

THE RENAISSANCE  
*of* TEAMWORK  
AQUENT





*Introduction*

**WE ARE EXPERIENCING  
THE DAWN OF MODERN  
TEAMWORK.**

**I**n an increasingly complex tech-driven world, the significance of high-performing teams grows more pivotal than ever. Built on trust and a shared purpose, they execute with nimbleness, resolve intricate problems, and accomplish more to promote creativity and develop abilities than their low-to-moderately performing counterparts. Today's workplaces are changing, and as staffing patterns shift, corporate investments in DEI tighten, remote work arrangements pivot, and AI advancements reshape the very fabric of work, the imperative to rethink the art of high-performance teamwork looms even larger.



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- Act I*    **SETTING THE STAGE FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE**
- Act II*    **TO ADOPT OR NOT ADOPT AI—THAT IS THE QUESTION**
- Act III*    **ALL THE WORLD'S A VIRTUAL WORKSPACE**

*Epilogue*





## WHAT'S CHANGED IN TODAY'S WORKPLACE:

### Employer-led job market

Not long ago, talent enjoyed unprecedented bargaining power. Now, employers are dealing out layoffs and belt-tightening measures amid economic uncertainty and tech-driven efficiency gains.

### On-site ultimatums

After years of plentiful remote work opportunities, many employers have swung firmly in the other direction, taking their teams from fully remote to hybrid, or even on-site, despite strong resistance from employees.

### Diversity programs under fire

Many companies who made commitments around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) during the racial reckoning of 2020 are curbing their investments due to declining business results, as well as political and legal pushback.

### Rapid technology shift

Everyone is grappling with how to integrate generative AI and understand what it means for jobs—today and in the future. Many companies are just now starting to experiment, scale their usage, and develop practices to protect their business.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

5,431 Respondents across North America, Europe, and Asia Pacific.

### JOB LEVEL

50.2%

NON-MANAGEMENT

49.8%

MANAGEMENT

### WORK ARRANGEMENT

45.0%

100% REMOTE

41.9%

HYBRID

13.1%

100% ON-SITE

### TEAM PERFORMANCE LEVEL

60.1%

HIGH-PERFORMING

39.9%

LOW-TO-MODERATELY PERFORMING

PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES: Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, The Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States

Art  
**I**  
SETTING THE  
STAGE FOR HIGH  
PERFORMANCE



## THE 8 BEHAVIORS THAT SET TEAMS AHEAD

In high-performing teams, we see healthy dynamics, communication, and engagement all contributing to a team's outcomes and ability to achieve their goals.

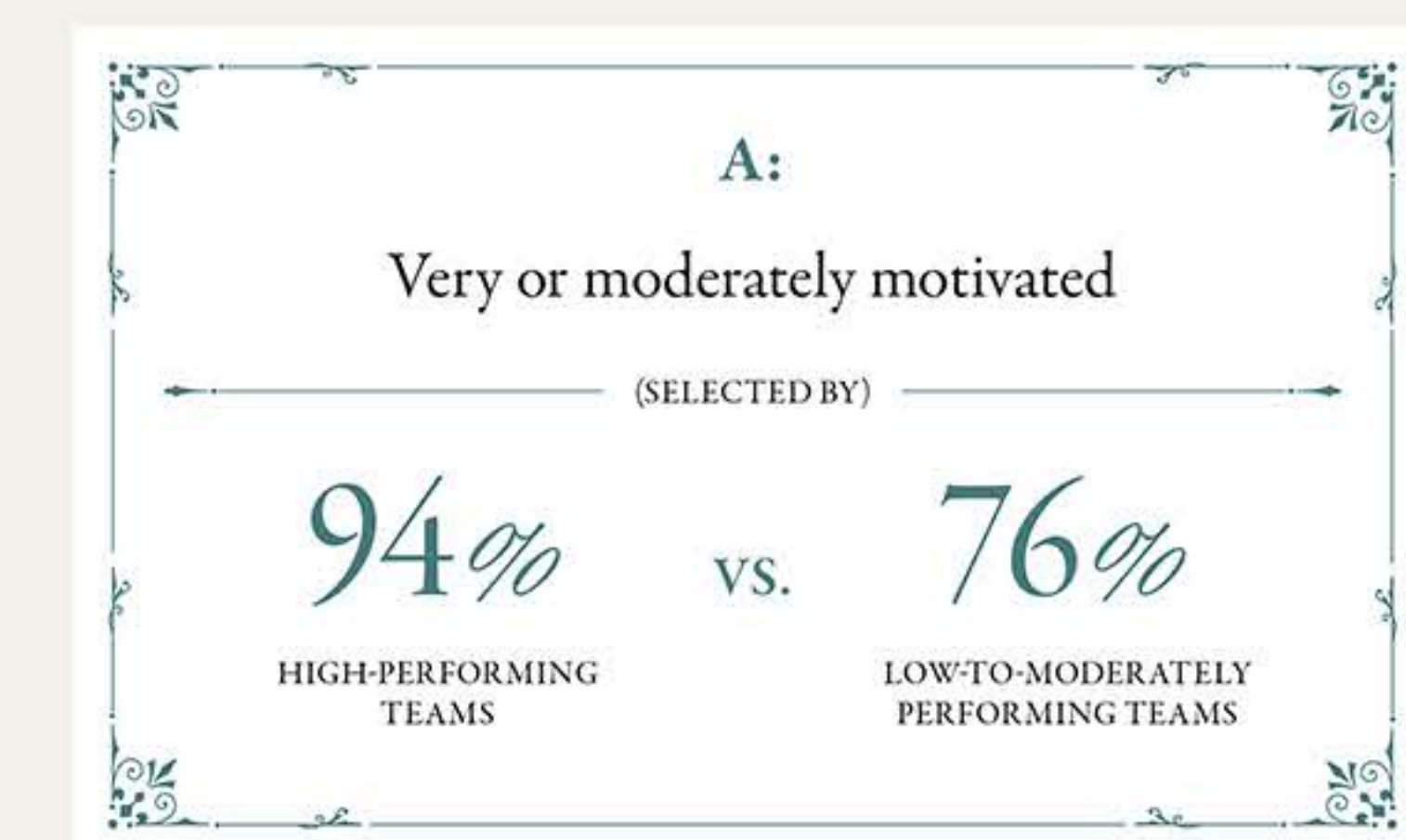
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**MOTIVATED BY BRAND  
PURPOSE**

