University of Zurich Social Media Strategy

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March 2019

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1 Background

The University of Zurich (UZH) has a diverse social media presence. The main channels of UZH are centrally maintained by the Communications Office, while other units of UZH run their own channels. This includes the University's seven faculties, more than 140 institutes and seminars, research groups, individual degree programs, student organizations, alumni organizations, libraries, museums, and other centralized and decentralized organizations.

The breadth of UZH's social media presence reflects the diversity of the University. However, there are significant differences when it comes to social media activity levels. Some units and employees such as researchers are very active, while others only participate irregularly or are not active on social media at all. There are few dedicated social media managers. Communication managers take on this role at some faculties and institutes. The UZH Communications Office itself has only had a Head of Social Media responsible for the University's social media presence since September 2018.

2 Goals, Strategies and Measures

The aims of UZH's social media channels are based on the communication aims and principles of the University. They apply to the main social media channels and serve as overarching aims for the social media presence of other UZH units.

2.1 Community building

Goal: To instill pride in students, alumni and staff as members of the UZH community, and establish a clear, long-lasting sense of identification with the University.

Strategy: We want to use social media to strengthen our dialogue with students and staff and encourage exchange within these target groups, both on our main channels and the channels belonging to other UZH units.

Measures:
– We will continue expanding the main social media channels of UZH.
– We offer advice and training to other UZH units to empower and encourage them to run their own social media channels, as they are more closely connected to their own content, communities and target groups.
– We design our content to encourage interaction and the exchange of knowledge and experiences.
– We develop formats that give a voice to our students, alumni and staff – the most important ambassadors for UZH.
– We celebrate important events and the successes of our students and staff.

2.2 Reputation building

Goal: To cultivate an international perception of UZH as the best comprehensive university in Switzerland and one of the best in Europe.

Strategy: We use social media to regularly communicate our activities and successes.

Measures:
– We actively communicate UZH's good position in recognized rankings.
– We provide more visibility for the academic and extracurricular successes of our students, researchers, teaching staff and alumni.
– We provide more visibility for excellent researchers, in particular our professors, by posting content about them and empowering them to maintain their own social media presence. The latter gives us the possibility of sharing their posts via our main social media channels, thereby giving UZH more visibility.
– We communicate in two languages – German and English – in order to maintain international visibility as well.

2.3 Positioning UZH as a first-choice educational institution

Goal: To ensure that current and prospective students perceive UZH as a preferred place of study.

Strategy: We use social media to communicate the diversity of our course offerings and to provide insights into life at the University.

Measures:
– We provide visibility for degree programs both big and small.
– We give insights into interesting lectures, seminars and projects.
– We portray the diversity of student organizations and activities.
– We place increasing emphasis on a peer-to-peer approach: content for students by students.

2.4 Publicizing UZH research

Goal: To share knowledge generated at UZH with society.

Strategy: We actively communicate new research findings.

Measures:
– We make increasing use of multimedia formats to make research accessible.
– We use language that is easy for the general public to understand and that does not require extensive prior knowledge.

3 Target Groups by Platform

The University of Zurich has a large variety of target groups, both internal and external. Depending on the platform, UZH can find itself in a conversation with the following target groups:

Target group	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	YouTube (subchannels depending on topic/target group)	LinkedIn
Students	x	x		x	
Researchers			x	x	x
Staff	x			x	x
Alumni	x			x	x
Prospective students	x	x		x	
Prospective researchers and staff			x	x	x
Science community			x	x	
Other universities			x	x	
Political community			x	x	
Business community			x	x	x
Media			x	x	
Society	x			x	

4 Platforms and Content

Each social media channel follows its own logic and offers UZH different possibilities to achieve its communication goals. This means that content should be adapted depending on where it is published.

4.1 FACEBOOK – close to the people (www.facebook.com/uzh.ch)

Profile: The UZH Facebook page aims to promote a positive image of the University – both internally and externally – as an open, accessible, attractive and lively place for studying, research and student life. For members of the University, the Facebook channel serves as a place to discover surprising and useful information from familiar and unfamiliar areas of the University. Those not associated with the University should feel invited to explore the diverse world of UZH.

Language: German and English. In German, the informal "du" form is to be used.

Target groups: Students, prospective students, UZH staff

Content:

– Content that promotes feelings of pride (e.g. rankings, exceptional academic achievements, occasional posts on students' exceptional extracurricular achievements)
– Content that inspires (e.g. projects and portraits of inspiring people at UZH)
– Content that surprises (e.g. impressive facts and figures about UZH and its students)

– Content that people find useful (e.g. events, research findings with relevance to day-to-day life, library opening hours)
– Content that promotes interaction and connection (e.g. impressions from events with high student attendance, surveys, competitions)

Numerous units of UZH have their own Facebook page. Content from these pages can be shared on the main UZH page if it meets the criteria listed above.

Selection criteria: We prefer content that engages the emotions, is accessible, promotes dialogue, is close to the people, is entertaining, arouses curiosity, promotes a positive image of UZH, and addresses a broad spectrum of internal and external target groups.

