

# SolarWorld USA



SolarWorld has long been at the forefront of renewable energy production, both at home and abroad. The company supports an expansive customer base that includes homeowners, commercial enterprises, military and government contractors, and direct-to-install vendors. Throughout its 40-year-history, SolarWorld has upheld rigorous standards of quality, in part by managing all aspects of product development in-house: the sourcing of materials, the assembly of solutions, the hiring of personnel.



**Customer since:** 2012

**Industry:** Manufacturing & Renewable Energy

**About SolarWorld USA:**

The largest US solar manufacturer for 40 years, uniquely recognized as America's solar leader for carrying out the most important steps of the solar production process on US soil: sourcing, manufacturing, assembling, and hiring.

**SolarWorld leverages Act-On for:**

- List segmentation and contact management
- Email campaigns and web forms
- Automated programs and lead nurturing
- Social publishing

## Challenge

The renewable energy industry is a challenging landscape to operate in amidst international competition. SolarWorld knew that they needed to introduce creative and cost-effective ways of building brand and connecting with customers. The company's livelihood depended on generating awareness and educating the marketplace on the benefits of solar energy. In 2012, SolarWorld began looking at digital marketing software and was introduced to marketing automation. Armed with an understanding of marketing automation and its capabilities, SolarWorld knew that this was the right technology to help them more effectively market and sell to national and international distributors and installers.

Prior to Act-On, SolarWorld not even implemented an email marketing system, and was still engaging with its distributors and installers through one-to-one emails. SolarWorld knew that in order to expand and differentiate itself in the fast-growing marketplace, it needed an all-in-one marketing platform that could enable sophisticated lead generation programs at scale. They needed a tool that was robust enough to support advanced list segmentation and personalization of communications, so they could tailor automated outreach based on demographic information stored in the database and behavioral activity on the website.

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## Solution

Early on, SolarWorld put Act-On to use in support of top-of-funnel initiatives: generating awareness via email offers and newsletters, lead capture through web forms, and brand building across social media channels. Lead generation at the time was the primary objective for SolarWorld, and continues to be an important initiative today. At every tradeshow, SolarWorld creates online lead-capture forms that the attendees can fill out on-site and then uses them as a way to gather intelligence on the attendees. The goal is to collect data that can be segmented in Act-On to deliver more personalized and tailored follow-up to the attendees. Based on the data provided in the form fields, the attendees are then placed into respective automated programs. Leveraging the data collected on the attendees, SolarWorld triggers post-show email campaigns to nurture the prospects and further familiarize them with the company and product. SolarWorld also applies this same level of nurturing to the leads generated organically from their website.

But SolarWorld's primary focus would soon shift to customer retention, as competition from foreign suppliers multiplied, demand dwindled, and production costs soared. This change forced SolarWorld to concentrate on the relationships it had previously built with its distributors and installers and chart a new course overnight.

SolarWorld turned its attention to its network and began leveraging Act-On to nurture its pre-existing relationships. The company instituted a monthly partner newsletter to encourage referrals and stay top of mind. SolarWorld also developed communiqués specific to strategic market segments: commercial and residential distributors, military and government personnel, and direct installers.

## Results

Since leveraging Act-On Marketing Automation, SolarWorld has seen an increase in its email engagements: Its 46% open and 28.5% clickthrough rate are well in excess of industry averages for manufacturing – 26.7% and 4.9%, respectively. SolarWorld attributes these achievements to Act-On's deliverability reputation and to the responsive design component of its email composer. Today, email is SolarWorld's 5th highest website traffic generator – in a recent six-month period, the company generated \$72,000 in pipeline opportunity as a result.

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## About Act-On Software

Act-On Software is a marketing automation company delivering innovation that empowers marketers to do the best work of their careers. Act-On is the only integrated workspace to address the needs of the customer experience, from brand awareness and demand generation, to retention and loyalty. With Act-On, marketers can drive better business outcomes and see higher customer lifetime value. The Act-On platform provides marketers with power they can actually use, without the need for a dedicated IT resource.

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