**Connection to brand purpose drives performance.**

Our survey shows that a connection with company values and brand purpose motivates teams to outperform. Younger workers around the globe, particularly millennials and those in Generation Z, want to work toward a purpose aligned with their beliefs, and this shapes their career decisions. According to a study in 44 countries, Gen Zers and millennials are more motivated by meaningful work and personal fulfillment, less motivated by traditional status symbols such as job title, seniority, or material possessions.

It is of vital importance for companies to articulate their brand purpose, anchor strategic decisions for the organization around it, and connect employees to that core. Without knowing your company's reason for being, it's harder to feel motivated to dig deep or go the extra mile. It's also important to be intentional during the recruiting process, ensuring the values of new team members align with the company's mission and vision.

**Q:**  
How motivated are team members to contribute to fulfilling the company's brand purpose?



Act  
II

TO ADOPT OR NOT  
ADOPT AI—THAT  
IS THE QUESTION



“Organizations cannot afford to be behind the curve on AI.  
The biggest risk is standing still.”

Frances Karamouzis  
GROUP CHIEF OF RESEARCH, GARTNER

WHAT DOES AI MEAN FOR TEAMS  
IN MARKETING, CREATIVE, AND DESIGN?



Amid all the hype, the jury is still out (literally, with lawsuits by authors, artists, and others pending) on whether generative AI companies can use copyrighted material to train their AI systems. And then there was the unintentional leak of proprietary code by employees using ChatGPT at one of the world's largest tech companies. It's no surprise that research highlights misinformation, legality, data security, privacy, and reputation as top concerns surrounding generative AI. But this isn't the full picture—AI is here and it's showing great promise. Organizations should be proactive in putting guardrails in place, so their teams get the most out of using AI tools, and they can make sure their intellectual property is protected.

While some workers fear AI will take their jobs, researchers and leaders alike view AI as a tool that helps enhance productivity and creativity.

The teams who are taking time to learn and practice using AI will be better prepared for the future. However, a recent survey shows that only 10% of marketers are receiving training or guidance from their company, and instead rely on internet articles and videos (81%) and talking with colleagues and friends (73%). Ironically, while companies are racing to find this skill set, prepared to pay sky-high salaries, one might ask why they are not taking this opportunity to invest in the development of their own employees.

“We believe AI  
will enhance human  
talent and empower  
people to be more  
creative, agile,  
and efficient.”

John H. Chuang  
CEO, AQUENT

Act  
III

ALL THE WORLD'S  
A VIRTUAL  
WORKSPACE



REMOTE TEAMS ATTRACT  
DIVERSITY AND DRIVE BETTER  
OUTCOMES

Remote environments drive performance, not just through productivity but diversity too. They eliminate geographical, physical, and social barriers; improving career opportunities for working parents, caregivers, ethnically diverse employees, employees with disabilities, and other underrepresented groups. A UK survey revealed that 80% of workers with disabilities view remote work as essential when they are job hunting. And an international McKinsey study showed that underrepresented groups are more likely to leave without flexible work options. This is foundational to the diverse thinking that drives high performance.

Remote work also levels the playing field in a manner on-site cannot. Practices like virtual hand raising, anonymous polls, and cameras off during video calls, as well as asynchronous communication encourage participation, ensure all voices are heard, and help employees share their ideas with confidence.

MORE EMPLOYEES FEEL EMPOWERED  
IN A VIRTUAL SETTING

Q:

Does your team encourage inclusive discussions where all members feel comfortable expressing their ideas?

A:

To a great extent or somewhat

(SELECTED BY)

85% vs. 69%

REMOTE TEAMS ON-SITE TEAMS

Q:

How well does your team actively seek diverse perspectives and opinions?

