



Product/Service:

i-mode, a new service offering mobile data access. Subscribers with i-mode mobile phones can quickly and easily access the Internet, send and receive emails, download video ring tones, games, videos, and video telephony anytime, anywhere.

Challenge:

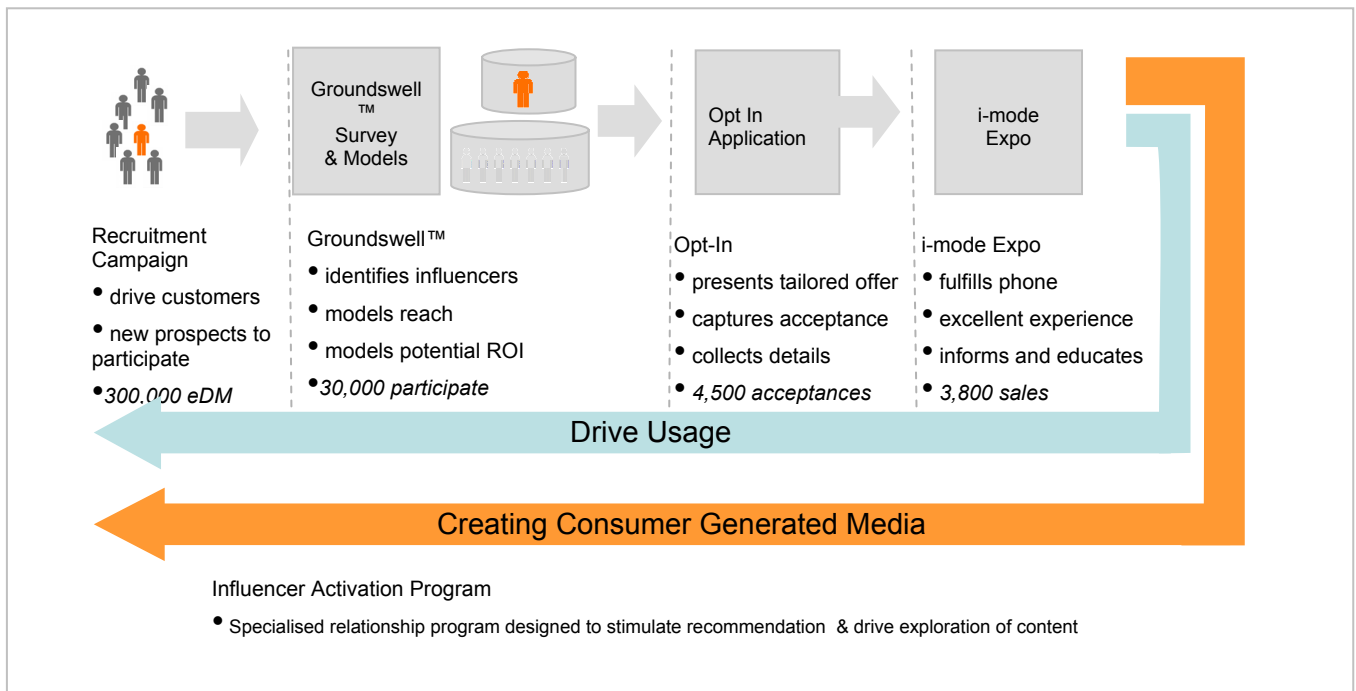
To launch i-mode in a youth market that was already 100% saturated with handset ownership; and to persuade the target segment to buy new i-mode compatible handsets and learn a new user interface to access i-mode services.

The Vocanic Proposition:

There is nothing more valuable in driving trial than friend-to-friend recommendation. Our main objective was to create a massive groundswell of personal recommendation for the i-mode product at a grassroots level.

The Vocanic Solution:

Using our Groundswell™ methodology and technology, we recruited people who were interested in the category of cell phones, keen on the i-mode concept, and who qualified as Influencer. Through them we started a pre-launch programme designed to drive i-mode content exploration, stimulating and amplifying peer-to-peer recommendation.



