

> The
U.S. CEO
LinkedIn Tracker

March 2023

Introduction

This edition of the U.S. CEO LinkedIn tracker is derived from our global research. The focus of this edition is on how U.S. CEOs are using LinkedIn to communicate.

4,494

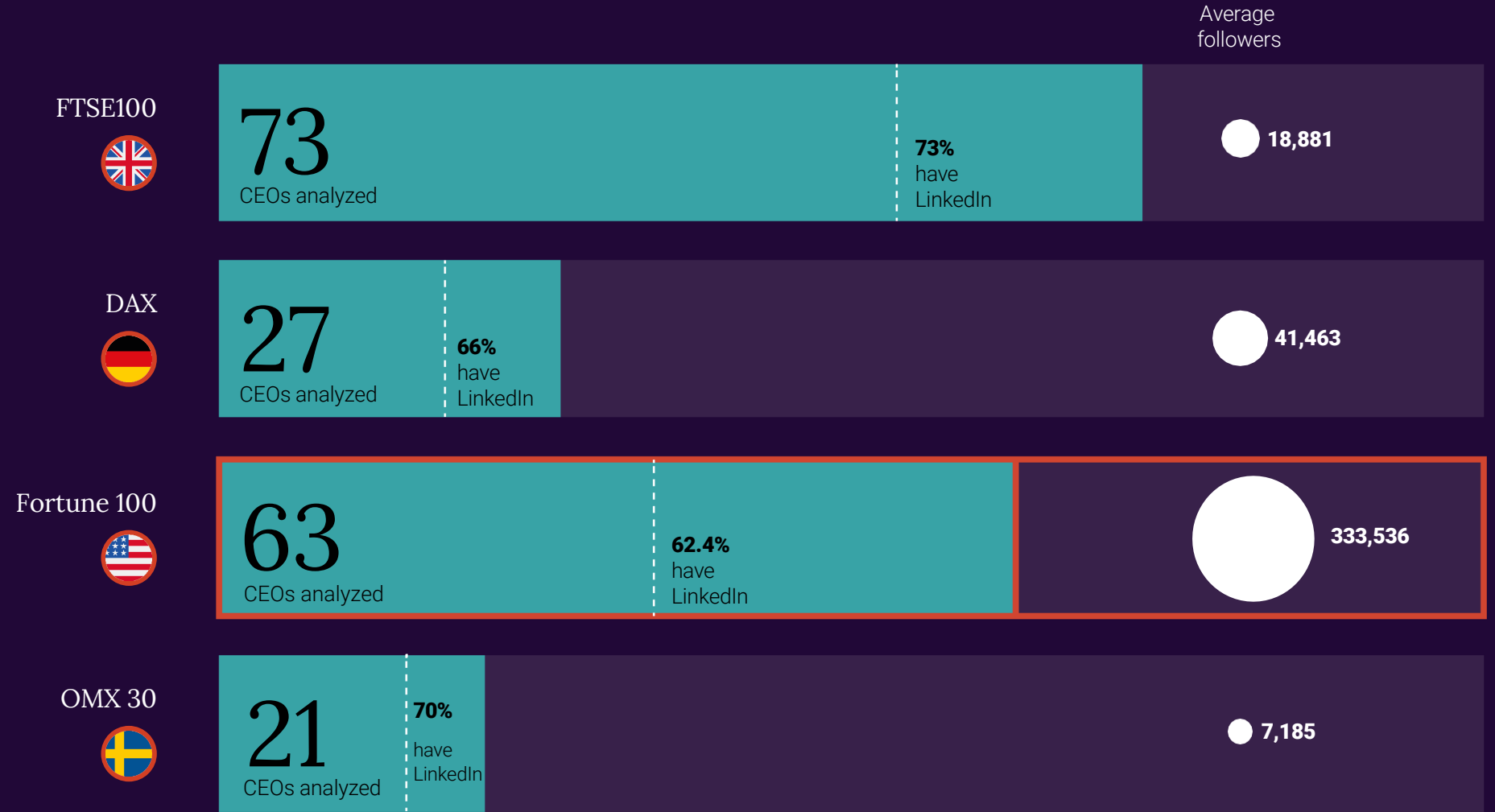
posts on LinkedIn from the U.S., UK, Germany, and Sweden from January 1st, 2022 to December 31st, 2022 have been manually analyzed by our team of digital specialists.



Putting U.S. CEOs in perspective

184

CEOs and 4,494 total posts manually analyzed, covering Q1 – Q4 2022.





The U.S. Key Takeaways

LinkedIn gives **U.S. CEOs** a platform to connect and communicate at a more personal level compared to other channels.

