

CASE STUDY

Creating More Buzz

The Challenge

BuzzFeed is an app with more than 1.5 million downloads and popular with the coveted Millennials audience, who use it as a source of entertainment as well as news. It didn't start out that way. "We went to their offices, and you have fifteen or twenty people combing the Internet for quirky news stories for their website. We never imagined it would explode into the buzzword it is today," says Justin Grammens, a Lab 651 founding member. Indeed, when Grammens and his Recursive Awesome team were approached by BuzzFeed, the initial idea was simply to drive more traffic to its website, which featured advertisements and user feedback on articles the editorial team found.

From Viewing to Interactivity

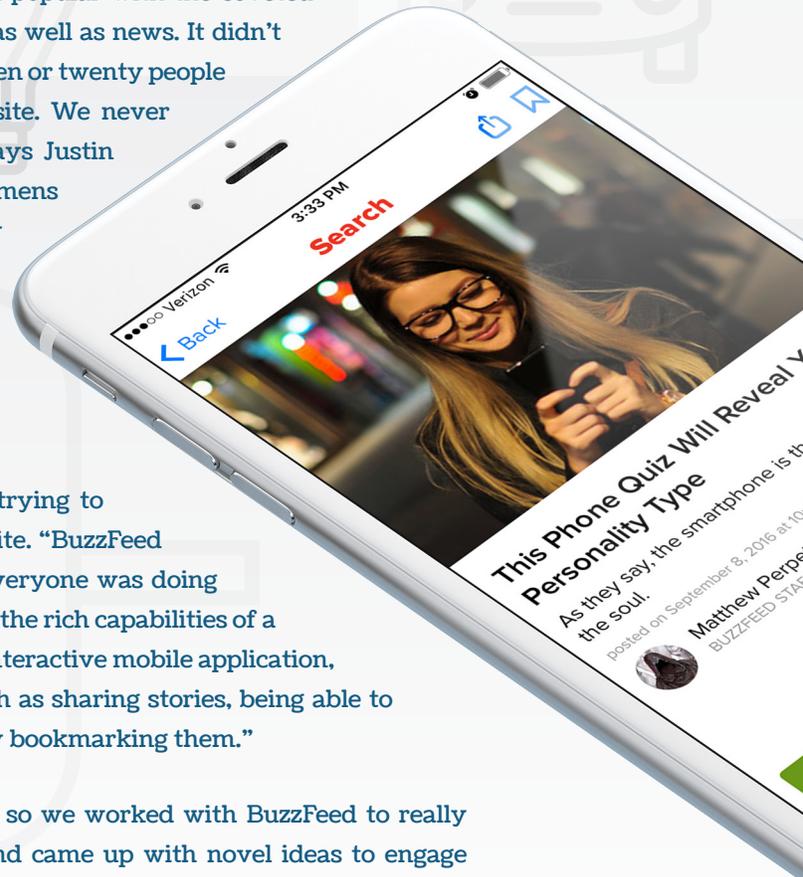
One of the major challenges of BuzzFeed's app initially was trying to convert an app into what effectively worked as a mobile website. "BuzzFeed told us they didn't want just a mobile version of their site—everyone was doing that. They wanted to create a unique experience by showcasing the rich capabilities of a native mobile app," Grammens says. Creating a powerful and interactive mobile application, however, had challenges: "This involved building features such as sharing stories, being able to watch BuzzFeed shows, and the ability to come back to posts by bookmarking them."

It wasn't long before the app became a huge hit. "It took off, so we worked with BuzzFeed to really enhance the interactivity." Grammens' team brainstormed and came up with novel ideas to engage users: they started a "trending stories" category as well as ways to "badge" stories where users could give their opinions. "We developed the app to update in real-time, to be responsive; if a story reached a certain level of engagement, it automatically went live to the 'trending stories' category." The badges helped identify which stories were engaging with audiences and which ones fell flat.

Exploding Growth

Buzzfeed invited Recursive Awesome to explore unique features for the app and to test out novel ideas. "The result was quizzes like, 'What's your personality color?' and they are a huge hit with the Millennials," notes Grammens. In response to the team's suggestions, BuzzFeed started creating unique content, as opposed to only curating content. "This app helped make the Internet more meaningful; as an end-user, they've culled through the morass of information to pick out what you care about," Grammens says. Lab 651 looks at how to leverage technology and information for our clients to make it more meaningful.

Developing connected devices is our specialty at Lab 651. Contact us for your next project at www.Lab651.com.



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