



SENNEBOGEN CASE STUDY

FROM ZERO TO HERO: \$9.3m in Sales in a New Industry in 1-Year

digital^{J2}

Revenue Growth Series



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Executive Summary

SENNEBOGEN, a leading German material handling manufacturer, was faced with the challenge of penetrating the North America market with a new product (the 718) in a new target market (tree service industry) that's never seen a machine like the 718 in the industry.

On top of that, SENNEBOGEN was trying to accomplish this goal by selling directly to the end-customer vs. through their traditional dealer channel.

In other words, SENNEBOGEN had big goals and huge challenges ahead of them. To address these goals and challenges, Constantino Lannes, CEO of SENNEBOGEN, engaged digitalJ2 in 2017.

By the end of 2018, SENNEBOGEN had generated great brand recognition in the tree service industry, bring roughly 80 prospects to a live equipment demo event, and selling 17 out of the 18 machines they made available for 2018.

This generated \$9.3 million worth of new revenue to fuel even bigger goals for 2019. On top of that, SENNEBOGEN now has a direct channel to communicate with prospects and customers in a way that they have never done before.

Let's dive into the details on how all this was accomplished with the help of the digitalJ2 marketing team.

About the Sennebogen

Established in America in the year 2000, SENNEBOGEN LLC has become a market leader in material handling equipment for recycling and scrap metal yards, demolition, barge, and port operations, log-handling, transfer stations and waste facilities, and most recently the urban forestry industry.



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A nationwide network of SENNEBOGEN dealers throughout the Americas provides expert support in material handler applications and ongoing maintenance, repairs, parts and service support.



SENNEBOGEN's newest industry of focus is the tree service industry, in particular, large scale tree trimming, dismantling, and removal. SENNEBOGEN's engineers have purpose-built a machine to serve the needs and challenges of the urban forestry, providing a much safer, faster, and more efficient working environment.

This is particularly important due to tree work being one of the most dangerous professions in America, with 10x the death and injury rates compared to most industry standards. The stored energy in trees can be unpredictable under certain situations, rendering it hazardous to even the most skilled of tree workers.

The SENNEBOGEN 718 tree-handler was designed to encase the operator inside a protected cab while giving him/her control, precision and speed to cut, grab, hold and stack trees.

Since much of urban tree removal is still done with bucket trucks, climbers and hand-held chainsaws, this equipment is certainly a disruptive technology.



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The Challenges

SENNEBOGEN faced several challenges in bringing this new product to tree service market. The main challenges included:

1. “New kid on the block” - unknown in the tree service industry
2. The Search Challenge - there isn’t any equipment like this in America; people aren’t searching for a machine like the 718
3. SENNEBOGEN has never gone direct before – they have always sold through a dealer network

The New Kid On The Block

As a German manufacturer, SENNEBOGEN was virtually unheard of in the tree service industry here in the States. To add another obstacle, many in the tree service industry are skeptical of European products due to the typical lack of customer and equipment uptime support. This is why many European companies have a hard time successfully penetrating the North American market.



Because SENNEBOGEN did not have any brand presence in the tree service industry, many simply dismissed the idea of investing in this type of equipment. During the first TCIA Industry Expo we heard many questions like this:

“Who is SENNEBOGEN? Never heard of this company before...they sound foreign.”

“I’m not sure how I would use this equipment out on the field.”

“This equipment is expensive! I don’t see how to justify the price tag.”

Although the equipment piqued the interest of the attendees at the first TCIA Expo, most remained skeptical and did not take further action.

We knew we had a LOT of product education ahead of us if we were to help our audience understand the real value of the equipment and how much it would benefit their businesses.

The Search Challenge

The other obstacle in our way was the lack of search volume for this type of equipment.

Because their 718 tree-handler was unlike any existing equipment in the market, people were not searching for this category of equipment. They were also not searching based on their familiarity with the brand because SENNEBOGEN was a new player in the game.

Thus, there was a great deal of product education that needed to be done to get prospects to understand the advantages and potential of the equipment to their business.



In addition, we put a lot of effort into building brand awareness. Our goal was to associate the 'SENNEBOGEN 718 tree-handler' with 'urban tree removal,' similar to how 'kleenex' became the go-to word for 'tissues.'

Going Direct For The Very First Time

So, what do we mean by "going direct?"

Well, in the heavy equipment manufacturing world, many manufactures sell products through a dealer networks, who then sell and provide service to the end customer.

For SENNEBOGEN, each dealer had their territory, and would both sell and service SENNEBOGEN's machines.

