



CASE STUDY

*Shoretel Sky Establishes Cloud Computing Authority
With Industry News*

Content Marketing · Technology & Cloud Services





ShoreTel's Cloud Division, formerly M5 Networks, offers businesses of all sizes cloud-based phone solutions. With prospects updating their communications systems about once every seven years, it's important for the brand to demonstrate that its products and services are reliable and offer capabilities that make an investment worthwhile.

Amber Newman, senior marketing communications manager for the [ShoreTel Sky](#) family of products, sought a strategic marketing partner to create content that demonstrates her company's expertise.

Like other forms of cloud services, the hosted or cloud-based phone system market is experiencing growing demand. Prospects have more options than ever before when selecting partners, and it takes more than a good product to win business. Newman opted to launch a content marketing strategy with Braffton that captured the value of cloud-based [business phone systems](#) to show prospects ShoreTel is on top of the industry.

“There are several trends that have come together in the field of unified communications,” Newman said. “Our whole industry is growing rapidly, in terms of adoption and technological developments. Because of this, buyers want to know more. This need really lends itself to content marketing.”

By developing a comprehensive strategy with Braffton's content marketing teams, the ShoreTel Sky website has transformed into a dynamic information portal. Pairing relevant industry insights with a broad product arsenal tells prospects ShoreTel is the company that can bring their communications systems into the 21st century. Newman and her team develop content of their own for the site's blog and commercial pages, while Braffton's editorial staff provides the consistent contributions ShoreTel needs to drive authority and web results.

“If we had to do content marketing in house, frequent publication wouldn't have been sustainable,” Newman said. “Not having to worry about writing every day has freed our team to become more strategic with our overall marketing and sales.”

An engaging, traffic-driving content marketing strategy

In the early stages of the relationship between Brafton and ShoreTel, Newman admits she had reservations. The technical nature of the subject matter alone was a concern, but Brafton's dedication to carefully crafted content quickly became evident. Brafton's content marketing strategists and content production teams developed an editorial brief based on ShoreTel's website goals. The team of writers creates informative articles about cloud computing, business VoIP and enterprise phone systems that ShoreTel is proud to have on its site.

SHORETEL SKY CONTENT STRATEGY



Daily 200-400 word authoritative news articles



Diverse keyword focus



Infographic publication



Conversion optimization

“Early on, I wasn't confident that Brafton could produce the type and volume of content we needed,” Newman said. “That has never been a problem. We've been thrilled with the editorial work and the guidance we've received from our consultants. The quality of the work is consistent.”

Brafton's strategy for ShoreTel includes a detailed list of keywords, as well as a combination of straightforward industry news and lengthier pieces that offer analysis to educate prospects further. One of the key campaign goals is to improve SEO to foster a stronger presence in search.

Newman and her team developed a list of keywords they knew would win traffic. Working with Brafton's content marketing team helped ShoreTel identify more terms to consider. Content that naturally includes these phrases positions the ShoreTel Sky website to attract traffic, generate leads and close sales.

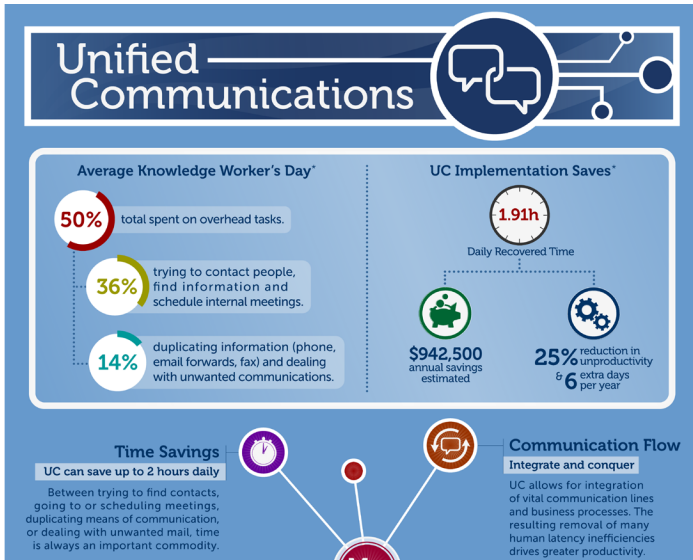
Another leading goal is building brand authority through content that educates and influences buyers. “The content needs to keep visitors on our site,” Newman said. Brafton's content covers a number of topics relevant to B2B buyers looking to upgrade their companies' phone systems. The ongoing articles discuss cloud-based phone systems and enterprise telephony, among other focus areas, that appeal to website visitors by highlighting demand or tangible results.

