Future Influencers - A virtual think tank community initiated by Siemens

Company: Siemens AG
Category: Reputation / Brand Management / CSR
Project: Future Influencers (www.futureinfluencers.com)
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Overview

Siemens initiated the exclusive global online community “Future Influencers” to bring together tomorrow’s thought leaders and to foster relationships and a continuous dialogue with those bright and talented young movers and shakers. The community serves as an online think tank where young high-potentials get the opportunity to collaborate on the most pressing sustainability challenges of our time. To date, through this platform, we’ve established over 180 unique relationships with high potentials and collected over 50 ideas of how to address the most pressing and urgent sustainability issues of our time.

Our Future Influencers are characterized by their exceptional engagement in the field of sustainability and their strong digital footprint which makes them multipliers in the social web. They are the decision makers of the future.

In so called collaborations, the Future Influencers discuss important sustainability topics (e.g. The Future of Energy) and come up with ideas and concepts to tackle those issues. The Future Influencers community is supported by its official partner, the Harvard Business Review. Highly recognized experts on sustainability topics mentor the members of the community during the collaborations and actively take part in the discussions. Additionally the panel discussions at the end of each collaboration are broadcasted live via an HBR-Webinar.

Stakeholder Analysis

With the Future Influencers community we aim to bring together the world’s brightest young talents in the field of sustainability. Siemens’ goal was to establish strong relationships with tomorrow’s thought leaders and decision makers in order to gain insights about their ideas and solutions regarding the biggest sustainability challenges of our time. Additionally it was important that the members of the Future Influencers community would serve as multipliers in order to spread the idea about the community in the social web.

By now the community counts more than 180 members. They cover a range of professionals including academics, entrepreneurs, CEOs & bloggers. All of them already look back on exceptional achievements: Future Influencers for example are listed as Forbes 30 under 30, are members of international think tanks, have been youth delegates to Rio+20, already founded their own
company, are listed as top thought leaders in their respective field by recognized media, attended World Economic Forums or were awarded with several awards for their work.

Goals and Objectives

Our objective is to facilitate global conversations and the exchange of ideas, allowing the company to gain authentic insights and learn about differing perspectives.
The goal of the Future Influencers community is to spark ideas on how to answer key future sustainability challenges. The focus is on technological and social aspects. Ideally answers and concepts will be developed from debating and exchanging ideas.
The fact that decision shapers debate those topics and the fact that the Harvard Business Review gives them a voice through webcasts and whitepapers is of huge value to the community.
Additionally Siemens wanted to build honest and long-lasting relationships with those young thought leaders - who wouldn’t naturally be part of the Siemens family. We know that today not only journalists or politicians influence society: With Future Influencers, Siemens aimed to foster relationships with young multipliers and top-talents who will be tomorrow’s thought leaders.

Planning

What do young talents worldwide and future thought leaders think about the most urgent issues concerning sustainability and how can they collaborate to strengthen their impact? As a global company which is highly engaged in sustainability matters, Siemens is keen to find the answers to those questions. As a result, in 2011, the Future Influencers community was established. Via an online platform, Future Influencers provides the opportunity to get in touch with people who want to achieve change in the world and in our societies and who want to make sure we find solutions to environmental problems. The idea is that members contribute their opinions and ideas to the community. In return, they have access to a network of likeminded and inspiring people, great insights, stimulating content and the possibility to bring real projects to life.

Execution

Twice a year, the community discusses challenges and produces ideas and concepts on sustainability related topics. The aim is to create and develop a project idea which will be presented at the end of each collaboration. A collaboration lasts for approximately six to eight weeks and usually leads up to global events on sustainability topics (such as the UN Climate Change Conference). Via the Future Influencers community, Siemens has the opportunity to engage in lively discussions with young future thought leaders regarding their key topics in the field of sustainability. Through this exchange of knowledge and ideas the company gains new insights and inspiration for their own products and solutions.

Results

By now the Future Influencers community counts more than 180 high profile members. We have successfully completed four collaborations providing more than 50 ideas and resulting in 3 HBR-webcasts at global sustainability events all around the world and two HBR-whitepapers. The results of those collaborations provided Siemens with fresh thoughts and unique data. Additionally it increased the company’s digital footprint significantly by using social media channels like Twitter or Google+ and the live broadcasted webcasts. In May 2013 the first Future Influencers live meeting took place at the Harvard Club of New York, which more than 40 members attended. The community provides Siemens with the opportunity to present itself at sustainability events of global significance as an innovative and open-minded company which cares about the concerns, ideas and concepts of tomorrow’s thought leaders and decision makers.
Future Influencers – Building a Sustainable Future

Our global community brings together future decision makers and thought leaders for exclusive, interactive, and collaborative discussions and learning. We invite and encourage our members to develop concepts and ideas which help to create a more sustainable future. From April 26 until May 31, 2013, the Future Influencers will tackle the following questions: The Employee of the Future: How Will Companies Engage and Sustain Shared Values? Create a Non-Competitive Edge?

Get invited  Connect and discuss  Create insights