people – but do it in a professional and well-branded manner.

Tip: Use the highest ranking keywords which resonates most with your profession. This will help your LinkedIn Profile rank better on Search Engines

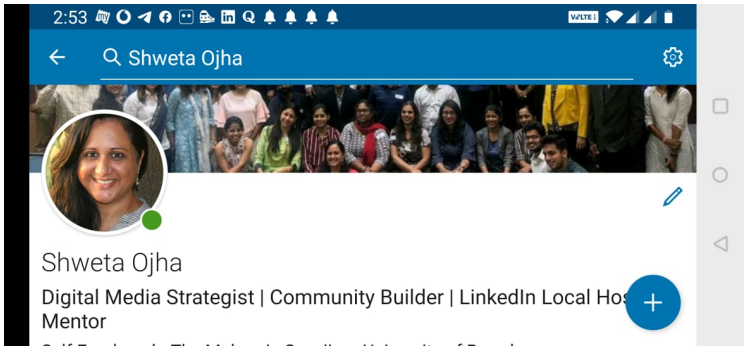
Headline illustrations of a few influencers:

- *Wealth Specialist | Global Speaker | Author X 5 | Business Advisor & Thought Leadership Mentor | Founder of The Successful Male | Managing Director of Maple Tree Wealth Management | Future Millionaires Academy*
- *Head of Marketing, Klook India | Ex-Uber | Growth Hacker | Speaker*
- *LinkedIn Top Voice 2017 II TEDx Speaker II Author, "The Entrepreneur's Soulbook" II Founder, WriteFor*
- *Founder & Speaker - Travel Chatter | Ex CMO-Rentokil PCI | Ex Unilever – Welspun*

 # Headline Template 1 : Designation | Keyword (your expertise) | Your offer/service

 # Headline Template 2 : Achievement (preferably biggest and latest) | Designation | Your offer/service

Here is my recent Headline. You can change your headline as you evolve and what you wish to project.



Section 5: About Section – Summary

Add a Summary to better represent the depth of your professional expertise. This will appear under a new About Section.

You can include up to 2,000 characters. You need to max this out, as the Summary is one of the most-read sections of a LinkedIn profile.

Tip 1 : Your summary should always be personalised and never written in an indirect language.

✓ I am Shweta Ojha an adventure seeker. I have evolved to becoming a career woman after being a Homemaker for almost 2 decades. As life keep giving opportunities, I grab them and that is how I developed as an event host, community leader and digital media strategist.

Tip 2 : Always use the keyword (used in headline) once or twice here in your summary. Caution : Don't overdo it.

Tip 3 : Always have a call to action. Who can get in touch with you. Your phone no./ email address/ website address etc. SHOULD BE MENTIONED IN YOUR SUMMARY

Tip 4 : Always use the 'Featured' Section effectively with your testimony, interviews, achievements, blogs, or one of your highly engaging LinkedIn Post.

About Section Template

Para1 - Introduction (Include a brief about your personal life too)

Para2 - Your Topics/ Your expertise

Para3 - Your product/ service / work/ work profile

Para 4 - Call To Action

Note : Communication should be crisp and targeted to your Audience. Use a combination of paragraph and bullet points.

Section 6: Experience

Put exact timelines of all your work experience.

You can mention your experience as an Intern too.

Always with each work experience briefly mention your job profile/ things that you handled/ your professional learning/growth/achievements

You can add significant documents like appreciation letter, testimony, certificates in each section relevant to that period.

Tip : Use the keyword (used in headline) in your work experience where relevant.

Section 7: Education/ Licenses & Certification/ Volunteer Experience

Give exact timelines of all your complete education.

Licences/ Certification Section - Put up any of your additional certification courses.

Volunteer Experience - If you are associated with any NGO or do any volunteering work here is where you can mention

Tip : Don’t shy away putting anything. Every course, every volunteering defines YOU

Section 8: Accomplishments

What to share?

- Publications
- Projects
- Honours & Awards
- Patents
- Test Scores

Go ahead and share accomplishments from your student days too!

Section 9: Skills & Endorsements

Including specific skills on your LinkedIn profile is a great way to showcase your abilities to your Target Audience. It can be other members, your peers, colleagues, managers, and even recruiters.

