

Case Study: Improving Tagging on LinkedIn

Background

Tagging on LinkedIn allows users to mention people or companies in posts, comments, or articles so that they are notified and can engage with the content. Today, tagging works primarily through the '@' syntax inside the text editor. When a user types '@' and starts typing a name, LinkedIn suggests people and company pages to tag. This is powerful for experienced users, but it is not easily discoverable for everyone, especially new or infrequent users.

Problem Statement

Although tagging exists on LinkedIn, it is not discoverable or flexible enough. Users must remember to type '@' while writing. If they forget, their main options are to edit the post later or tag people in comments, which can feel awkward and can reduce visibility and context. Tagging is also not clearly surfaced in comments and after publishing, even though that is when many users remember who they should have tagged.

Goal

The goal is to make tagging on LinkedIn easy, discoverable, and flexible, while keeping the professional tone and without breaking current behavior for existing users. Tagging should:

- Increase meaningful mentions of people and companies.
- Support users who write first and remember tagging later.
- Allow safe tagging even after a post is published.
- Work consistently in posts and comments.

User Segments

- Professionals sharing updates, milestones, or appreciation posts.
- Job seekers tagging recruiters, hiring managers, or companies.
- Entrepreneurs and founders tagging clients, partners, and investors.
- Thought leaders and content creators tagging collaborators and peers.
- Educators and event organizers tagging speakers, participants, and institutions.
- Recruiters and HR professionals tagging candidates, teams, and leaders.

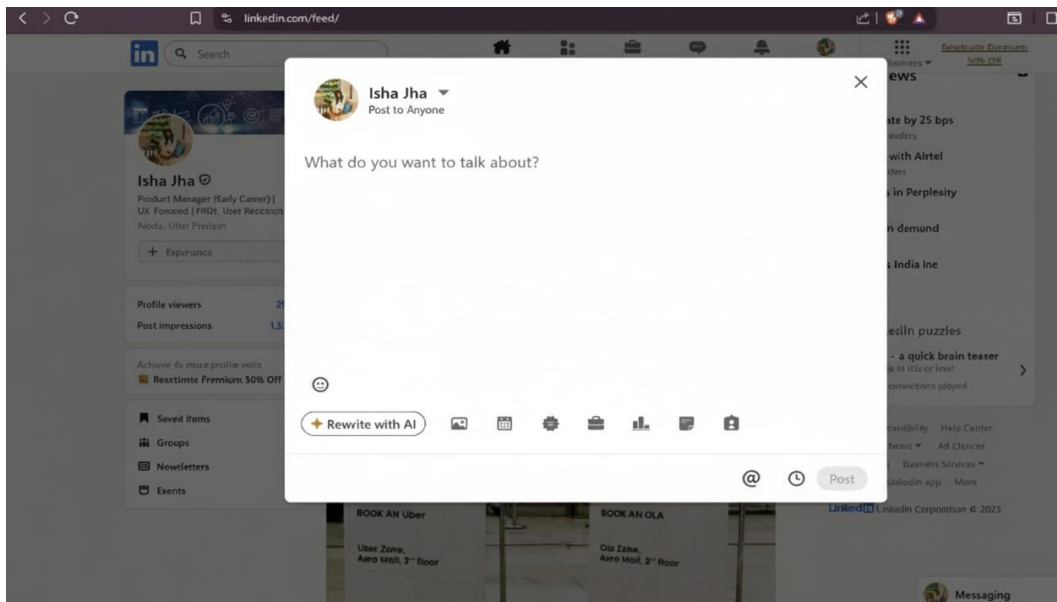
User Pain Points

- Tagging is hidden behind the '@' syntax and is not visually discoverable.
- New and infrequent users may not know that tagging exists.
- Users focusing on writing often remember tagging only at the end or after posting.
- Editing a post just to tag someone feels heavy and can be socially awkward.
- Tagging in comments reduces clarity and may be less visible to the audience.
- Tagging controls are not clearly surfaced in the comment composer.

