

1 (a) Identify which one of the four social media described in the chapter would be most useful and (b) give your reasons. Would you consider other social media like Pinterest? Why or why not?

Describe (a) how you would use this website to try to increase sales of your products and (b) why you expect target market customers to respond to it.

V19-5 CASE 19

StuffDOT™, Inc.: Rewarding Users for Actively Shopping and Sharing!



"Coming from a rewards and loyalty background, I often wondered how to combine the best of rewards

Video 19-5
StuffDOT Video Case
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and commissions with the expanding universe of social media," says Jennifer Katz, founder and chief executive officer of StuffDOT, Inc.

"Further, it seemed really unfair that only a few people were benefiting from all the content millions of people were providing for free online. I believe the individuals creating all this online content deserve to benefit from their efforts," says Katz.

"Thinking about this, one day our marketing director came into a meeting and explained how a really cute anchor bracelet that she posted on a social-sharing site went viral. But now she faced a six-week backlog to purchase it. So we all said, if she made a commission on every anchor bracelet that was sold because of that one post, she could have bought five. Right then and there, StuffDOT was born," explains Katz.

While the young social network is constantly changing, its beginnings offer a valuable case study.

STUFFDOT'S VISION, BRAND NAME, AND LOGO

StuffDot is designed to be the all-in-one site for online shopping and sharing. StuffDOT's vision is to reward users for what they are already doing online. Most other sites tend to keep all the affiliate fees and commissions for themselves. StuffDOT, however, enables users to benefit from all this online shopping and sharing. This is the first time, to StuffDOT's knowledge, that a firm has developed a platform where the people posting to social media are the same people who are rewarded for it. In addition, the StuffDOT team has added coupons, cash-back shopping from thousands of retailers, and a feature that allows users to create their own stores, called DOT shops.

"We chose the brand name StuffDOT because it was catchy and [we] felt we could really build on it," says Katz. "With the name StuffDOT, we could use Stuff, DOT, and StuffDOT, which also gives flexibility. The name also is great for campaigns like 'CareDot,' 'Spot the Dot,' or 'Stuff I Like.' The team tried other names, but they just didn't have that fun stickiness that the name StuffDOT does," says Jennifer Katz.

The StuffDOT team also tried and tested several different logos before coming up with the memorable, attention-getting logo shown above. People see the orange dot as friendly, familiar, and eye-catching and it has proven to be an easy logo to build on.

HOW STUFFDOT WORKS

Kelsey Fisher, StuffDOT's creative director, explains what a "Dot" is and the steps in "Dotting"—keys to understanding how StuffDOT users earn and redeem their resulting commissions.

What Is a "Dot"?

"Dots are posts ranging from products, to Do-It-Yourself projects, to recipes, to funny videos and random photos," Fisher explains. "A dot is something posted to view, to share, or to track for a future

stuff DOT

Courtesy of StuffDOT, Inc.

purchase. A dot is simply a post of anything you want to display on the StuffDOT site," she says.

How to "Dot"

Kelsey Fisher explains the three steps to dot:

1. "Use the simple drag-and-drop process to add the 'Dot It' button to your toolbar in your web browser.
2. "Dot or post items you 'like' online by clicking on that button on your toolbar. For example, if you are browsing Macy's online store and see something you like, you can click on the 'Dot It' button in your toolbar and it will show up on your StuffDOT page.
3. "Watch your commissions grow as people share, buy, or click on the stuff you've 'dotted.' You can also earn commissions on your own purchases!" Fisher says.

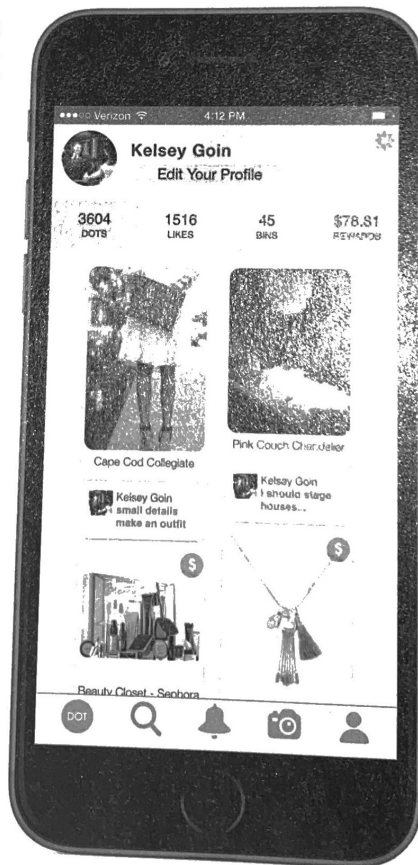
Earning and Redeeming StuffDOT Commissions

