

STACKS

RESEARCH REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report entails that the future prospects of Stacks will be positive if certain factors and changes are adhered to.

Key Recommendations discussed include:

- Targeting big corporations in the early stages of releasing the app
- Pushing the marketing of the Stacks app further to evoke and be recognised by a broader audience.
- Strategically choosing which countries to first release the app based on cultural factors.

All of the recommendations and proposed modifications towards the Stacks app and its marketing strategy are based on information attained from the Swinburne Design Factory Shanghai to Helsinki Study Tour.

After thoroughly researching and collecting data whilst abroad, we analysed our findings to develop recommendations of which are entirely justified by what we had witnessed during the study tour, and also reinforced with secondary research.

The report also discusses how the process of handling and exchanging business cards is done in China and Scandinavia.

It was noticed that there is much ritual and ceremony that is involved in the transferral of a business card and this will have significant impact in the way Stacks will need to operate, particularly in the Asian market. Design, business and marketing suggestions were generated and discussed during ideation phases within the duration of the project.



ABOUT STACKS

Stacks app is a contemporary way to exchange and manage business cards, while the Stacks Dashboard is a new way for graphic designers and digital creatives to deliver card designs to clients.

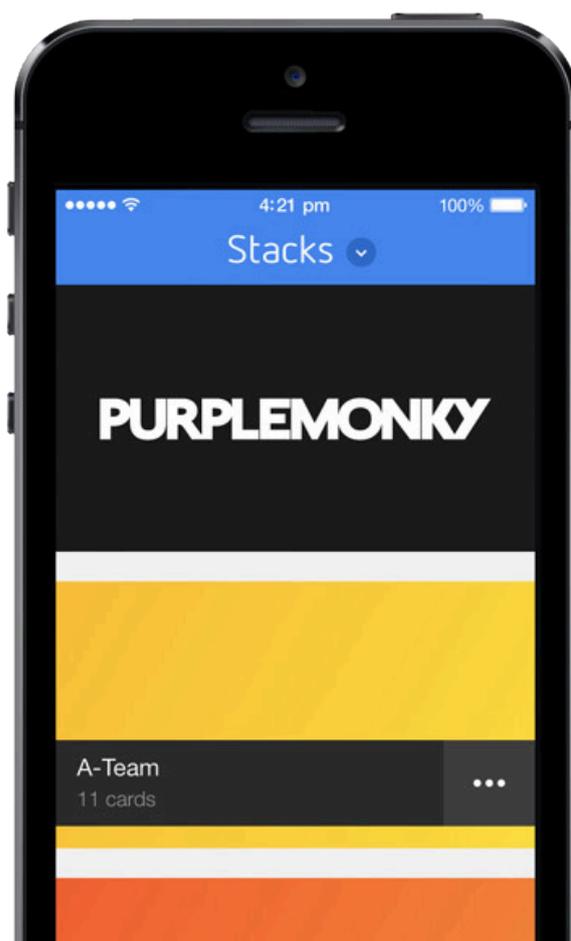
The grand vision for the Stacks platform is to become the ubiquitous global business card and contact management platform with a valued international presence.

Hence the Stacks app possesses a large scope as it has the potential to be used globally by all who use business cards and store contacts. However implementing apps like this into various countries with contrasting cultures means that it should be done in a strategic manner, that has been planned thoroughly, in order for the acceptance and adoption of Purple Monkey's grand vision to become a reality.

The fundamental problem is that the Stacks app needs to be user friendly and acquire social, economical and environmental benefits over the traditional, physical, printed business cards, if it is to appeal to a global market and successfully achieve the grand vision.

The main features that the app has, which will be used as promotional tools when marketing are:

- Pixel perfection
- Incredible sharing and storing
- Smart updates
- Beautiful and Intuitive UI/UX
- Centralized directory with social networking features





PROJECT DESCRIPTION

To aid Stacks in its growth and to provide valuable information referring to Stacks reaching a global market, our requirement on this study tour was to investigate the exact business card culture in both Asia and Europe by gaining information in the following topics: Using business cards, storage, the process, the cost, sustainability, using iphone apps, behaviours towards apps, android vs iphone and technology. Once obtaining this information we can pass on our knowledge of various countries and regional customs and cultures to Purple Monkey.





UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

Finding a target market for Stacks is a key part of this project. Based on the knowledge to date, this is our understanding of who Stacks should be targeting.