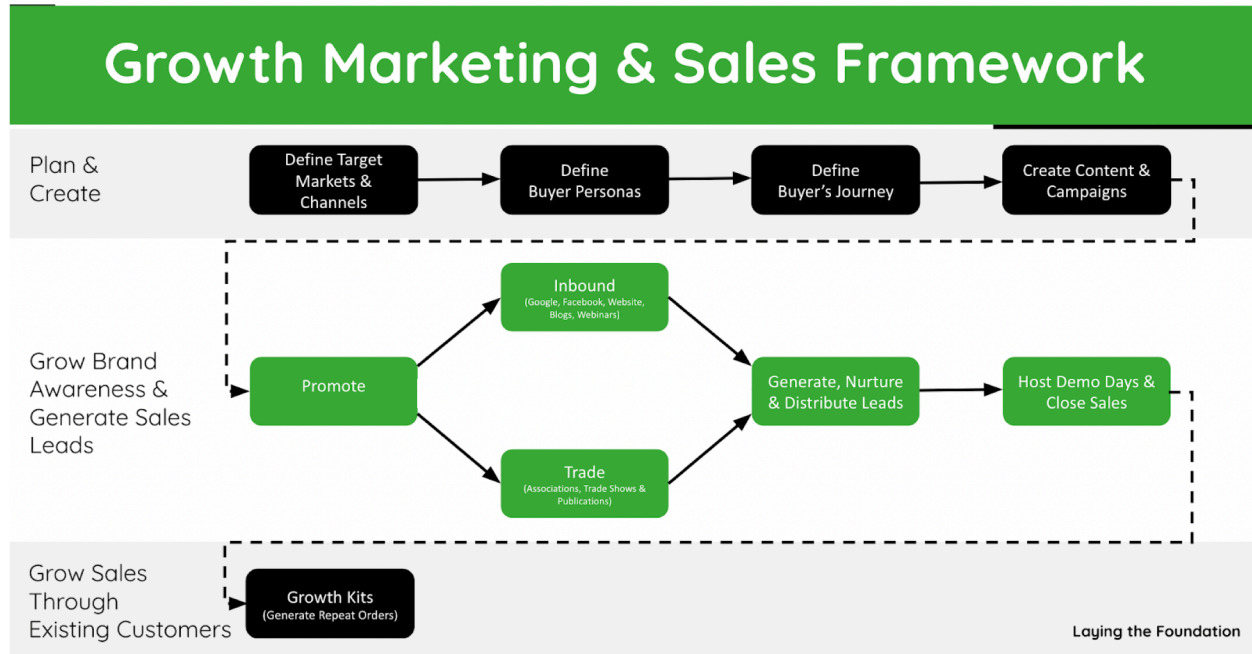
SENNEBOGEN did not sell directly to the end user before. Nor did they have the infrastructure to accomplish such a feat. But they were willing to take on this challenge with openness to make the needed pivots in their sales process.

For the digitalJ2 team, this would mean we had to create more bridges between SENNEBOGEN and their potential end customers and ensure that the marketing and sales teams were closely aligned to create a seamless experience for the customer.



The Solution

This image below displays the growth framework of how we found, connected with, generated and nurtured leads into customers.



Our solutions to SENNEBOGEN's challenges included the following:

- Going all in on inbound
- Hosting demos of the 718 tree-handler at SENNEBOGEN N. America's headquarters
- Aligning the marketing & sales departments
- Implementing the HubSpot CRM
- Creating clarity with full-funnel reporting from marketing data to sales data

All in on Inbound

The first objective was to create brand awareness - increase recognition, familiarity & trust with the brand. We strived to make SENNEBOGEN a 'household name' and top of mind with anyone in the tree service industry.



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With this goal, we had to go all in on inbound. Since no one knew anything about this equipment, we had to create a ton of educational content to educate the market. We created webinars, videos, blogs, social posts, press releases, downloadable assets, nurturing email sequences to show the audience a simple solution to their significant problems.

We sought to help them imagine what their life and business would be like with the help of this innovative equipment.

How We Leveraged Social Media

Since there was limited search volume for this type of equipment, we set out to target our persona on social media channels through organic post and paid advertisements.

For paid campaigns, we focused three stages of the buyer's journey: awareness, consideration, and decision. As our persona interacted with each ad, they were then retargeted with the next stage of the buyer's journey ad for their nurturing process.

Awareness Ad - A Video Introducing the 718

We worked with an amazing industry influencer, Ken Palmer to create a video that would introduce the 718 to the tree service industry.

