Test-Aankoop creates Europe-wide, collaborative, and interactive community based on Verint Community

Opportunity

Test-Aankoop is one of the leading consumer rights organisations in Europe, providing customers with informed, independent advice into the purchase of goods and services. Headquartered in Belgium, Test-Aankoop delivers this advice by testing products, highlighting inferior products or services, and raising awareness of consumer rights. Beyond Belgium, the non-profit has tight collaboration with consumer rights organisations in Spain, Italy, and Portugal.

Test-Aankoop is a great believer in the maxim "you don't stay ahead by standing still." Despite already having close to one million satisfied customers, the organisation aims to grow this number significantly and offer an even more rewarding and responsive consumer rights service.

Social engagement is a major factor in this strategy. Test-Aankoop understands that a collaborative relationship — driven through digital marketing and support communities — has the potential to create deeper and richer customer relationships. Moreover, an online social community can provide unique, real-time insight into customers' needs, preferences, and behaviour — "Voice of the Customer" insight that can be used to tailor existing services and create new ones.

However, according to Bram Vermeire, IT manager at Test-Aankoop, early attempts at building an online community were not entirely successful. "Our customers are interacting socially all the time, and so should we. Here in Belgium, our online customer forum offered limited functionality and demanded a significant degree of manual administrative intervention. It simply wasn't flexible enough to take Test-Aankoop into the future."

The catalyst for change occurred when Test-Aankoop unveiled a new consumer program focused on renewable energy. Established with the aim of increasing awareness of the benefits of using sustainable energy both in the home and at work, the new program was an ideal opportunity to deploy a next-generation online community.

Test-Aankoop had previously standardised on Sitecore as its Web content management system (CMS), and it was Sitecore that recommended Verint® Community™. "We enjoy a long and trusted partnership with Sitecore, so when they suggested [Verint] Community for our online community platform, we didn't hesitate," says Vermeire. "The solution operates straight out of the box, it's intuitive to use, and, of course, it integrates seamlessly with our existing Sitecore environment."

Solution

Verint Community provides Test-Aankoop with a flexible, highly customizable online community platform. Customers use this dynamic, immersive social environment to share their experiences of renewable energy. In time, the community will be widened to support other consumer rights activities.

Discussion groups in the forum include, for example, customers discussing the merits of investing in solar panels, such as which provider offers the best deals and which panels perform best. Another group shares the value of using different forms of energy to heat water systems. And another debates whether energy prices are likely to rise in the short-term.

Solutions

Verint® Community™*

Industry

Consumer Services

Region

Europe

Results

- **Created a collaborative, interactive community for some 9,000 users across four European countries.**

- **Increased brand awareness and loyalty.**

- **Improved customer intelligence and insight.**

VERINT

* Formerly known as Telligent® Community™

"The forums enable us to create interesting and engaging customer dialogue," explains Mike Desaever, functional analyst at Test-Aankoop. "We can moderate discussions, responses can be flat or threaded, and the audience can 'like' thread replies, with the highest rated content surfaced up front. The tool is genuinely transformative."

A key aspect of that transformative capability is the rapid, straightforward open source integration with Test-Aankoop's Sitecore Web CMS. Verint Community runs side-by-side with Sitecore, delivering social applications and services along with user-generated content directly in the Sitecore platform.

Desaever and his team use Verint Community's REST web services, together with single sign-on authentication, to extract the data from the community platform and instantly populate the Sitecore environment. "The [Verint] Community-Sitecore integration is fast and seamless," Desaever says. "Having previously developed the Sitecore system, we were immediately at home in the [Verint] Community developer ecosystem. Like Sitecore, [Verint] Community is built on the Microsoft .NET platform and the integration is published as an open source SDK on GitHub. Adding [Verint] Community to our Sitecore environment creates a truly dynamic and interactive experience for Test-Aankoop's customers."

Benefits

Verint Community is helping to transform Test-Aankoop's "Voice of the Customer" strategy, with almost 9,000 users across four countries now turning to the social community to discuss renewable energy.

Vermeire comments, "[Verint] Community, together with the straightforward integration into our Sitecore CMS, is creating a collaborative, interactive community on renewable energy. It enables our customers in four European countries to share and interact with each other on renewable energy advice, creating a network of knowledge, resources, and accessible information."

Other advantages of this collaborative energy community include:

- Enhanced awareness of both renewable energy options and the Test-Aankoop brand through continual publication of relevant, user-generated content.

- Improved customer intelligence and insight, which can be used to tailor future consumer rights programs.

- Increased customer satisfaction and loyalty via a tailored, immersive, and interactive experience.

- Flexibility to expand the community to include blogs, wikis, activity streams, ideation, calendars, gamification, and more.

- Rapid Sitecore integration based on API-first development model.

Vermeire, Desaever, and the rest of the Test-Aankoop team are not standing still though. In time, other features will be added to the Verint Community-Sitecore system, including a notifications feature, the ability to upload media like videos and photos, gamification, polls, and additional community entry points from Test-Aankoop Web pages.

"With [Verint] Community, almost any community is possible," concludes Vermeire.

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