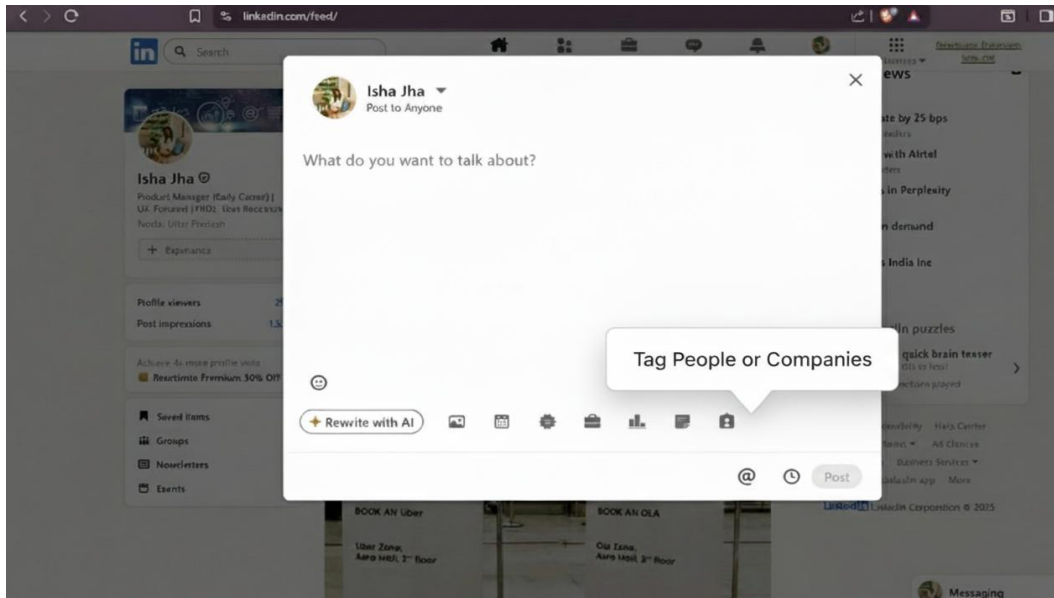
Proposed Solutions

1. Visible @ Tag Icon While Creating a Post

Add a dedicated '@' icon in the post composer, placed on the right side of the action row, next to the clock icon (Schedule for later) and left of the Post button. On hover, show a tooltip reading “Tag people or companies”. This mirrors the existing tooltip treatment for Schedule for later and makes tagging clearly discoverable without removing or changing any existing icons.



Mock 1: @ icon added beside Schedule and Post button.



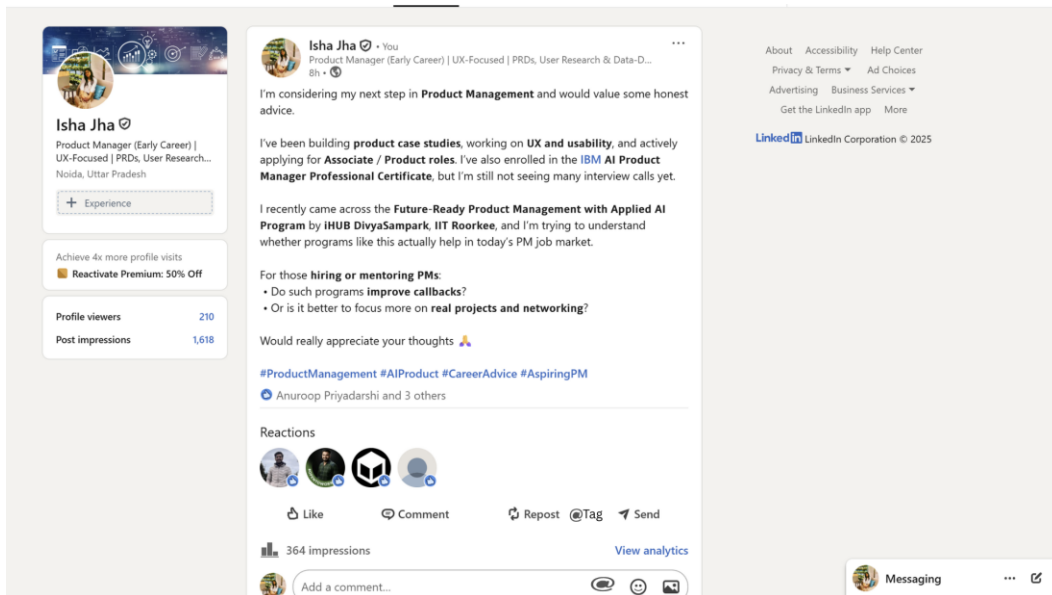
Mock 2: Hover tooltip showing “Tag People or Companies”.

