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Case Study

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Referrals

CASE STUDY: SHINNOVA SOLAR

Leads as Good as Gold: How Shinnova Achieves a 6.6% Request-to-Referral Rate Through the Snoball Referrals Module

COMPANY SUMMARY

 **Number of employees:**
11-50

 **Industry focus:**
Solar + home solutions

 **Founded:**
2016

RESULTS

6.6%

Request-to-Referral Rate



85%

Of Referrals Became
Qualified Sales Opportunities



100+

New Referrals



The average request-to-referral rate in the solar industry is 1.5%. So how was Shinnova able to exceed these industry expectations?

Discover the unique dynamics at play and uncover the strategies that set Shinnova apart from the industry standard.



THE CHALLENGE

An in-house referral program that was inefficient and time-consuming to manage

Before adopting the Snoball Referrals Module, Shinnova faced challenges with its in-house solutions. Despite their unwavering commitment to long-term customer satisfaction, traditional methods for obtaining referrals were falling short.

Issues included the following:

- Low sales rep adoption
- High resource demands
- Disconnected customer journeys
- Less engaged referral contacts

Christian, the Marketing Manager at Shinnova, describes the challenges faced in building and managing an internal referral program.



Christian Zirbel

Marketing Manager @ Shinnova

“We tried building our own and it just didn’t make sense with the resources we had... The shelf life of the engagement with these referrals was low.”

THE SOLUTION

A word of mouth marketing platform aligned with Shinnova's commitment to nurture long-lasting customer relationships

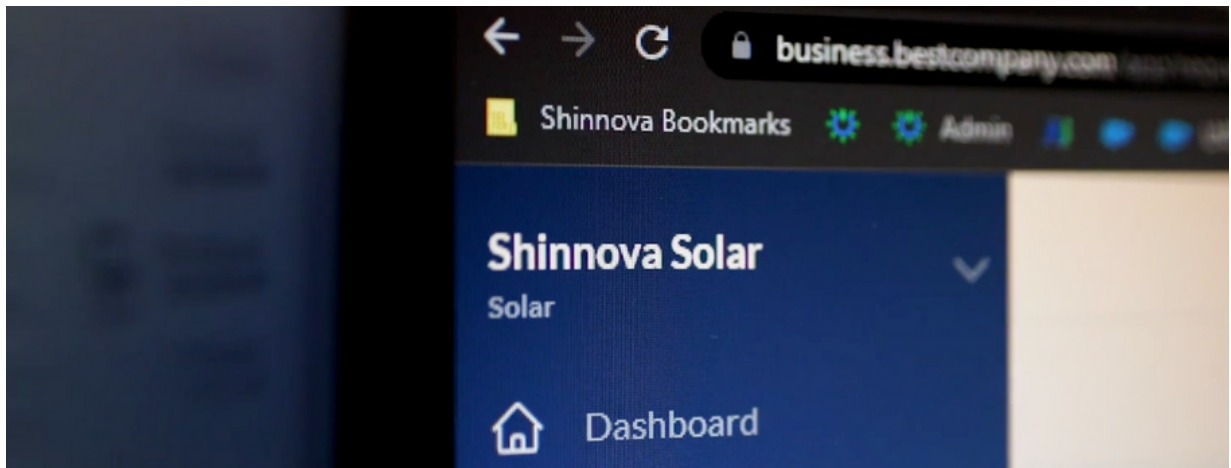
Upon the launch of Snoball's Referrals Module, Snoball identified Shinnova as an ideal fit because of its customer-centric approach. Snoball's automated platform, designed to nurture and convert leads into referral customers, aligned perfectly with Shinnova's commitment to lasting customer relationships.



Ethan Holtman

VP of Operation @ Shinnova

*"The partnership with [Snoball] makes a lot of sense because it **adds to the value** that we have with our current homeowners."*



THE RESULTS

An automated process that brought more qualified referrals ready to sign

The Snoball Referrals Module did wonders for Shinnova Solar. With its automation and personal touch, it not only boosted conversion rates but also slashed marketing costs and made the whole customer experience better.

Christian talks about the cost savings his team experienced as a customer acquisition channel.

"Cost is lower than our target. In what we are looking for in a lead partner, this is great."

- Christian Zirbel, Marketing Manager @ Shinnova

Snoball sent leads or past customers through a nurturing process, and in return, dropped referral leads back into Shinnova's CRM. The platform's full automation, including messaging, timing, CRM integrations, and performance dashboards, ensured efficient lead management.

The success rate of referral leads was evident, with 85% of them turning into legitimate opportunities for Shinnova's sales team. The return on investment was substantial, highlighting the effectiveness of the Snoball platform in handling customer conversations at a human level.

