

New B2C Launch Strategy Delivers Extraordinary Sales

Seagate Technology uses WebEx Event Center to create consumer buzz about revolutionary new solid state hybrid drive.

Executive Summary

Customer Name:

Seagate Technology LLC

Industry:

High Tech, Hardware and Storage

Location:

Scotts Valley, California

Number of Employees:

52,000

Challenge:

- Bypass traditional B2B channels to reach end-users about revolutionary new storage drive
- With limited expenditures, get attention of influential customers such as gamers and other enthusiasts
- Create new launch model that focuses on viral marketing channels

Solution:

- WebEx-facilitated product launch garners more than 1500 attendees with zero advertising budget
- Cisco Advanced Services help ensure glitch-free event and down-to-earth dialogue with key customers
- WebEx tools let Seagate assemble far-flung speakers for webcast without need for travel

Results:

- Exceeded initial unit sales goal by 300 percent, doubling sales forecast within one week of launch
- Created instant backlog of demand for Seagate's new solid state hybrid drive
- Created viral marketing effect with 38,880 YouTube views of the webcast in four-month period

Challenge

With headquarters in Scotts Valley, California, and more than 50,000 employees scattered across the globe, Seagate Technology has been providing the storage devices at the center of computers for more than 30 years. As a maker of hard disk drives, solid-state drives, and now solid state hybrid drives, Seagate derives the majority of its laptop drive sales from original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), which use the company's drives in the devices they produce. For many end users, these drives remain anonymous, simply another piece of the tiny jigsaw puzzle inside their computers.

It is not surprising, then, that Seagate has traditionally focused its marketing efforts on the business-to-business segment. However, when it came time to introduce its new solid state hybrid drive, the Momentus XT, the company decided to take a different tack. Although Seagate knew it had a winner in its solid state hybrid drive for laptops, the company also knew that it would need to work hard to convince others of that.

So Seagate tried something radical: going directly to consumers. "The Seagate notebook marketing team decided to target the gamers and techies, who aren't shy about sharing their opinions," says Joni Clark, senior product marketing manager for Seagate. "We knew that if we could get them talking about the drive, it would go viral." To make this happen, the team decided to launch the product through a live webcast that would take consumers into Seagate's offices for product demos, Q&A sessions, and more. Seagate would need an online event solution that could accommodate thousands of attendees, provide top-quality audio and video, and allow the event to be produced without any technical problems.

Solution

Once Clark and her team determined that a live webcast would give the Momentus XT the launch that it deserved, she went to Seagate's IT department for advice on pulling off an online event of this magnitude. The department immediately suggested Cisco WebEx™ Event Center. Although Clark was familiar with Cisco WebEx® online tools through Seagate's internal use of WebEx Meeting Center, she had no idea whether they could scale to meet her ambitious plans. When the IT staff told her about the success they had had (and the money they saved on travel) by using Cisco® WebEx Event Center to host online meetings for Seagate's geographically dispersed executive team, Clark decided it was time to talk to the folks at Cisco WebEx.

"When I laid out our plans for the Momentous XT webcast to our WebEx contacts, I said that we were aiming to get 1000 attendees, but that we were going to market it as if we were shooting for 5000," says Clark. "I also told them that we needed the event to go off without a hitch, and that we wanted top-quality audio, video, and connectivity, but without the slick and impersonal look of a studio-produced videoconference. We wanted to bring end-users into our offices to see what we do and to talk to them directly in a down-to-earth fashion. For the folks at WebEx, none of this was a problem."

Convinced that WebEx Event Center was the right tool for the job, Clark and team began planning the product launch and webcast in earnest. A key piece of this planning was enlisting the aid of WebEx Advanced Services to provide the pre-production expertise, technical assistance, and confidence that the team needed to make the event run smoothly. Seagate's marketing team was then free to focus on driving traffic to the webcast, a feat that it pulled off without spending a dime of Seagate's money. It did so by sparking interest among analysts and the media through product demonstrations. That interest then transformed into sponsorships.

With banner ads for the webcast displayed on the sites of direct marketing partners such as Tiger Direct and Newegg.com, a concerted social media effort, and a key ally and event co-sponsor in ASUS (the one OEM that had consented to look at the Momentus XT), interest in the live webcast began to grow. Using WebEx Event Center's built-in registration module to manage the sign-up process, Clark and team watched in amazement as the number of potential participants climbed into the thousands. Five months after the first planning meeting, Seagate broadcast the online Momentus XT event from its Scotts Valley offices with four speakers, 1800 attendees, and not a single technical glitch. The highly successful event generated close to 5000 leads.

“From hand-holding to brain-storming and delivering content in a form our audience could appreciate, WebEx Advanced Services was there with us every step of the way.”

— Joni Clark, senior product marketing manager, Seagate Technology LLC

Results

Four months later, Seagate was still reaping the benefits of the Momentus XT webcast, and Clark was still marveling at the results. “We weren't looking to sell thousands upon thousands of drives right out the door from this event,” she says. “We just wanted to generate some hype, dispel hybrid fear, and win back the hearts and minds of users.” But sell they did, not only exceeding its initial unit sales goal by 300 percent, but also initiating a massive backlog. Says Clark, “Thanks to this event, we doubled the sales forecast we had in place for the product launch, and we're still trying to catch up with the backlog of orders we created.”

Perhaps most importantly, Seagate got the attention of its OEMs. “Within two weeks of the webcast, our OEMs were asking for information about the solid state hybrid drive and requesting samples, because their customers were demanding it,” says Clark. And with over 4000 views of the webcast and over 38,000 views of supporting YouTube video within the first few months of its initial broadcast, demand just continues to grow. “Typically, OEMs don't want to co-brand other people's components,” says Clark. “But the hype we generated with our webcast for the Momentus XT has shifted that balance. Now, these same OEMs are open to marketing opportunities with the solid state hybrid drive by Seagate.”

For Clark's team, the successful online event has brought internal recognition as well. Not only did attendees report uniform satisfaction with content, venue, speakers, and technology, one Seagate executive who witnessed the webcast reported to Clark's boss that he was proud to be a Seagate employee after watching this live event. To Clark, this is what it was always about: paying tribute to those who had worked long and hard on the hybrid drive by bringing the product the attention that it deserved. This public attention would not have been possible without WebEx tools and support. “We would never have had the confidence to pull off an event of this scale without knowing that

WebEx consultants were there to provide technical and strategic assistance,” she says. “From hand-holding to brain-storming and delivering content in a form our audience could appreciate, WebEx Advanced Services was there with us every step of the way.”

Next Steps

Inspired by the success of the Momentum XT webcast, employees throughout Seagate have begun to approach Clark’s group for advice on how to hold their own events with WebEx Event Center. The group responded by writing a how-to guide on just that topic. With one additional webcast already on the agenda and many more planned, that guide will come in handy. Says Clark, “Now that we’ve seen what’s possible with WebEx Event Center, we know that when we want to make an impact with consumers, it can provide a sure-fire, low-cost way of doing so.”

For More Information

To find out more about Cisco WebEx solutions, go to <http://www.cisco.com/web/products/webex/index.html>.

Product List

- Cisco WebEx Event Center
- Cisco WebEx Advanced Services
- Cisco WebEx Production Services



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