

LinkedIn and Microsoft: A Marriage Made for the Enterprise?

✘ *By Chuck Hester, Managing Partner, [Chuck Hester Enterprises](#); Chief Communications Officer, [Big Think Innovation](#)*

As you have probably heard by now, it was announced on Monday that LinkedIn is being acquired by Microsoft for \$26.2 billion in an all cash deal. Immediately my social networks – [LinkedIn](#), Twitter, Facebook – began to light up with the news, and with a variety of reactions:

“Bad News for LinkedIn!”

“Microsoft? Wow!”

“Anxious to see what the two companies can do together!”

As a LinkedIn trainer, speaker and subject matter expert, my reactions are excitement and faith.

Excitement that my favorite social platform, and one that is by far the best for [B2B communications](#), is being acquired by a company with so many channels that can be used to get information disseminated.

Faith in CEO Jeff Weiner and his team that they will be able to be true to the LinkedIn brand and continue to deliver great features and services that B2B communicators need and want.

Several things should be noted:

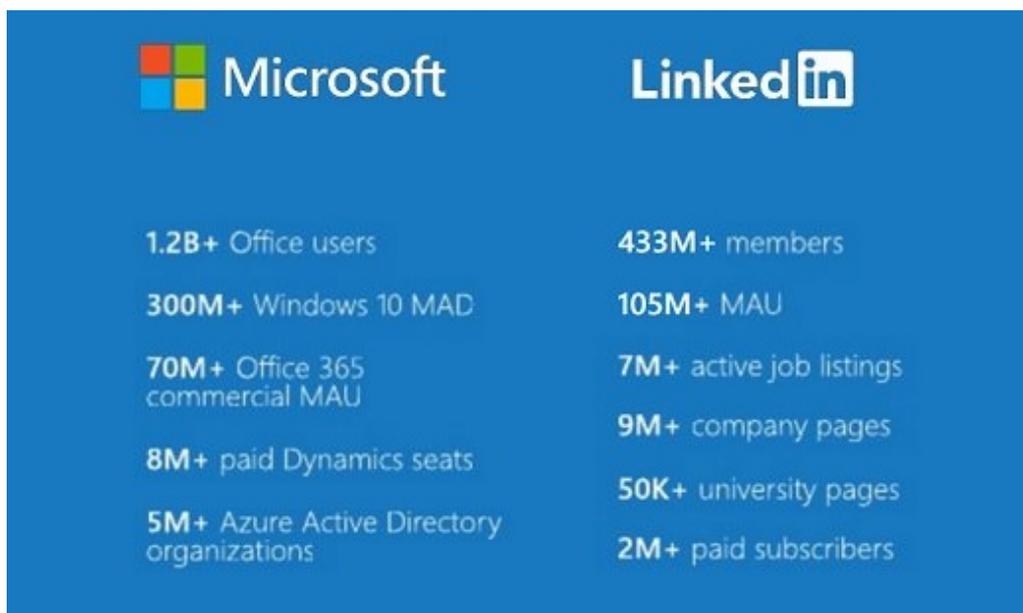
- First: the sale, while announced today will take several months to complete.
- Second: this was not a spur-of-the-moment decision by

either company. I have been involved with acquisitions in the past, and it takes months of planning and execution.

All that being said, questions still remain:

Does this sale open a door into the business identity/publishing space for Facebook?

I believe this door was already open. Facebook has matured as a business platform and many ways competes with LinkedIn as content marketing platform. Where LinkedIn excels is in long-form publishing through its LinkedIn Publisher feature. It is often the B2B content curation and marketing platform of choice, and this acquisition should only strengthen that position.



(Image Source: Twitter)

What, if any impact will this have on the LinkedIn community?

This truly depends on Weiner & Company and how they treat the changes that are inevitable. For the most part, in my 12 years as a LinkedIn user, I have seen transparency and open communication from LinkedIn. This is especially true since Jeff Weiner took the helm in 7 years ago.

This was apparent yesterday when Jeff Weiner [published a memo](#) he sent to LinkedIn employees about the acquisition and what it meant to the company:

Weiner explained that LinkedIn and Microsoft were aligned in two areas: Purpose and Structure. “Essentially, we’re both trying to do the same thing but coming at it from two different places: For LinkedIn, it’s the professional network, and for Microsoft, the professional cloud.

As long as we, as LinkedIn users, are given ample notice of any significant changes, I believe we will embrace the new ownership and the opportunities to expand our network reach through Microsoft’s many services – Office 365 including Outlook and Calendar, Dynamics, Skype and even Cortana.

Will this acquisition strengthen Microsoft’s weakness in both the cloud and the office?

There are more than 430 million LinkedIn users, mostly B2B users. Combine that with Microsoft’s over 1 billion customers and it’s a powerful ecosystem that was just born.

Again, as a LinkedIn power user, who grew up on LinkedIn since 2004, I believe in the company and its promise to deliver business-to-business communications and content to LinkedIn users.

Will there be growing pains, first year missteps and concerns? Of course, that happens to most acquisitions of this size and magnitude.

But at the end of the day, one tech giant just threw its vast resources behind one of social media’s pioneer platforms. I can’t wait to see what the future holds. It’s going to be an interesting ride!

About the Author: Chuck Hester is a LinkedIn power connector with more than 15,000 direct connections. The Chief

Communications Officer at [Big Think Innovation](#), he heads their digital marketing practice, helping clients get their stories told through influencer relations, good old fashion PR strategies and hard work. He also offers LinkedIn Corporate Boot Camps that help businesses maximize their use of LinkedIn, find and retain customers and enhance their social media footprints. You can find him on LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/in/chuckhester