At present, Stacks is targeting individual users who require pixel-perfect, digital business cards that can be shared easily with others, and who want the ability to organise their business card collection. The secondary market is for graphic designers who have the knowledge to use the templates and the design ability to produce high quality graphics.

STACKS VALUE PROPOSITION:

- Environmentally friendly resulting in less paper waste
- Stacks is infinite, the user has a limitless supply of business cards as it is supported via a digital platform.
- High resolution visuals

Currently, Stacks is new to the market and the only promotion existing for the app is the website and the page on the app store. We aim to explore ways in which Stacks could be further distributed globally, via different mediums such as social media and Google.

Through project research and demonstrating the app to various participants, we will attempt to gain further understanding of where the app fits in the market and what is the most beneficial use for Stacks . We will also aim to discover if there are any changes or improvements to the app’s functionality which could help engage future Stacks users.



WHO IS THE USER?



HOW DO WE RAISE AWARENESS?



HOW CAN USERS ENGAGE WITH THE APP?



COULD THE APP BE IMPROVED?

1. User designed by Yeonjung Rho from the Noun Project
2. Texting designed by Juan Pablo Bravo from the Noun Project
3. Megaphone designed by Stefan Brechbuhl from the Noun Project
4. Settings designed by Stefan Parnarov from the Noun Project



IDENTIFYING THE NEEDS

Business cards are a necessity for modern day professionals. The needs of having a business card are not limited to representing a good image but also to sell a product or services to the market.

A printed business card can be used to hold on to tradition as evident in China. Methods of exchanging the card, providing a means of contact and using the card as a marketing campaign are vital. Whilst undertaking research it was important to discover if stacks is able to adhere to these factors.

Meanwhile, technology has changed the way people communicate. The use of smart phones inspires users to find an easier way to share and store information in a less time consuming, cost effective and sustainable manner.

BUSINESS CARD	DIGITAL BUSINESS CARD
Represents good company image	Pixel perfect
Personal image/ Representation	Cost effective
Business marketing (Part of a marketing campaign)	Easy sharing and storing
Something Physical	Eco friendly/sustainable
Selling a product or service	Easily accessible
Providing a means of contact	Cards can't be lost
Holding on to tradition	Fluid transaction
	Easy to update
	Infinite



RESEARCH METHODS: STAGE ONE | THE PROCESS

In order to get valuable and reliable research as a group we collectively decided to conduct a series of 10-20 minute interviews with students, staff and business professionals that we encountered along the length of the tour. Before starting the interviews we decided it would be vital to have a list of questions or topics that we would bring into conversation and that these questions and topics had to be asked of every person we interview in both Shanghai and Helsinki, so we could compare data sufficiently. The topics we discussed with participants included: Using business cards, storage, the process, the cost, sustainability, using iphone apps, behaviours towards apps, android vs iphone and technology.

The interview process was quite casual as we wanted our participants to feel comfortable and wanted to create an environment in which we could all openly discuss the topics. By not limiting our time with participants to a strict set of questions we were able to discuss points that helped us better understand peoples true thoughts and feelings and it ensured that we were not being biased or swaying the participant.



RESEARCH METHODS: STAGE TWO | DATA ANALYSIS

We specifically developed a set of interview questions to gain more information and understanding on the use of business cards and mobile technology, and how these mediums can be used for means of networking and communication. Patterns emerged while analysing the responses from interviewees both in China and in Finland, and these findings will be outlined under key topic areas.

WHY HAVE A BUSINESS CARD?

From the interviews that were conducted in China, it was found that business cards were an essential part of networking. From previous knowledge, it is understood that the process of exchanging business cards in some Asian cultures, is a very ceremonial and formal practice. Hence without a business card, you may be seen as unprofessional in some cultures.

Field research was conducted at a trade exhibition in Shanghai, which was where we collected and observed vital information and data. From this visit, it was reinforced that having a physical business card was of the greatest importance, as it you would have object that represents yourself and your profession, that you could offer to other individuals and experience contrasting process of exchanging business cards in a different culture.

Majority of the respondents that we interviewed in Finland were students or young professionals, and most of them did not have a business card of their own, but they planned on getting a business card after completing their studies. For these respondents, having a business card showed professionalism.

A common factor in the data collected in both countries was that the design of a business card is very important, to the Asian and European respondents. The card is a way of “representing oneself”, like an extension of your personality, and the aesthetic of the card is of as much importance as the information on the card itself.

