Stuffstr 'No Unused Stuff"

Introduction

Stuffstr is a mobile app dedicated to increasing sustainability around the things we buy, use, and discard. Stuffstr's vision is "No Unused Stuff," and the business is committed to helping consumers join the global movement toward a circular economy. It works by helping people to make the most out of their personal possessions; increasing the use and recirculation of the things we buy, in order to reduce clutter and decrease landfill. Stuffstr launched in the US in July 2016, and is currently planning expansion into Europe.

Opportunities and Drivers

Stuffstr identified key inefficiencies built into the current linear consumerist economy:

- The average American home has over \$7,000 of unused stuff i
- Over 80% of household items are used less than once a month
- The average American throws away 35 kg of clothing each year.

Approach

To address these inefficiencies, Stuffstr helps consumers direct unwanted items to the most suitable end-of-life outcome, be that gifting to friends, corporate take-back schemes for recycling or donation to charity for re-use. The user benefits from convenience, decluttering, and the feel-good factor of environmental benefits and social impact.

Stuffstr's initial market research indicated that the average person has far more individual items from a greater number of different retailers than they ever conceived, providing further validation that consumers need help and providing useful insight into the development of the app, which needs to cope with vast numbers of items.

Stuffstr's business model takes advantage of the huge amounts of data generated by manufacturers and retailers about the products they sell. The data is there at point of sale, but can be hard to access or leverage when it comes to disposing of a product or finding second-life options. Stuffstr automatically captures product specification information at the point of sale and can input historic data from online accounts with retailers to build up a detailed picture of someone's personal assets. Swipe on an item and you will be presented with a range of local, convenient options for donation or recycling.

Opportunity

- Low use intensity of owned products: the average American home has over \$7,000 of unused stuff and over 80% of household items are used less than once a month
- High rates of disposal or products with reuse value: The average American throws away 35 kg of clothing each year

Approach

- Leveraging big data from point of sale databases and mobile app technology to provide consumers a simple inventory of their assets
- Use location services to provide the information required to direct unwanted items to the most suitable end-of-life outcome

Expected Impact

- Diversion of waste from landfill and increased reuse rates
- Increased product use intensity and consumer awareness of their role in the circular economy
- Increased analysis of post-sale product lifecycle data by retailers

Benefits and Impact

According to Stuffstr CEO John Atcheson

"Most people would rather see their belongings go to good use than have them end up in landfill, but it's often easier to just throw things away. Stuffstr is the first app specifically designed to make it easy to put your unused stuff to good use. Our forward-thinking partners give stuff a second life, and we're excited to be working with them."



Stuffstr's model relies on close cooperation with retailers to get access to the point of sale data that populates information on the app. But its mission to promote reuse could be seen as having the potential to cannibalise markets and thus threaten retailers' profit margins. According to Harvard Business Review,

"Conventional wisdom would seem to suggest that companies have no incentive to lengthen the life cycle of their products and reduce the revenue they would get from selling new goods. Yet, more and more businesses are thinking about how to reduce consumer waste." "

That was certainly the experience of Stuffstr, which found big brands keen to position themselves as purveyors of quality, durable, environmentally friendly products. Among Stuffstr's partners are I:Collect (I:CO), the international service provider for collection, reuse and recycling of apparel and footwear for H&M, The North Face, and other retailers worldwide.



Stuffstr is now exploring connecting directly to resale platforms such as eBay so that users could post with one-click or even automatically their under-used assets and recoup some of the embedded financial value within that asset. An alternative model could involve retailers leveraging resale activity for example by offering proceeds from resale as credit to drive traffic back to that retailer.

Most retailers don't have much to help customers post-sale and so supporting customers on their journey with product through the product lifecycle has immediate appeal. Imagine if product assembly, maintenance, care or repair manuals and videos could be sent directly or automatically to the customer's phone. Supporting customers to get the most out of their products maintains an ongoing relationship between brand and customer. The aggregation of vast quantities of post-sale database also has the potential to provide retailers and manufacturers with invaluable information on the post-sale product lifecycle: which products get repaired or resold; what are the failure rates indicating quality issues, who resells products and what do they get sold for? The aggregation of vast quantities of post-sale database also has the potential to provide retailers and manufacturers with invaluable information on the post-sale product lifecycle: which products get repaired, resold, what are the failure rates indicating quality issues, who resells products and what do they get sold for?



"Stuffstr's business model is primarily structured around the aggregated post-sale product lifecycle data we collect". says Atcheson.

"Longitudinal data of this type has never existed before, and we are focusing on it for three reasons. First, this data is highly sought after by both manufacturers and retailers, so we believe it can provide a solid financial footing for the business. Second, we hope this information will seed circular business models for both manufacturers and retailers by giving them visibility in the full product lifecycle. Finally, using data as a business model as opposed to, for example, a transaction-based model - allows us to treat all products equally, regardless of price. So a £35 shirt is as important to us as a £1,200 bicycle."

Changing consumer behaviour is often cited as one of the great barriers to mass adoption of circular economy models. Stuffstr are convinced that engaging with the big retail brands is key to unlocking this behaviour change and having impact at scale.



¹A recent study commissioned by Oxfam, highlights the amount of unused shoes in the UK:

http://www.oxfam.org.uk/media-centre/press-releases/2016/08/ shoes-stretch-all-the-way-round-the-world

"https://hbr.org/2016/06/companies-are-working-with-consumer s-to-reduce-waste

""http://www.stuffstr.com/launch

Image Sources: www.stuffstr.com

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