KEY METRICS

6.6%

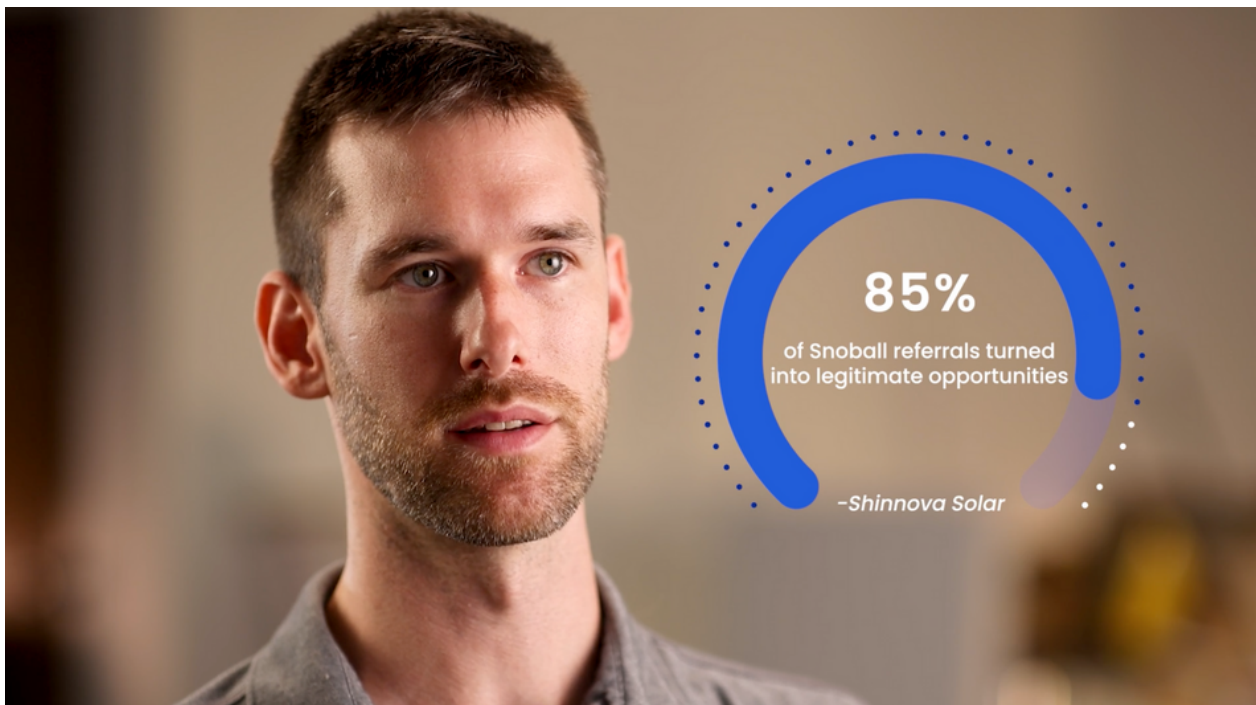
Request-to-Referral
Rate

85%

Of Referrals Into Qualified
Sales Opportunities

100+

New Referrals



KEY OUTCOMES FOR SHINNOVA SOLAR



**Reduced
marketing costs**



**Improved customer
service**



**Increase in
referrals**

With the help of the Snoball Referrals Module, Shinnova was able to cut down on marketing costs, improve customer service, and enjoy a major spike in referral-based opportunities.

Reduced marketing costs

With the implementation of the Snoball Referrals Module, Shinnova experienced a significant reduction in marketing costs. Christian, the Marketing Manager, emphasized the positive return on investment, stating, “The ROI is definitely there for the price we pay.”

Improved customer service

The Snoball Referrals Module didn't just streamline the referral process; it also elevated customer service at Shinnova. Christian highlighted the positive impact on customer interactions, explaining, “From a customer service aspect, it's nice to have their voice heard so we can fix any issues that may have arisen.”

Increase in referrals

The integration of the Snoball Referrals Module not only addressed Shinnova's immediate referral challenge but also became a catalyst for business growth. Shinnova's approach shifted from merely solving a problem to proactively building enduring customer relationships and securing the future of their business.

As Christian, the Marketing Manager, emphasized, “We treat referrals like gold. And they perform better for us than other lead types. At the end of the day, it's worth it to cultivate those leads and potential customers and send our sales team.”

Reviews & Reputation Marketing

CASE STUDY: SHINNOVA SOLAR

How Shinnova Solar Uses Snoball to Strengthen its Online Reputation and Foster Trust in its Sales Cycle



COMPANY SUMMARY

 **Number of employees:**
11-50

 **Industry focus:**
Solar + home solutions

 **Founded:**
2016

RESULTS

78%

Increase in Profile Visits



4.5 Stars

Overall Reviewer Rating



1 in 5

Customers Leave a Review



SHINNOVA'S ONLINE PRESENCE

A solid online reputation with opportunity for growth

Shinnova Solar started with a diverse online presence and a solid foundation for an impactful word of mouth marketing strategy. Before using Snoball, Shinnova Solar was active on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram, with profiles also on LinkedIn and Yelp. Shinnova had close to 300 reviews on Google, along with review profiles on other solar-related review sites.

