SMA Solar Technology AG: Best Practice - How SMA supports sales with an internal trade fair app

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The approximately 3,900 employees of SMA Solar Technology AG (SMA), based in Niestetal near Kassel, Germany, develop and produce photovoltaic power supply solutions - from hybrid inverters for private homes to commercial charging stations for electric cars. The solar industry is booming, so fast processes are required in consulting and sales. SMA has responded: In order to provide as many customers as possible with targeted information in a short space of time at energy and solar trade fairs such as Intersolar, the internal organization has been automated with the help of a mobile app. Mehtap Hatipoglu, Senior CRM Manager at SMA, reports on an exciting project that not only relieves the burden on employees, but also on the environment.

Many thanks to the haustec.de Marketing-Club editorial team for conducting the following interview with Mehtap Hatipoglu from SMA Solar Technology AG and making it available to us.

Ms. Hatipoglu, how is the marketing department responsible for your app currently set up?

Mehtap Hatipoglu: "The Global Digital Marketing & Services department currently has around ten employees. In addition to management, these include experts in digital customer journeys, content, digital campaign management and performance marketing, as well as CRM specialists. As CRM Manager, I was responsible for the app project."

What challenges led to the idea of an internal app for trade fair organization at SMA?

"First and foremost, we want to reduce the manual maintenance of customer data and the associated effort, as well as optimize processes that are already partially automated. The interface to our CRM should be established so that data transfer can be automated. We are also pursuing our goal of offering customers an optimal trade fair experience. A very important topic for SMA was also included in the considerations: sustainability. The end result was seamless customer communication on demand for sales: the customer receives all requested SMA materials digitally. And, at the same time, to reduce paper consumption and the flood of business cards, which always increase significantly, especially at trade fairs."

Please tell us how the project was set up and implemented in detail.

"In addition to Sales, Marketing, the Event Team and Corporate Communications were also involved. External support, such as from agencies or programmers, was not required as we used the assets of the lead app snapADDY VisitReport, which could be adapted to our needs. In total, the implementation took three months, the app has been available since March and is updated regularly."

What functions does snapADDY VisitReport offer in detail?

"In principle, almost everything that makes it easier for sales staff to record call content, leads and inquiries. This starts with scanning business cards and QR codes, comparing LinkedIn data or entering data manually. The app records other important details such as the note function that can be used by the respective sales employee and the saving of current and upcoming to-dos. The content of the conversation is then recorded using a predefined questionnaire and notes are created. Customer data is automatically compared with the existing CRM data, validated and sent to the CRM system according to defined rules. After customer meetings, we can send all requested brochures and product information, including video links, directly from the app. The lead app also creates automated reports with key figures on trade fair activities, such as the number of contacts recorded, the content of conversations and product interests."
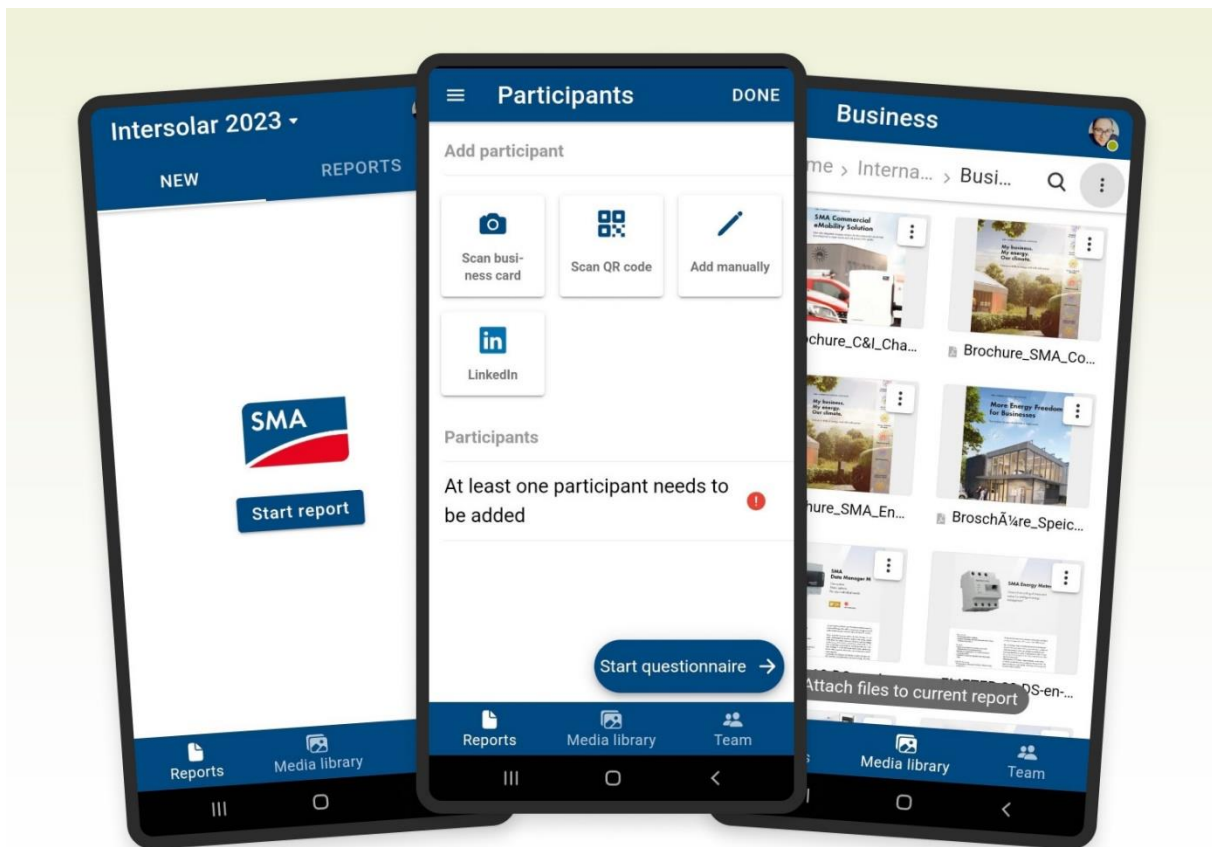
Digital lead capture with snapADDY VisitReport

How does the app help to conserve resources?

"The fact that data can be recorded by the app and PDFs can be sent digitally saves a lot of paper. This fits in with our corporate strategy, which includes holistic sustainability in all areas of the company. We also reduce manual work, which helps us to save time."

Are there any other advantages of the app that have emerged since its launch in March?

"We have already significantly expanded the area of application. The app is now also being used at trade fairs abroad and for internal events."

What advice would you give to other marketing departments that want to copy your approach?

"My recommendation would be for Sales and Marketing to jointly select a suitable app framework. Based on this, the most important questions regarding use should be clarified: Who is the target group, how should the questionnaire be designed and what information should be collected? This can be used to develop a specification sheet that will be worked through during implementation. The following factors play an important role when selecting the app provider: modifiability, multilingualism, role-based user authorizations, interfaces to third-party systems or a good price model including service and support. This is particularly important if the company operates internationally, as SMA does. And last but not least, the app should be suitable for Android and iOS to ensure flexibility in the choice of end devices."

We thank you for the insights and are proud that we were able to support SMA Technology AG with snapADDY VisitReport in the digitalization of their trade fair lead capture!