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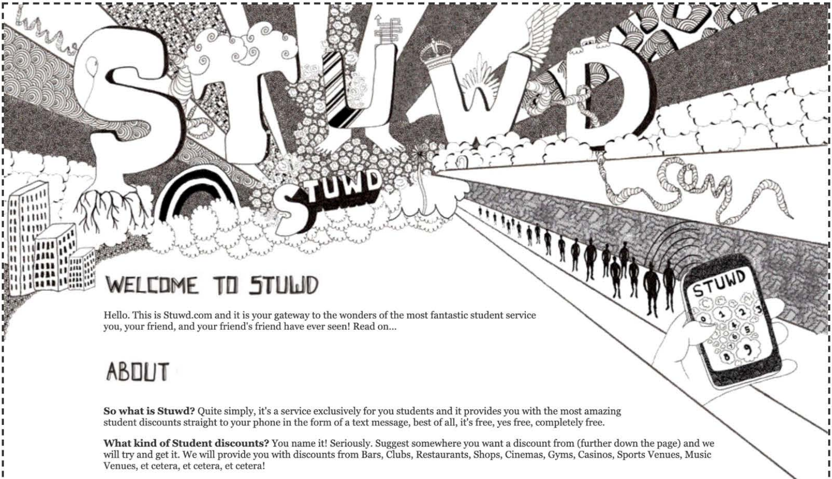
Case Study 00

Stuwd Text Message Marketing

A Digital Channel for Local Marketing



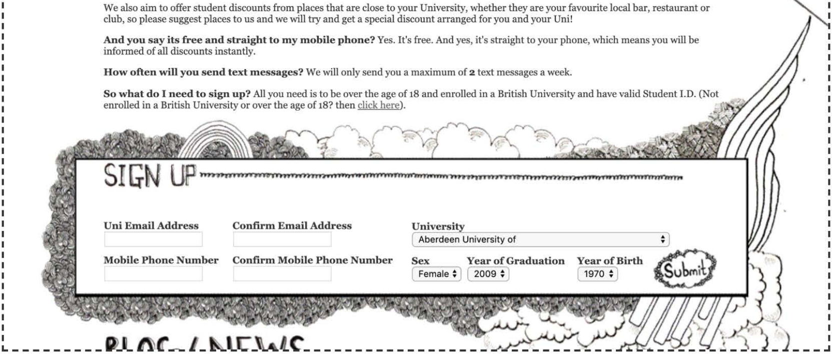
WELCOME TO STUWD

Hello. This is Stuwd.com and it is your gateway to the wonders of the most fantastic student service you, your friend, and your friend's friend have ever seen! Read on...

ABOUT

So what is Stuwd? Quite simply, it's a service exclusively for you students and it provides you with the most amazing student discounts straight to your phone in the form of a text message, best of all, it's free, yes free, completely free.

What kind of Student discounts? You name it! Seriously. Suggest somewhere you want a discount from (further down the page) and we will try and get it. We will provide you with discounts from Bars, Clubs, Restaurants, Shops, Cinemas, Gyms, Casinos, Sports Venues, Music Venues, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera!



We also aim to offer student discounts from places that are close to your University, whether they are your favourite local bar, restaurant or club, so please suggest places to us and we will try and get a special discount arranged for you and your Uni!

And you say its free and straight to my mobile phone? Yes. It's free. And yes, it's straight to your phone, which means you will be informed of all discounts instantly.

How often will you send text messages? We will only send you a maximum of **2** text messages a week.

So what do I need to sign up? All you need is to be over the age of 18 and enrolled in a British University and have valid Student I.D. (Not enrolled in a British University or over the age of 18? then click here).

SIGN UP

Uni Email Address

Confirm Email Address

University: Aberdeen University of

Mobile Phone Number

Confirm Mobile Phone Number

Sex: Female

Year of Graduation: 2009

Year of Birth: 1970

Client: eyetxt

Project Name: Stuwd Alerts

Brief Summary

Traditional forms of advertising are becoming more expensive, and new opportunities are arising as the digital world is expanding. These opportunities allow for better targeting, scale and speed, as well as other efficiencies.

How can marketers reach their audience through a new digital method? How is the audience built? What does the tech stack look like? What is the most viable digital medium that can be utilised to reach audiences?

Deliverables

Launching any new business or product requires a number of things, but the core requirement was a method of capturing the audience. In the MVP this was very analogue - ironic considering the nature of the service.

The full release, Stuwd, required a site that users could subscribe through and manage their subscription along with a database, and an email/text message server that could run the campaigns.

Intro

I launched eyetxt after graduating from University in 2006, I saw an opportunity to utilise digital as a more efficient means of marketing.

Having been dabbling in building websites from a young age, I was fully aware of the opportunities that the internet and an emerging 'always connected' culture were creating. As someone who is naturally entrepreneurial, I am always paying attention to what was happening and what opportunities were being missed.