For example,
ShoreTel Sky headlines include:

- [“VoIP, Unified Communications Investments Continue Growing”](#)
- [“Updated Customer Service Technology Helps Banks”](#)
- [“Cloud-based Phones Benefit Business”](#)

Each article presents prospects with a relevant piece of data to highlight a trend in the industry. By including real-world examples of [cloud-based phone systems](#) improving corporate efficiency and performance, prospects learn more about the technology's impact on their companies.

Coverage of a wide range of topics that interest buyers with different competitive or enterprise goals helps ShoreTel reach unique audiences. The industry's prospect base has evolved over time, and different buyers have different informational needs. Aside from the news content, Braffton and ShoreTel work together to execute infographics that complement industry articles and appeal to diverse audiences.



The company wants content that speaks to specific customer segments, using content marketing to support form completions on its site. Braffton's content marketing strategists worked with ShoreTel to develop a strategy for using calls to action to optimize the conversion process.

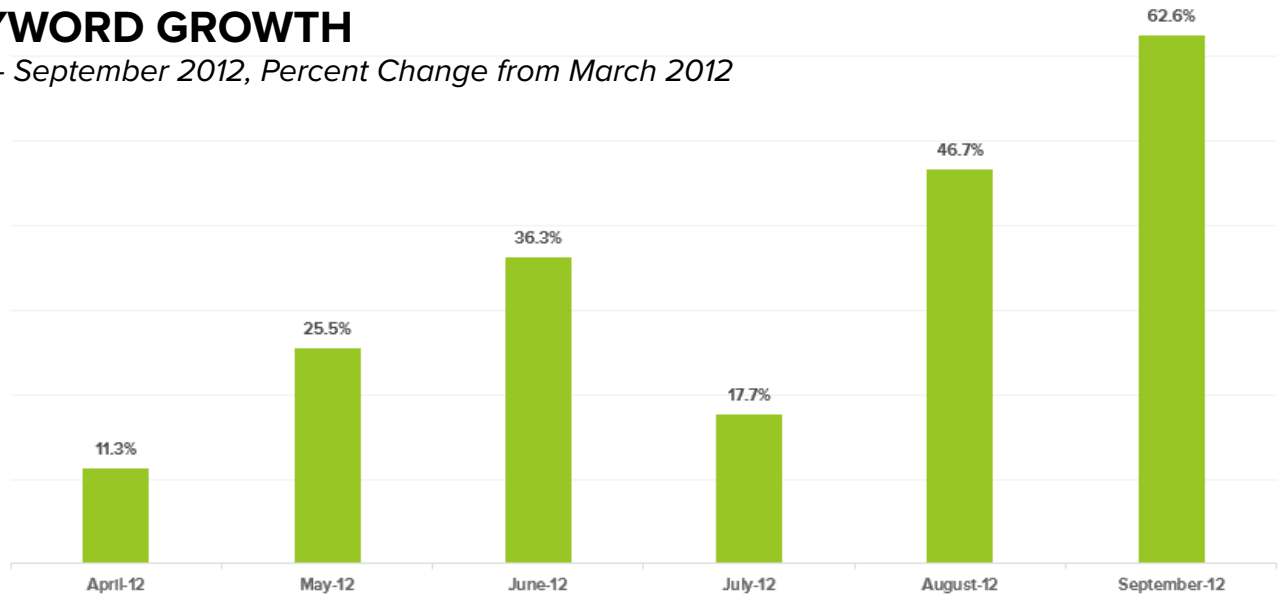
Thought leadership and SEO results through content marketing

Measuring increased thought leadership and authority can be challenging, so defining the metrics that suggest greater influence in an industry is a critical first step. Braffton's content marketing strategists use Google Analytics and other trusted tools to measure inbound links, keyword referrals and additional data to gauge improved niche authority.

