

## Why HP Digital Photography focuses everyone on its online community

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*Diane talks with Tanya from HP about why their digital photography community accomplishes what they need and why it won the HP Circle Award for marketing excellence and innovative customer marketing research. HP recently launched its largest, global interactive marketing campaign to date, the “What do you have to say?” campaign, which helps customers express themselves with online tools to easily mash, create and publish digital content in new, exciting ways. To learn more about the creative features that the PhotoSpace community helped design please check out the LEARN section on the <http://www.expressioncenter.wetpaint.com>.*

**DIANE:** Hi. This is Diane Hessian of Communispace and today I’m talking with Tanya Maurer, who is a customer experience program manager from Hewlett-Packard.

HP recently received the highest ethical reputation ranking in the world among multi-national high-tech companies by Covalence, which is huge congratulations there. And among the many Communispace communities that Hewlett-Packard has, its first one ever was for its digital photography group. Recently, that team won the prestigious HP Circle Award for marketing excellence and innovative customer marketing research out of a field of 443 entries from 36 countries.

So Tanya, let’s start with that. Why did you win this award for your PhotoSpace community?

**TANYA:** Thanks, Diane. We are so excited to be able to get that. And one of the reasons that our program stood out is that we were able to show a new way to do ethnography studies in a digital format, and that’s not just a single moment, looking at customers, but it gives us a look into consumers’ lives and experiences through a series of snapshots over time. And we provided information within a short time period that’s innovative, actionable, and it gives our teams a fresh look at the consumer experience.

**DIANE:** Now, I understand that people from all parts of HP’s digital photography organization on a regular basis listen in to the community’s conversations and that sometimes you literally have to hold them back

from bombarding the community members with questions. What do you think it is that people find so valuable?

**TANYA:** We do have hundreds of employees who have access to the community to observe and kind of listen in on conversations, and that's difficult to do in traditional research when you're spread out all over the world in different time zones and different organizations, to really be able to talk and listen to your customers. They're hearing directly from people that they're designing solutions for in real time. And it also helps them substantiate some of the recommendations that they're making to their team members from a customer point of view. So it brings those customers into the design process with them. And it's also very motivating and exciting for them to be able to kind of work directly with consumers, and we don't have that luxury to be able to do that in our little cubes in their offices on a regular basis.

**DIANE:** Well, aside from market research, what we all think of as market research, where else in the company do you have functions that find the community especially useful?

**TANYA:** Our R&D engineers, our scientists, program managers, marketing communication, designers. It spreads across all of the company so you don't have to go through a formal process to be able to set up a traditional research program that may take a long time. They can jump in, work with us and within a few days, maybe to a week, be able to start a conversation with consumers and bring it directly into their teams and help them move forward with some of the decisions in the things that they're doing.

**DIANE:** Interesting. So how do people across your organization make decisions differently now that they have access to the community and get this instant feedback? Do you have some examples of how they do that?

**TANYA:** Sure. What often they do is when they're trying to make decisions within a team about things that are small, they don't really warrant a big research project but they need some information, some input, from customers to move forward more confidently with their decisions, they'll first think of the community because this is an open resource for those people who need insights from digital photography consumers.

So it's really nice that they know they have this resource and when they have those things such as what kind of wording do I use for this or what icon or picture makes a better sense for that customer or what color should this button be. Little things that they may just, in their group, with their peers, walk it around, try to make the decision, will have that additional customer voice and that's really great. By the time we deliver

something, we have some more confidence about how it's going to be received, and it also makes our decision process a little more fast and reliable as we move forward.

**DIANE:** OK. Interesting. So one example then is you've got the voice of the customer coming into HP in situations where traditionally you wouldn't have even had the time to ask customers or the budget to ask customers or something like that, what you call the small things.

**TANYA:** Exactly. And the nice thing, too, is we can do it in iterations. That's something that you don't often have. When you do traditional research, it's kind of one stab at it with those customers. They go off to their homes or wherever and if there are questions afterwards, you're left with the researchers and the people who are in the room trying to guess what people meant.

In the community we have that on-going access for clarification, for iteration, and having that conversation with them. And it makes such a difference in the substantiation of the information that we get back.