NETWORKING

We asked the interviewees which channels and modes of communication that they use the most to keep in touch with their business contacts. Email was more popular than using voice calls or text messages. One of our Chinese respondents mentioned that social networking sites such as QQ and Weibo are gaining popularity amongst the older generations. Three of the respondents from Finland mentioned the professional networking site ‘linked.in’ as another method of communicating with their business contacts.

PHYSICAL BUSINESS CARDS VS. DIGITAL BUSINESS CARDS

There were mixed responses to this subject. Generally speaking, the Chinese respondents liked having a physical card more than a digital card, although some were open to the idea of digital or web-based business cards, but believed that it would have to be fast and user friendly.

There is “huge potential” for a digital business card app, but drawbacks include the tangibility of a digital card as a “real” object; the experience of exchanging digital business cards doesn’t feel as authentic as exchanging a physical card.

One respondent mentioned the cost of printing business cards in Shanghai was 100 yuan for 200 cards (approximately \$20 AUD), and she would repeat this process every three months.

RESEARCH METHODS: STAGE TWO | DATA ANALYSIS

OPERATING SYSTEM AND APP USAGE

At present, Stacks is only available for iOS. Nearly all of the respondents across China and Finland mentioned owning other mobile phones besides the iPhone; for example, the Samsung Galaxy, Sony Ericsson, Google Nexus, Windows Phone, and Nokia.

The primary reason for these individuals not owning an iPhone were because of cost and favouritism towards brands other than apple.

Many participants stated that they would only try a new app if they hear it was “cool” from someone else, or if they randomly decided to download it to test an unknown app, they would almost always forget about it after one day or delete it straight away.

ORGANISING BUSINESS CARDS

When we asked individuals about how to manage a collection of business cards, a few interviewees gave the common answer of storing them in boxes or filing cabinets, where there are often over 500 cards in one box. One Chinese respondent used an Excel spreadsheet to create a digital database of contact details of the most cards that he had received, and copied this to his mobile phone. Yet, another respondent from Europe mentioned how he just “stacked them in a pile” and would “likely never look at them again”.

Interviewees were asked if they would consider using their mobile phone for the purposes of organising business cards they had received. There was an overall, favourable result for this as they understood that they would easily be able to navigate within the app to search for specific individuals, even if they were to have over 500 contacts.





RESEARCH METHODS:
 STAGE THREE | IDENTIFYING KEY
 ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

We found that many interview participants stated that a long tutorial process, and restricting other smart phone users to download stacks, will definitely make the apps unappealing to a global market.

A major problem that would arise when using stacks to exchange business cards in comparison to traditional exchanging physical cards, is that it is not a fast process. The fact that airdropping, messaging, emailing or using any other digital channel to exchange cards is essential to stacks as an app, directly becomes a major flaw as it can not compete with the fast transaction of handing an individual and object is such a short time.

Moreover, time concerned users would not likely want to go on to a desktop to upload business card or contact a designer to do so.

CHINA
Majority are non-iphone users
Aging population that prefer traditional methods and processes
Printing business cards are cheap, easy and reliable
Eliminating cultural experience
No sufficient privacy filter
Trust issues (Security / ensuring privacy)
Design restriction on business card from corporations
Physical business cards look professional (status). A nice stock and texture adds to the professional qualities.
Popularity of apps are important
They are aware of the indirect Competitor apps

FINLAND
Majority non-iphone users
Physical cards are more valuable
Often exchange contact details via email/phone (Some do not need business cards to be professional)
Most participants told us they like to use a print company that designs and prints the card in one process. Then this can be repeated easily once you need more cards.

