

## **THE 2014 UFI MARKETING AWARD**

### **“Mobile Marketing – How we used it in 2013”**

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Zimbabwe International Trade Fair is one of the largest intra-regional trade fairs south of the Sahara. An annual exhibition which offers exposure to trade and public visitors, the multi-sectoral, multi-national expo provides a convenient trade hub for the region.

The 55<sup>th</sup> edition of ZITF was held from 22-26 April 2014 under the theme, “New Ideas to New Heights,” a theme meant to motivate innovation as the main driver of economic growth around the world and encourage participants to consider fresh ways of doing business.

Preparations for the event began in May of 2013, followed by the official launch of the marketing campaign in September 2013. In the past, survey results had shown that participants would like to see ZITF digitalising and staying abreast of international trends; hence the launch of the campaign “ZITF Goes Digital.” This campaign saw the introduction of a mobile app with online matchmaking and lead management capabilities.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

In tandem with one of our strategic themes (ZITF 2013-2016 Strategic Document) of delivering outstanding customer value through increasing the total benefit package to our customers; the overarching objective of introducing the mobile app was to enhance the event experience for our participants, as recommended by participants themselves (digitalisation).

We envisaged that the app would do this by enabling participants to access real-time information, plan their participation, share their experiences and generally create an interactive community around ZITF 2014.

To this end, our specific objectives were to achieve:

1. 10% usage rate of the app by our exhibitors,
2. 5% of attendees using the online-matchmaking facility,
3. An increase of 5% in our social media following.

The target group for this campaign initiative was both exhibitors and attendees alike.

The mobile app did not seek to replace an existing activity but was supplementary to the aims of other communication media such as our website [www.zitf.net](http://www.zitf.net), monthly e-newsletter and weekly e-mailers.

#### **ACTIONS**

We divided our campaign into three phases; pre-event, during and post-event; focusing on the development of the app, communication to stakeholders and its usage.

## Pre-event (May 2013-April 2014)

- **Exploration** - We began the project by compiling a requirements list of the functionality needed on the app in line with our objectives. This required us to do extensive research into other event apps as well as to conduct a dip-stick survey on our exhibitors to determine what they would like to see in a mobile app.
  - **Appointment of a service provider** - We then engaged the services of an event app development company to design an app to suit our stated requirements.
  - **Design elements** - In the meanwhile, we designed the visuals (splash screens, web banner, native banner etc.) for the app which maintained the look-and-feel of the overall ZITF 2014 campaign.
  - **Mini launch** - After uploading data onto the completed app, we launched it internally to educate and encourage staff members to download and experiment on it so that we could identify and resolve any bugs.
  - **App ready to launch** - After we were satisfied that the app not only met our requirements, but was also user-friendly, we launched <https://zitf2014.zerista.com>.
  - **Launch and communication** - The campaign was launched and communicated to our various publics using different communication media such as press briefings and media releases, bulk sms platform, features in our monthly newsletters, dedicated e-mailers as well as the different social media platforms on which we are active.
  - **Exhibitor training** - We also conducted training through our regular exhibitor training seminars, to raise awareness on how an event app can be used to enhance the event experience and increase ROI for participants.
- **During the event (April 22-26, 2014)**
    - **App awareness** - We continued with our awareness campaigns through the printed daily bulletins which were distributed to all participants (<http://zitf.net/category/daily-bulletins/>), website, social media as well as push notifications via the app itself.
    - **Heightened usage** – The beginning of the show signified the peak time for participants to use the app. We facilitated this by ensuring that the booked meeting venues were ready (matchmaking zones), continuously updating info on the app as well as sending push notifications to advise participants of any changes to the event programme.
    - **Support** - In addition, there was a dedicated staff resource on-site to answer questions and explain how to use the different aspects of the app.
  - **Post-event (May 2014)**
    - **Research** - We conducted a mini-survey via the app to gauge the satisfaction levels of those participants who had made use of the app.
    - **Stakeholder appreciation** - We also sent thank-you messages to the event participants via the app.
    - **Planning for the 2014-2015 experience** –Using the information gathered from the research we have begun working on the ZITF 2015 mobile marketing campaign.