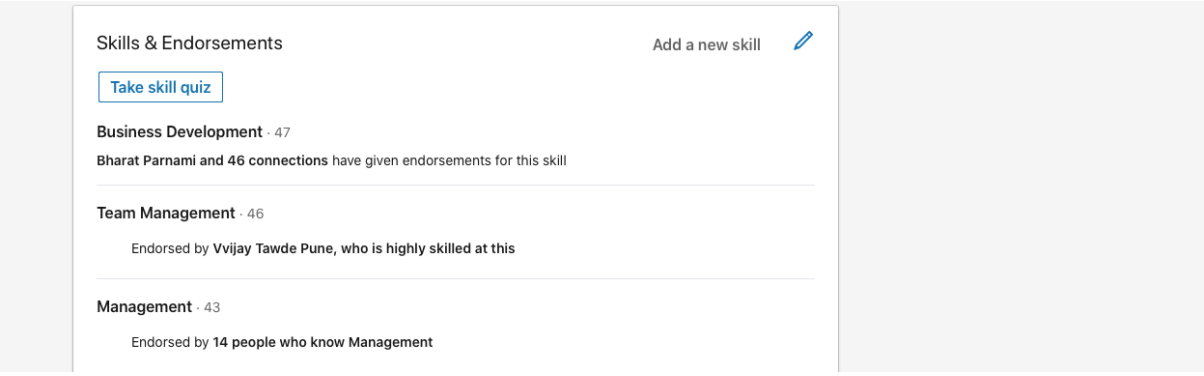
You can add a maximum of 50 skills to your profile. They're a simple and effective way of building your professional brand and engaging your network.

Once you've added a skill to your profile, your skills can be validated by 1st-degree connections to reinforce their weighting.

These are called skill endorsements, which are different than recommendations.

When a connection endorses your skills, it contributes to the strength of your profile, and increases the likelihood that you'll be discovered for opportunities related to the skills you possess.

Here is a screen shot of my skills & endorsements section for reference.



Section 10: Recommendations

Recommendations build credibility. A recommendation is a statement that is written by your connect to recognize such as a colleague, business partner, or student.

People who view your profile will often read the recommendations you've received from your connections to see what others have to say about your work.

Don't shy away from politely asking for recommendation.

Caution: Only ask for recommendations from those whom you have interacted with, reported to, worked with, been associated with, given service to such as your current subordinates, seniors, peers, business associates, vendors, clients, ex colleagues, teachers etc.

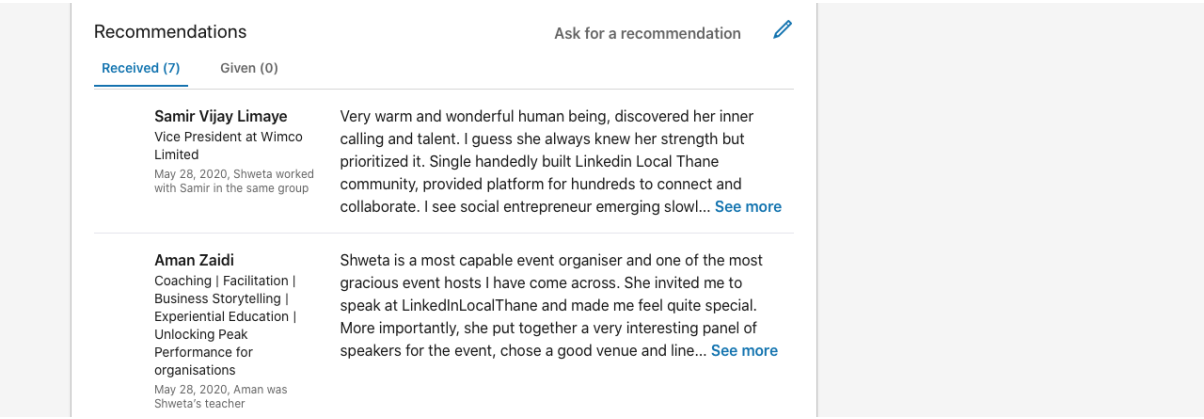
NEVER ASK FOR RECOMMENDATIONS FROM RANDOM CONNECTS OR PEOPLE WITH WHOM YOU HAVE BRIEFLY ENCOUNTERED WITH.

If someone willingly gives you a recommendation, accept graciously and thank them.

If someone you know closely (the above criteria) has asked for recommendation, here is How to Write a LinkedIn Recommendation

- Explain the nature of your professional relationship.
- Provide details of the position for which you're recommending the person.
- Explain how they've grown at the company.
- Indicate how their contribution helped grow the team or company.
- Explain what these achievements reveal about that person.

Here is a screen shot of my skills & endorsements section for reference.