Frequency: Three to four posts per week.

4.2 TWITTER – the news channel (https://twitter.com/uzh_ch)

Profile: Newsworthy updates from UZH relevant to people interested in academia and education.

Language: German and English. In German, the informal "du" form is to be used with students. Use the formal "Sie" form with all others.

Target groups: People in Switzerland and abroad who are interested in academia, education and university politics. This includes researchers, journalists, decision-makers, opinion leaders, UZH members and alumni.

Content: News about research findings, successes, events that generate good publicity, important personnel changes. Tweets by UZH members and those close to the University can be shared if they meet these criteria. When creating a tweet, it is better to ask questions rather than list off a series of facts.

Selection criteria: Traditionally newsworthy topics, relevance to UZH. This also applies to retweets.

Frequency: One to three times per day, but can be more if necessary (e.g. live tweeting an event).

4.3 LINKEDIN – sharing successes with successful people (www.linkedin.com/school/uzh/)

Profile: On LinkedIn, UZH aims to present itself as an attractive, future-oriented research institution with international reach as well as an attractive employer.

Language: Primarily English. When writing in German, the formal "Sie" form is to be used.

Target groups: UZH members (primarily alumni and staff), prospective staff, professionals working in an academic environment, decision-makers and opinion leaders from academia, business, politics and the arts.

Content: Successes by UZH researchers, rankings, strategic institutional decisions, personnel matters relevant to the University as a whole, portraits of staff and alumni, blogs on key topics, working models at UZH, job openings.

Selection criteria: Here the focus is on content that builds the reputation of UZH. The content should reinforce the status of UZH as an institution of learning and research.

Frequency: Two to three posts per week.

4.4 INSTAGRAM – showcase of life at UZH (www.instagram.com/uzh.ch)

Profile: On Instagram, UZH aims to create an emotional, evocative connection with students and to strengthen the feeling of community at the University. Currently Instagram is the most-used channel among the 18- to 24-year-old target group. The UZH Instagram page will be run together with various student organizations in the future.

Language: English, sometimes German in Instagram Stories. In German, the informal "du" form is to be used.

Target groups: Mainly current and prospective students as well as UZH employees.

Content: Impressions of the campus, insights into the lives of UZH students (portraits, account takeovers), student events and activities at UZH.

Selection criteria:

–   The visual language should be authentic, emotional and aesthetically pleasing.
–   The focus is on portraying student life, studying and research at UZH.

Frequency: Two to three posts per week. Two to three Instagram Stories per week.

4.5 YOUTUBE – the UZH video portal (www.youtube.com/uzhch)

Profile: On YouTube, UZH has the opportunity to present itself in video format. YouTube is the second biggest search engine in the world after Google. This is why we should increasingly emphasize the use of videos to communicate information on our research and teaching.

Language: German and English. In German, the informal "du" form is to be used with students. Use the formal "Sie" form with all others.

Target groups: all (playlists tailored to different target groups and topics)

Content:

–   Presentation of degree programs
–   How-to videos (how to apply to UZH, how to study abroad, etc.)
–   Insider tips for students by students
–   Short, easy to understand research videos
–   Portraits of UZH members
–   Impressions of important events

Selection criteria: All high-quality videos on topics with longer-term relevance that are produced by or for UZH will be placed on YouTube and catalogued in the appropriate playlist.

Frequency: At least one high-quality video per month.

This information is based on a report on the channels of UZH Communications and their reputation (*Die Kanäle der UZH Kommunikation und ihre Profile*, as of 27 February 2019).

5 Roles and Responsibilities

Communications Office

The social media team, part of Digital Communications, is responsible for running UZH's main social media channels. Social media managers and selected editors post content and respond to comments and questions on the main channels.

Social media managers offer training to other units of UZH, advise them on setting up and maintaining their own social media channels, and coordinate networking in this regard.

The Communications Office also provides guidelines on how UZH is to formally present itself on social media, both generally (how to name the channels, profile image templates that meet CI/CD standards, etc.) and regarding specific use by UZH units and members.

Topics and comments that could damage the reputation of the University are to be discussed with the person responsible for issue management within the Communications Office.

Faculties, institutes and seminars

Other units of UZH – e.g. faculties, institutes, chairs, etc. – have their own accounts, which they maintain independently. We explicitly encourage diversity in this regard.

Defining and approving content

Comms team weekly topic selection meeting: Prioritization of content for main channels
Comms team 9 a.m. meeting: Daily meeting to agree on current topics for main channels
Head of Comms: Approval sought when necessary
Communications Network of the Faculties (*Kommunikationskreis Fakultäten, KKF*): Planning and coverage of bigger topics (Faculties -> Comms and Comms -> Faculties)

6 Monitoring

The social media team regularly pulls reports in order to measure, document and optimize UZH's social media presence and its impact.
- – Monthly reports for the Communications Office
- – Annual report for the Executive Board of the University