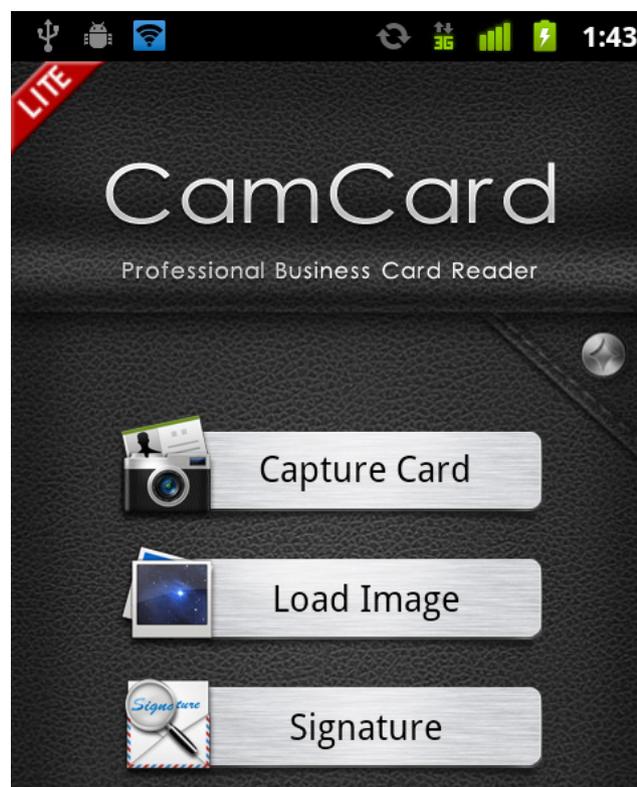


There are several indirect competitor's app that we came across, that possess features that Stacks should adopt or counter, CamCard is already dominating the Asian market, not only china. And linkedin also has Cardmunch, where basically a Card scanning feature collects the information on a card which is then recognised and linked with linkedin platform as well.

Some Problems and Threats that Purple Monky should be aware of whilst developing and releasing Stacks:

- Less iPhones users, only 1 out of 10 using iPhone
- Aging population, preferred traditional methods.

- Printing business cards are cheap.
- Physical business card can be unique organic shapes, with folds, textures and scents embedded within the design.
- Physical business card can be used as a gift or respectful offering of an artefact.
- Eliminating cultural experience and physical, face to face exchanging process.
- Takes much longer to turn on air drop, send Card through digital channel and receive, than it does when simply handing someone a paper card.
- Security / ensuring privacy and trust issues.
- Competitor's app.
- Popularity, some participants said that they only download an app once its popular.
- The app needs to obtain a high reputation to allow the app to grow.
- Physical business card look professional (status),



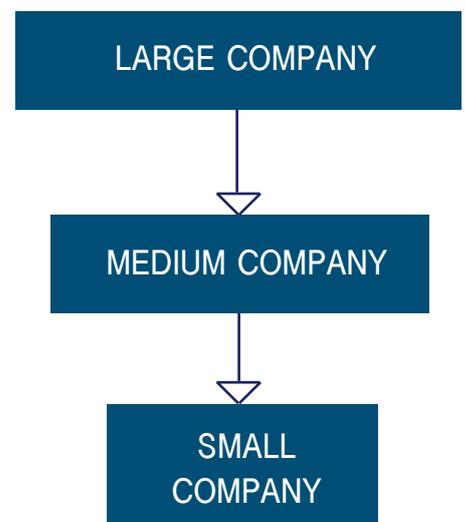


RESEARCH METHODS: STAGE FOUR | FINDING A FOCUS

From our research we have established that it would be in Purple Monkys best interest to initially target Stacks towards business people of a middle to high socioeconomic status and demographic.

We believe that stacks should be used primarily for business-to-business collaboration or information exchanging, in the early stages after being released. After conducting market research and trend analysis we have come to find that big companies set trends that are then often adopted by smaller companies and organizations.

Hence we recommend that Purple Monkys strategic approach should be directed towards encouraging large enterprises and organizations to use and build up the apps reputation over a period of time. This will have a flow on affect that will influence smaller organisations to also use the apps, as each small organisation draws inspiration from larger ones which act as role models and competitors in a way where desire to be the best or as good as the best is evident in all flourishing companies. This common mentality, which is universal throughout the business people and successful workers around the globe, shall harness the driving force needed by stacks, if it is to eventually reach the grand vision.



This diagram shows the order in which businesses Stacks should approach first, and then how the influence will follow on from this approach.



TARGET MARKET PERSONAS

Personas were developed to target a certain market that was developed during research and is mentioned in our final outcome.

Shari Turner,
Female, 30

Occupation:
Freelance graphic designer

Experienced in the fields of branding and visual identity. Has a paper business card, but would prefer using a digital one as most of her clients are only communicated with online. Has the potential to design business cards for clients using the Stacks platform.

Owns an iPhone.

Sue Langdon,
Female, 40

Occupation:
Senior Manager at
Manufacturing Facility

Speaks at many seminars and networking events. Sue is provided business cards by her company administration department and needs to go through them when she needs more ordered.