STEP 3

ENGAGEMENT

THREE IMPORTANT RULES OF ENGAGEMENT TO BUILD YOUR BRAND

Content

Create content keeping in my your Target Audience. Whether you are creating a post, commenting on other's post, writing an article or sending a message…Before translating a thought/ an idea/ an information/ a request into content ask these questions

- √ Are you adding value through your content?
- √ Is the content easy to comprehend and unambiguous?
- √ Is the content engaging?
- √ Does the content reflect you/ your thought/ your expertise/ your interests?

Consistency

Creating content once in a while is of no use.
The objective of writing content is creating a follower base of your Target Audience.

Rule 1-2-3

- √ Posting once a day is recommended.
- √ Comment on at least two relevant posts in a day.
- √ Connect one on one with at least three of your connections in a week.

Communication

Make it effective. Here are a few suggestions.

- √ Never communicate in an offensive, disrespectful or condescending tone.
- √ Personalize your connection request.
- √ Don't forget to address the recipient by name while messaging.

YOUR POSTS ON LINKEDIN

Writing a piece of content and writing an effective piece of content, both are totally different from each other.

Writing a piece of content is not just the post/articles it is engaging in other posts through comments, engaging with other members through messaging.

Only way to remain visible, Build a Brand on LinkedIn is to put content, effectiveness is not a choice. It is essential to leave a mark.

Needless to state, effective content creation requires a good investment of time and efforts. That's why people who are doing it comes in "LinkedIn 1% club".

Your post should follow the HOOK - STORY- CTA template.

TIPS FOR CREATING ENGAGEMENT THROUGH POSTS

- Key is consistency. One post a day is recommended.
- Post can be in the form of just writeup, or with video/carousal/ picture/poll etc.
- Engage in your post within half an hour of posting. Best way to do is ‘like’ and ‘comment’ on your own post.
- You can Tag people who you think would be interested in your post content. This helps with the outreach and engagement.
  Caution: Never keep on tagging irrelevant people just for outreach.
- Always to put relevant and trending 2/3 hashtags
- Whatever content you share always have an open ended question/call to action for reader to engage with the post. Questions/statements like these encourage readers to share their viewpoints. Few examples of Call To Action:

  √ *Looking forward to hear your views.*
  √ *Have you also experienced similar situation?*
  √ *What would you do if you had the same experience?*
  √ *Feel free to share this post further.*
  √ *Do you agree with above thoughts?*
  √ What are your thoughts on this?

ENGAGEMENT HACKS

Hack 1

Create your CHOSEN first 5000 connections.

When connecting think about two things, can you add value to them? Or can they add value to you?

Follow these tips to build your network

- √ Break the hesitation to engage with strangers.
- √ Send personalized connection requests to your target audience.
- √ You can find them through different searches such as keywords, organization, designation etc.
- √ Engage with the posts of people whom you admire, who inspire you.
- √ Follow relevant hashtags to identify likeminded people and engage with them.
- √ Join relevant groups, this will open up doors of connection and communication.

Hack 2

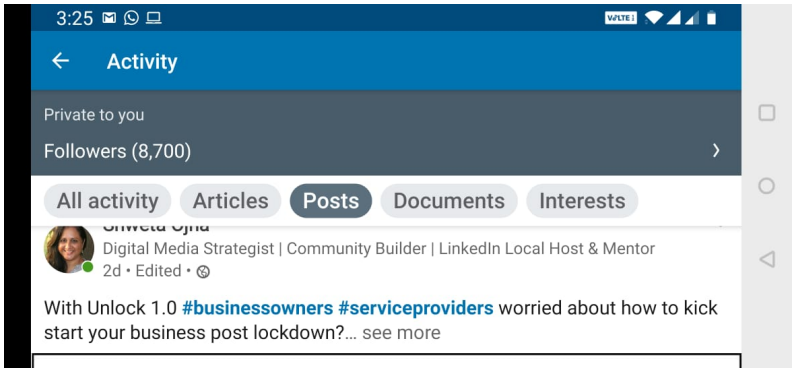
Whenever your post appears in your network's feed, only first 2-3 lines of the post are visible followed by *"see more"*

Write an interesting hook for your reader to click on "see more".

And the only way to do that is to intrigue the interest of the reader by first two lines.

Hook Ideas:

Content which give a sense of urgency due to which readers will definitely read your content by clicking on *"see more".*



The impression created by first two lines of your post is a very important factor in determining the effectiveness of your content.

 # Hook Idea 1. Use questions and open statements to make your reader curious.

For example

- *How I have 10000 followers on LinkedIn?*
- *No matter what you do, if your content won't be effective.*
- *If I had known the following tips earlier, I would have increased my content visibility by 70%.*
- How do you become an influencer anyway?

