

Squishable

Company Background

Started out of a Bethesda, Maryland apartment by designer Zoe Fraade-Blanar and tech entrepreneur Aaron Glazer in 2007, Squishable is a company that makes unique stuffed animals for children and adults alike. Now based in New York, the six-person company is distinguished by its playful, oversized plushies such as the platypus, narwhal and top-selling Squishable Panda. Sold through Squishable.com and retailers across the country, the stuffed animals fetch between \$19 and \$44.

Objective

Squishable created its first official Facebook Page called Squishable.com in early 2009. Based on a preexisting comics and geek following, it reckoned it would find an instant fan base for its giant round stuffed animals on Facebook. Sure enough, Squishable.com soon had rocketed past 10,000 fans, establishing a critical mass of people who loved its 15-inch tall creatures. Today, fans regularly post pictures and videos of themselves with their Squishables and go on the Page to clamor for new designs. “We have fans who are so gung-ho about Squishables that they answer questions for other fans and involve their friends in the community as well,” says Aaron. “We realized Facebook was a great way to introduce people to Squishables without being a heavy sell or your having to click on a banner ad.”

Mindful that Facebook could provide this small company with word-of-mouth marketing at scale, Squishable wanted to use Facebook to raise awareness of its products by increasing its fans. “We started running ads when we realized the more fans we had, the more likely they were to have a good

“People will say, ‘no’ and I’ll try again or they’ll say ‘yes’ and those are the designs we send to prototype,” Zoe says. “It’s just a safer way of developing new things, especially when you’re on a tight budget.”

Facebook Executive Summary

Client:

The logo for Squishable, featuring the word "squishable" in a blue, rounded, lowercase font with a registered trademark symbol (®) to the upper right.

facebook.com/squishabledotcom

Objective:

To raise awareness of a unique kind of stuffed animal created for children and adults alike

Solution:

A series of Marketplace Ads serving to acquire new fans for the Page where people can interact with content and browse a product catalogue

Key Lessons:

- Facebook Ads can help companies build up a fan base quickly, creating highly engaged communities that can provide word-of-mouth marketing for your brand
- Facebook can enable companies to crowd-source new product ideas, providing a safe way to develop new products as the crowd can indicate their ultimate success

Zoe Fraade-Blanar

Chief Squisher and Lead Designer, Squishable



time talking to each other,” says Zoe. “The more people on the Page, the more fun it would be for them to interact with it.”

Approach

In late 2009, Squishable began running Marketplace Ads encouraging people to like its Page. The ad text typically invites people to like the Page and the ad creative features simple photos of its animals. Aaron and Zoe use Facebook Targeting to reach people most likely to be customers, including young people in high school and college, or older people who fit into a unique audience. “We’ve had very good success targeting people who like Anime, people who like Joss Whedon, people who like science fiction shows, etc.,” says Aaron.

Squishable has also used the publishing feature on its Page to enlist its fans to invite friends to become fans of the Page, offering coupons when the fan-count numbers reach certain milestones. The company keeps activity on its Page lively by rewarding its Facebook fans with exclusive content, such as posting daily pictures and offering sneak peeks at new products and an original comic strip featuring Squishables called “The Fuzzy Five”. All of this leads to friends telling friends about the brand, Zoe says. “We get a lot of people who send something out to their entire group of friends on Facebook saying, ‘please for the love of God will you be fans of these people so I can get a coupon,’” Zoe says.

Squishable also added a “Get a Squishable!” tab on its Facebook Page that enables people to browse its collection and click through to the squishable.com e-commerce site to purchase one of its creations.

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Squishable.com



They're giant round fuzzy stuffed T-Rexes. Hug them!

 Like · 133,777 people like this.

Results

- As of early April 2011, more than 133,000 people had become fans of the Squishable.com Page, giving the company a substantial base of brand loyalists with whom to engage and seek feedback
- 29 percent of traffic to squishable.com now comes from Facebook.
- 15 percent of Squishable’s sales are direct sales from people clicking on the link to the company’s ecommerce site from Facebook. “It’s probably higher than that because it doesn’t track people who are just browsing on Facebook and then go to Google and type ‘Squishables,’” Aaron says.

Aaron says that Facebook has proved a cost-effective platform to help build the business. “Out of all our online marketing, Facebook has the highest return on investment, and lowest cost per conversion,” he says.

But Squishable says the sales results are just half the story. The company is increasingly relying on its fans on Facebook to guide its product innovation cycle. When people post on Facebook requesting a new kind of Squishable, those candidates go onto a voting page on Squishable’s website. Only the top vote-getters become actual products. Once into the design stage, Zoe posts her sketches on Facebook to seek feedback from fans. “People will say, ‘no’ and I’ll try again or they’ll say ‘yes’ and those are the ones we send to prototype,” Zoe says. “It’s just a safer way of developing new things, especially when you’re on a tight budget.” A recent ‘Phoenix’ Squishable was sent back to the drawing board when fans complained the design “looked like a Turkey.”

The Future

Squishable plans to expand its advertising on Facebook to reach new target audiences, says Zoe. The company also plans to create new tabs for content on its Facebook Page to deepen its engagement with its fans. “The whole strength of Facebook is that it isn’t an advertising platform,” says Zoe. “People are comfortable there in a way that they aren’t when they’re being treated as customers instead of as fans. Companies would do so much better to thank about it as a social space first.”