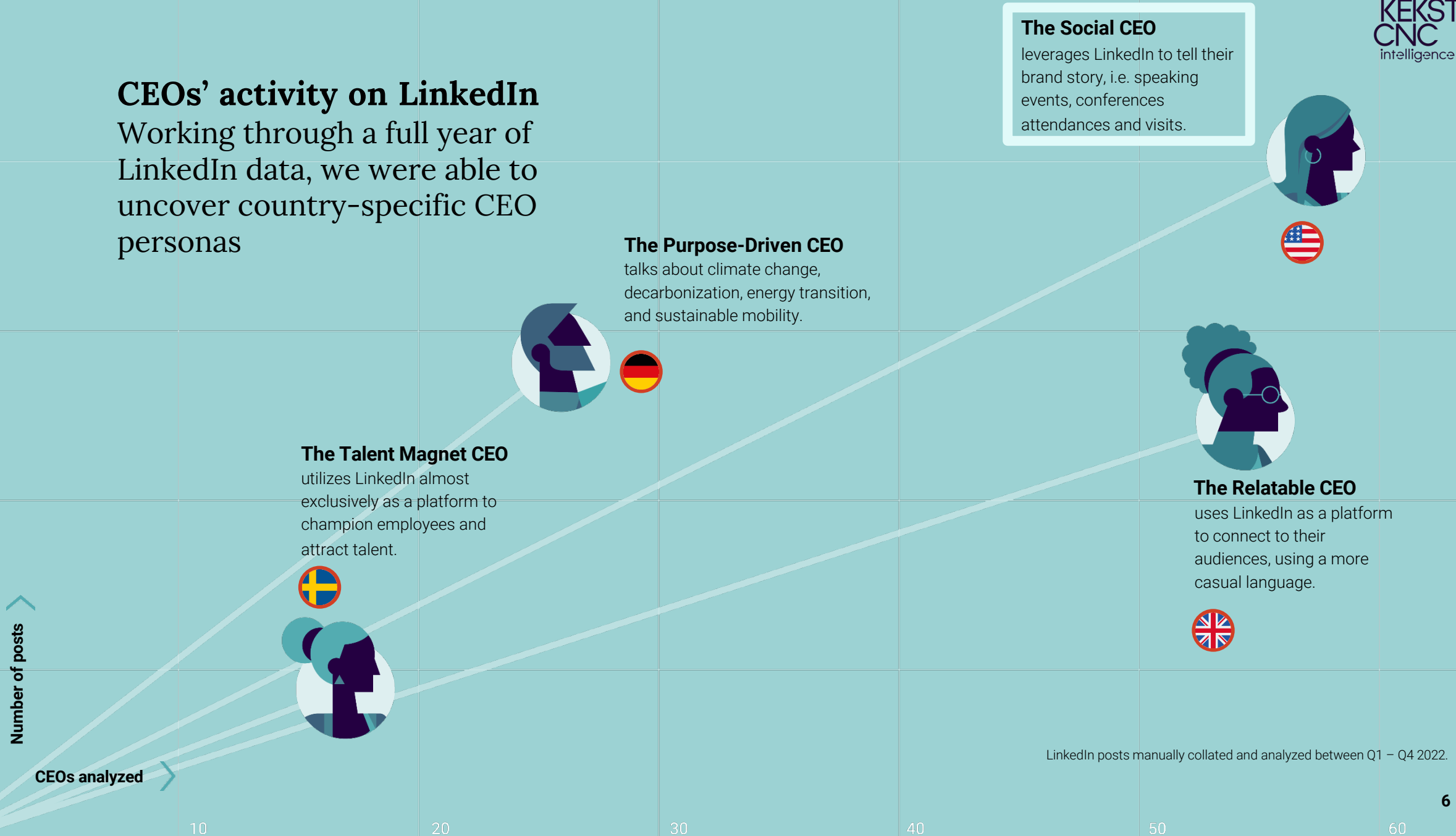
- Based off our wider Global CEO Tracker, this report focuses on **U.S. CEOs**, whose behavior on LinkedIn we've characterized as the "Social CEO."
- CEOs used LinkedIn as an **extension of their companies**, enabling them to connect with their audiences by frequently posting about topics of importance to themselves personally and their companies
- CEOs garnered **highly favorable exposure** on LinkedIn, with only three percent of posts receiving negative comments
- Posts on **DE&I and sustainability** were closely connected to external events and the news cycle
- **Images** were CEOs' most frequently used post format on LinkedIn, followed by videos, links to websites, and links to articles. Simple text posts were the least-used format

Leadership on LinkedIn: Personas

An overview of different CEOs...

CEOs' activity on LinkedIn

Working through a full year of LinkedIn data, we were able to uncover country-specific CEO personas



The Social CEO
leverages LinkedIn to tell their brand story, i.e. speaking events, conferences attendances and visits.



The Purpose-Driven CEO
talks about climate change, decarbonization, energy transition, and sustainable mobility.



The Talent Magnet CEO
utilizes LinkedIn almost exclusively as a platform to champion employees and attract talent.



The Reliable CEO
uses LinkedIn as a platform to connect to their audiences, using a more casual language.



LinkedIn posts manually collated and analyzed between Q1 – Q4 2022.

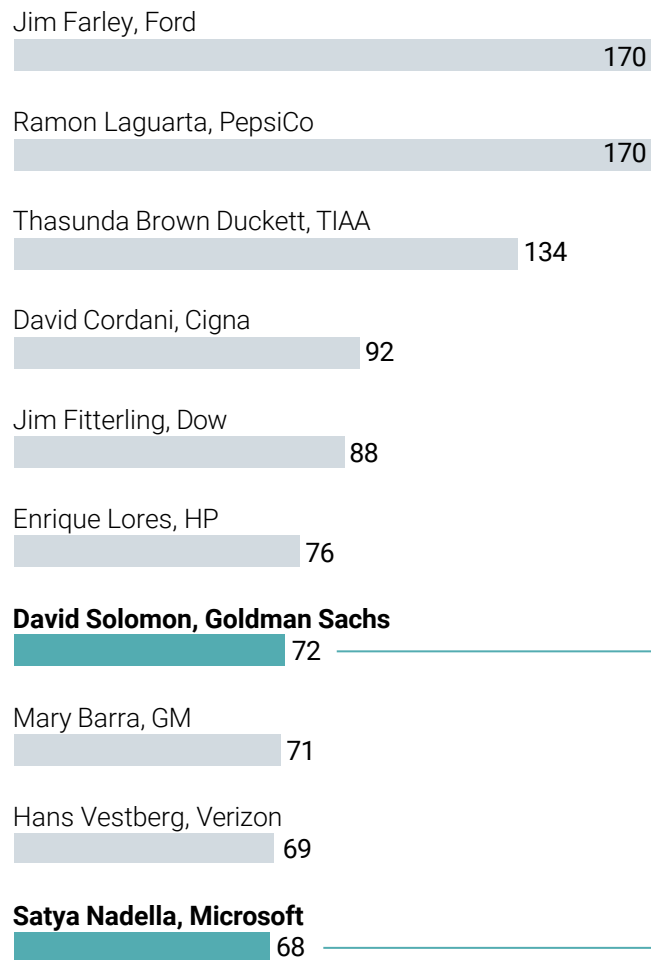


High-profile U.S. CEOs post less often but garner high engagement rates.



