

# The Demolishing Line of Professionalism: The “you don’t belong here” postsof LinkedIn | VL Postcards

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To start with, let us all be honest, we have been witnessing and noticing a rise in informal posts on LinkedIn. As a user, I have, and I cannot, unfortunately unsee it. My mornings used to start with checking LinkedIn to catch up with the progress of my connections, search for opportunities, and get a peek into the “professional” side of social media. I do not contest the fact that LinkedIn is a social media platform, but I also cannot deny that it is a professional one, unlike its counterparts such as Instagram, Facebooks, etc.

*Personal milestone/ anniversary announcements:* No matter how “cute” personal updates may sound for some people, I feel LinkedIn might not be the best place to drop your marriage, engagement, anniversary etc. pictures with a grand note on how supportive your spouse/partner is/ would be/has been. Relationship advice, on top of it, dilute the essence of the platform. I do notice childbirth announcements and wonder if that would actually be

classified as a “professional” update unless someone is posting an update regarding their maternity/paternity/childcare leave and the resultant work break and professional unavailability. Additionally, I have been coming across posts with pictures of the author, with the author openly acknowledging that the picture was added for increasing the post’s reach. This Instagram-like rush for likes and shares is a serious point of departure from LinkedIn’s aim and scope.

*General rant posts:* How could I miss the sprawling increase in posts that include general rants on how gloomy the day feels or how the birds are chirping, and that it is a perfect productive day? As a patient of clinical depression, I am sorry, your desk’s picture with a slogan shout of “Slay!” is not helping me and I am sure many, just like me, would have wished the daily motivation quotes were restricted to Family WhatsApp groups.

*Specific rant posts:* Next comes the most controversial class of posts— specific rants. Why do I use the term controversial? Well, because not all of these are useless. For instance, if you escaped being/were a victim of a job trap and intend to warn your connections by exposing the name of the perpetrator, it actually is helpful! However, if you do not name the scamster, stating that it is a well-known company or a recruiter— you yourself are becoming a passive complicit, rendering your post rather useless for consumers. You wish to cite awareness? Well, everyone knows scams happen every minute— what difference did your post make?

Now, coming to the controversial part— the “screenshot posts.” Again, not all of them are useless, but specifically, the ones that blur out the name of the alleged perpetrator are the ones that do not actually serve any purpose. Such posts are related to multiple subject matters which are doing rounds lately. Of these, I see two kinds of screenshots every now and then on LinkedIn— *first*, containing sexually explicit approaches by one user towards the other and *second*, containing bits and pieces of conversations with a client/ service-provider. All of this will make sense if you name the person that caused mischief. However, I increasingly see even the posts that name the perpetrator becoming rather redundant because of the war that takes a rather profound place in the comments section, diluting the essence of the post in the first place. I vividly remember under one such post of a female user sharing screenshot of how a male user approached her in the DMs (something most of us have experienced) and took the conversation to an uncomfortable level (also something most of us must have experienced, regardless of gender). The comments section included male users advising the author of the post to “discover” the “Block” option and to “move on”, as if she did not already know this! Not their fault, there is a reason why “mansplaining” has been coined as an altogether separate term! Another recollection takes me back to a post wherein the comments section, the named seller/ service-provider was engaged in a comment-exchange battle with the author of the post claiming that they had posted one side of the story through the screenshots shared. The comment section quickly turned into a civil court with advocates jumping in to represent both sides on the issue of contract non-performance. What positive outcome did it beget? I have no clue! Although, it took my inquisitive soul ’10 minutes, at least for sure, because who does not want once skim through a happening comments section!

*Attacking Posts:* The last, but of course not the least, our very own, “attacking posts”. These posts have some of the age-old themes such as:

- Religion: These are typically posts where the author is commenting on a current affair, but with their *tadka*. The comments section for such posts are generally dominated by people who have the self-proclaimed power of granting and ripping off people's citizenship, based on their religious affiliation.
- Gender: A topic for which less said is more. Do watch out for a LinkedIn page [Indian Purush](#)— they are everywhere in the comments section of posts that talk about abuse of rights of any gender other than *purush samaaj*. Interestingly, they are quick in commenting even under sensitive posts! Someone was killed for dowry— no problem, Indian Purush will be right there with screenshots of some newspaper reporting a case of false dowry allegation. Let me get this straight, no one's denying that there is a rising issue of the misuse of laws that were primarily made for the safeguard of women, but there is a context you speak up for your cause in, lest you endanger diluting the sheen of your organisation's motto.
- Caste/ statehood/class: Of course, how can any social media be complete without some person crying over the fact that they missed a cutoff and throwing their tantrum on people who had absolutely nothing to do with their exam result? By the way, I myself do not get reservation, so please do not start attacking me on this assuming that I am in support of reservation because I enjoy it's benefits. No! I am in support of it because of the long history of discrimination certain section of people have faced. The comments section of such posts has self-proclaimed policy makers, who are sure their comments are being read by the Prime Minister, who they are tagging countless times.

Statehood, oh yes, how can I forget that! Being a Bihari, when I have faced, in-person discrimination, how can LinkedIn posts not pace themselves up! I still do not understand how people get the statistics they report in their posts. How many people from this state commented that life in that state is better— blah, blah. Kudos to your data collection team!

Then comes class— elitist posts of kids around half my age, flaunting their Gucci, Prada accessories, iPhone in their hands, announcing how blessed they are to go on a mind-cleansing vacation to Switzerland because the semester was “oh, so hectic”. Kid, the semester was mind-numbing for me too. I just don't have the parental wealth to go on the exact same much-needed mind cleansing trip. Also, is that your professional update? Because I see nothing that you achieved by going on a fun vacation, unless it was alongside an internship or a summer school, or some academic activity. Remember, you are not earning yet, your goal is to finish your course diligently and get a job, no matter how old school this sounds. Trips should happen but posting it on LinkedIn lacks substance for me.

*Emerging areas:* As an academician, how can my opinion not have a section on emerging areas – because that’s what sells, right? Jokes apart, there is a serious rise in the trend of AI- shaming. Notice, I have used em dashes in my post? Some of you might have been quite quick to jump to the conclusion that it is AI- written. Reality: I wrote it on my Tab with a pen and then converted it to text (yes, my handwriting is pretty, the Tab reader detects it error-free, now cry about it— a Bihari who knows English and can also write well, quite strange for elitists, I guess). You will see such AI-shaming in the comments section of posts where the authors use em dashes. In my head, I respond to them: “Okay, human form of Turnitin, well done, now please go back generate the Similarity index report for the assignments that I have to grade – what are you still doing in the comments section— you don’t belong here!”

To end with— you don’t belong here— something that I have heard an awful number of times, due to multiple factors. I proved them wrong, still belonging here, right beside your elitist bunch of professionals; but to all the above types of posts on LinkedIn— I am sorry, you don’t belong here, please go back where you actually belong to— Facebook, Instagram or whatever new Gen Z social media app you prefer.

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