

PRESS RELEASE

iPhone Buddy app a big hit in the Netherlands

Young entrepreneur from the Netherlands introduced an iPhone application to support smokers during an attempt to quit named My Stop Buddy. Yesterday the app was released in the Netherlands and within 24 hours it reached the 3th place in the Dutch AppStore.

Amsterdam, 2 March 2010 – People who would like to quit smoking can get support for 21 days. By filling in their personal profile they will receive 150 activities for difficult moments, 75 jokes about health and feedback, for example, about the amount of money saved after the quit attempt. My Stop Buddy can be used everywhere, is personal, recognizes the users and shows consideration for their situation. Ex-smokers will get support whenever they need it: in the morning, at night, at work or in the cafe. To promote My Stop Buddy, people receive a discount of more than 60% on the launch day, the 1st of March 2010.

The app displays five buttons on the screen. The buttons correspondent with a certain emotion, for instance stress, boredom or relaxation. Thus, the former smoker becomes more aware of his smoking behavior. By pressing the corresponding emotion button and by answering questions about the situation of the user, different alternative activities will be displayed on the screen which provide distraction to the user during a moments, when he is craving for a cigarette. The users' opinion about these activities and the progress of the attempt to quit are registered for 21 days. Online feedback from users, for instance, via a forum on the website, gives opportunities to optimalize future versions of the application.

Scientific based

Three years ago, Industrial Designer Lianne Sleebos MSc., graduated from the Technical University of Delft on an innovative method to support smokers during an attempt to quit. STIVORO, the Dutch Foundation for National Health and Smoking, and the Dutch Heart Foundation were actively involved during the graduation project in 2007. The method is based on different theories on how to quit smoking which have proven their values in time. Eighteen months ago, new opportunities arose thanks to the introduction of the iPhone with the AppStore in the Netherlands. Recently, Sleebos developed an app for the Apple-smartphone in cooperation with a freelance programmer.

Worldwide

My Stop Buddy will be launched worldwide in Dutch and English for a price of 2.99 dollar. This amount is lower than that of a packet of cigarettes and will save the user a lot of money, if the attempt to quit proves successful. The young talented entrepreneurs wish to develop more apps which will support change of habit.

END PRESS RELEASE

Note for the editorial office

* For high resolution screenshots and images, please go to our website:

www.mystopbuddy.com/press.html

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Background information

My Stop Buddy is a new and active way of breaking the habit of smoking by providing alternative activities. The approach is positive, fun and fits the character of the iPhone, which can be noticed from the content and aesthetic of the app. The fundament of the method originated from different stop-smoking-theories, which have proven their values in time. Some examples are summarized below:

1) Stages of Change (SOC) model - Prochaska en DiClemente. This model describes the different stages an individual goes through while meeting the challenge of conquering an addiction. If the stages are summarized we end up with three main stages: the preparation, the quit attempt, the relapse phase. My Stop Buddy supports former smokers in the stage of quitting and tries to prevent relapse. The target group consists of smokers who have will power to quit. The maintenance of the quit attempt is possible through the given activities and the positive feedback via rewards and encouragements by My Stop Buddy.

2) Classical Conditioning – Pavlov. This theory explains the process of addiction. Craving of cigarettes exist of repeatedly connecting stimulus from the environment to the effects of nicotine. My Stop Buddy tries to break the habit of smoking by connecting stimulus from the environment with alternative activities.

3) Rational Emotive Therapy (RET) - Albert Ellis. This theory says the problems themselves aren't the trouble, but the way we look at these problems. The theory is based upon our rational thinking, by means people distinguish incorrect images within their thoughts and will get a more realistic view on themselves and their situation. The therapy uses rational analysis of a person: Occasion, Thoughts, Feeling, Behavior and Consequences (on the short and the long term). Below a example is displayed:

RET	Old situation	New situation: My Stop Buddy
Occasion	Busy at work	Busy at work
Thoughts	Craving for a cigarette	Craving for a cigarette
Feeling	<i>Stress</i>	<i>Stress</i>
Behavior	<i>Smoking</i>	<i>Alternative activity</i>
Consequences	<i>Reward (nicotine), but a health risk and high costs of cigarettes</i>	<i>Break the habit (quit attempt). Improvement of health and save money on costs of cigarettes.</i>

My Stop Buddy tries to break the habit of smoking by connecting emotions to alternative activities.

4) The contradiction of apparently effects - Jan Geurtz. The theory describes emotions which are connected to smoking behavior. The emotions are filtered from the theory and used in My Stop Buddy. The former smoker chooses one emotion during a difficult moment by which awareness of the smoking behavior arises.

5) The process of an craving moment – W. de Gruyter. This research shows that a difficult moment, when craving exists connected to a situation and an emotion, lasts about 5 minutes.

6) 21 days habit theory - Maxwell Maltz. This researcher tells that 21 days are needed to learn a new habit. Brain circuits take engrams (memory traces), and produce neuroconnections and neuropathways only if they are bombarded for 21 days in a row. This means that our brain does not accept 'new' data for a change of habit unless it is repeated each day for 21 days.

Unique advantages the iPhone app

My Stop Buddy:

- is a new and fresh method with a positive approach within a framework of proven theories about the process of quitting
- offers support everywhere and always: in the morning, at night, at work or in the barroom.
- recognizes the user and becomes personal through feedback of the user.
- Stimulates an active attitude and improves the self-confidence of the user. It provides a hopeful view of the future, because alternative activities exist.
- has a positive and fun approach which fits the character of the iPhone and can be noticed from the content and aesthetic of the app.
- makes the user more aware of the connection between smoking and the emotion behind it, due to five emotion-buttons.
- supports the former smoker during difficult moments when craving occurs. This moment is the biggest threat for relapse.
- fits to the needs of the target group. Former smokers ask experts to give useful advice, like alternative activities regularly.
- is easy to use and therefore approachable. The app has been launched in different languages.
- is reasonably priced for the consumer. The price is lower than one packet of cigarettes and the user will save a lot of money after a successful quit attempt.
- can lead to more new, inspiring activities brought in by users themselves. This will be stimulated through a forum on the website.
- can be seen as a physical replacement through the integration in the iPhone. To play with the iPhone and to search for alternative activities can be seen as a distraction itself.
- is sustainable in two ways 1) the app has been developed to solve a social and individual problem; the problem smokers experience during a quit attempt, and 2) apps are categorized under Product-Service-Systems (PSS). These systems often cause dematerialization of products due to the additional service.
- uses the Internet and her social networks, like facebook, twitter, forum, etc. for promotion purposes and to collect feedback of users to improvement the app. This is known as web 3.0: everyone can be a part of the discussion.