

Description:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The Heat Changers project is an international communication campaign that educates, inspires and motivates people to convert to solar heat.</i> - <i>It addresses potential users of solar heat from three different perspectives: emotions, technology, and economics.</i> - <i>Heat Changers are users of solar heating technologies that act as brand ambassadors for solar heat.</i>
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Introduction

Reviving solar thermal is not only a matter of cost reduction but also one of visibility. New marketing strategies and ways to inform about the technology are crucial elements for strengthening the market for solar water heating. This info sheet presents the recently launched Heat Changers campaign as showcase project for innovative communication and promotion activities.

About the Project

The Heat Changers educate, inspire and motivate people to use solar energy to heat water, contaminate less and build a greener future.

The Heat Changers are a community that raises awareness about solar heat. They do this through a communication campaign and use social media to reach people from different countries.

Goals

- To draw consumers' attention to heat and solar heat.
- To make solar thermal appealing to consumers by creating an innovative and consistent image.
- To use online marketing tools to create an online community that shares information about solar heat.

Approach

“Doing what is in our hands: making weaknesses weaker and strengths stronger”



The idea of the Heat Changers emerged from a simple **SWOT** analysis of the solar thermal market done by the authors. It builds upon three **strengths** (internal factors): knowledge and expertise about the technology and international markets, highly engaged and capable team players, intercultural, interdisciplinary, and language skills.

At the same time, it focusses on reducing three **weaknesses** (internal factors) that hinder the growth of the solar thermal market: lack of awareness about heat and solar heat, highly technical content, presentation of solar heating as a complex matter, non-consistent image.

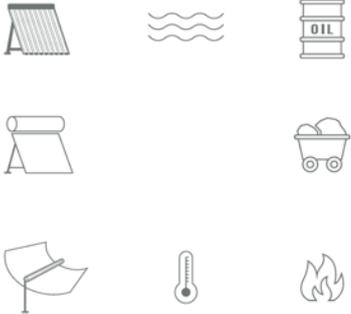
The project’s approach is to maximize the strengths to take advantage of areas of **opportunity** (external factors) such as: success stories with solar heating all over the world, digitalization, increasing social media engagement of solar thermal market players. Moreover, some major **threats** (external factors) could be tackled as a side effect: shrinking solar thermal markets, public policies that do not consider heating and solar heating technologies as priority, lack of investments in solar heating technologies, weaker positioning of solar thermal compared to solar photovoltaic.

Project Identity

A key component of the Heat Changers project is the project’s identity and branding, since one of the goals is to make solar thermal appealing to consumers by creating an innovative and consistent image.

Brand	
<p>Name: clear (heat), short (two words), strong (changer), international (English).</p> <p>Color: cold (blue) and warm (warm yellow).</p> <p>Logo: dynamic, geometric, simple.</p> <p>Symbol: two elements converge: water and sun, marketers and technicians, users and potential users, past and future.</p> <p>Slogan: there are many success stories all over the world, many experts working in this field, many people convinced that solar heat is reliable and worth it. The Heat Changers campaign look for them and provide them a forum to share their experience with others.</p>	

Key visuals	
<p>Sun: simple, accessible.</p>	

<p>People: optimistic, youthful, positive attitude, diverse.</p>	
<p>Key messages: short, bold.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Be a HeatChanger</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="background-color: #003366; color: white; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>We want to change that.</p> </div> <div style="background-color: #FFC000; color: white; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>We're the Heat Changers.</p> </div> </div>
<p>Icons: solar water heating, collector technologies, fossil fuels.</p>	
<p>Merchandising: polo shirts and pins.</p>	

Initial Support



The Solar Heating Initiative has been able to develop the concept and promotional materials for the Heat Changers project thanks to resources from several members of the Solar Heating Initiative and has already brought some well-known supporters on board, including Markus Elsässer, Founder and Managing Director of Solar Promotion and organiser of the Intersolar Europe, and Australian Ken Guthrie, formerly chair of the IEA Solar Heating and Cooling Program, Bernhard Weyres-Borchert President of the German Solar Society for Solar Energy (DGS), Dr. Roger Corradini from the Forschungsstelle Energiewirtschaft e.V.

Promotional Video



Video with subtitles in

English: <https://youtu.be/htSgWjyQL4>

German: <https://youtu.be/OEhDFYIem60>

Spanish: https://youtu.be/6IkqU_BdqYI

Crowdfunding Campaign

Since further resources are necessary to implement the campaign fully, a crowdfunding campaign was launched at Kickstarters to let companies and people from all over the world fund the Heat Changers' project. The funding goal of 35.000 EUR was not reached; however, the crowdfunding campaign was an excellent exercise to grow the Heat Changers community bigger and see what is possible to do with social media within 45 days. Example Twitter: 120 followers, 48.2K impressions, 984 impressions per day, 255 retweets, 551 likes.

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/heatchangers/heat-changers>

The campaign will be run with direct contributions from interested companies and organizations, as well as with sponsoring.