2. Write First, Tag at the End (Before Posting)

Allow users to write their entire post without tags and then click the '@' icon before posting. From there, they can search and select people or companies. The selected tags are then inserted into the post text (for example near the end), using the existing LinkedIn mention formatting. This supports a natural write-first, organize-later workflow.

3. Post-Publish Tagging Option

Many users realize whom they should have tagged only after the post is live. Currently, they either edit the post or resort to tagging people in comments. To reduce friction, add an '@ Tag' action to the post action bar of a published post, positioned alongside existing actions such as Like, Comment, Repost and Send. This option lets users tag people or companies directly on the post without editing the main content.



Mock 3: Post-publish tagging option, with Tag icon next to Send.

4. Tagging in Comments with an @ Icon

Add an '@' icon in the comment composer so users can discover tagging while commenting. On hover, the tooltip again reads “Tag people or companies”. Functionally this reuses the same tagging logic as in the post composer, but makes the capability much more visible for users who are used to writing comments like plain text.

Why This Is a UX Improvement, Not a New System

All proposed changes build on top of LinkedIn’s existing tagging infrastructure. The behaviour of '@' mentions, notifications, and privacy rules stays the same. The improvements are mainly about discoverability and flexibility: making it obvious that tagging exists, allowing users to tag at the end of writing, and supporting tagging after the post is published. This reduces friction without adding complexity to the underlying system.

Prioritisation (High Level)

Using a RICE-style view:

- Visible @ icon in composer – High reach, high impact, high confidence, low effort → Highest priority.
- Post-publish tagging option – High reach, high impact, medium effort → High priority.
- Comment @ icon – High reach, medium impact, low effort → High priority.

Success Metrics

Engagement and Usage:

- Increase in the percentage of posts that contain at least one tag.
- Increase in engagement (likes, comments, reposts) on posts with tags.

Usability:

- Reduction in post edits that are done only to add or fix tags.
- Reduction in tagging-only comments (comments whose main purpose is tagging someone missed in the post).

Adoption of New Entry Points:

- Click-through and usage rate of the '@' icon in the composer.
- Usage rate of the post-publish Tag option and the comment '@' icon.

Satisfaction & Feedback:

- Qualitative feedback from surveys or in-product prompts about ease of tagging.
- Decrease in complaints related to tagging discoverability or flexibility.

Risks and Mitigations

Risk 1: Increase in Unnecessary or Excessive Tagging

Making tagging more visible may lead some users to over-tag people or companies, which could reduce content quality and user trust.

Mitigation:

- Introduce soft tagging guidelines, such as subtle UI hints encouraging tagging only when relevant
- Add a suggested tag limit per post (not a hard block initially)
- Monitor tagging patterns and introduce stricter limits only if misuse increases

Risk 2: Potential Notification Overload for Tagged Users

More accessible tagging could increase notification volume for users who are frequently mentioned.

Mitigation:

- Allow users to control tagging notifications (e.g. mute or reduce tag notifications)
- Provide clearer visibility into existing tag-related notification settings
- Prioritize notifications from direct connections over weak signals

Risk 3: UI Clutter in the Post Composer

Adding new icons could make the composer feel crowded or distracting.

Mitigation:

- Reuse existing icon styles, size, and alignment
- Place the @ icon alongside current action buttons instead of adding a new row
- Validate icon placement through usability testing to ensure clarity without clutter

Conclusion

By introducing a visible '@' icon while composing posts, supporting tag-at-the-end flows, enabling post-publish tagging, and surfacing tagging in comments, LinkedIn can make tagging more discoverable and flexible without changing the underlying system. This better reflects how people naturally write and share on the platform, and it can drive more relevant engagement and stronger professional connections.