So how does an online user actually earn commissions? When a user finds things they want to share or purchase online, they dot or post the item to StuffDOT. If the item appears with a sticker showing a commission percentage, this means it is from one of StuffDOT's retail partners and is commission-eligible.

When a dot leads to a purchase or a click-through view, or a share by the 'dotter' or someone else, the dotter will receive a commission. Users can also earn commissions by posting and purchasing their own items. Once a user's balance reaches \$15, they can start redeeming gift cards from a variety of popular retailers."

ENHANCING STUFFDOT'S USER-FRIENDLINESS

A challenge for the StuffDOT team is keeping it simple, yet having features that make StuffDOT fun and rewarding.



Courtesy of StuffDOT, Inc.

"I work closely with the StuffDOT team to turn the concepts they create into user-friendly features on StuffDOT," says Sudipta Tripathy, StuffDOT's chief technology officer. "For example, we want to ensure that all new features have the same look and feel across all parts of the StuffDOT platform—website, Android app, or iOS app," he says.

Recent updates and features now enable StuffDOT users more ways to earn commissions. By moving many features to its mobile apps (photo), StuffDOT has added the flexibility to share, shop, and earn anywhere at any time. Some other examples of user-friendly features include:

- **Retailer List.** Adding a list of retailers and their commission percentages lets StuffDOT shoppers know the exact rewards from each store. Also, users can discover reward-eligible shops they did not even know about.
- **Search Shops & Deals.** Users now can search for products and deals from StuffDOT's retailers without leaving the site. StuffDOT members can then find, dot, and buy commission-eligible items in one easy-to-use platform.
- **Commission Status.** The redesigned commissions section shows users the values of their lifetime, current, and pending commissions. So they can track their purchase commissions and confirm their purchases are commission-eligible.



Courtesy of StuffDOT, Inc.

In addition, StuffDOT has been working with select retailers to create unique promotional programs that benefit users and make the partner brand more prominent. For example, a recent promotion featured a free pair of running shoes for signing up, referring friends, and dotting. This not only built awareness for the brand of running shoes, but it also created a new user base for StuffDOT.

The StuffDOT internship and campus ambassador program (photo) not only gives students a rich experience working in new social media, but it has greatly enhanced the benefits of the StuffDOT platform. Student interns work both at the home office and on campus to create StuffDOT promotions. Depending on their interests, students may focus on organizing new-user workshops and street-team promotions or finding new partners and users through social networks. StuffDOT is looking continuously for new Campus Ambassadors.

Social-sharing features throughout the StuffDOT site make it very convenient for users to share items with friends or family. For example, a student who wants a new laptop for her birthday can share that item with friends on Facebook, and she can also e-mail that item with an embedded link to her parents as a reminder. That student can

also earn a StuffDOT reward on the purchase—a "double" birthday present.⁵¹

Questions

- 1 What recent StuffDOT actions have added to its user-friendliness?
- 2 (a) Who are StuffDOT's major competitors and (b) what point(s) of difference should StuffDOT use to distinguish itself from them?
- 3 How should StuffDOT be marketed so that it becomes an integral part of everyday life?
- 4 How can the team create "buzz" for StuffDOT and grow its user base most effectively (a) using social media platforms (like Facebook and Twitter) and (b) using its own website?

MARKETING STUFFDOT

StuffDOT has focused its initial marketing efforts on three areas: (1) partnerships, (2) the StuffDOT Internship and Campus Ambassador Program, and (3) social sharing.

StuffDOT's partnerships include online affiliate aggregators that give users access to over 20,000 online retailers that share affiliate fees and commissions.