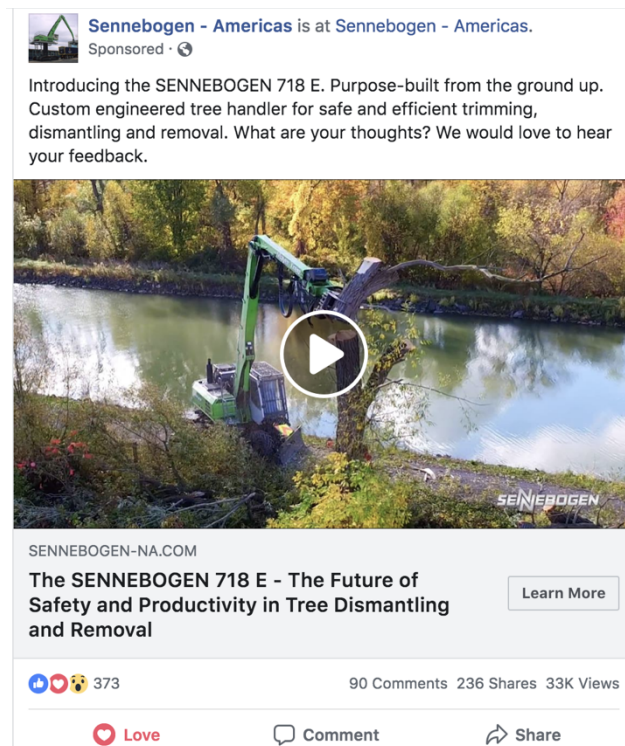
The video showcased the functions and applications of the equipment and described the benefits & advantages.

The main focus and goal of this ad was brand impressions and ad engagement.



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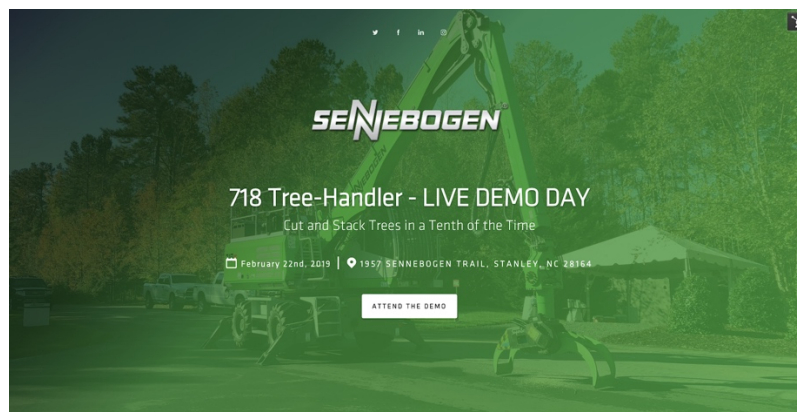
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Consideration & Decision Ads - Demo Event & Testimonial Videos

Of those who saw or engaged in the awareness ad, we retargeted those prospects with a free demo event to see this machine in action.

The demo event provided an excellent opportunity to educate prospects interested in growing their tree service business.





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We would also target those same prospects with customer testimonial videos from both owners and operators of the equipment to build additional trust with social proof.



Leveraging Industry Associations

SENNEBOGEN became a Pact Partner with the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA), who helped spread brand awareness for SENNEBOGEN to their audience via their social channels, their email blasts, trade magazines, and conferences. Having participated in TCIA's annual Expo, SENNEBOGEN was able to increase exposure to new prospects and further connect with interested prospects who have already engaged with us digitally.

Hosted Demo Events

The second objective was to get SENNEBOGEN's ideal customer to attend a live demo event that showcased the equipment in action and allowed for a more hands-on experience.

Our rationale for putting on live demonstrations to interested prospects at SENNEBOGEN's headquarters in Stanley, NC was the following:



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1. Witnessing the equipment in real life action was truly impressive; also, not many people would invest into a half a million-dollar machine without seeing it
2. Sennebogen gave a tour of their 100,000 sq. ft. facility with a robust parts and service network. This is critical to decision-makers; lack of customer support - no matter how good the equipment - was usually a deal-breaker. Therefore, showing SENNEBOGEN's commitment to customer service & equipment uptime would sway prospects to purchase
3. Prospects were able to get key questions answered (while we learned what was really important to them & repurposed it in later content)
4. The Demo Day created an opportunity for SENNEBOGEN to create a personal connection with prospective buyers. After all, people do business with people at the end of the day.

