

Toshiba Corporation Case Study

Toshiba Draws 160,000+ New Customer Prospects Worldwide. Enjoys Content Marketing Success for "Smart Community" with LinkedIn Showcase Pages and SlideShare channel



Toshiba Corporation's corporate mission is to leverage communications technologies to promote renewable energies and the concept of a "smart community." Electricity, water, traffic, health care, and lifestyle information can be comprehensively managed and optimally controlled, as well as further developed on a global scale.

However, Toshiba had a big problem with marketing.

"Web searches for 'Smart Community' and 'Smart Grid' yielded no hits for any of Toshiba's web pages, and only showed other companies' pages. This was to be expected as the amount of content we had put out was overwhelmingly small. Although we were working to strengthen Smart Community projects, we were losing business opportunities to other companies online," said Takafumi Arai, in charge of Toshiba's digital marketing.



Sales Division, Advertising Department, Digital Marketing Supervisor and Advisor

Takafumi Arai

Background

Mr. Arai played a central role as Toshiba moved to improve the situation. In 2011, Toshiba set up the "Toshiba Smart Community" website, with information on Toshiba's smart communities in English and Japanese. YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter were all utilized to increase traffic to the company site. After a year of continuously increasing content, Toshiba appeared at the top of search results and visitor numbers had increased.

However, Mr. Arai had a question. "The purpose was not to simply increase traffic. These marketing efforts were meaningless unless they contributed inherently and directly to our business. In other words, they must lead to the acquisition of customers. My thinking was our site is not simply a site to

Issues

- Global awareness of Toshiba's B2B projects like its "smart community" initiative was abysmally low.
- The amount of smart community related content that Toshiba had published online was sparse – and invisible to search engines.
- As a result, countless business opportunities were being lost to Toshiba's competitors.

Rationale

- LinkedIn is the network for professionals. With so many members abroad, Toshiba can raise the international profile of its various B2B projects and engage potential customers.
- SlideShare makes it easy to share business slides with professionals both at home and around the world.
- LinkedIn Showcase pages and SlideShare content ads can deliver valuable content to their targeted audience and effectively communicate with potential customers.

Results

- Toshiba's Showcase page has over 160,000 followers (as of September 2014)
- SlideShare scores highest and LinkedIn second highest for social media lead conversion rates.
- Toshiba acquired potential customers from Asia to North America.
- Toshiba was ranked the most influential Japanese company on LinkedIn thanks to its content marketing efforts.

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deliver information. It needs to be positioned as a clear marketing tool." So in 2013, he revamped the Toshiba site, increased content for B2B marketing, such as blogs and white papers, and refocused on the LinkedIn and SlideShare social media sites.



Sponsored Updates Campaign Screenshot

Result

In February 2014, Toshiba was the first Japanese company to set up a Showcase page on LinkedIn. A Showcase page is specially crafted for marketing. "Sponsored updates" content can be delivered to targeted recipients, like with a company page. "You can update a specific group of LinkedIn users likely to be interested in particular content. The ability to change recipients based upon their level of interest is a benefit of LinkedIn," said Mr. Arai. Toshiba actually delivers tailored content to select LinkedIn users based on their industry, occupation and location. Linking with the company's own

"Toshiba Smart Community" site, this channel was used as a unique marketing tool to distribute their B2B content globally. Followers surpassed 160,000 in number by September 2014. Content is currently delivered only in English, but other languages are also planned.

Toshiba opened its official SlideShare account in April 2013, and developed their first "SlideShare Content Ad" in Japan in August 2014. This feature publishes business slides as ads on LinkedIn and delivers them to targeted recipients. Toshiba is now expanding by first delivering content to LinkedIn users in

Singapore and Malaysia targeted to their industries and occupations, then opening up to other locations. Both Showcase pages and SlideShare content ads are used as an effective "content marketing" tool with valuable information and insights delivered to the people they want to approach. Ultimately, their success is indicated by prospective customer acquisition, measured by the number of inquiries and the business contact information users enter when downloading white papers. "We measure lead conversion rates (the percentage of visitors who become customers) for each social media channel. The highest was SlideShare, followed by LinkedIn. As a result, Toshiba, which had low global name recognition in B2B, is currently acquiring many potential customers not only in Asia, but also North America and India. Among potential customers, the number of cases that lead to concrete negotiations is increasing as well," said Mr. Arai.

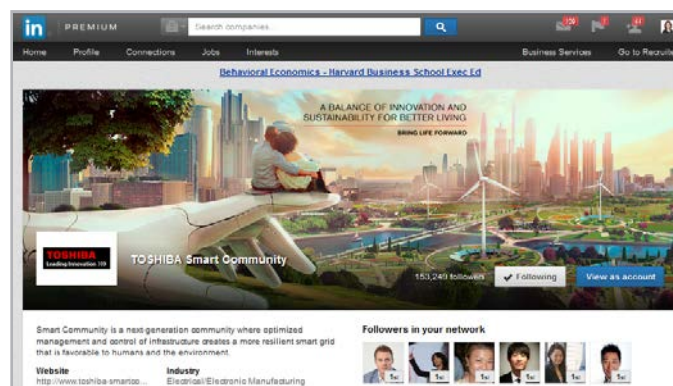
Success Stories and Future Prospects

In addition to mastering the use of LinkedIn and SlideShare for content marketing, the close relationship with sales is one of Toshiba's key advantages. Toshiba is not simply sharing information instantaneously with potential customers. The company is also actively incorporating the opinions of salespeople to create content likely to entice prospective customers to Toshiba.

In the future, the focus will expand to imagery and content produced overseas. Toshiba believes content creation with a global focus is vital to compete successfully with Western companies. "Our international competition posts more online content than we do by an entire order of magnitude. If Toshiba does not focus on content marketing, we will not survive as a global company," said Mr. Arai. In addition to content quantity and quality, the effective use of professional-oriented social media such as LinkedIn and SlideShare is pivotal to Toshiba's goal of attracting new global business.



Slideshare Content Ad Campaign Screenshot



Toshiba Smart Community Showcase Page

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