Owns a Samsung Galaxy

Charles Mizzi,
Male, 50

Occupation:
CEO at a large accounting firm

Uses paper business cards, but is not very familiar with mobile technology/apps and prefers to communicate by email or telephone. Wishes to find a method of organising all the cards he receives from his various clients.

Owns a Blackberry





ALL IDEAS GENERATED

Throughout our journey, and from the interviews with our participants, many different ideas were brainstormed, conceptualized and developed.

USING SENSATIONS

Develop a bump/swish ritual or a vibration movement when cards are transferred. This would make it more fun and develop a new ritual, thus creating a trademark for the stacks brand. Allowing the exchange to be new and digital, however it would still entail a physical action which would not only make it appeal to a broad target market, but will also compensate for removing other ceremonial and cultural actions that would normally occur during a business card exchanging process.

SOFTWARE

Through interviews it was discovered that quite a few people did not have iphones. Stacks could be an app that could be entirely used on tablets, ipad, smart phones and computers, so it can be more usable and appeal to more people.

TUTORIAL PROCESS

Is there a possibility to make the stacks tutorial process easier? Is there a way in which people can upload their card straight from their phone.

The tutorial process when first downloading and opening stacks can come across as overwhelming and discouraging towards users. Knowing that users would be using stacks because it was recommended by a friend, or some would randomly download to see how useful it could be, do not mean that first time users will give it a proper shot. If it is too confusing, time consuming or boring, it will be more common for individuals to disengage with the app and speak lowly of it. This is why the tutorial process should be as inviting, informative and user friendly as possible.

PRIVACY

People were surprisingly quite concerned with other stacks members being able to find and see their details. In Chinese culture you need to first earn respect and trust with people before doing business. A privacy and filtering system would have to be implemented within the app, without being too complicated to access and set by the user.

KEEPING IN CONTACT

To continue users journey with stacks its important to keep in contact and communicate with users via email. There could be an opportunity to create some sort of bulletin called "stacks on stacks" and it can feature some news about networking.

Even if there could be an instant messaging add-on, which could potentially be a purchasable upgrade, users could then communicate within the app for quick messages, similar to whatsapp and Viber. This would encourage time spent using the app to increase dramatically, especially if it has a friendly user interface that rivals whatsapp and Viber.

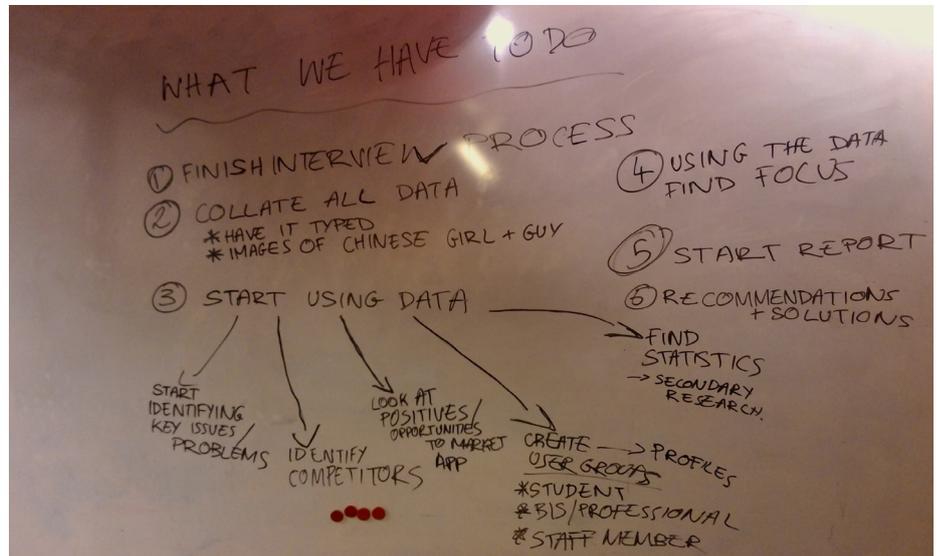
THE PROJECT OUTCOME

To reach an outcome for this report we had to go through various stages. Which involved looking at who our target audience is. We developed a strategic plan, as well as research into what countries the app might be most successful in. We also created a business model and developed further recommendations which will be listed further on in the report.

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR STACKS

There is the potential to raise further awareness of the Stacks app by providing interactive demonstrations of the app at a trade fair or conference. Showing the app to a new user and explaining how it works was the best way of understanding and learning how to use Stacks, in our personal experiences and while briefly explaining the app to research participants.