A:

Very or moderately well

(SELECTED BY)

79% vs. 61%

REMOTE TEAMS ON-SITE TEAMS

Q:

How effective is your team at incorporating diverse perspectives into decision-making processes?

A:

Very or moderately effective

(SELECTED BY)

79% vs. 63%

REMOTE TEAMS ON-SITE TEAMS



*Epilogue*



## KEY ACTIONS TO ELEVATE YOUR TEAM'S PERFORMANCE:



### Determine how your team applies the 8 behaviors of high performance

Check in with your employees on how they feel the team is doing. Meet with each team member one on one, or survey the team as a whole (anonymous responses promote more candid feedback). You can also take the survey as a self-assessment for greater clarity. These results identify the areas where your team already excels and where they might need extra support.

### Build an environment of safety and trust and always lead by example

By providing an environment of psychological safety and trust, you give your team the space they need to think outside the box. It activates their creativity, instills confidence, and encourages them to take professional risks they might not otherwise explore. To lead by example and model these behaviors, you set your team up for success. And you reduce employee burnout as well.

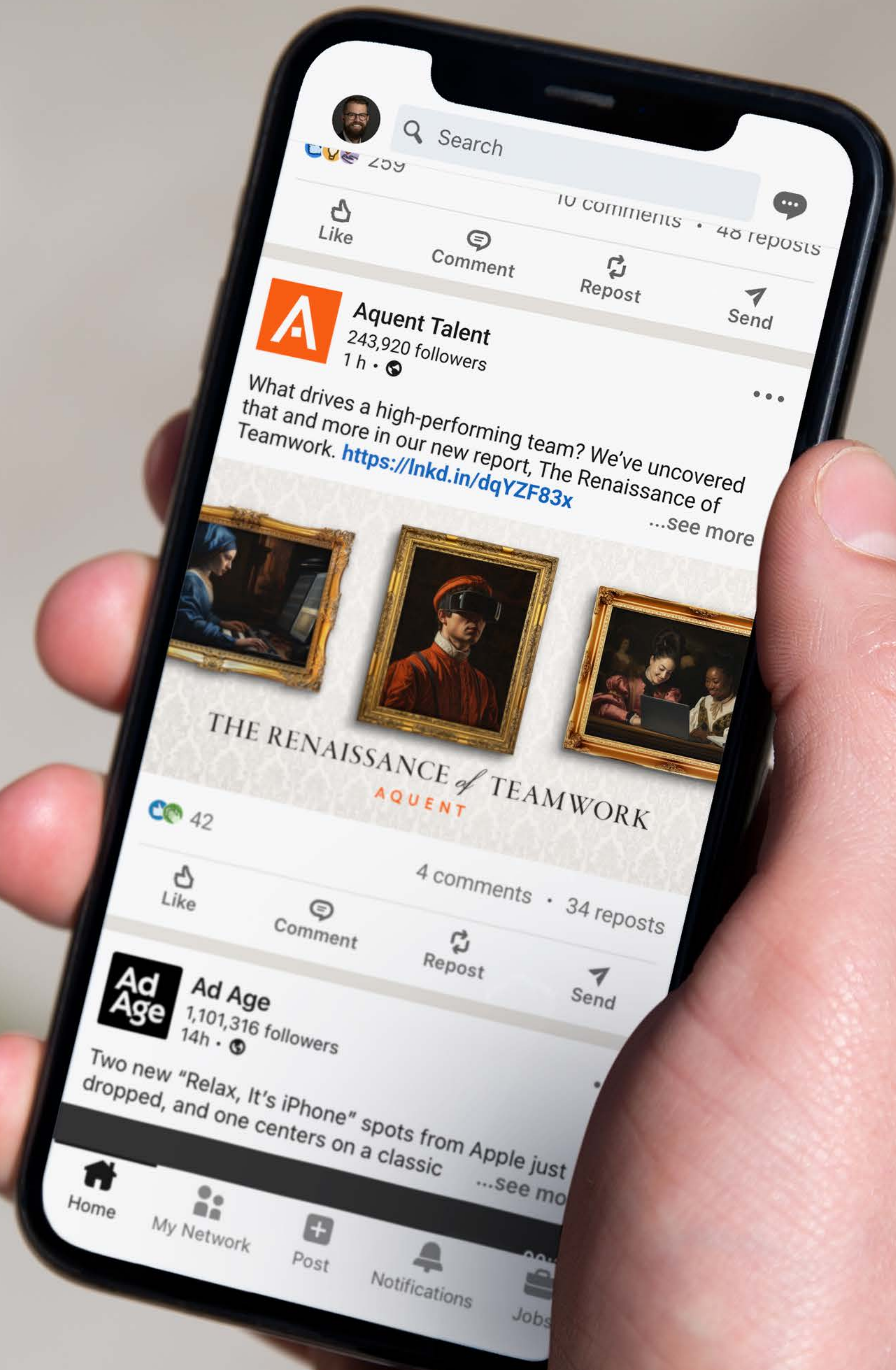
### Break down silos by creating transparent channels of communication

Communication is essential in the workplace, but it can be hard to get right. Particularly when managing remote teams, a level of awareness is required that pushes beyond the comfort zone of some traditional leaders. Always consider how, when, and with whom your team interacts; and be proactive in seeking out diverse opinions and perspectives. This breaks down silos between departments, fosters cross-organizational collaboration, and improves outcomes.