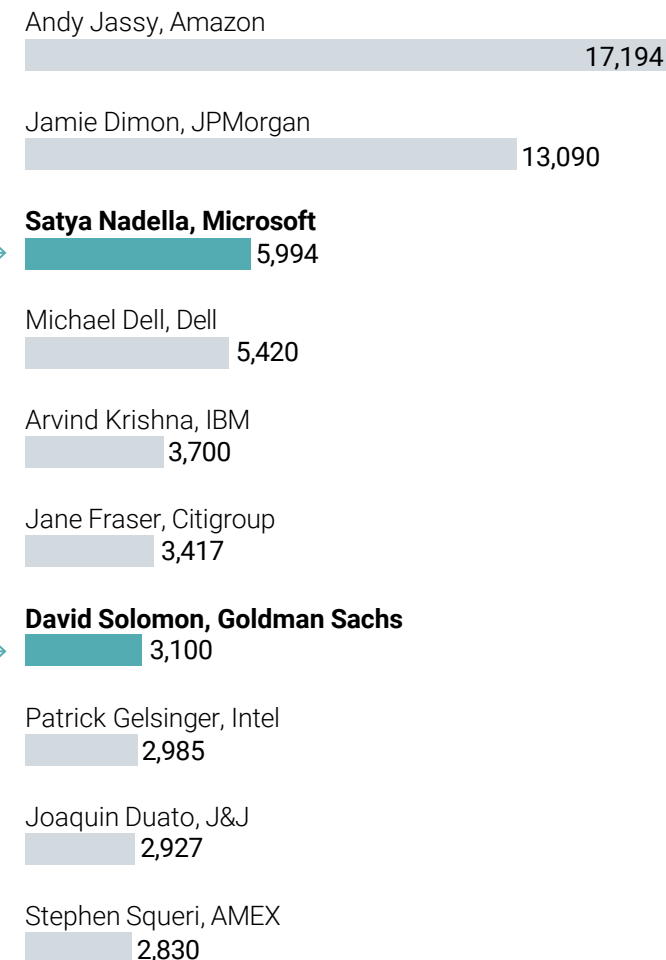
The most active CEOs

Number of posts, in 2022



The most engaging CEOs

Number of engagements, in 2022



LinkedIn posts manually collated and analyzed between Q1 – Q4 2022.

Analyzing the **key topics** of conversation



Communicating Talent

New appointments,
DE&I, promotions,
praise, and gratitude
over the celebration
of public holidays.



The Social CEO

focuses on connecting with colleagues and the issues they care about, engaging in politics, and using images when posting about talent.



Content & Messaging

Use DE&I-related posts to amplify in-person connection

35% of all posts from U.S. CEOs focused on talent. Within that, 44% of posts focused on DE&I, showing how significant and relevant the issue is in the U.S.

Content outside of DE&I focused on topics including CEOs visiting company offices and facilities, CEOs sharing impactful stories of employees, CEOs highlighting employees who won company awards, and general posts thanking employees.

This reflects how CEOs in the U.S. are using LinkedIn as a platform to amplify in-person connections, as well as tackling prevalent issues that employees care about.



Tone

Keep a neutral and objective tone when discussing talent

U.S. CEOs don't take a deeply personal tone when sharing talent-related posts. Instead, they focused on events, impact, and the news cycle.

In contrast, leaders like Thasunda Brown Duckett earned high engagement on DE&I posts that related to political change. In particular, her posts on Ketanji Brown Jackson joining the U.S. Supreme Court were some of the highest-engaged with posts in this topic.

CEOs may be reticent to personally reflect on talent, instead erring on the side of caution by employing a more formal tone.



Format

Visuals are a must to showcase company culture and employees

Visuals are vital for U.S. CEOs communicating about talent and employees. Six out of 10 of the most-engaged-with posts used images, and 55% of posts overall used them.

Just 3% of posts were text-only, suggesting that leaders rely on visuals to help communicate and engage with talent.

DE&I is a key topic within talent for most markets

DE&I-related posts form a significant portion of talent-related posts in the U.S., UK, and Germany.