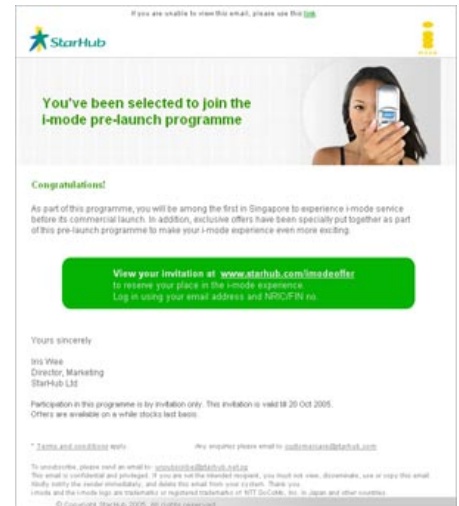
Recruitment and selection of **Influencers**

A mass recruitment campaign using eDM, SMS and online ads was launched. Enthusiastic to be amongst the first to try a new mobile product, more than 50,000 people visited the pre-launch i-mode microsite and participated in the Groundswell™ survey.

Using the Groundswell™ analytics engine we ranked the Influencers suitable for i-mode. Influencers were segmented into two groups. The most “powerful” Influencers were given a “free trial offer” in order to maximise the take up rate in this key group, whilst the second-tier Influencers were given a “discounted purchase offer” to allow a significant number of phones to be seeded into the market.

2. Invitation to **Seeding**

Once the Influencers were identified, we ran an online campaign to present the offer, inviting them to register for the i-mode Expo. By giving them the chance to interact with the brand before the official public launch, we put them in a privileged position that fuelled user feedback, personal reviews, and friend-to-friend recommendation.



3. **i-mode** Experience Expo

The top storey of the Suntec City Convention Centre was transformed into an i-mode showcase where participants were invited to attend a private, unadvertised “by invitation only” Expo to collect their phones and learn all about the i-mode service.

During the Expo trained personnel provide product knowledge, an efficient registration and handset collection process, demonstrate the key brand features and reinforced i-mode’s brand personality.

The 4,500 people who turned up didn’t just collect their phones—they had their first remarkable personal experience with i-mode!

4. Usage and **Referrals**

Once the Influencers were equipped with i-mode, we rolled out marketing activities to amplify word of mouth recommendation for i-mode

The “**i-treat**” token & voucher system

i-mode Influencers were empowered to give their family and friends “i-treats” (from an i-mode application deployed to the phone), which entitled them to discounts on their i-mode phones. We reinforced the privileged position of the i-mode Influencers, whilst driving sales of i-mode phones.





Birthday surprises

Birthday greetings are nothing extraordinary, but what about a personalised video birthday message from celebrities like Denise Keller? Sassy, fun, and personalised, we gave the i-mode Influencers an opportunity to show off their phones!

Voice of the Customer Programme

To establish deep brand relationships with Influencers, we rolled out a Voice of the Customer programme where their ideas and feedback on i-mode were systematically recorded, reviewed, and where possible, acted upon. Influencers felt valued and in turn spread positive word of mouth about i-mode.

“Treasure Hunt” Contest

To drive usage and increase interface familiarity, we created the “Treasure Hunt” contest where icons were embedded in i-mode websites. All i-mode users had to do was to surf on their i-mode phones, locate six icons and they got to win themselves new ipods.

Even before the official launch of i-mode, the Influencers had become loyal i-mode users. By converting them first, and tapping on their Influencer personality and large social networks, the word of mouth impact was extremely significant.

What the client said about the project

Here's what Iris Wee, StarHub's VP Marketing had to say about the Influencer-driven word of mouth campaign that Vocanic developed and implemented for i-mode:

“We wanted to introduce i-mode to the Singapore market in a unique way. Vocanic idea of a seeding programme combined with the ability to put the phones into the hands of highly-influential people who meet our target profile was an attractive proposition that was difficult to resist.

The process of recruitment, activation and creation of activities to drive word-of-mouth were all meticulously thought-through and well executed.

It was successful at creating a highly positive experience for both the i-mode seeds (and a high level of recommendation) as well as those who had the privilege of working on this project.”

*Iris Wee
VP Marketing*