Prior to University I had partnered with a friend to put on club nights, and we spent a lot of time and money advertising these nights through flyers and posters. Having gone to University, I noticed the same culture and inefficiencies throughout my studies.

Graduating in 2006, I needed to make a plan and began exploring a few ideas, eyetxt being one of them. I was fortunate enough to attend a University that had a incubator for start up businesses, and I approached them with this specific idea and was promptly accepted on to the programme that provided mentorship and funding.

Problem

As physical flyers and posters were my form of inspiration, they became my focus - what problems are they solving for both marketer and recipient, what problems are they not solving, and what problems are they potentially causing.

Marketers

Take as an example someone who owns a late night Bar in a busy and competitive student town. They have ongoing club nights, and ongoing drinks promotions, however their customers change every year - with students graduating and new students arriving. They need a way of generating new custom and the standard method of achieving this is through physical flyers distributed by hand.

The setup time for a flyer campaign takes around 4 weeks at a minimum, from design of the flyer, to printing. They then need to be distributed to the target audience. This results in a lack of nimbleness, or sophistication - it's basically an analogue solution.

Audience

A student is open to new experiences, they are in a new place and want to discover the best of it - they also want a good deal or incentive. They are open to being handed a flyer, or reading one because whilst it's technically an advert, it's also informative. It may contain information about a new club night, or a drinks promotion or free entry or a number of other things.

Whilst this makes them the perfect audience, they can easily miss out if they are not in the right place at the right time and the flyer itself might not be relevant to them - it's not targeted.

There are also a number of environmental considerations to take in to account, as well as just a general local littering issue.

Research

When originally envisioning the product, I spent a lot of time thinking about the different stakeholders - who would use this service, where was the value, was there a fair balance for all stakeholders? Was the switching cost worthwhile?

Once I had some better direction, I tried to speak to as many potential customers as I could and to understand if and how they currently marketed their business, and then if they were open to methods. Finally I mentioned that I was hoping to create a method for marketing locally via digital.

The other important stakeholder was the audience - I needed to understand how they would normally be informed of evening activities and other things, along with methods they may be open to. As the primary audience were students, they were easy to find and also open to conversation. After a couple of days of guerrilla interviews, I had enough research to begin to look at potential solutions.

When speaking to both sets of stakeholders it became clear that any solution would be to push any marketing messages, rather than simply putting those messages in places that the audience might see them.

The reasoning for this was two fold, scale and time - the types of marketing campaigns that were being run were time limited, and needed to reach as many people as possible.

From an audience perspective, they were unlikely to go and find these messages or stumble across them - let alone at scale and at a set time frame.

Solution

I'm writing this a number of years after I launched the business in 2006 - Social media wasn't really a thing, and Google advertising was still in it's infancy along with the general digital advertising space - particularly when trying to target a specific local audience. Apps were just a vision in Steve Jobs mind.

Due to the needs of the marketing campaigns - local/time limited/specific audience/scale - there was a limitation on potential solutions;

- A normal website wouldn't work because you would be reliant on the audience coming to you.
- Acting as an agency and buying inventory would be difficult due to the campaign needing to target a specific audience, which wasn’t possible with any existing digital advertising networks.
- An email newsletter could work, but the always connected culture didn’t exist, and it may be days or weeks before any emails were opened - negating the ability to run instant alert campaigns.

Focusing purely on 'alerts', and knowing that a lot of normal digital means wouldn't work, left me with a single option - SMS text messages - and fortunately it was the perfect solution because everyone had the capability of receiving them.

The MVP took the form of a subscription service aimed at students in Nottingham - they signed up to receive marketing messages from local venues. These messages would contain information about certain events, or discounts for example.

In the 9 months from launch over 3,000 local students signed up, and a number of campaigns and messages were sent. This gave encouragement that there was a bigger opportunity to be had for a service on a national level.

Expanding on the MVP launched in Nottingham in 2006, a full national service was launched in October 2007 - the product was called Stuwd.

Headline Numbers

- 100,000 subscribers
- 70 campaigns over 2 years
- 400,000 SMS text messages sent

Conclusion

To start an entirely new business within weeks or graduating from University was a challenge, and obviously came with a huge learning curve.

The research that lead on to the MVP was the perfect starting point, and the openness that local businesses and the audience had to the service was hugely encouraging. Taking these learnings and launching an entirely new product and brand off the back of it was bold and ambitious.

The volume of subscribers, campaigns and messages certainly point to finding a good solution to a particular problem.

