



## Collaborative efforts

DoubleDutch apps, including a powerful CRM sales tool, help far-flung employees stay connected

For simplehoney, a travel startup that tailors lodging choices to users' personality profiles, keeping track of its staff as they scour the world filing reports is as easy as a few taps on a smartphone, thanks to an app called Pride. Team members don't need to rely on e-mail, text messages or phone calls to stay up to date with their bosses or each other, no matter where business takes them. Think of it as a closed Facebook social network, limited to people within the company, that works on iOS and Android mobile devices and can reduce intraoffice e-mail traffic by one-third.

Pride is one of three apps developed by DoubleDutch, a San Francisco-based startup, to help everyone from the CEO to the intern keep a finger on a company's

pulse. Another, the white-label events app Flock, gives attendees the power to check in to seminars and panel discussions and also connect with other professionals.

But DoubleDutch's most disruptive app is surely Hive, which allows a salesperson to download a prospect's complete background file from a cloud-based customer relationship management (CRM) program such as Salesforce. The app can also track sales analytics and transmit those back to home base. It's a mobile challenge to traditional CRM and reporting tools.

"All these CRMs [on the market] are about reporting what has happened in the past," says DoubleDutch CEO and co-founder Lawrence Coburn. "We're capturing many more data points than

traditional reporting software. It goes from being a reporting tool to being a real-time window into what's happening right now."

The biggest sticking point for CRM programs has been reluctance on the part of sales teams to input data. To create an intuitive app that promotes engagement, DoubleDutch incorporated easy and clear objectives and gaming principles. "Companies use the app's game mechanics to motivate the behaviors that are known to drive sales," Coburn says. "For example, one Fortune 500 customer gives away an iPad to salespeople at the top of the monthly leaderboard. It seems basic, but it moves the dial."

So far, customers like what they see. The company, founded in 2011, is doubling its business every two quarters thanks to signing clients such as Cisco, Roche pharmaceuticals and Lowe's home-improvement centers. To handle that growth, Coburn expects to increase staff from 18 to 30 employees by the end of the year.

A big part of DoubleDutch's success has been stripping down the sprawling concept of mobile connectivity. According to Coburn, the goal was always simplicity: "People want simple apps that do one thing well, not many things at once."

—Logan Kugler

## Cheering section

Customer interaction turns the tide for an entrepreneurship guru

**M**arie Forleo has built a multimillion-dollar operation as a small-business consultant and entrepreneurship expert through her Rich Happy & Hot brand of online tutorials and programs. Geared toward women, her New York City-based firm helps clients establish financial and lifestyle autonomy by starting their own companies.

But Forleo ran into trouble with her flagship product, B-School, an eight-week course in marketing and online entrepreneurship. The program costs \$2,000 and consists of weekly content modules that show students how to build profitable businesses, expand their online presence and construct personal brands. While the course earned rave reviews, a disturbing 17 percent of students second-guessed themselves (and the program) after they signed up—and asked for refunds.

"I wasn't happy," Forleo says. "Though 20 percent is about normal in the industry, nothing about what we do should be normal." Customers weren't complaining about any specific component of the course, leaving Forleo to act on a hunch: "I felt there was a lot more happening under the surface, but I didn't feel like we were addressing it."

### THE FIX

Forleo created a series of auto-response e-mails that mapped her customers' psychology during each stage of the course. Her efforts were informed by customer comments and good old guesswork. For instance, she saw that participants started the course excited, then became nervous about the amount of material that would be covered. As cus-

tomers dove in, some felt overwhelmed. Later, many fell behind on their work or didn't see the success they expected.

Using OfficeAutopilot e-mail marketing software, Forleo wrote an e-mail to address each emotional high and low that customers might feel during a class segment. Each time the next class module was released, hundreds of B-Schoolers received a reassuring e-mail from Forleo that provided encouragement and reported big entrepreneurial wins from the B-School alumni community.

### THE RESULTS

The refund rate for the B-School course dropped dramatically—from 17 percent in 2010 to less than 3.5 percent in 2011—adding \$199,800 to the bottom line. Says Forleo, "The feedback we received said things like, 'Please tell Marie thank you so much for writing that note about feeling overwhelmed. That's exactly what I was going through. Now I realize this is normal; I'm going to stay with it.'"

### A SECOND OPINION

"What I love is that Marie got into the head of her customer," says Scott Martineau, co-founder and vice president of demand generation for Infusionsoft, which sells web-based sales and marketing software for small businesses. While Martineau gives Forleo's auto-respond results a rave review, he believes small businesses need to go even further by tailoring automatic messages to individual groups of customers throughout a product's life cycle. "That is what consumers want and expect: a very personalized experience," he says. "They don't want to be talked to as if they're not being listened to." —L.K.



A good listener:  
Rich Happy  
& Hot's  
Marie Forleo.

## To pin or not to pin?

Tool gauges Pinterest mentions

**P**interest is now the third most popular social networking site (following Facebook and Twitter), attracting millions of "pinners" who grab digital images from websites and add them to their bulletin boards. But many small-business owners are still on the sidelines, wondering if they should commit to the platform for yet another social platform (what may not be worth the trouble of convincing anyone?) PinMe, a free online tool from Boston-based social media marketing dashboard MarketMeSuite, can eliminate that guesswork.

Users go to [MarketMeSuite.com/pinme](http://MarketMeSuite.com/pinme), enter their company's URL and instantly see how many pinners are promoting that company on Pinterest. The very basic website bypasses the convoluted alternative: applying to join Pinterest and waiting up to 24 hours to receive an invitation; once inside, a company can conduct only a hit-or-miss search using keywords (not a specific URL) to see who has pinned a photo of one of its products.

"There wasn't a way for pinners to be thanked," says MarketMeSuite CEO Tammy Fennell, who developed PinMe after conducting an experiment with her father's e-commerce store, Baker-towneCollectables. She created a Pinterest board for one of the store's products, Hummel figurines, and within 72 hours had 18 followers and five re-pins. But more telling was her discovery that other pinners had already been highlighting the figurines. It was a community Fennell's father never knew existed.

MarketMeSuite released PinMe in April; more than 6,000 businesses tried it in the first two months. About 65 percent of PinMe users found that their site had already been pinned; Fennell says the next step for those companies is to create a Pinterest page and interact with those pinners. And for the 35 percent who discovered no pins to their URL, they can ignore the Pinterest hype and devote their resources elsewhere. —Katherine Duncan