

CARROTMOB

Executive Summary

Carrotmob is a non-profit organization that creates incentives for companies to make socially-responsible business decisions by building a network of consumers and leveraging the power of those consumers to give companies financial rewards.

OVERVIEW

Corporations have the power to improve their environmental impact in profound ways. This power is often neglected in the absence of economic incentive. Our solution is to organize consumers to provide an economic incentive to companies who do good. Carrotmob will target consumers and companies globally, focusing on improving corporate environmental practices. We will create a broad network of consumers and form partnerships with other larger advocacy groups to use their research and infrastructure. Together we will implement campaigns focusing on different industries. For each campaign, we will identify opportunities for making practices in a certain industry more environmentally friendly, and approach the companies in that industry with suggestions. Interested companies will “compete” with how much “good” they are willing to do. Companies will propose actions they are willing to take, on their own terms. We will evaluate which offer is the strongest from an environmental standpoint, and accept it. Our network of consumers will then reward the chosen company with an unprecedented kind of shopping spree to boost short-term company profits, as well as by defining that company as the most responsible in its industry, to boost long-term profits. As a result, the most socially-responsible business decision gets the most profit.

RATIONALE

Campaigns will be designed to improve the natural environment while also being highly profitable for companies we work with. The traditional attitudes of consumer advocates have held that a focus on increasing profits is precisely what has aggravated the climate crisis. They see corporations designed to disregard moral concerns in the unyielding quest for profits, and they see in the business world a catastrophic inability to invest in changes that could help mitigate the threat of climate change. They are correct. But what they have not seen is that these same traits of corporations can be harnessed to power a solution. If environmentalists can BECOME the profits, then corporations will follow us.

PLAN OF ACTION

We are seeking funds for one year’s worth of salary for the founder, a CTO and a COO. During the first year we will build our network starting with a younger demographic, growing through online social networks. Early campaigns will focus on local communities and smaller businesses where the impact of a modest-sized network will be felt. We will grow through partnerships with other groups, as well as through a diverse marketing effort to reach broader segments of the population. With growth and a track record of success, we will begin dealing with larger companies. During the first

year we do not expect any revenue. Later revenue will come from (socially and environmentally screened) advertising. For example, our members will display user-generated images and videos as ads on their Facebook profiles via the Carrotmob application. The social and viral aspect of this advertising is in demand, as indicated by the hype around Facebook Beacon. Facebook members will be more receptive to our system than they were to Beacon, since ad content itself will be user-generated, and Carrotmob's non-profit status will make people feel that they are helping a good cause rather than being used *only* to boost someone's profits. Besides advertising, other potential revenue sources include labeling, certification, consulting, or being a shopping portal. These models may be pursued only as far as the trust of our network allows.

A UNIQUE AND PROMISING APPROACH

This approach is unique from the perspective of both consumer and company. Consumers will finally have an effective tool to proactively inject their values into the consumer products market. Choosing a specific brand is a profoundly simple action. It's easier than signing a petition, costs little or nothing extra, and it's not time-consuming, confusing, radical or mean-spirited. There is no obstacle to participation. On the other side, companies will appreciate advocates who allow them to internally define what actions they can take, and who will never treat them like criminals. Most companies prefer to do good, and we will enable them to finally justify good actions with profits from increased sales. We will also decrease the high costs of acquiring new customers and provide free press and promotion so companies can save on marketing and advertising. Furthermore, an initial focus will be on energy usage, and we may suggest energy-saving actions to lower emissions and save money, allowing companies to articulate their environmental improvements to investors in terms of operational cost savings.

THE TEAM

Founder Brent Schulkin is an aspiring Renaissance Man. He is a connector of people and of ideas. Rich with creativity and leadership experience, he has put his Stanford degree to use working at Google, then as an independent documentary filmmaker, and most recently in the corporate team-building space, creating elaborate, customized events for his clients. Carrotmob's advisory board includes a wide range of advocates, issue experts, business executives, leading thinkers and experienced entrepreneurs.

A NEW LEAF

Carrotmob is novel, and perfectly suited to bring together the talent and passion of existing advocacy groups with the power of online social networks and the latent desire for change that exists within so many casual consumers. The most exciting thing about Carrotmob may be that we can end the tradition of hostility between activists and business. Today we strive to make these important changes using a framework of positive cooperation. The best company wins, the consumer wins, and the planet wins.

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