



# TRENDSETTING



*Virginia Zuloaga, Social Media Manager, Loesche GmbH, Germany, discusses the company's approach to social media and the experiences and opportunities that have arisen from using online platforms.*

**Q** When did Loesche first start using social media? What sites did you use to start with and what sites do you use now?

**A** We decided to start our social media project almost two years ago, in the summer of 2012, because we considered it to be the piece that we were missing in our overall marketing strategy to help us bring Loesche's brand presence to the next level – the push that would take global brand recognition one step further.

It was also important for us to be where our clients, suppliers and employees were, and that was Facebook,

Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and many other social media platforms. We saw this as an opportunity to invite them to connect and keep in touch, while we also became closer and even more open along our communication channels.

That is the reason we joined these sites and, taking into consideration other types of material that could be interesting for communication purposes, Loesche also set up channels on SlideShare and WordPress. The last network that we added to this group was Xing, a platform that has proven to be a great human resources tool for Europe, especially for German speaking countries.



**Q What has been your approach in this conservative industry?**

**A** We communicate differently on each network, as we recognise that members in each of our communities look for different experiences. For instance, our approach on Facebook is more casual and visual due to the nature of the site. We focus on offering stories, trivia and the more human aspect of our brand and we try to involve community members in our experiences.

On Twitter we have a more informative approach. For us, Twitter is the channel where we can share all types of information, re-share relevant and interesting news and promote our website and other channels. We are mostly connected to other companies from the industry or related industries and we support each other in order to improve reach and engagement. As it is such a powerful tool, we believe it is important to maintain a high level of communication on Twitter.

On other platforms such as YouTube and SlideShare, Loesche intends to share more technical information that can be useful for clients, engineers at all levels, as well as people interested in the company's products and services.

LinkedIn and Xing are primarily focused on human resources, with the added value of sharing Loesche's news and general information about products and services. We are constantly developing content that can be of interest to those who would like to learn more about our brand.

We also keep a blog on WordPress where we inform our readers about our latest news.

We look to offer all the content that we have available and it is wonderful to be able to count on so many horizontal and vertical social networks for this purpose.

**Q Has your attitude/expectations regarding the impact of social media changed over the time you have been using it?**

**A** Over the past couple of years we have learned that each network has a different reaction regarding what it likes, and preferences for content, engagement and the use of each network varies. The profiles of members in our various social media communities

are also different, as each person looks for a specific experience.

With regards to impact, we have witnessed the value of the well known 'word-of-mouth' that social media represents nowadays. Loesche's website is an indispensable tool for offering information about the brand, such as news, events, careers, etc., and the implementation of social media has helped to improve the website's visibility on Google Search results.

As an international company with subsidiaries in many countries around the world, this has also helped us to show the more international side of our brand, in addition to providing us with a new possibility – the potential to connect with our clients, stakeholders, suppliers, engineers, etc., while offering them a number of ways to contact us. We are here, and we are always available for them.

**Q What is your target audience on social media?**

**A** Among our communities, we always look to have clients, suppliers, Loesche employees, potential staff members, experts and members of the general public that are interested in the industry.

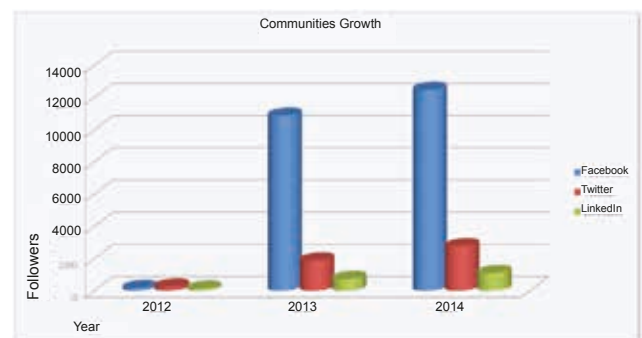
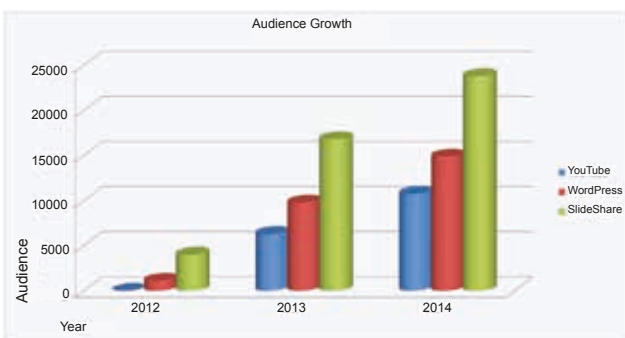
Up until now we have identified our target audience on our seven social media channels and we are always working towards improving the content that we share with them to ensure a valuable experience.