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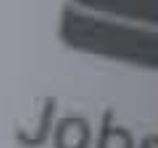
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We surveyed 5,431 professionals worldwide across marketing, creative, and design to understand what drives high-performing teams today.

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**ALTHOUGH EARLY, AI ADOPTERS ARE PACES AHEAD**

Q: How would you rate the level of AI adoption on your team?

A: Excellent or good

41% vs. 26%

HIGH PERFORMING TEAMS vs. LOW TO MODERATELY PERFORMING TEAMS

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**REMOTE TEAMS ATTRACT DIVERSITY AND DRIVE BETTER OUTCOMES**

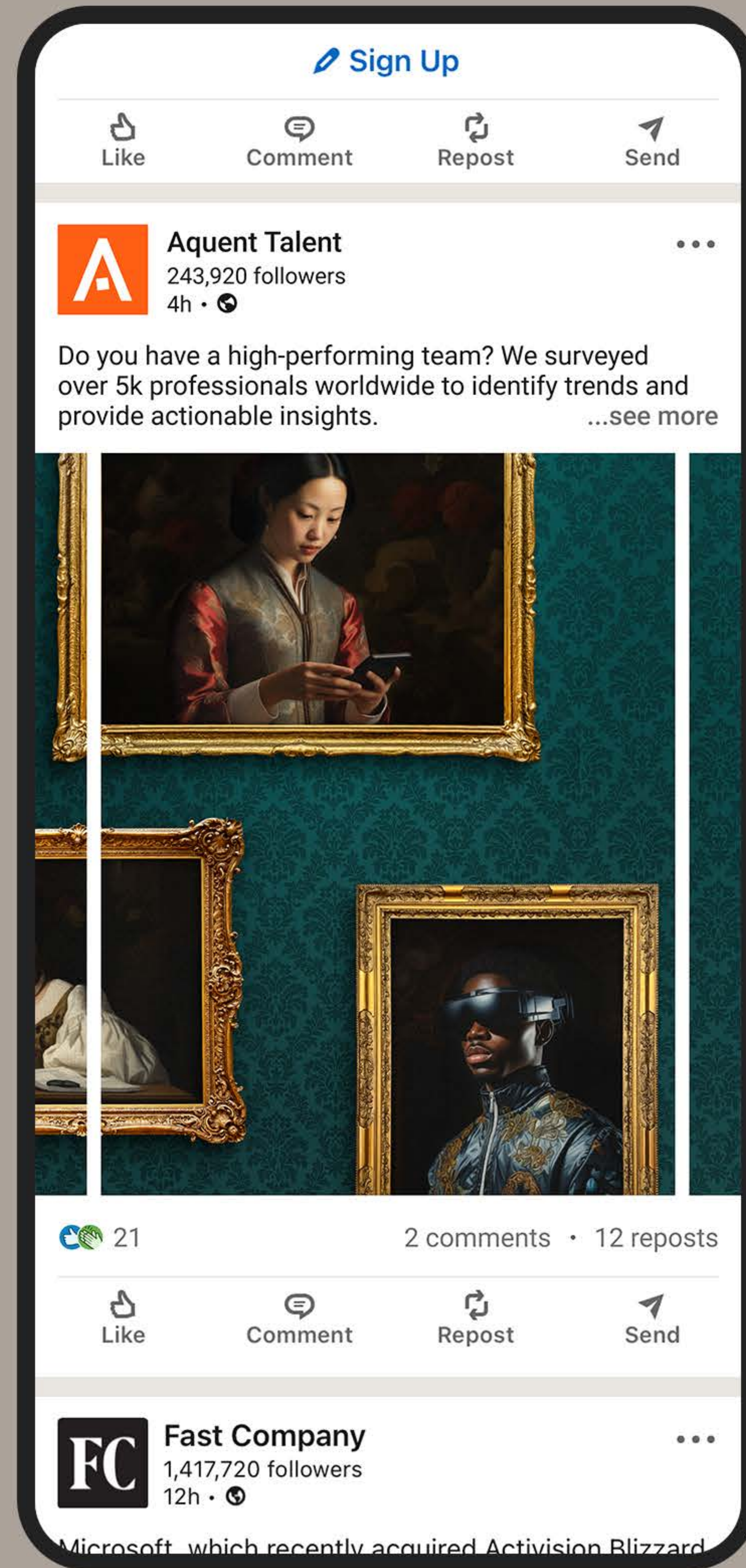
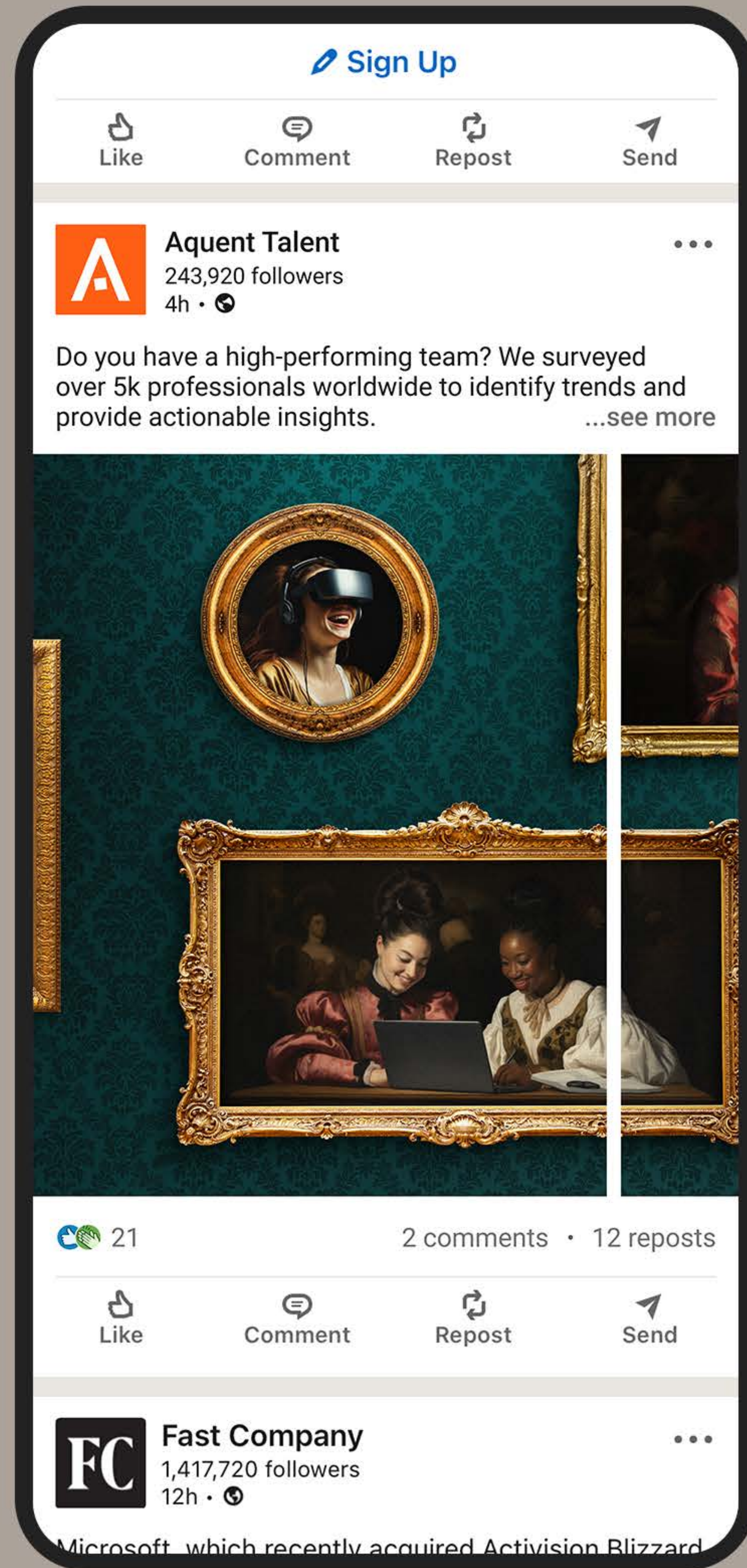