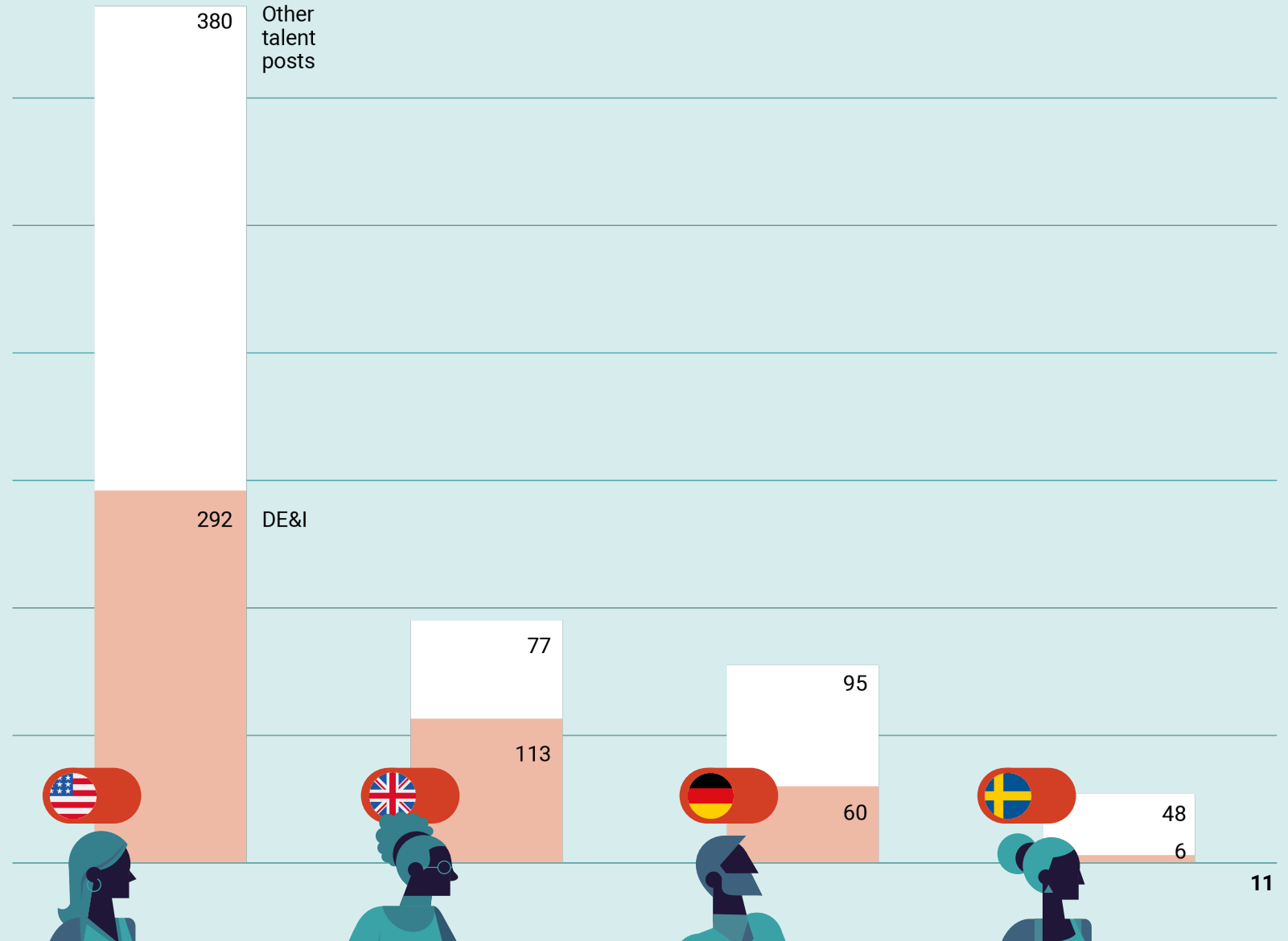
DE&I posts include topics such as gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights, racial equality, and inclusion. The single most mentioned DE&I topic was gender equality, which made up 32% of DE&I related posts across markets.

While previously, DE&I posts were rooted in "awareness days," the data shows that CEOs are not only using specific calendar dates to raise awareness, but also to amplify personal and employee stories around DE&I.

Among **U.S. CEOs**, prominent DE&I topics included Black achievement, Martin Luther King Jr., education initiatives focused on people of color, LGBTQ+, and disability inclusion, veteran's issues, women's achievements, and Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage.

LinkedIn posts manually collated and analyzed between Q1 – Q4 2022.