Social Media

@HeatChangers #HeatChangers

Twitter



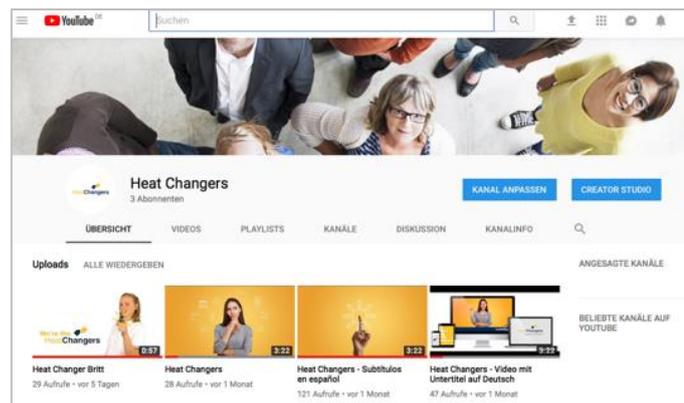
Instagram



Facebook



You Tube Channel



Heat Changers

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Target Market

The Heat Changers campaign is for people who have a **solar heating system** to **join the Heat Changer community** and **give testimony** of the benefits it has brought to their lives.

The Heat Changers are brand ambassadors for solar heat. They are multipliers and introduce others (families and friends) into the solar heat world since they either have a solar heating system, work in the solar heating sector, or both.

Heat Changers build a bridge for others to learn and enjoy the benefits of solar heat; are aware of their heat demand; have changed from a 100% fossil fuel consumption to a more CO2-free heating with solar thermal technologies; are innovative, engaging, and have a strong sense of belonging.

Heat Changers are glad to **share** their experience and knowledge with solar heat.

Their goal is

- To show that solar heat is able to compete with other energy sources
- To provide evidence that solar heating is worth it, financially and ecologically
- To reduce uncertainty and awaken interest by providing useful and easy-to-understand technical facts



Examples: You Tube videos

Heat Changer **Britt**: <https://youtu.be/ZoMkxTjXn58>

Heat Changer **Edith**: <https://youtu.be/WhbMgi49xvE>

Heat Changers address individuals who

- still don't know how much saving potential is in their heating habits and consumption
- are not aware of the ecological and economic benefits of solar heat
- are skeptical and avoid change
- still use inefficient gas and/or oil boilers (fossil fuels)
- are overwhelmed with the information about all different types of heating technologies



Content

The backbone of the Heat Changers campaign will be the **stories of people who use solar thermal technologies** and are willing to share their experience and motivate others to convert to solar heat.

The campaign will address potential Heat Changers (consumers) from three different perspectives:

- Emotions: well-being and happiness
- Technology: reliability
- Economics: savings and profits

The main messages of the Heat Changers are:

- Solar heating is the simplest way to achieve a CO₂-free heat supply. Sun energy is unlimited and does not cause contamination.
- In a solar heating system, heat is supplied by the sun for free and is directly delivered on-site. That makes you more independent from energy prices and supply networks.
- Solar collectors are reliable and durable heat generators that accompany you like a good friend and cover a big share of your heat demand for a long time.
- For most applications, such as residential, service, and industry, a huge variety of different types of efficient solar collectors are available and they can be perfectly combined with other heating technologies.
- Only solar thermal heating systems make energy efficiency in buildings really effective. They process the solar irradiation on your roof with high efficiency and do not need too much space. This means they leave enough space for PV so that your expensive electricity demand for household and mobility can be covered to a great extent.

Channels

The Heat Changers campaign use word of mouth marketing that will widespread authentic stories through online communication channels (social media).

Today's online communication tools and channels represent a huge opportunity to spread a message worldwide easier and more cost-effective than with traditional print media. The challenge is to create content more appealing for consumers that it is worth their attention and willingness to share it.

Online tools:

- **Website:** www.heat-changers.com
- **Blog series** with background information and suggestions from
 - Heat Changers at Home
 - Heat Changers at Work
- **Short videos** with
 - **Interviews from experts** that explain the suitability of solar heating technologies in different countries and market segments (*technology*)
 - Authentic **statements from users** (household, managers, etc.) that describe how they benefit from their solar heating system (*emotions, economics*)
- **Facebook-Series** with tips e. g.
 - "Why does my solar heating system pay off? ": Comfort and warmth with long-term cost savings and a clear conscience (*emotions, economics*)
 - "This is how the change works": In just a few steps, the long-term optimal solar heating system (*technology*)
 - "How to save money in 5 steps": Make your contribution to the energy transition and benefit from subsidies (*economics*)
- **Twitter series** with short facts and figures e. g.
 - "Did you know that...?" series about savings, consumption, and solutions (*emotions*)
 - Daily tweets of the solar yield of one user's solar heating system (*technology*)
 - Tweets about grants and subsidies (*economics*)
- **Instagram** images of reference systems and infographics
- Monthly **newsletter** to keep our followers and Heat Changers informed



About the Authors



Marisol Oropeza is responsible for Marketing and Public Relations of the Solar Heating Initiative and coordinates the Heat Changers project. She has over 10-years experience in marketing for the solar heating sector internationally. Since 2016, she works independently at www.matters.mx and has provided consultancy services to the Solar Keymark Network, Solarthermalworld.org, and other companies from the European solar thermal sector. She is a network partner of the German agency for solar market research and international communication Solrico and coordinates the communication activities of the IKI project Solar Payback for Mexico.

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Stefan Abrecht is responsible for technical advice and lobbying of the Solar Heating Initiative. He is an expert in solar thermal energy with over 30-years experience in this sector and lives in his own solar house for 25 years. He participates in several international projects related to technical aspects and standards. His work includes analyzing, evaluating and developing solar collectors and systems for small applications like single family houses up to large scale for district heating. Moreover, he works on multifunctional building integrated solar collectors producing heat, providing sun protection, supplying daylight and transparency while reducing heating and cooling loads.

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