Setting up a stand at a trade fair/conference, with representatives from Purple monkey/Stacks is one proposal for raising more awareness about Stacks. The tagline for Stacks is "pixel perfect networking", and digital business cards are still relatively uncommon within a traditional networking setting.



In a trade fair/expo environment, there are numerous opportunities for networking with a large number of people. This would be a good opportunity to inform attendees of the benefits of Stacks and encourage people to try/download the app, and register for a Stacks account on-the-spot. Attendees of such conferences would be part of the demographic that Stacks is targeted at, and may be individuals or part of a company that might be interested in using Stacks.

Such conferences could include:

- YOW! (Melbourne/Brisbane/Sydney) - developers conference
- CeBit (Sydney) - technology and business conference

These conferences were chosen as a starting point as their topic area is technology, and it would be more likely that the people that attend these events would be more technologically savvy and own a smart phone/mobile device.

Starting within Melbourne and eventually visiting more conferences around Australia and New Zealand would be a cost-effective way to promote the app locally.

Increasing the presence of Stacks online would also be beneficial for the promotion of the app. The creation of a "News" section on the current Stacks website could inform users about the latest developments with Stacks, and perhaps provide examples of how Stacks could be used within a company (to help organise clients into different "stacks"). Placing the emphasis on "networking" could be a possible approach, and again outlining the benefits of Stacks in more detail, such as sustainability and mobile business, will be key.