For an event that required an expense and time commitment, we had a total of 80 attendees show up over 3 events. For a brand that was totally new to the marketplace, we considered that a big success!

Marketing & Sales Alignment

The third objective was to ensure there was seamless alignment between the marketing and sales department.

- Provide sales team with industry & product education
- Create transparency with marketing to sales pass off

Creating marketing & sales alignment was extremely important for several reasons.

1. We needed to unite toward a common goal and understand how we would work together to create a great experience for a prospect.



2. We needed to make sure sales was taking advantage of all of the leads marketing was bringing in order to close them.
3. Feedback from sales would help adjust messaging to improve both quantity and quality of leads.

By understanding when and how sales would follow up on marketing qualified leads, we ensured no opportunities were dropping through the cracks and that we were maximizing results and investment in marketing efforts.

Closing the 'feedback loop' was also crucial for taking smart pivots in messaging.

While marketing was able to get general feedback by monitoring social media, sales was able to relay very useful feedback to marketing once they connected with a prospect or customer.

Aligning on a Persona

Both marketing and sales teams had to learn about the tree service industry and the product itself - in order to effectively talk to potential customers about what was important to them and how this equipment applied to their business specifically.

This was accomplished with the help of a strategic partnership with Ken Palmer, a well-known and respected arborist, who provides training on safe tree management with the latest techniques and equipment.

He became a brand ambassador for SENNEBOGEN and spread the word to his own following about what he enthusiastically dubbed as "the future of tree care." To him, this equipment meant saving lives, by paving the way too much safer tree management.

Ken knows trees, he knows equipment, and he knows the way other 'tree people' think and what they value. This helped our team construct a detailed persona and start with a good idea of where and how to speak to our key audience.



The Last Step to Improve the Customer Experience

The fourth and final objective was to create customer delight experience.

We strategized with SENNEBOGEN on how we could reduce the sales friction and delight post-purchase customers. The common sales barrier was, “would I have enough work to service this new machine?”

With that common sales objection, a new product was born. Growth Kits.

All purchasers of the 718 would receive a complimentary 6-month marketing kit (Growth Kit) to increase the local awareness about the new tree service technology that just entered the market with the objective of creating so much demand for the customer they would need to purchase another 718 to continue growing.

This would ensure that their equipment was making money and helping them win new contracts.

Our goal was to make their equipment so busy, that they gladly invest in another within 12 months.

A win for the customer and a win for SENNEBOGEN.

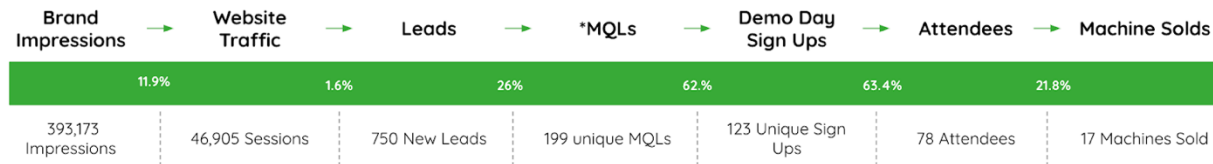


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The Results

Here are the results of the hard work and they speak for themselves!



By developing social presence, engaging with prospects in online conversations, and developing educational content, we were able to generate a lot of buzz, interest and excitement around SENNEBOGEN's new revolutionary product.

SENNEBOGEN only made 18 machines in 2018. In the first year, with so many odds against us, we were still able to sell 17 of them and make 2018 a very profitable and successful break into the market!!

We can't wait to see what this next year will look like!

Customer Testimonial

"digitalJ2's most significant selling point is that they care about our growth just as much as their own growth and they know by being a trusted partner to us, it will help ignite their own business."

- **Constantino Lannes**, President of SENNEBOGEN NA



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About Our Growth Engineer: Marina Turner



Marina Turner

Inbound Marketing Manager & Strategist

Marina is a marketing strategist who loves learning new things and expanding her skillsets and experiences. Although her educational background is rooted in health sciences and Oriental Medicine, somehow her journey led her into the data-driven and continually changing world of marketing. When not cuddling on the couch with Bella, Marina is busy building targeted marketing strategies and improving her clients' digital footprint.

Fun Fact: Professional Latin Dancer



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About digitalJ2

digitalJ2 is a proven revenue growth agency for high-growth companies. We fuel revenue growth by building predictable and measurable marketing and sales solutions.



John Turner

Growth Engineer

To learn more about our growth services, you can reach me at 813.205.3745 or jt@digitalj2.com.