



How interactive mobile technology helped
The Warehouse double its takings for charity

power to you



“Vodafone had the idea of how we could work together to help support the community. They were focused and dedicated. And they delivered on the night.”

As a committed supporter of Starship Children’s Hospital, The Warehouse was keen to find ways to boost the money raised during its annual black tie fund-raising event. Discussing the opportunity with Vodafone, it emerged that the silent auction held during the evening was ripe for a new approach.

Vodafone brainstormed an innovative solution to allow participants to enter live bids from their mobile phones or from iPads circulating the room. Working closely with Smudge Apps, the Vodafone and The Warehouse team created a unique app within six short weeks. When the big night arrived, The Warehouse was thrilled with audience participation in the silent auction. Better still, this innovative approach helped ensure takings of \$770 per item auctioned – almost double the result from the previous year.

Situation

There’s one slight problem with silent auctions. They’re silent. Without a noisy auctioneer to cajole the audience into raising their bids, it’s all too easy for items to go for a fraction of their true value.

That’s fine if you’re the person who gets a bargain – but not so great if you’re a charity hoping to raise much-needed funds.

When The Warehouse reviewed its annual black tie event, this year held in aid of Starship Children’s Hospital, it became clear that the silent auction needed an overhaul. Running alongside a live auction during the evening, this vital fundraiser was not reaching its potential. The problem was that the audience – 950 corporate movers and shakers – had to leave the ballroom to place their bids. It was too distracting from the main event, so the silent auction was failing to take off. Items were going well below their value and the hospital was missing out.

The team at Vodafone discussed the issue with Adam Doocey, The Warehouse’s IT Infrastructure Manager, and Peter Allen from Seven Events. Could clever use of mobile technology help bring the silent auction to life?



“We sat down with Vodafone and together we thrashed out the possibilities and constraints.”

The solution

Vodafone identified an opportunity for iPhones, netbooks and iPads to be used to place bids over the 3G network. The principles were simple. As Adam Doocey says, “We sat down with Vodafone and together we thrashed out the possibilities and constraints.”

The solution called for a mobile app that participants could download on the night and use to enter live bids on a range of items. Now all that was needed was someone to develop the software. Vodafone approached its partner, Smudge Apps.

Vodafone and Smudge Apps worked closely with the Warehouse team to develop a silent auction solution with all the functionality required. With a hard deadline looming, the team completed all development (including approval from Apple) in just six weeks.

The ultimate test came on the night. The silent auction app was introduced to the audience, who received an SMS via a link that took the user directly to the app to download. This made it easy for them to take part in the silent auction without anyone needing to leave their seat. As soon as someone entered a bid, a message popped up saying whether the bid was successful or prompting a raise. It was easy, fun and interactive – the perfect formula for a charity auction.

In addition, iPads were circulated around the audience, adding to the fun and providing everyone with the chance to bid. These iPads were such a hit that Vodafone decided on the spur of the moment to offer three of them as spot prizes. It was announced that every bid would go in the draw to win an iPad – leading to a frenzy of bids that drove takings even higher.

At the end of the evening, the organisers were pleased to report a resounding success. 18 items had been sold via the silent auction, with an average successful bid of \$770 per item. This was almost double the average bid achieved the previous year.

The Warehouse’s Adam Doocey was delighted with the way Vodafone turned a bright idea into a successful event in front of 950 business and community leaders. “Vodafone had the idea of how we could work together to help support the community. They were focused and dedicated. And they delivered on the night.”

Business benefits

- **Interactive mobile solution generated more funds for charity.** Even though the organisers were offering items with approximately the same value as previous years, the average winning bid was much higher, translating to \$770 per item. Starship Children’s Hospital benefitted from the success of the night.
- **Successful demonstration of digital leadership.** Vodafone enhanced the total experience for guests on auction night and helped position The Warehouse as an innovator in the technical arena.
- **Showcasing mobile innovation within the business.** The event provided the ideal platform to demonstrate the value of interactive mobile technology to an influential audience. Warehouse CIO Owen McCall was the successful bidder for Smudge Apps’ offer of \$10,000 worth of iPhone and iPad development time.

To find out more about how The Warehouse saved money with Vodafone Business contact your Account Manager or Vodafone Representative.

Business benefits

- Average winning bid of \$770 per item – almost double the sum achieved at previous year's event.
- Successful demonstration of digital leadership, providing a good foundation for further developments.
- Showcasing interactive mobile technology within The Warehouse's business.

Customer profile

The Warehouse is one of New Zealand's largest retailers, known and loved by Kiwis for its wide range of products from clothing, entertainment, technology and music to sports goods, garden products and groceries. With 86 stores (and counting), this New Zealand owned and operated company employs over 8,500 team members from Kaitiaki in the north to Invercargill in the south.



To find out more about how The Warehouse saved money with Vodafone Business contact your Account Manager or Vodafone Representative.