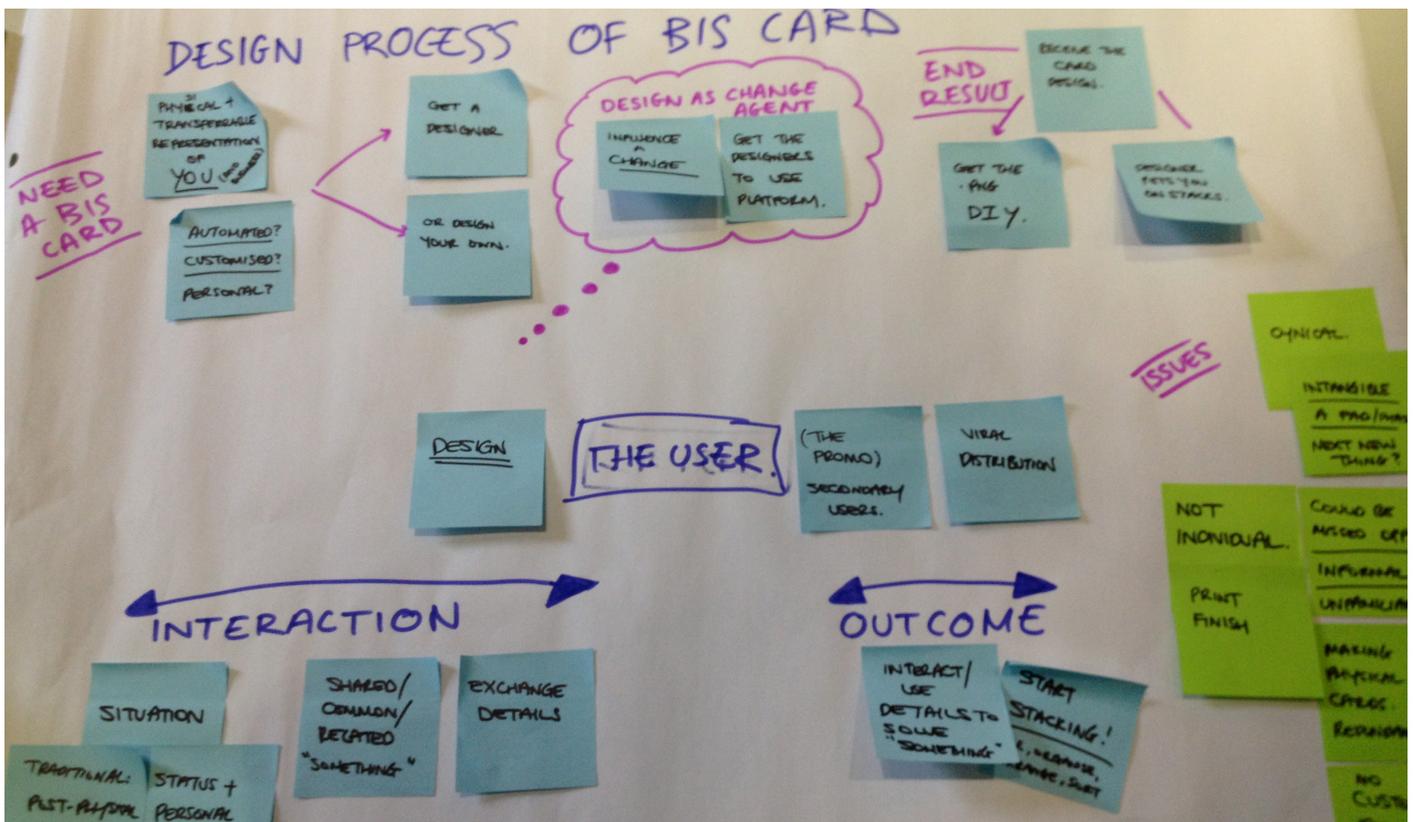
THE FEASIBILITY OUTCOME

The project outcomes that we have derived from our research are strong recommendations that we put forward to purple monkey as we believe they are vital elements that can lead to the concepts feasibility. After conducting our in depth research overseas, and analysing our data and establishing common factors, we firmly believe that Stacks has the potential to be used throughout the globe, whilst also possessing potential to fail in succeeding if stacks is not executed and released in a strategic manner.

Our desired outcome would be to see Purple Monkey absorb and implement the suggestions and recommendations that we have provided them. Our input and proposed modifications are based entirely on the face to face research that we encountered, and the new experiences and cultures observed during our time spent on the SDF study tour. It is in our best interest to see stacks live up to the grand vision expressed by our industry sponsor, and thus we are trying to guide them towards a direction that will give stacks the best opportunity to achieve success in a global market and reach purple monkey's ambitions.

Our proposed outcomes are entirely feasible and realistic to implement. Restrictions such as cost/budgets, human resources and deadlines have not specified during our ideation and analysis stages, thus we are unaware of such constraints that purple monkey may have, which will influence our proposals, and would entail to further developing our outcomes.

Nevertheless, in reference to the viability of stacks, it has great opportunity to flourish the market if it is targeted towards an audience that will strategically become the foundations of its stacks as a app that can only grow and improve.





BUSINESS OVERVIEW

To further develop a recommended business outcome we first needed to break down the current Stacks business model.

CURRENT BUSINESS OVERVIEW

KEY PARTNERS

Apps developer
Graphic designers
Content provider

KEY ACTIVITIES

Professionals networking
Business cards sharing and storing

KEY RESOURCES

Stacks Platform
Stack Dashboard

VALUE PROPOSITIONS

Pixel Perfect
Limitless storage and sharing
Environmentally friendly

RELATIONSHIP

Contact management

CHANNELS

Airdrop
Iphone
Email
SMS
Twitter

CUSTOMERS SEGMENTS

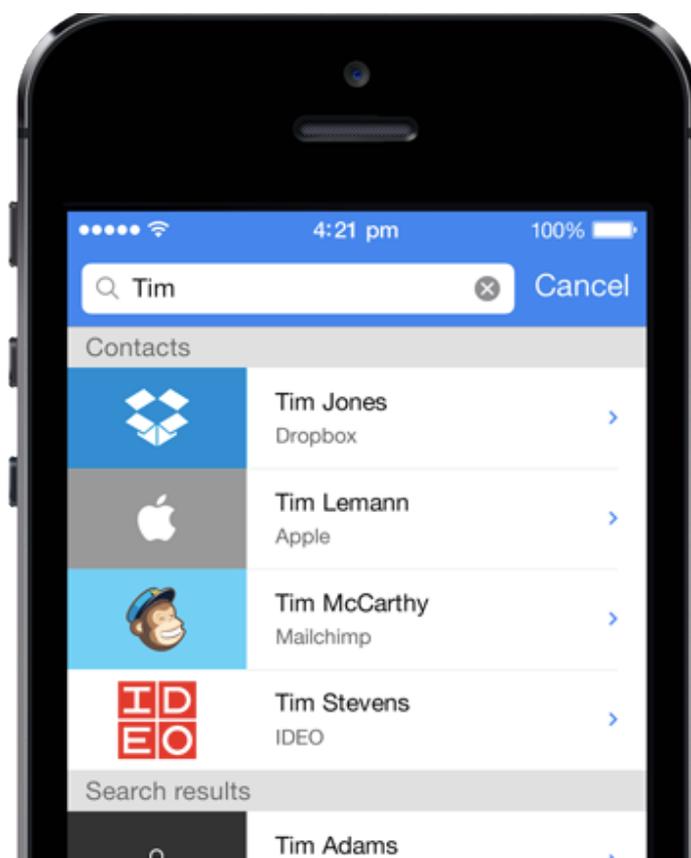
Iphone users
Graphic designers
Entrepreneurs

COST STRUCTURE

Web hosting
App hosting
Marketing
App development
Administration

REVENUE STREAMS

Purple Monkey funding the Stacks app





Once all ideas were generated and research was conducted a recommended business overview was created.