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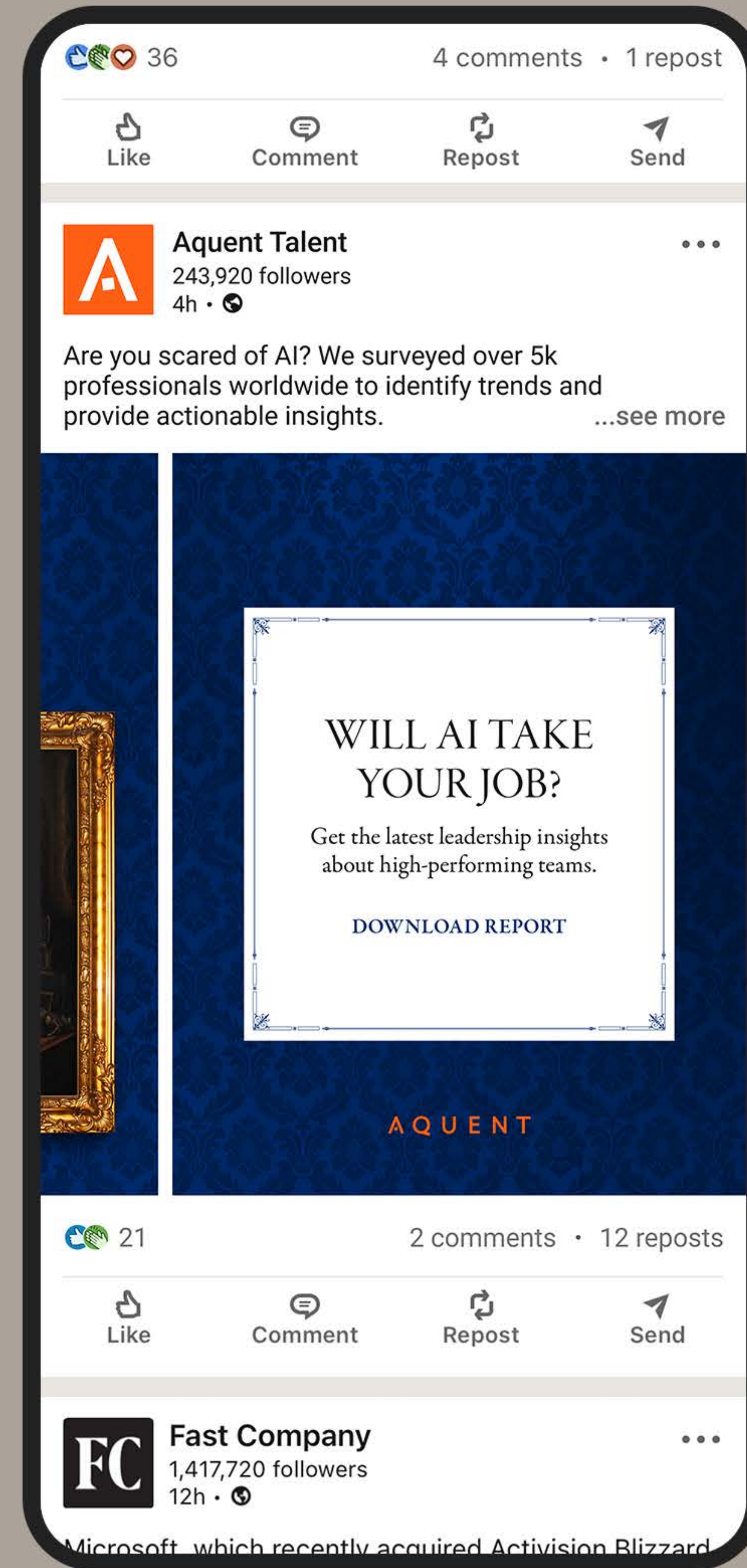
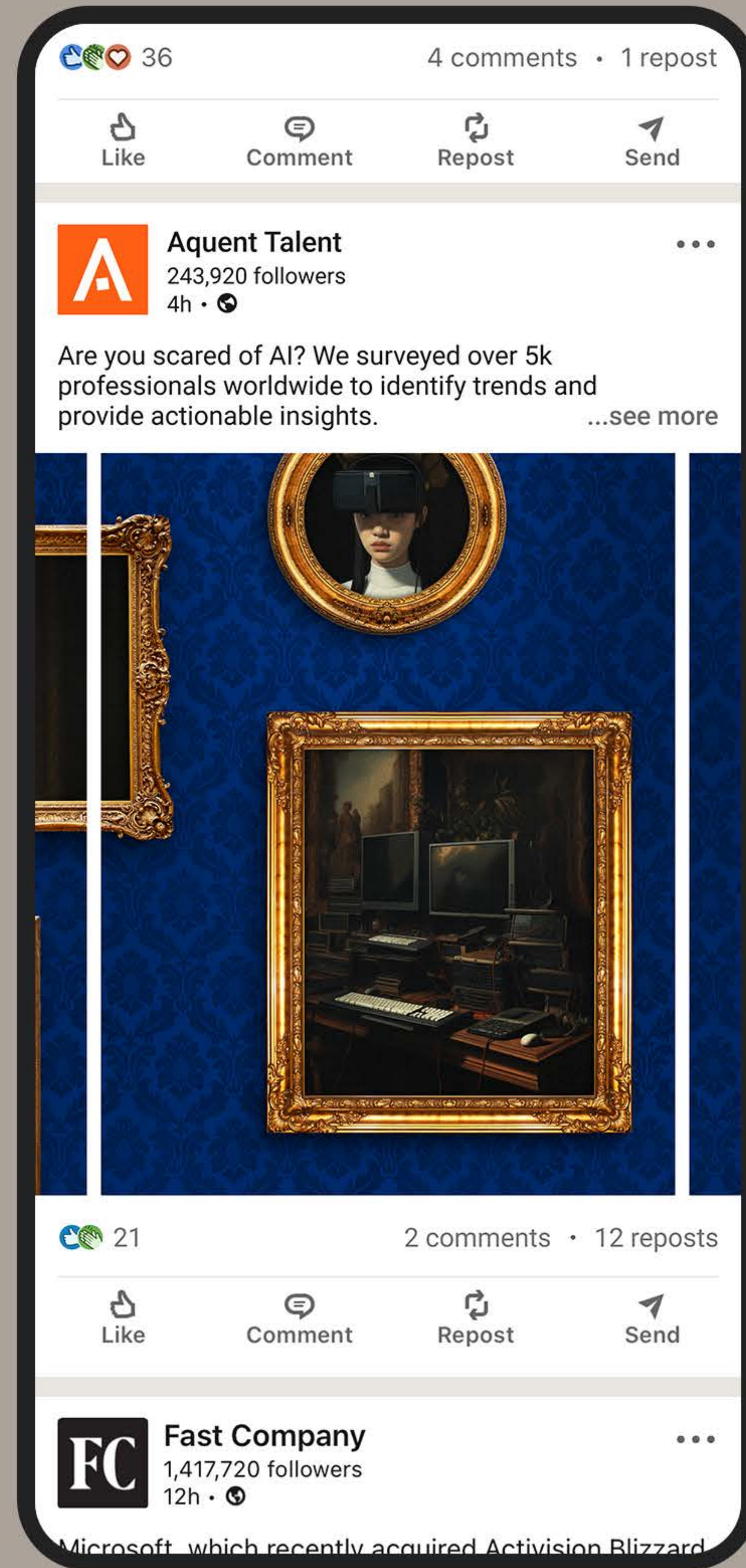
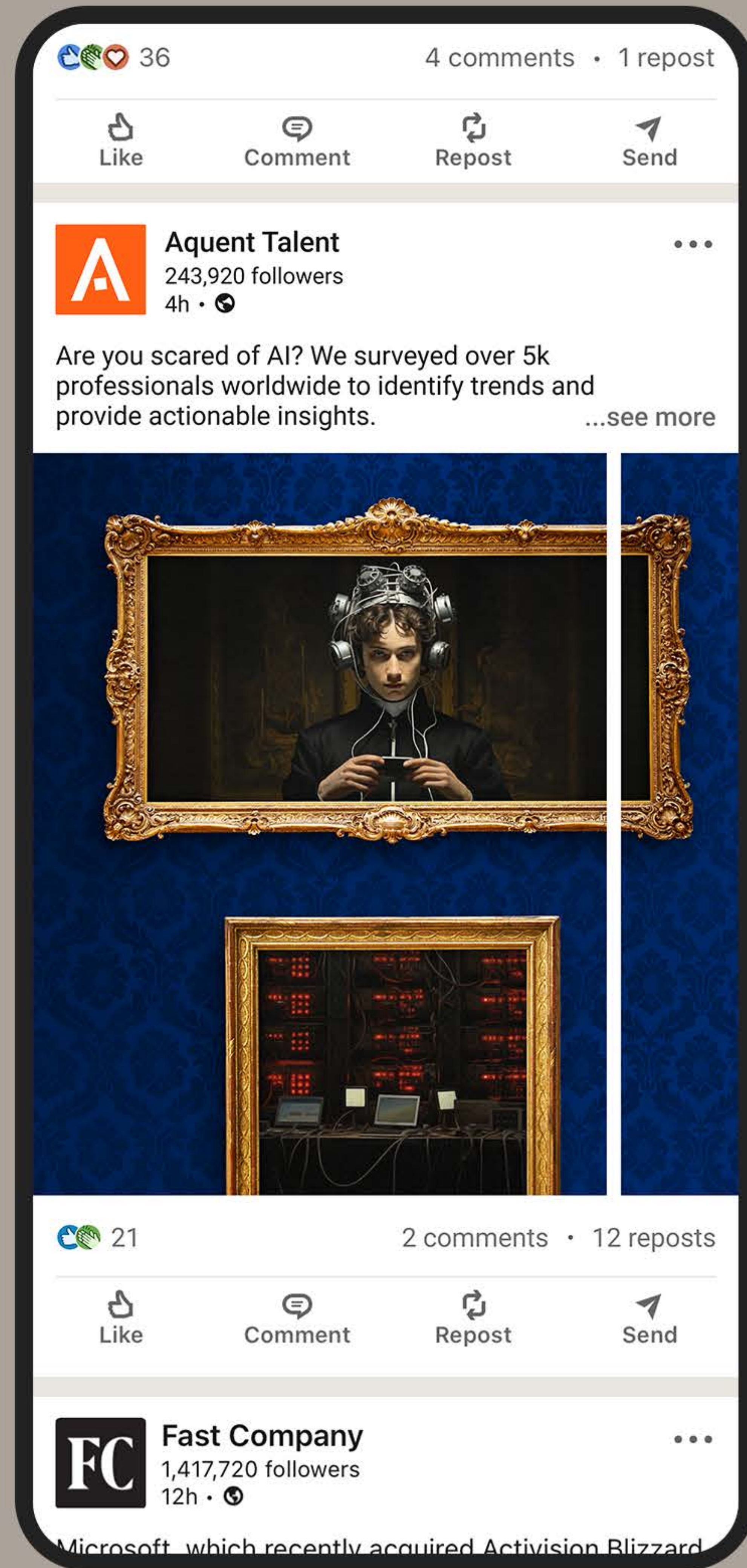
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**ADAPT & INNOVATE**  
Change is inescapable in today's world.