**Q What kind of response do you receive from the cement industry?**

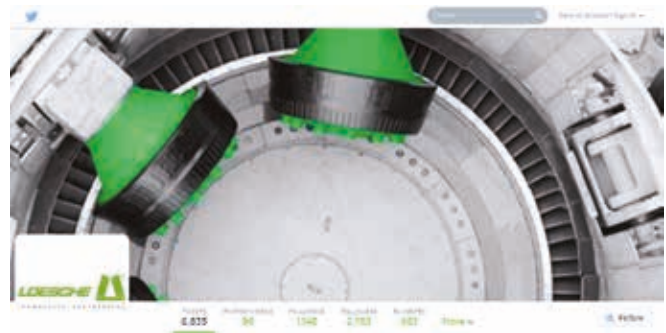
**A** We have experienced different responses, each of them very valuable to us. For example, on our Facebook channel, we are glad to engage with people working at cement plants. They have been enthusiastic and supportive so far, always willing to interact by liking, commenting and sharing. Some even share their own stories with us!

On Twitter the responses have been diverse. Since we connect with companies related to the industry, either directly or indirectly, we have engaged in different kinds of conversations over the last few years, most of them very cooperative.

Loesche's social media performance.



In addition to its website, Loesche's online presence extends across several social media platforms.



We also discovered a high level of impact in terms of promoting job offers, especially for engineers, making it a valuable tool for HR purposes.

On SlideShare, in addition to a significant number of visits, Loesche has had many downloads every month regarding the technical information that we share with users. We are pleased that the documents that we upload are useful to them. SlideShare is an excellent tool for finding technical information at all levels and in many industries.

All in all, the approach of using seven networks together to achieve one main goal has proven to be highly efficient for connecting and interacting with communities that are willing to exchange ideas. *World Cement's* group on LinkedIn is a great example of this.

We are grateful for the support that we receive on each network. We would not be where we are today if it was not for the people within these communities.

**Q** Do you have any examples of a particular success story that could give us an idea of the spread of publicity possible from using social media?

**A** Loesche always tries to be one step ahead and we are proud to play an important role in social media as a market leader.

At the beginning of 2014, we were very happy to find out that we had reached several social media milestones, particularly on Facebook and SlideShare.

In terms of performance, thanks to Likealyzer (Facebook LikeRank), an analytics tool by Meltwater, we found out that we had reached first place on Facebook among engineering and construction companies in Germany. We even reached first place in this category worldwide, which is a huge achievement for us. These rankings change from day to day depending on the engagement of a community with a fan page, but we still maintain a high level of engagement to date.

On SlideShare, Loesche was among the top 3% of the most visited companies in 2013. We were very happy to be a part of this group. SlideShare is a relatively new channel that not too many people are aware of, but it offers a lot of value.

One of our latest discoveries, and one example of the great impact of word-of-mouth, is escalating over

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900 000 positions on Alexa rankings thanks to the force of an online HR campaign. We recently opened a new office in Nigeria so during one month we had many website stories, tweets and Facebook posts linking back to the company's main site. Visits to Loesche's website escalated significantly and mentions of @LoescheGroup on Twitter skyrocketed. All this exceeded our expectations and we received a large number of job applications within a short period of time.

In our experience, it is vital to keep a branding campaign alive; to lay solid foundations and create an image that your audience identifies with. Perseverance and great content are two key factors to keep in mind when building a presence on social networks. It is also important to be where your audience is, offer them the experience that they are looking for and be available to them.

**Q** How would you compare your approach to the way other companies in this industry are using social media?

**A** We believe that every brand finds its own voice on social media. We are aware that there are great examples to follow out there and, in our case, in the cement industry. However, we are also conscious that although we have similar interests, we also have different ideas and experiences to share.

We are delighted to have the opportunity that we have today, to be able to communicate with everyone in a more direct way and to demonstrate the human side of the Loesche brand. This is one of the things that we like most about social media: changing a brand from an "it" to an "us" – to the people that make the brand. 🌐