KEY PARTNERS

App Developer
 Graphic designers agencies/org/ association/listings
 Online payment provider
 Content provider

KEY ACTIVITIES

- Digital Business Card making
- Business cards sharing and storing
- Professionals networking

KEY RESOURCES

Stacks Apps Platform and desktop access

VALUE PROPOSITIONS

Pixel Perfect
 Limitless storage and sharing
 Environmentally friendly
 Easy to update and maintainable

RELATIONSHIP

Contact management
 Business card solution

CHANNELS

- Any sharing method smartphones both Android and IOS
- Email
- SMS
- Social Network

CUSTOMERS SEGMENTS

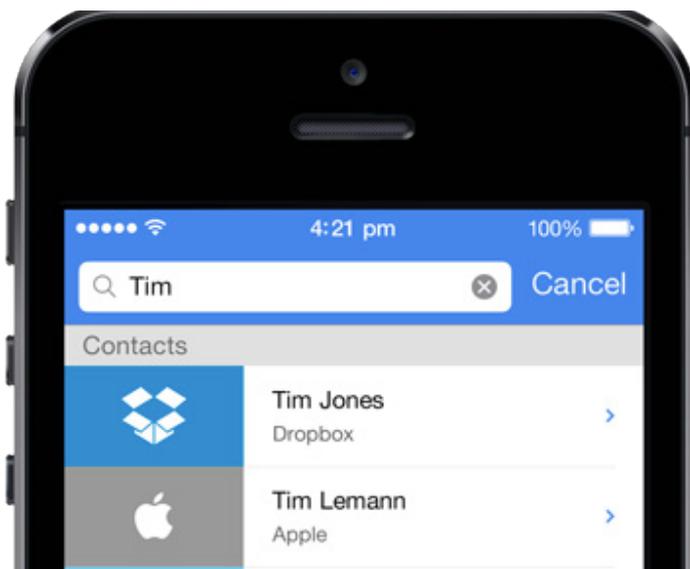
- Administration department of small and large companies in Asia Pacific.
- Marketing department of small and large companies in Asia Pacific
- Graphic designers
- Entrepreneurs
- Sales consultants

COST STRUCTURE

Web hosting
 App hosting
 Marketing
 App development
 Administration

REVENUE STREAMS

- In-app purchases/bonus feature
- Freemium/Premium subscription
- Registration according to numbers of group/employees





FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

To further promote and ensure that people continue to use Stacks, we have developed two ideas in which people would be further intrigued and excited about using the app.

Our first idea is to push getting the app downloaded by more individuals in the early stages of its release, and to get more users signed up and using the app for events or exhibitions. Purple Monkey could team up with various art / media events around Melbourne (or in other countries - depending on financial status) and evoke professionals to meet, collaborate or network. For example an event like Supergraph which is 'Australia's Contemporary Graphic Art Fair' that celebrates design, print and illustration'. It is a new event itself and forming alliances with an event such as this will really push stacks towards the interest of the initial target market. It is the perfect opportunity for a networking app to be in use and to show how easy and sufficient its use can be.

The second idea that was developed is one in which Purple Monkey can keep in contact with its users and to create hype around Stacks. The idea is to hold a networking meet every 6 months or so or twice a year in which an email is sent out to the stacks database, first in best dressed books into a session which run by Purple Monkey and held in a studio or an alternate venue. The session is for participants to use the app to create new contacts and possibly even discuss business opportunities or adventures. This kind of meet will leave people feeling inspired to continue using the app.



REFERENCES

IMAGES

Persona images
(Page 14) found from:

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<http://www.fobsic.com/medium-long-hairstyles-over-age-40/medium-hairstyles-for-40-year-old-woman/>

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Images of Stacks app are from the brief provided by Purple Monkey

INFORMATION

Most information was based on our interviews with participants.

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