

AVNET TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS CREATES UNIQUE CHANNEL VALUE FOR ITS VENDORS AND BUSINESS PARTNERS USING SOCIALONDEMAND[®].

Background

Avnet Technology Solutions is a global IT solutions distributor of enterprise-computing solutions, services, software and hardware. With 1,800 employees across 30 locations in EMEA alone, Avnet's customers include Value-Added Resellers, Systems Integrators, Carrier and Service Providers and Independent Software Vendors that deliver IT solutions to SMBs and Enterprises.

Challenges

Operating in a highly competitive space, Avnet represents vendors that invariably have multiple distribution partners, which means Avnet has to continually find new and effective ways to differentiate itself both up and down the channel.

Vendors look to Avnet for unique and innovative ways to drive business growth, both to and through their business partners; and Avnet's business partners look to Avnet for tangible sources of 'value add' to justify their loyalty to the distributor.

"We are constantly looking for ways in which to help our business partners undertake marketing activities that drive end-user engagement and generate new opportunities," said Julie Field, Microsoft Marketing Manager, Avnet Technology Solutions, EMEA.

Despite world-wide adoption of the medium, both Avnet's vendors and business partners face challenges around social media as a vehicle to drive end-user engagement. Vendors have valuable content, yet often struggle to reach and influence end-user decision makers given their indirect route to market. Conversely, partners with lean operations face the often time-consuming task of finding relevant and useful content to fuel their social media presence.

Approach and Solution

As a Tremolo[®] partner, incumbent IT channel marketing consultancy purechannels recommended that Avnet bring enhanced value to its business partners and vendors through socialondemand[®], one of the founding tools developed by Tremolo[®].

socialondemand[®] enables organisations to share and syndicate targeted social media content with the social media connections of their staff and sales partners, leveraging their social presence to reach and influence more end-users.

Following a demonstration of socialondemand by Tremolo[®] in March 2012, Avnet moved to adopt the tool to syndicate targeted end-user content to the social media connections of its business partners. Tremolo[®] created a fully Avnet-branded interface of socialondemand[®] for the distributor to use and, working closely with purechannels to drive a programme of vendor engagement and partner recruitment, Avnet and its vendors and partners were all quickly able to realise the benefits of socialondemand.

“By driving key and relevant messages through our business partners to end users, Avnet socialondemand provides us with an invaluable mechanism by which to actively support our vendors' go-to-market strategies.”

Julie Field,
Microsoft Marketing

Results

By March 2013, over 141 business partners had already registered for Avnet socialondemand. Avnet has so far created 408 social media posts which have been reposted 4,984 times by partners and employees, achieving over 68,800 clicks, downloads and retweets.

Initially, Avnet engaged with one of its key strategic vendors – Microsoft – to post both Avnet and Microsoft relevant content via the socialondemand platform.

As socialondemand® facilitates multi-level content creation with a solid approval workflow, Avnet is able to pre-approve all posts to its business partner community, and in turn its partners are able to select, edit and approve content based on their exact needs and target audience.

Having clearly demonstrated the success of socialondemand® with Microsoft, Avnet has now engaged other vendors within its portfolio, including F5, IBM, Juniper, Veeam, EMC and Brocade, to leverage the unique value of this social media tool. Working closely with its vendors' social media teams, Avnet provides a regular source of vendor-approved posts readily available to its entire channel. As well as providing socialondemand to its integral business partners, Avnet also use the platform internally for its staff to repost to their own followers. There are currently 32 Avnet members of staff posting regularly - Avnet representatives that are not just social media savvy marketing people but who are key members of the sales and business development teams with valuable networks of followers.

Benefits

Most significantly, socialondemand® provides Avnet, its vendors and business partners with the mechanism to directly influence the end-user buying process and drive incremental business.

Vendors are able to maintain a more controlled consistency of brand values and targeted messaging through their channels to reach end-users.

Partners are able to select and publish relevant and real-time end-user content to their own social media accounts, without having to manually sign into any of these accounts.

Feedback confirms the value of the tool - a recent survey of participating Avnet partners revealed 100% believe socialondemand® content adds value to their business. "Our social media activity has increased considerably, and the hassle of creating and writing posts is a lot less stressful," commented one partner. "Social media in B2B is here to stay and, using socialondemand®, Avnet is enabling its partners to build up an advantageous reputation as trusted advisors within the end user community," noted Olivier Choron, CEO and Founder at Tremolo®.

The Future

Having demonstrated the benefits of socialondemand® to vendors and partners alike in the UK, the platform has also been adopted by Avnet Australia. As traction continues to grow, it is also anticipated that Avnet in Europe and in the US will shortly follow suit.