Number of talent posts

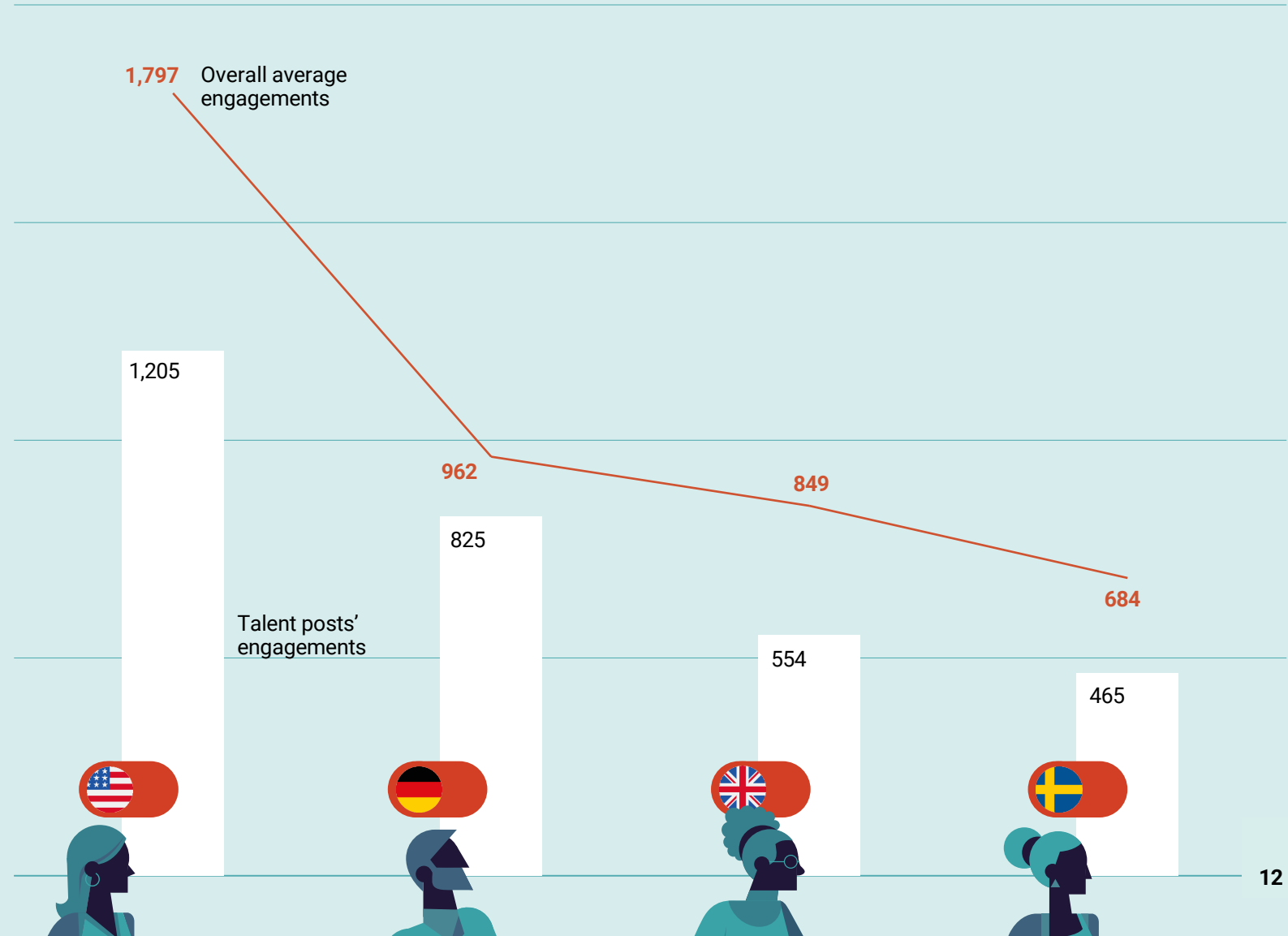


U.S. CEOs lead in average engagement on talent posts

Of the top 10 most-engaged-with posts across all markets, 60% related to DE&I content, highlighting how important the topic is to the CEO audience. **U.S. CEOs** amplified this messaging to a greater extent than their global counterparts, as shown by their comparatively higher engagement rates.

U.S. CEOs often used LinkedIn to highlight employees by sharing impactful stories, awards, and general appreciation.

Talent posts' average engagements



LinkedIn posts manually collated and analyzed between Q1 – Q4 2022.



Communicating the Personal

Work-related experiences, personal stories, career announcements, and impressions from visits to offices.



The Social CEO

tailors the message to a specific audience, using a positive and authentic tone, while leveraging visual and creative posting formats when posting about personal topics.



Content & Messaging

Make their presence felt in the company

U.S. CEOs primarily communicated about different events, conferences, interviews, and meetings they attended or hosted. CEOs utilized LinkedIn to showcase their presence at these events, as well as to thank the hosts and other speakers. Such posts accounted for over 35% of all personal posts.

They also responded to global events including the passing of Queen Elizabeth II and the war in Ukraine, and mentioned U.S.-specific events like Juneteenth, several tragic mass shootings, and Hurricane Ian.



Tone

Authenticity is key when sharing personal posts

CEOs typically communicated using a positive and authentic tone, and their posts often conveyed messages of gratitude, appreciation, encouragement, and excitement.

Notably, CEOs used a personal tone when discussing topics important to them, such as book recommendations, personal history/childhood, sports, and mental health. For posts that had a more negative context, such as tragedy or mourning, CEOs used a more somber tone.



Format

Use simple text to convey authenticity, especially when it comes to emotional topics

Like the overall findings across the different markets, CEOs in the U.S. leveraged images most frequently, followed by links to articles and videos. Nearly 50% of all personal posts incorporated an image.

Despite simple text only accounting for 12% of personal posts, this format received the highest engagement. Of the posts that used just text, 60% either referenced a global event or holiday. The emotional and personal nature of these topics typically evokes higher engagement from the audience, as they can connect more readily with the content.

Over 77% of all CEOs post personal content

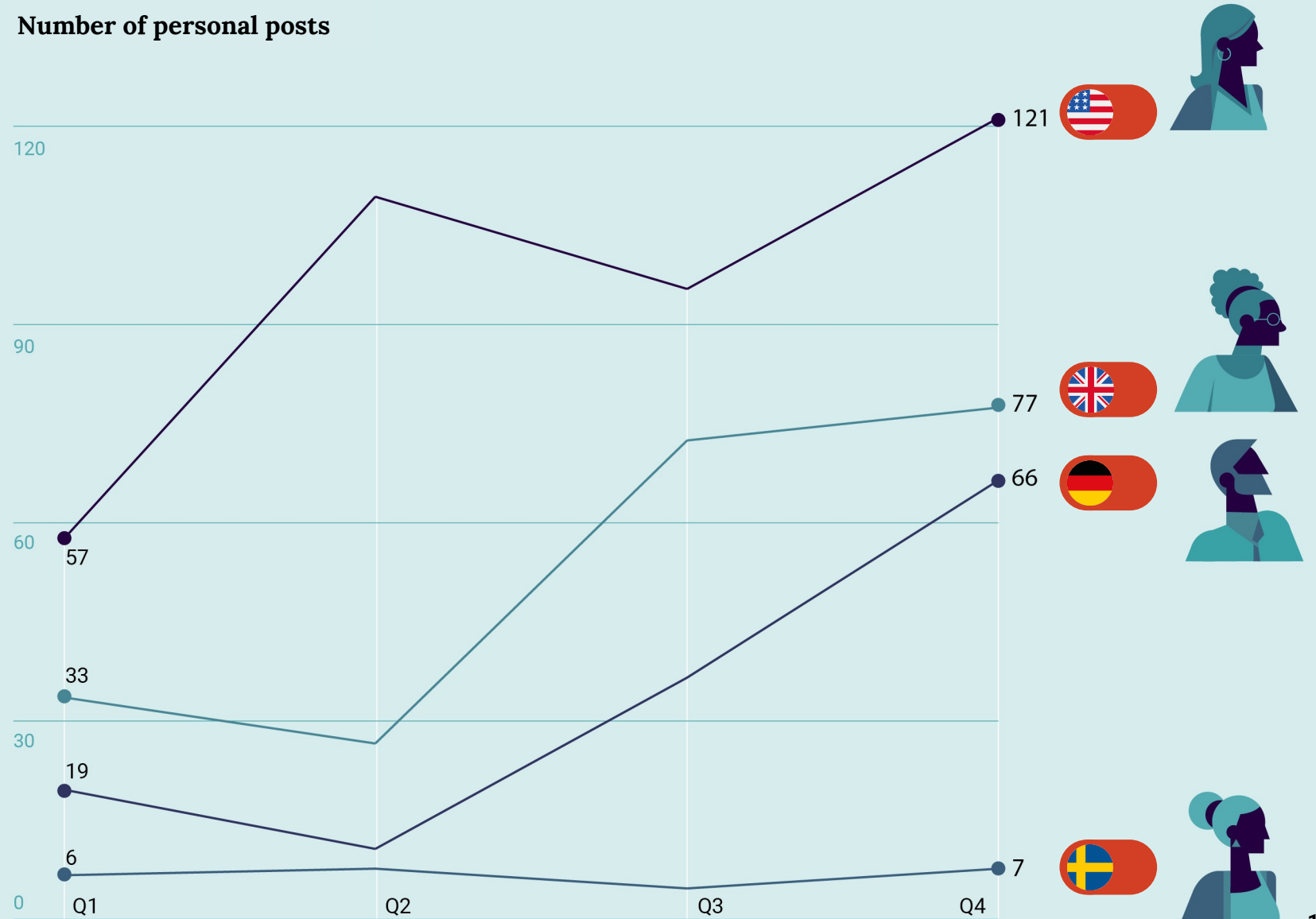
Most CEOs across markets posted about personal topics, with personal posts by U.S., UK, and German CEOs increasing in Q4 around the holidays.