**DIANE:** What about above and beyond small things? Are there opportunities that you had to make decisions that you feel are more than just kind of the tactical what color should the picture be?

**TANYA:** Most definitely. We just introduced a new camera and a new photo printer, and some of those creative features in those two pieces of equipment were directly affected by the community. They gave insight on something that we call pet eye, which is removing the green eyes from your pet photos or animal photos. And we were struggling with what do you call this thing that you do and then also being able to test it in a real environment.

We have employees provide pictures, but what we were able to do with the community is community members named it pet eye. They said that made a difference, and they supplied us with a whole variety of images that had this phenomena, that we could run it through our algorithms, test it, tweak it, and make sure that it was going to work in real life situation. And so when we delivered that, we're pretty confident that we've got something that's going to work out there in the real world and make sense to customers.

And other design elements like photo borders that we do in photography -- they helped with the design of those photo borders, what they liked and they didn't like, what we called those borders and how we grouped them in our menus. And so they're actually co-developing with us, and we're able to actually see that in products in the market today.

**DIANE:** Yeah. It's so interesting because HP really has a heritage of wanting to have its customers involved in what today we call co-creation, and this is interesting to see how you're really able to do it in these applications also.

**TANYA:** And I think it's exciting for the members as well to hear back when I can tell them look. Now you can show your friends and families things that you actually helped HP design. And so it makes them proud, too, that we listened to them and that they actually had some say-so in that.

**DIANE:** That's interesting. Do they literally tell you, do they literally say I feel proud about this? What is the member experience like?

**TANYA:** It is. And what's surprising to me is when we first started giving them feedback about everything that they've done and we've listened to and we've worked on, they were actually surprised that a big corporation cared about what they thought. And that's so far from reality in this company. We really want to hear from customers and it's so valuable and we really do appreciate it, so again and again we try to tell them how they're making an impact and now that they've sort of been with the community for a while, they're a bit over the surprise and they are very open, very frank and honest with us, which is what we want. The good, the bad, and the ugly. We need to hear it all from them because they're our reality check.

**DIANE:** Right. So Tanya, if other people are trying to do this and to create these communities that generate this kind of customer insight, do you have advice for people who are trying to do a great job here with this?

**TANYA:** Yeah. One of the things when we first started, it was really important, because this is new compared to traditional research for most organizations, is communicate, communicate, communicate what you're doing and make it relevant so as you're talking to different groups, bring in examples of information that they really care about. Make sure that the information you're bringing to them is actionable and not just nice to know, because they get a lot of nice to know information, but if you can show them customer insight and input that can affect what they're working on today and help them with their decisions and have that real voice and personality and story of the customer with it, it makes such a difference and it resonates so much more.

It's different from traditional research because it doesn't take so long to plan and to get the information back. Within 24 hours, we launch an activity. They will actually have useful information to be able to start working on. You don't have to wait for months and so when you talk to your decision-makers, make sure

you make the information relevant to them. Information that they can take action on and bring that customer voice. Try not to filter it because I find that that's where the value of the community is, is having that unfiltered voice and being able to envision those customers and what they're really saying and what they want so it brings, again, that reality into what you're working on.

**DIANE:** That's really interesting. And of course, when you talk about how you've been doing this with 24-hour turnaround, it really is instant gratification, isn't it?

**TANYA:** Yes. And there's nothing like that to keep people motivated and excited and working forward. I've had engineers that just, they're blown away by what they get from customers and those of us who work with customers on a regular basis say that's what it's all about and that's why we have this tool and that's why it's so amazing, so please continue to take advantage of it.

**DIANE:** Right. Great. Well, Tanya, this is fascinating and the work that you've done and in general, just the great innovations that HP has been involved in is just so impressive, and it's very, very helpful to hear your perspective. So thanks so much for sharing your wisdom with us.

**TANYA:** You're very welcome. And thanks for having me today.

**About Communispace:**

Communispace Corporation, headquartered in Watertown, Massachusetts, is the leader in building, managing and facilitating private branded communities that deliver the voice of the customer and enable businesses to generate continuous insights, drive faster innovation, and build loyalty.