## Challenges:

- **Stage of the product life cycle** – Although we have 13.5 million registered mobile users in Zimbabwe against a total population of 12.9 million, mobile marketing is still in its infancy and expectedly, adoption of such products as event apps is still low, comparatively speaking. We therefore proactively included two new training modules to our annual exhibitor training seminar to conscientise our clientele on the benefits to be derived from the use of event apps, online matchmaking and lead management systems.
- **Connectivity challenges** – Unfortunately, due to logistical challenges, internet connectivity was not as good as we would have wished. Although we managed to service recover through the use of our internal server, we are now engaged in discussions with some ISP companies to provide us with a permanent solution to making the Zimbabwe International Exhibition Centre an internet hotspot.

## RESULTS

### 1. Achievement of objectives

#### Qualitative

The following benefits were achieved for our participants:

- a. **Information** was available at their fingertips - Participants were able to **view** session schedules, find exhibitors, locate other attendees and learn more about speakers.
- b. Participants were able to **share** their experience with others at the event and those attending via social media and through the use of automatically-generated QR codes.

Find below snippets of some of the comments by participants:



**tongybless** Apr 28, 11:23am via Twitter for Websites

ZITF 2014, Bulawayo Roars Into

[Lifetechnomag.co.zw/2014/04/26/zit...](http://Lifetechnomag.co.zw/2014/04/26/zit...) @radiodialoguefm @ZITF1 @Astrozimbabwe@shonatiger @deltandou @tinash\_gerald



**nuraiFOH** Apr 26, 11:02pm via Twitter for Android

@ZITF1 came to an end with light showers in#Bulawayo. Until next year!! See you at the#56thZITF. Next stop #HIFApic.twitter.com/DPO7TqgDun



**TrumolTiles** Apr 26, 5:07pm via Twitter Web Client

@deltandou @ZimpapersViews thank you for the visit. Great conversation, looking forward to further interaction. @ZITF1 #ZITF2014

- c. By meeting carefully targeted and qualified contacts, participants optimised their **business-matching** opportunities and ensured successful meetings that led to concrete business projects.

### **Quantitative**

Although we fell slightly shy of our quantitative objectives, we still consider the campaign a success as we were able to increase appreciation for how an event app can re-invent the exhibition experience for participants. We achieved:

- a. 7% adoption rate of the app by our exhibitors and 8% for attendees.
- b. 3% of attendees using the online-matchmaking facility to schedule meetings.
- c. An increase of 8% in our Twitter following, and 5% new Facebook friends. In addition, a combined 67 tweets on our social feed came via the mobile app.
- d. 5% use of the lead management functionality.

## **2. Good media coverage and improved image of the event**

As an organisation, we are proud that ZITF remains one of the region's leading international B-2-B exhibitions, more than half a century after its inception. The launch of the "ZITF Goes Digital" campaign presented an opportunity for us to refresh the brand in line with changing market needs. Indeed, the press coverage and feedback which we received shows that we achieved this and then some! Below are a few of the articles which covered the campaign:

<https://www.newsday.co.zw/2014/03/20/zitf-launches-mobile-application/>

<http://www.radiodialogue.com/zitf-digitalises/>

<http://technomag.co.zw/2014/04/17/zitf-launches-an-exciting-mobile-app-launched/#sthash.sFChFSyl.dpbs>

## **3. Increased business prospects for ZITF**

Being a launch year, we did not expect to increase our revenues or to directly profit from our mobile marketing efforts as we had to invest heavily in education and awareness for our participants. We are therefore pleasantly surprised with the number of prospective sponsors and advertisers who have made enquiries on how they can be featured on the ZITF 2015 app.

*Application Submitted by*

*The Zimbabwe International Trade Fair Company (ZITF) for the ZITF 2014 Marketing Campaign – "ZITF Goes Digital"*