Personal posts included a range of topics such as public appearances, office visits and personal travel, major global events, career and personal milestones and reflections, and awards.

Activity by **U.S. CEOs** on personal content steadily increased from Q1 to Q2, dipping slightly in Q3. There was an increase in activity from Q3 to Q4, as many CEOs use LinkedIn to post about the holidays and reflect on the year.

LinkedIn posts manually collated and analyzed between Q1 – Q4 2022.

Number of personal posts



40% of all personal content related to public appearances and major global events

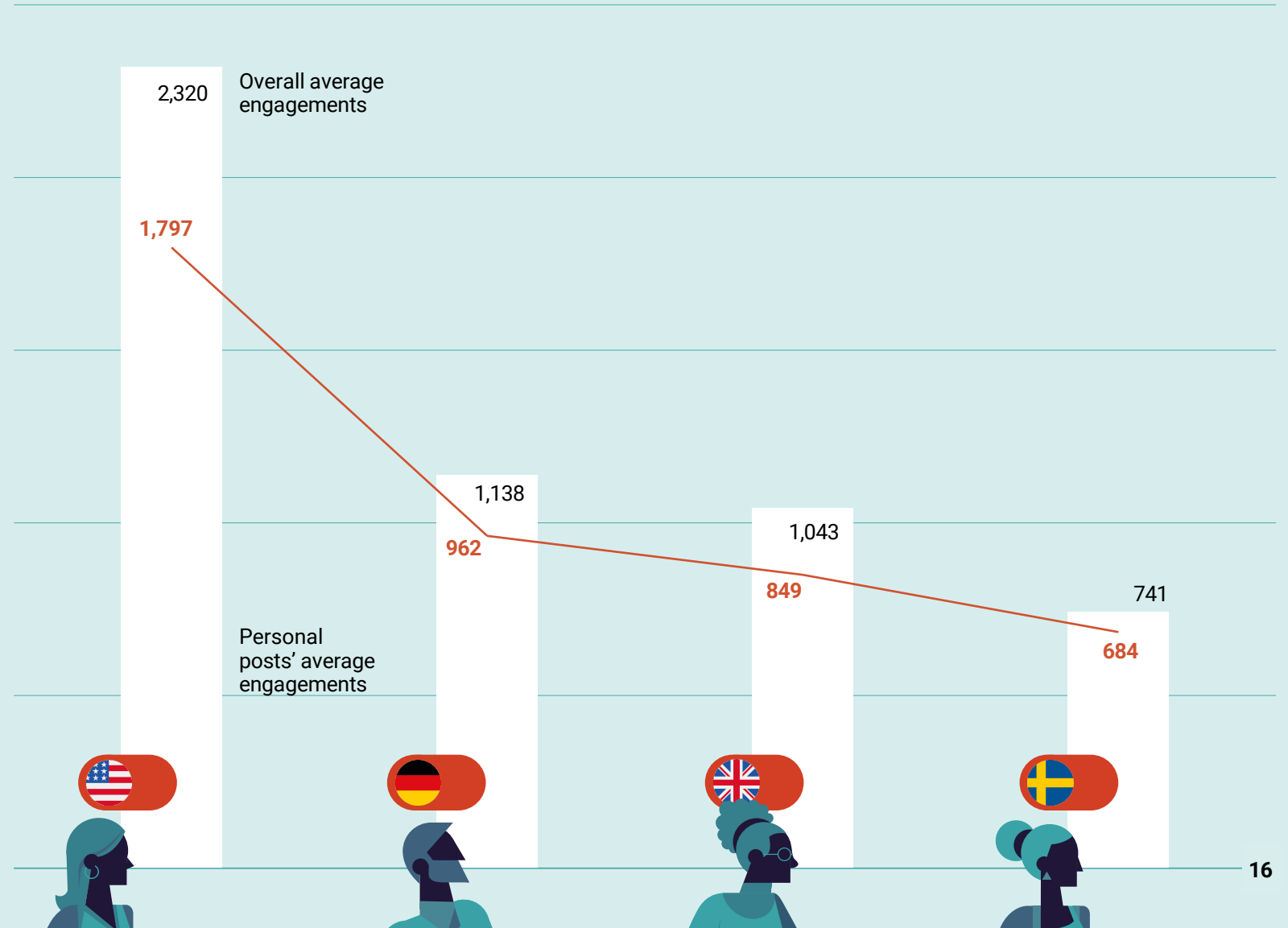
CEOs across markets utilized LinkedIn to share personal but relevant public appearances including conferences, interviews, discussions, and keynotes.

Of the 100 posts that referenced global events, 42 mentioned the passing of Queen Elizabeth II and 17 mentioned the war in Ukraine.

