



[BREW] developer case study

company □ Thumbworks Inc.

headquarters □ Tustin, Calif.

founded □ January 2002

overview □ Thumbworks is a leading publisher of applications for cell phones and other wireless devices. The company is emerging as a pioneer in mobile advergaming, whereby they enable consumer brands such as Suzuki, Jeep and Honda to extend their marketing reach and promote their products through a new medium — cell phones. Celebrities can use the medium to extend their brand as well, and Thumbworks is launching a line of new BREWTM-based wireless games, including Barry Bonds Baseball, the first ever game of any type to carry the famous slugger's name.

website □ www.thumbworks.com

BREW developer □ Since January 2002

Three years ago Craig Holland, Peter Watkins, and Mick Donahoo worked at a smart little Southern California-based interactive agency called Nine Dots. They specialized in market research and web site development, and QUALCOMM was a client. They were conducting research to assist the company in developing a web site and alliance program for a new QUALCOMM product called BREW – Binary Runtime Environment for Wireless™.

Fast forward to July 2003 ... The SoCal office of Nine Dots no longer exists, and in its place is a company called Thumbworks. The company combines marketing strategy with technology to create new opportunities for brands to engage their customers. No longer just an agency, they're an interesting hybrid – they call themselves “mobile market-makers,” and they're part brand champion, part wireless software developer and part publisher. The medium: cell phones. The brands: Etch a Sketch®, Suzuki, Honda and Jeep, to name a few.

What was the impetus for this agency evolution? Thumbworks founder and president, Holland, credits QUALCOMM's BREW solution, “As an agency for QUALCOMM during the early days of BREW, we saw this huge untapped market potential for consumer brands to capitalize on wireless devices – cell phones – to reach their markets.” “Cell phones are ubiquitous, and because BREW gave us a technical and business solution, we knew we could get to market quickly with our brand-based promotions and that we could make money.”

Thumbworks has emerged as a pioneer in a new genre called “mobile advergaming.” They enable large consumer brands such as Suzuki, Jeep and Honda to extend their market reach and promote their products through games on cell phones.

Case in point: Suzuki. Thumbworks approached Suzuki last year to see if the company would be interested in sponsoring a wireless game, stressing the fact that such a move would give Suzuki the opportunity to reach out to its target market: finicky 18 to 24 year-olds who are interested in motocross.

“In a mobile environment, we have the attention of a very attractive audience,” said Holland. “The youth market is very active in the mobile world. For a lot of marketing folks, that audience is a tough group to reach,” Holland added. “They tend to be resistant to traditional advertising campaigns, and they're extremely savvy – they don't allow themselves to be promoted to directly like generations past have.”

Suzuki liked the idea and funded Thumbworks to develop an arcade-style Suzuki-branded motocross game that has Suzuki's name and logo strategically placed in different frames and levels of the game. Verizon Wireless introduced the game in November 2002 through their BREW-based “Get It Now” service.

“The key is to give Verizon Wireless' subscribers a great experience with the game, on the phone – an experience they're willing to pay for and come back to,” said Holland. “While at the

same time providing a new and readily measurable medium to increase the sponsor's brand exposure.” For Suzuki, its investment in the branding campaign cost thousands of dollars rather than the millions it could have cost to launch a traditional national advertising campaign. Suzuki measures the campaign's effectiveness through the number of times subscribers download the game to their cell phone. Holland said the game has achieved hundreds of thousands of downloads and has quickly become one of Verizon Wireless' top-selling applications.

Thumbworks credits BREW with their ability to introduce and successfully commercialize brand building mobile advergaming. BREW allows the company to experiment with different pricing schemes, even offering free demos. And when their clients ask for the reach and frequency data to measure their exposure, Thumbworks needs look no further than the BREW extranet site set-up by QUALCOMM to enable results tracking.

Thumbworks has several other advergaming applications in the works. Its deal with Jeep targets the 18 to 29-year-old demographic. **Jeep Off-Road Jam** is an off-road racing game in which the object is to beat the opponent to the top of a mountain. The only way to make it to the top is in a Jeep Wrangler 4 x 4.

The **Barry Bonds Home Run Challenge** allows users to adjust their swings to smash the ball at different targets in a wildly fun home run contest.

The object of Thumbworks' **Surf's Up with Honda Element** game is to try and stay on top of the water, perform tricks and ride out the wave. The Honda Element provides transportation to the beach and stores a variety of surfboards.

“Not all sponsorship deals involve consumer brands paying for development of the application,” said Holland. “The upfront payment from the sponsor isn't the way we make money,” said Holland. “We make money from the downloads. Sponsorships help us get into the game, but we want to be compensated too.”

BREW facilitates compensation to publishers and developers because it assists with operator required application testing, delivers the software via the BREW developer Extranet (a virtual marketplace) and bills operators on behalf of the application provider, ensuring that publishers like Thumbworks get paid.

“The nice thing is that QUALCOMM is really listening to the publishers and to the developer community and adding a lot of features and constantly thinking about how to make it a better system,” said Holland.

media inquiries

Thumbworks is more than happy to speak with press and industry analysts in more depth about the topics covered in this case study...Craig Holland, founder and president, is the appropriate spokesman. His contact information is: (714)505-7580, Ext. 22, craig@thumbworks.com.