The industry news on ShoreTel Sky's website has contributed to positive growth across these metrics. Since Brafton content went live in March 2012, the number of measurable keywords referring traffic has increased by more than 62 percent. The presence of keyword-infused content drives search presence for core terms as well as secondary phrases.

KEYWORD GROWTH

April - September 2012, Percent Change from March 2012



Similarly, ShoreTel Sky's site now garners traffic from 48 different variations of the term "business phone systems." These long tail phrases bring relevant, convertible traffic that ShoreTel targets to generate leads and sales from its website.

In general, organic traffic is up across the board. For Q3 2012, organic traffic grew 50.8 percent compared to the same time period in 2011.

ORGANIC TRAFFIC IS UP
50.8% YOY
WITH BRAFTON CONTENT

"Brafton's content has helped us win more traffic and information requests."

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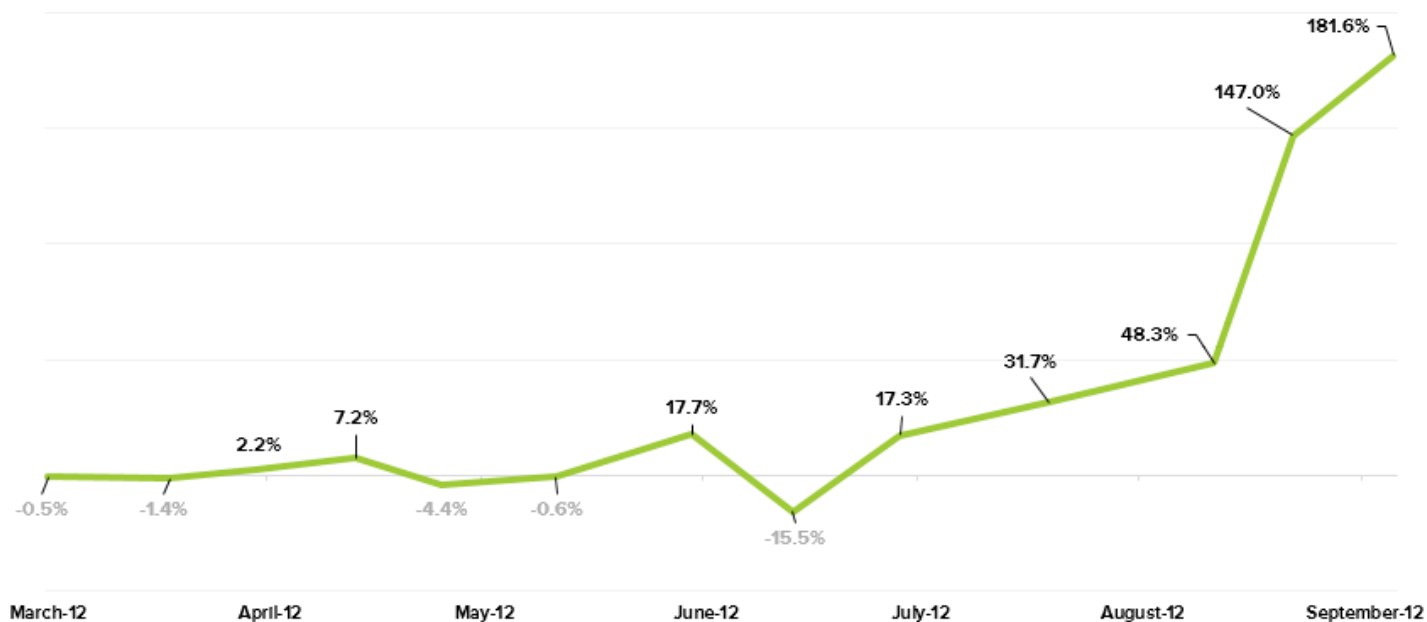
SEPT-12

“It’s difficult to quantify thought leadership and awareness, but we think it’s a strong indicator that Brafton’s content has helped us win more traffic and information requests,” Newman said.