For a small-to-medium-sized company, this was a great head start for Shinnova Solar in terms of its online presence, which provided a great opportunity to magnify its diligent efforts.

Snapshot of marketing strategy before Snoball:



296 reviews on Google with
a 4.9-star rating



At least **5 industry-related**
review profiles



Active on **4 social media**
platforms

THE CHALLENGE

Proactively expanding the company's online reputation to attract new customers



Christian Zirbel
Marketing Manager @ Shinnova

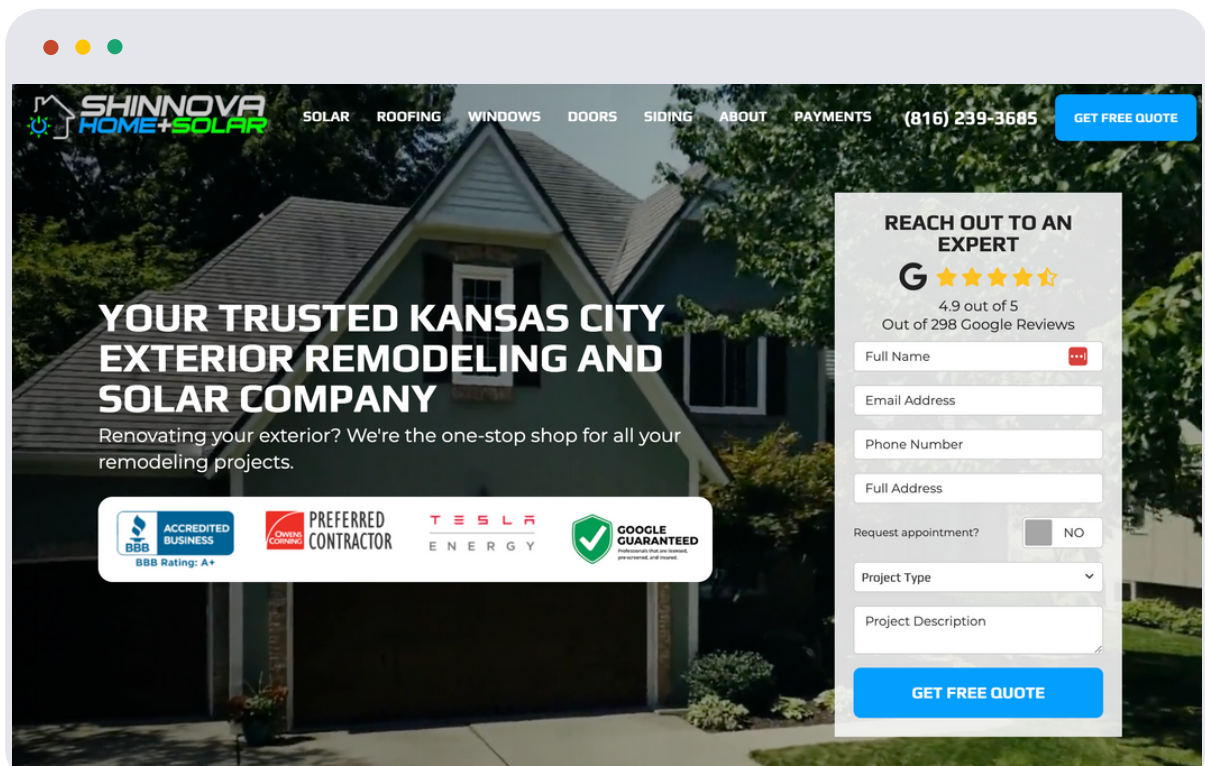
"Reputation management and our online presence is something we take seriously.

*We've invested a lot of time [in] generating Google reviews, but also want to flush out that reputation to other platforms that people are gonna be on. So on the solar side, **it's really about continuing to build the trust and brand awareness that we've been cultivating the last two years.**"*

Since Shinnova is a small business with limited resources, every customer counts. The Shinnova Solar team knew it needed to continue diversifying its online presence to improve its chances of retaining customers in its sales funnel.

Solar is a big purchase that takes a lot of time and research. Shinnova Solar realized if customers were researching its company after building an initial connection through an ad or referral, the customer needed reassurance. That meant expanding its online presence to trusted platforms with a bigger reach.

Shinnova wasn't willing to settle for "good enough" when it came to its online reputation. The company realized the importance of proactively seeking out new tools to elevate its reputation.