Posts by **U.S. CEOs** on personal topics outperformed in terms of average engagement. While personal topics, both in terms of frequency and average engagement, fall second behind company announcements – the gap in average engagement between the two topics is much smaller than the gap in frequency.

LinkedIn posts manually collated and analyzed between Q1 – Q4 2022.

Personal posts' average engagements





Communicating Sustainability

Climate change, decarbonization, energy transition, and sustainable mobility.



The Social CEO

uses an honest, business-first mentality when communicating on different sustainability initiatives.



Content & Messaging

Use external milestones as content hooks

Posts on sustainability were closely connected to external events and the news cycle.

For example, content related to sustainability echoed events such as Earth Day, the joining of sustainability-focused initiatives such as the Climate Pledge, or recognition for sustainability initiatives, such as #AmericasMostJustCompanies.



Tone

Adapt your tone of voice to your message and company

CEO posts in this category were evenly split between supportive, positive tones and formal, direct tones.

Examples using a positive tone included the introduction of new EV vehicles, quarterly ESG reports, and more personal events adopted a positive tone.

Whereas, when discussing initiatives and future-facing content such as net-zero transition, low carbon emissions, or adopting alternative energies among tech companies, CEOs employed a more formal tone so as to clearly express the importance and active contribution the company is taking on this journey.



Format

Visual posts linking to more detailed information perform best

47% of sustainability posts across the U.S. used images to support their posts, with the majority remaining on brand with their respective companies.

The posts with the greatest level of engagement generally included links to company blogs (16%) that dove deeper into the selected topic, notably when it came to discussing a company's plan to reach net zero.

How CEOs communicate about sustainability

While Germany continues to lead as the most vocal market on matters of sustainability, the overall volume of posts decreased over the year.

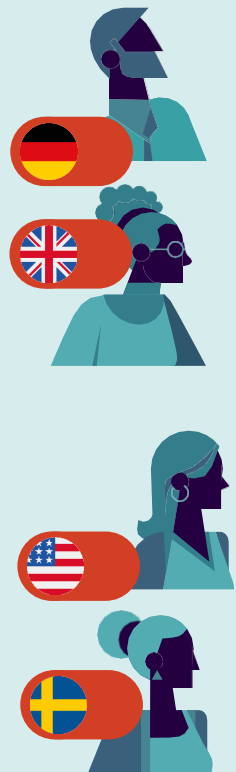
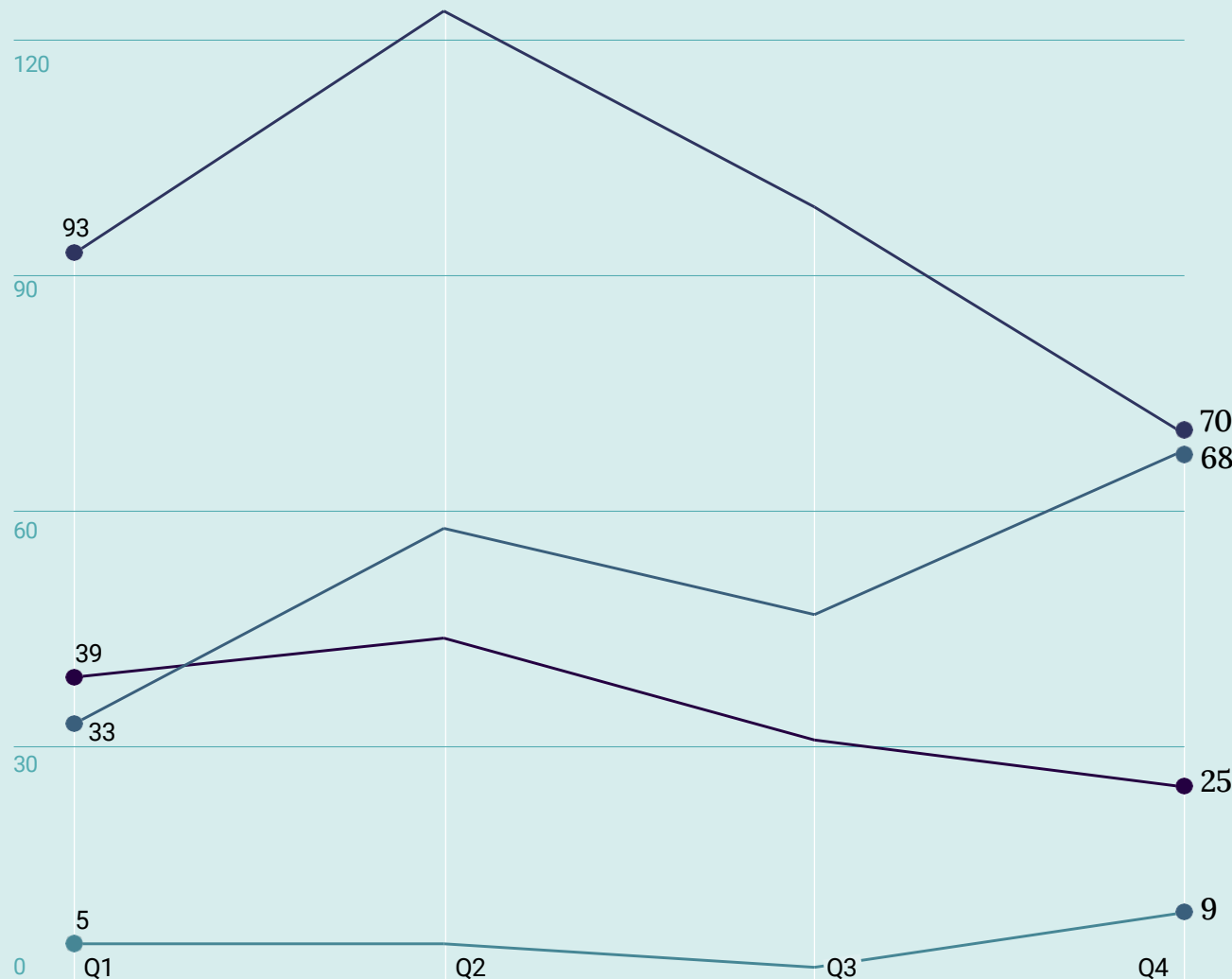
There was an uptick in volume of posts across all other markets from Q1 to Q2 due to predictions for the new year and new company missions. Interestingly, across all markets there was decrease in sustainability posts during COP27.