Understanding the ways people endorse brands on the web is critical to assessing thought leadership. Inbound links from quality pages or influential social users suggest content stands out to people as credible and share-worthy. Diverse content contributed to a 181 percent increase in [ShoreTelSky.com](#)’s inbound links from March 2012 through September 2012.

INBOUND LINK GROWTH

April - September 2012, Percent Change from March 2012



“Our content gets picked up by news aggregators and that’s been important in developing our brand’s thought leadership.

“We want to be invited into the social conversation for our industry,” Newman said. “Our Brafton content puts us in front of the people talking about cloud-based phone systems. Now, we’re not just involved, but our content guides the conversations.”

Meaningful engagement that drives conversions

As more prospects read content, Newman believes that their understanding of the ShoreTel Sky product line grows, and they enter the conversion funnel as a result.

Prospects who accessed the site's non-commercial content (including blogs and Brafton-provided news) converted 43 percent more frequently than other website visitors in Q3 2012. Beyond news and blog articles, traffic exposed to the site's infographics produced a conversion rate twice as high as the site's overall average, measuring from the launch of the first infographic in March through September 2012. The visual content demonstrates greater engagement, too.

Infographic viewers have a 3 percent lower than the site average conversion abandonment rate and a 3 percent lower than site average bounce rate.



THOSE WHO VIEWED
NEWS & BLOG CONTENT

+42% Goal Conversion Rate
-7% Bounce Rate

 ShoreTelSky(.com)

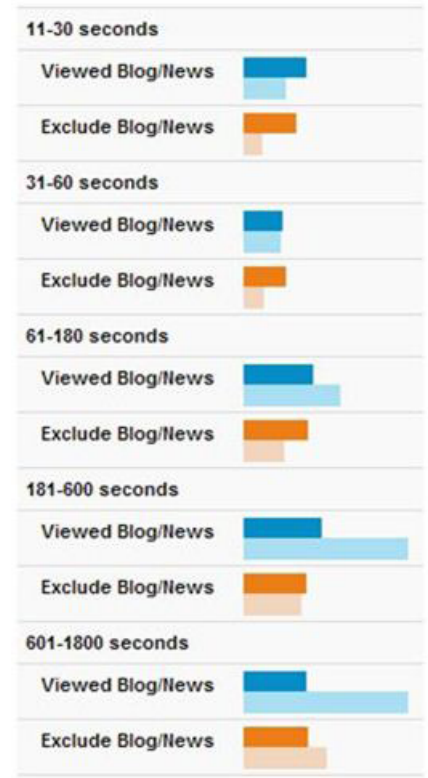
“Our content is designed to bridge the gaps in knowledge that our audience may have,” she said. “We want to help people understand our technology and show them the value of working with us in the process.”

The [news landing page](#), used as a hub for all of ShoreTel Sky's industry news content, has proven vital to attracting new traffic. It's become a top landing page and one of the most frequently accessed pages on the site overall. As prospects navigate the site, news content keeps them reading and progressing toward conversion at a greater rate than those accessing other pages. In fact, average time on site is consistently higher among prospects reading news and blogs than visitors who do not.

ShoreTel had expertise in its industry and related trends before it started working with Braffton. However, the contribution of regular, timely content detailing the merits of cloud phone systems helps convey this authority and distinguishes ShoreTel from other companies on the web.

"Braffton has not only made us more confident in our presence on the web, but it's improved our ability to market our services," Newman said. "I definitely recommend Braffton. We've already recommended Braffton to other divisions of our company and external business partners.

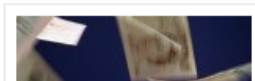
"We will dedicate more resources to Braffton, and we're already adding more content types into our strategy," Newman said. "Beyond that, we want to work more closely with our Braffton consultants to improve our sales cycle."



INDUSTRY NEWS

COMPANIES DEPLOYING VOIP AND UC SOLUTIONS

Posted by: *admin* on Nov 16, 2012 in *Hosted Communications* | *No Comments*



Enterprises looking to improve communication are beginning to turn to Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), unified communications (UC), customer relationship management (CRM) and other technologically advanced options to ensure that

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Check out Shoretel Sky's News Landing Page: <http://www.ShoreTelSky.com/category/industry-news/>