

LinkedIn is the latest to take on Clubhouse—and focusing on business events could help it succeed

Article

LinkedIn is **working** on its own social audio feature to compete with Clubhouse, the professional network confirmed to TechCrunch on Tuesday, making it the third Big Tech company after **Twitter** and **Spotify** to invest in the social audio space. The news also came shortly after LinkedIn **announced** several updates, including a new “creator mode” profile aimed at making it easier for influencers to communicate with their audiences.

LinkedIn could be taking a risk by trying to target a business audience, given that Clubhouse is already so successful among professionals. Other competitors have done the opposite, trying to attract an audience that's not heavily present on Clubhouse. Twitter's Spaces **rolled out** its first tests to marginalized groups like women and people of color, and Spotify's acquisition of Locker Room is geared toward sports, a topic area that Clubhouse doesn't see too much of.

But LinkedIn could differentiate itself by focusing more heavily on structured professional events like conferences and webinars, areas it already shines in. While Clubhouse has positioned itself as a more casual place to chat, structured conference-style rooms have begun popping up. Clubhouse “does feel like a conference panel at times, if it's moderated well,” said Karen Staughton, West Coast engagement director at digital agency Grow. And LinkedIn has the home-field advantage when it comes to these kinds of events.

- For one, LinkedIn already has the existing infrastructure to support live digital events, something the platform has been working on since before the pandemic. In 2019, it launched an **Events** feature and a video broadcasting tool called **LinkedIn Live**. A live audio tool could be a natural extension of these features.
- LinkedIn also has a higher capacity for content moderation, something Clubhouse has **struggled** with. Requiring users to sync with their existing LinkedIn profiles could be a major deterrent for the kinds of harassment and abuse reported on Clubhouse, which could also help attract a more professional audience.

These two factors also make LinkedIn more appealing for B2B marketers looking to host sponsored digital events. “There's an exciting opportunity for brands and agencies to show up in this space and be the facilitators of thought leadership and innovation, and drive things forward in more of an event space,” Staughton said of Clubhouse. “But my spidey senses go off when it comes to brand safety here.” LinkedIn's advantages in digital event hosting and content moderation could give marketers many of the same opportunities as those on Clubhouse—but in what might feel like a safer and more established environment. However,

that may come at the expense of the casual, “post-work drinks” vibe that makes Clubhouse so appealing.