

How a century-old German manufacturer reengineered its global sales strategy with LinkedIn



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When AS-Schneider Group was founded as a precision mechanics workshop in 1875, it was already ahead of its time. It continued to push the engineering boundaries over the next 140 years and, in the process, established itself as a world leader in the manufacture of industrial valves. Now, the brand is focused on reengineering its sales strategy to win in a digitally connected world.

AS-Schneider’s market leadership puts it in an enviable position where it receives unsolicited sales inquiries but this has encouraged a passive sales approach, according to Tim-Frederik Kohler, AS-Schneider’s Global Chief Sales Officer. He believes that the brand needs to be more proactive and targeted in its sales efforts in order to seize opportunities in markets outside the brand’s stronghold of Europe and protect its leadership position against growing competition.

We sat down with Tim to find out how AS-Schneider reengineered its global sales strategy with LinkedIn Sales Navigator.

Q: What was the impetus for change?

In the three years between 2011 and 2013, we strengthened our international presence with successive new offices in Singapore, Dubai, and Houston to respectively serve Asia Pacific, the Middle East, and the United States. These are all

high-potential markets, but they are also markedly different from our home market of Europe.

To reach our potential customers, we would have to build a massive sales force but, even then, we would see little success if we did not understand the markets. We needed a different way to sell—one that would give us insights into our target audience and allow us to engage them meaningfully in a resource-efficient manner.

“ **With LinkedIn Sales Navigator, our sales outreach quadrupled in a year. We went from 2,500 to over 10,000 sessions without significantly growing our sales force.** ”



Tim-Frederik Kohler
Global Chief Sales Officer,
AS-Schneider Group

Why LinkedIn?

- Access to the world’s largest professional network with more than 562 million users in 200 countries
- Precise targeting capabilities to identify, connect and engage with a global audience

Objectives

- To amplify sales reach in a resource efficient manner
- To identify and engage target audiences based on their needs
- To generate new sales leads

Solutions

- LinkedIn Sales Navigator

Results

- Grew sales outreach by over 4X within a year
- Closed deals valued at €48,000 (US\$56,000)
- Created open opportunities estimated at €100,000 (US\$117,000)
- Directed over 3,200 first-time visitors to its website from LinkedIn

“It was a big change for us to drop cold calling and adopt social selling on LinkedIn. Naturally, there was some resistance but we are generating good results and the numbers speak for themselves.”



Tim-Frederik Kohler
Global Chief Sales Officer,
AS-Schneider Group



Q: How did LinkedIn Sales Navigator make a difference?

With LinkedIn Sales Navigator, we are able to reach out to the right people, whether based on job title, function, seniority, industry, company, or geography. This creates the opportunity for us to influence the buying decision early in the process.

By the time a Request for Quote has been issued, we estimate that about 60% of the buying process has already been completed. At that point, we are engaging the customer’s procurement team, rather than the engineers onsite whose problems we are trying to solve. Our goal is to engage the engineers at an early stage to understand their reality—the issues they face, and the solutions that we can offer.

Q: Could you give us an example?

In one instance, through LinkedIn, we discovered that many engineers grapple with carpal tunnel syndrome. This can happen when the valves they operate are high torque, which makes it difficult to open and close. We used LinkedIn Sales Navigator to identify this specific audience and introduced our low-torque product, which can literally be operated with one finger.

Q: What results have you seen?

We are definitely enjoying greater sales efficiency and effectiveness with LinkedIn Sales Navigator. In the span of



just one year, it has helped my team close €48,000 (US\$56,000) worth of deals. We are also actively pursuing an estimated €100,000 (US\$117,000) worth of qualified leads right now.

Q: What’s your take on the future of selling?

I think that sales will only become more digital in the years to come, and social selling will continue to be an effective strategy. As a team, we have internal targets for our Social Selling Index and I’m happy to share that we have already exceeded industry benchmarks. Of course, there is always room for improvement, which is why we have introduced training sessions during our global sales meetings. It’s important to build those skills today, if we are to succeed tomorrow.

Visit sales.linkedin.com to learn how other sales professionals are hitting their targets with ease.



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