THE SOLUTION

A word of mouth marketing platform used to reinforce organic brand reach and perception

The Shinnova Solar team set out to find a solution to improve its lifecycle marketing with the help of reviews and reputation marketing. It poured time and energy into exploring top review sites and online reputation platforms.

Shinnova Solar needed a solution that could help it:

- Improve SERP results for “brand name” + keyword
- Add credibility with an unbiased third-party company review
- Increase overall review count online and move away from sole reliance on Google reviews
- Produce marketing materials for sharing the company’s online ratings on social media and the company’s webpage

Christian Zirbel, Marketing Manager at Shinnova, happened upon a Best Company (now known as Snoball) badge while browsing another company’s website. Christian set up an initial call with the Snoball team and felt strongly that this was the right tool to pursue.

Christian recounts his experience choosing Snoball:

*"I think the whole package, the service, [and] the team that I've interacted with also just seemed on kind of **a different level than the other companies I've spoken with.**"*

- Christian Zirbel, Marketing Manager @ Shinnova

Snoball offered new review and reputation marketing capabilities that Shinnova Solar needed to keep expanding its online presence.

Christian enjoys how user-friendly the tools are and the way the service continues working on its own after getting things set up and putting in some initial effort. He and the rest of the team were excited to witness the impact Snoball would have on their sales cycle.

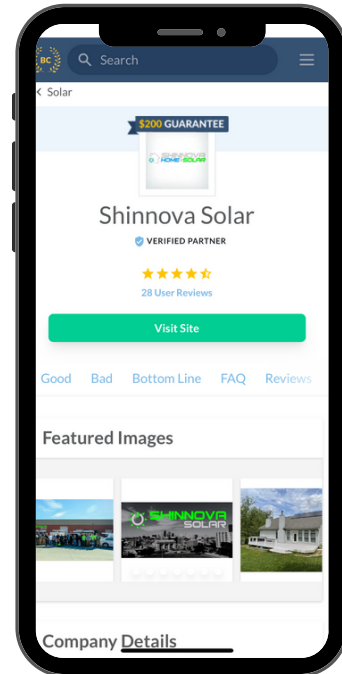
THE RESULTS

Improved search results for prospective customers researching Shinnova Solar

Snoball partners with [BestCompany.com](https://www.bestcompany.com), a trusted home services review site, as part of its complete word of mouth marketing solution. After signing up for the Snoball platform, Shinnova Solar built out its profile on [BestCompany.com](https://www.bestcompany.com) and submitted customer lists for review generation.

In just three months, Shinnova Solar secured a 4.5-star rating on BestCompany.com. Additionally, Shinnova Solar attained an average review conversion score of 18 percent, meaning about one in five of the customers Snoball reached out to left a review. This demonstrates Shinnova Solar's ability to convert sales into positive reviews with the help of Snoball.

Shinnova has seen a 78 percent increase in traffic to its profile in the last six months. Shinnova Solar's BestCompany.com profile ranks in the 10 top Google results for keywords such as "Shinnova Solar," "Shinnova Solar reviews," and "Shinnova." As a result of the SEO ranking, Shinnova's team had leads come through that mentioned they found the solar company through its BestCompany.com profile.



78%

Increase in Profile Visits

Strong SEO rankings and an active online reputation strategy has led to an increase in profile visits.

4.5 Stars

Overall Reviewer Rating

An intentional strategy to gather reviews from happy customers has led to an above average star rating.

1 in 5

Customers Left a Review

One in five of the customers Best Company reaches out to leaves a review for Shinnova Solar.

*"On the technical side, the SEO and ranking in Google is really nice. We've already gone beyond the lead generation, we've gotten some inquiries that people call and say they've found our profile and it ends up being on [BestCompany.com]. **It's definitely working.** So I think as the company profile continues to grow, it'll be a pretty powerful tool for us."*

- Christian Zirbel, Marketing Manager @ Shinnova



WHO IS SHINNOVA SOLAR?

A solar and home service company

Shinnova Solar is a Kansas City-based solar and home services company providing custom energy solutions and exterior upgrades to residential and commercial customers. Founded in 2016, the company has expanded its service area to cover a variety of cities in Kansas and Missouri.

Shinnova Solar focuses on steady and sustainable growth, continuing to improve its business strategy and processes to prepare for future expansion.

Why choose Snoball?

Snoball is a word of mouth marketing platform that leverages the power of customer satisfaction. With the help of this platform, you can utilize the experiences and opinions of your satisfied customers to build momentum in your marketing and sales efforts.

Snoball offers easy-to-use tools for receiving referrals from happy customers, gathering customer reviews, and displaying reviews on your website with customizable widgets.

Find out how Snoball can benefit your business at snoball.com.