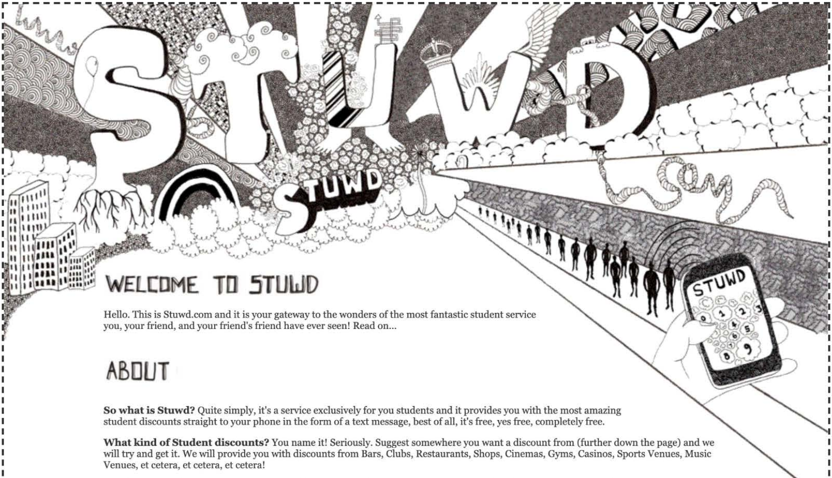
eyetxt limited was dissolved in 2010. The digital landscape shifted quickly, particularly with the emergence of social media and apps, along with more granular targeting through other digital channels.

I had used Facebook to grow the number of subscribers through advertising and other means, but it also meant that my clients and would be clients could also use Facebook to target their audiences directly - something Facebook did well.

The biggest learning was that there was too much focus on the audience as a stakeholder, and not the clients - the cost of running campaigns was considered too high with text messages (10-12p per message), but the margins didn't exist to reduce the costs.

Future plans were to launch an app as a means of delivering alerts and keeping the audience updated, but budget constraints made this plan unattainable.

Product Screenshots



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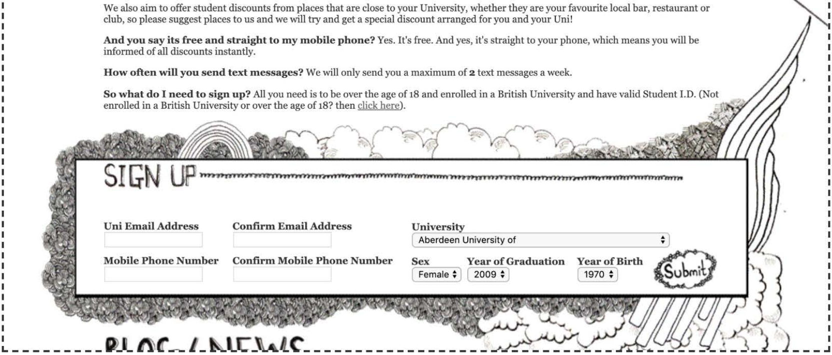

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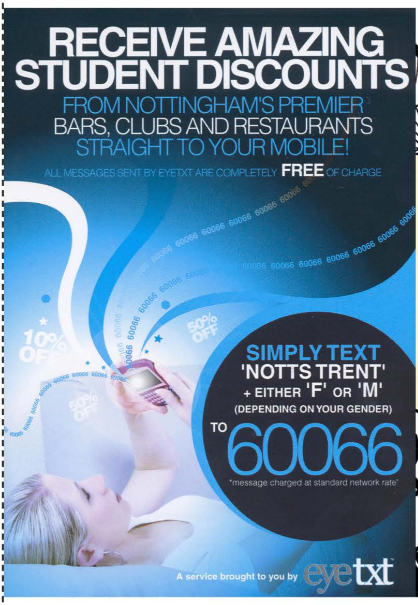
SIGN UP

Uni Email Address
Confirm Email Address
University: Aberdeen University of
Mobile Phone Number
Confirm Mobile Phone Number
Sex: Female
Year of Graduation: 2009
Year of Birth: 1970

Submit



RECEIVE AMAZING STUDENT DISCOUNTS

FROM NOTTINGHAM'S PREMIER BARS, CLUBS AND RESTAURANTS STRAIGHT TO YOUR MOBILE!

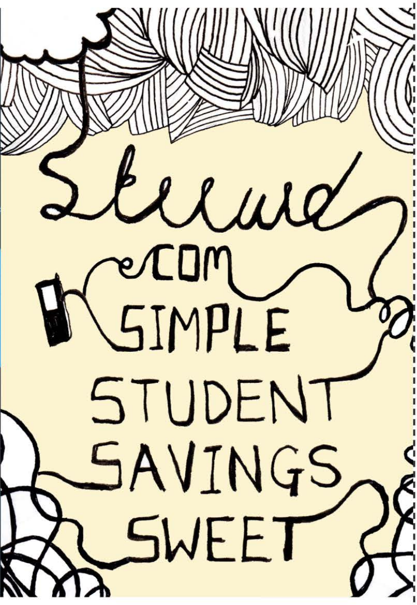
ALL MESSAGES SENT BY EYETXT ARE COMPLETELY **FREE** OF CHARGE

SIMPLY TEXT 'NOTTS TRENT' + EITHER 'F' OR 'M' (DEPENDING ON YOUR GENDER) TO 60066

"message charged at standard network rate"

A service brought to you by eyetxt

60066 60066 60066
10% OFF
50% OFF
50% OFF



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