 # Hook Idea 2. Share a story with an interesting opening statement

For example

- I was nothing but anxious last 24 hours.
- We spoke and she agreed instantly. I asked her to send me her profile and I was blown away!
- I told her we look like bridesmaid.

Hack 3

In my experience, there's no specific relation between length of the post and its effectiveness. How much value one can derive more value from your content is essential. It's not connected though with the length of the content.

Although LinkedIn statistics say, long posts gain more visibility than the shorter ones.

Figure out what works best for you. Experiment with different lengths and keeping your posts full of variety.

- Share your thoughts
- share your case study
- share your learning from day to day experiences,
- share a quote that inspires you,
- share relevant data pertaining to your domain
- share your concerns, share your success story
- Variety brings different flavours in your engagement.
- Personalized content enhances engagement.
- You need to find out what's significant for your readers.

Hack 4

Personalize your content as suggested in the previous hack enhances engagement.

You're a human who's trying to write effective content for another ‘Human’.

Bring humour, be vulnerable or be silly by sharing your mistakes, fears and challenges in your content, you can bring out the "human" aspect!

Whenever you write, assume you are conversing with your reader.

Have a nice conversation!

Writing takes efforts, but talking comes naturally.

Create a connection with your reader which makes your reader accept your experiences as their own/ listen to your advice as someone whom they trust, That is the ultimate goal of EFFECTIVE writing.

Tip: Don’t get overwhelmed by the language and grammar. The simpler it is the easier to comprehend.

Hack 5

People buy you before they buy your product/ service.

Wherever you mark your presence, your business comes along with you.

When resharing a post from your company page, always put a foreword/context/thoughts with it. Don’t simply share it.

If you are resharing other people’s post do the same as above and also tag them in your reshared post.

With very high organic reach, LinkedIn is the hot spot of business opportunities right now. It's just a matter of consistency to start increasing your revenues through LinkedIn.

Hack 6

Don’t include any external link in the post, always put it in the comment section.

Link to your YouTube video, event link, website or blog post don’t include it in your post.

LinkedIn doesn’t want people to leave the platform so does not encourage engagement of such posts.

Hack 7

This is basically an outreach hack.

- √ Always tag people who are mentioned in the post.
- √ People who might benefit/ may be interested in the information Tag them in the comment section.

Note :

If someone is constantly being distasteful/ offensive after polite warnings, you can block them.
Suggest you navigate through settings to understand all the safety and privacy features.

POPULAR MYTHS ABOUT LINKEDIN

Myth : It's all about numbers. More likes and comments you have on your posts, more visibility you'll have. Just focus on increasing your followers base. Everything else doesn't matter.

Truth : Likes and comments do give you outreach but important is these engagement should come from your target audience.

Myth : It's not good to message strangers. If they want to talk, they'll message you. You shouldn't take any risk.

Truth : You have to take initiative to identify and connect with right people, waiting for people reaching out is a waste of time and opportunity.

Myth : Make your LinkedIn profile impressive. Rest everything will follow. Don't engage or do any of that sort of activities. Just build your profile, people will find you by themselves.

Truth : A good profile helps you stand out when people are looking out for someone like you. But engagement is what helps build trust.

Myth : You won't have a target audience because you're not selling any product or service. So target anyone and everyone on LinkedIn with your content and other activities.

Truth : If you can't identify what you want to sell and to whom, LinkedIn is not the place for you.

Myth : If you own a business, focus on your LinkedIn company page instead of your personal profile. People would work with you only after seeing your LinkedIn company page.

Truth : It's the other way round. People buy YOU first before buying your product/ service.
If you have demonstrated that authority and build that trust, then only people would trust your business.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

I have achieved all this without using **LinkedIn Premium** which is a paid feature of LinkedIn.

The premium version has a few major feature differences: You get more profile searches, free gives you 100 while the first level of paid gives you 300. Ability to see who's viewed your profile across the last 90 days, as compared to the free version that shows only 5 days.

Initially if you find difficulty in reaching your target audience, you can choose to use this for a brief period. Although personally I don't feel it's necessary.

Consistent engagement with your target audience through good content is the crux of building your brand on LinkedIn.

Follow these three steps diligently and you will see

- √ **your followers growing**
- √ **your engagement growing**
- √ **right people connecting with you**

A strong Personal Brand demonstrates credibility, authority and expertise.
This builds trust.
People always want to do business with whom they trust.

Share your success stories with me on connect@shwetaojha.com