Sustainability posts referenced topics such as digital transformation, net-zero ambitions, new company initiatives, personal milestones, and reflections on their net-zero ambitions.

Specifically in the **U.S.**, CEOs' posts on sustainability often echoed external sustainability events and initiatives.

LinkedIn posts manually collated and analyzed between Q1 – Q4 2022.

Number of sustainability posts

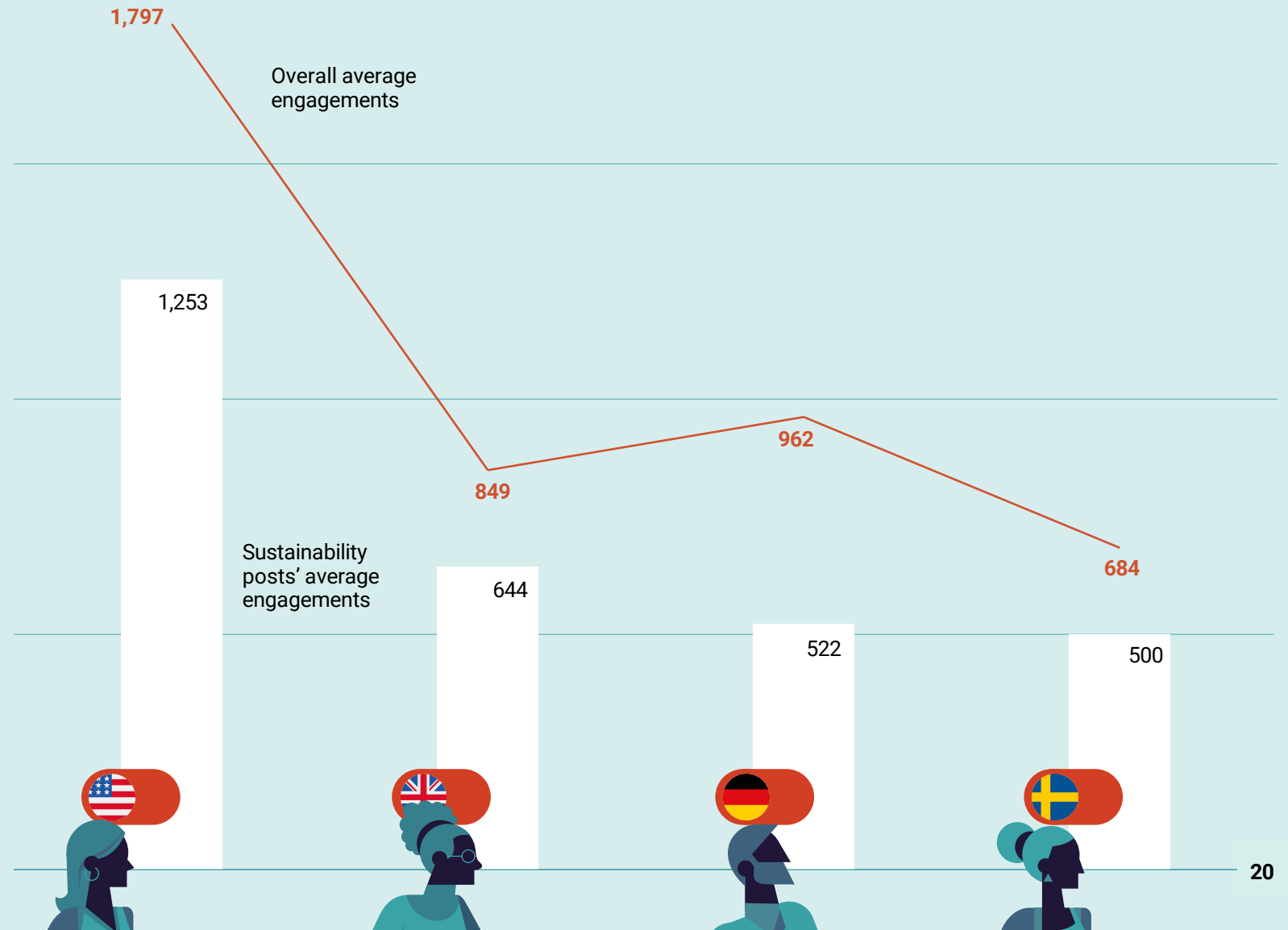


Sustainability posts' average engagements

How well do sustainability posts perform?

There is an ongoing pattern of users engaging with and responding positively to CEOs' candor when discussing their business mission to become a net-zero company and personal connections to driving a more sustainable future.

When compared to other markets, **U.S. CEOs** seem to perform well in terms of engagement. However, within the U.S., posts about sustainability do not do as well in terms of engagement – indicating the U.S. audience is more interested in other content.





Research Objectives, Design, and Methodology

Objectives

- Understand how CEOs across different geographic markets – the U.S., UK, Germany, and Sweden – communicate on LinkedIn
- Identify the tactics used in LinkedIn communications and the level of digital engagement their communications receive
- Determine global and market-specific trends around any differences or similarities in terms of topic, format, and engagement that emerged

Design and Methodology

Kekst CNC Intelligence conducted a manual review of LinkedIn data from U.S. CEOs in the Fortune 100 between Q1 – Q4 2022. Of note, only CEOs with active LinkedIn profiles were analyzed. Within the U.S., 63 out of 101* CEOs had a presence on LinkedIn and out of that group, 89% were active** on LinkedIn during 2022. Examples of topics that emerged included company announcements, personal, talent (DE&I and HR), financial results, sustainability, and innovation.



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