Q:  
How effective is your team in adapting to change and embracing innovation?

A:  
Very or moderately effective

(SELECTED BY)

**96%** vs. **73%**

HIGH-PERFORMING TEAMS vs. LOW-TO-MODERATELY PERFORMING TEAMS

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**MOTIVATED BY BRAND PURPOSE**  
Connection to brand purpose drives performance.

Q:  
How motivated are team members to contribute to fulfilling the company's brand purpose?

A:  
Very or moderately motivated

(SELECTED BY)

**94%** vs. **76%**

HIGH-PERFORMING TEAMS vs. LOW-TO-MODERATELY PERFORMING TEAMS

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DESPITE THE PUSH TO  
ON-SITE, REMOTE REMAINS  
THE CLEAR VICTOR

The advantages are many:

Fewer interruptions. Better work-life balance. Healthier habits. And improvement to career opportunities for working parents and caregivers, ethnically diverse employees, and other underrepresented groups.

All of these factors contribute to stronger team performance and employee retention.

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85% vs. 69%

REMOTE TEAMS vs. ON-SITE TEAMS

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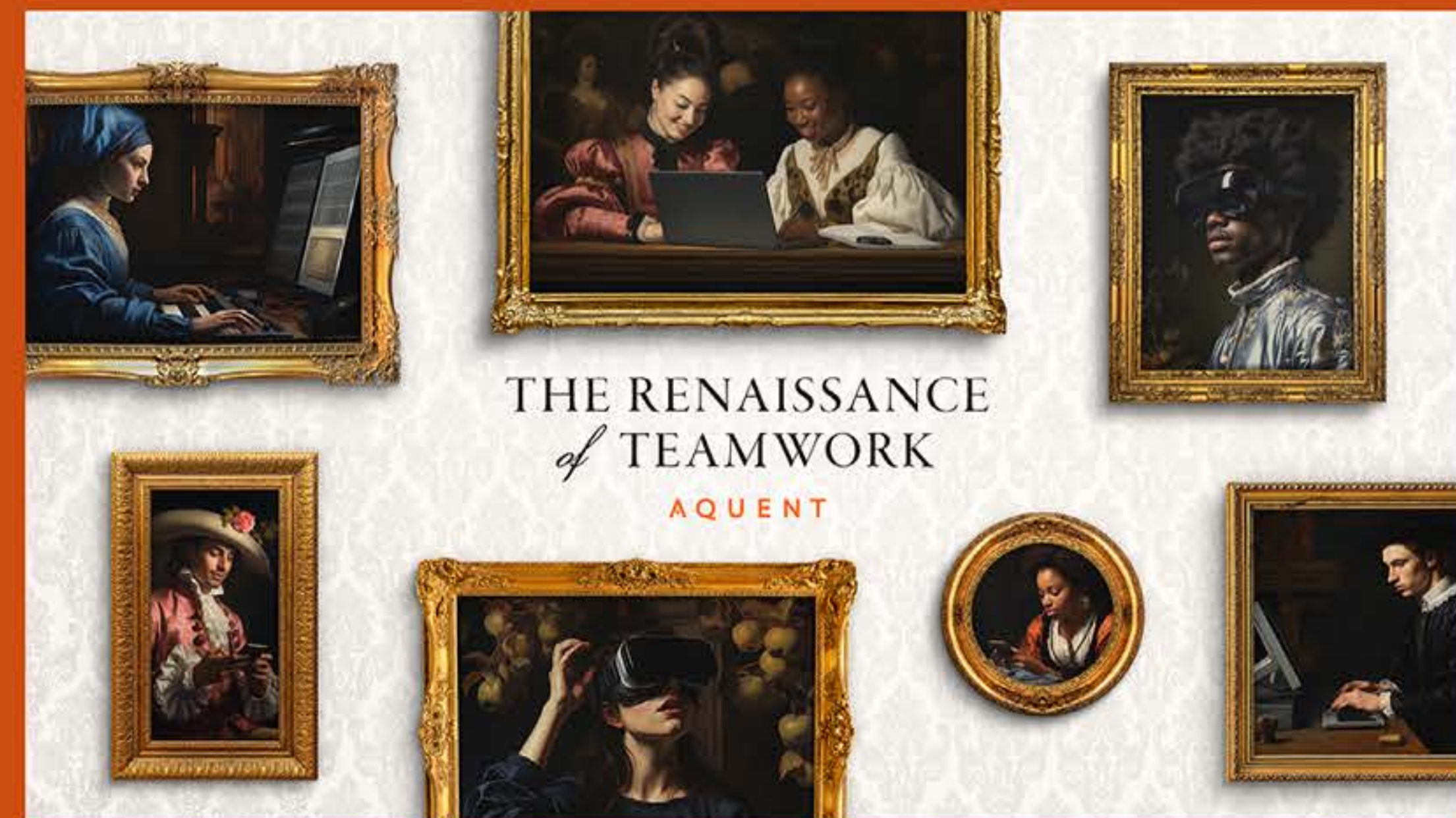
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As a global work solutions company, we help guide businesses toward the talent, technology, and services they need to create a better future of work.

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Setting the stage for great performances.

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In today's workplace, the high-performance team grows more pivotal than ever before.

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John James Smith

LOCATION

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