

Traveling in the Times of Corona

Gold | Effie United States | E-Commerce / Commerce & Shopper Effies | 2021

Advertiser(s): **The Wild Detectives**

Lead Agency(s): **Dieste, Inc.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Wild Detectives has worked to create an experience for Dallas locals built around books, booze, and community-driven cultural conversation. This vision came to a halt when the pandemic forced thousands of small businesses to close permanently. The WD found a way to keep their business afloat by creating a mock travel agency, gobookatrip.com, pranking their fans with the launch of their new e-commerce site with no media budget. Sales soared by 200% and the site garnered over 30K visits within the first three days with zero media investment.

THE CHALLENGE & OBJECTIVES

When we're looking for an escape, books allow us to travel anywhere we want.

THE INSIGHT & THE BIG IDEA

The Insight:

When our life plans are canceled, we're left feeling restless and on-edge.

The Big Idea:

Ensure the survival of an independent bookstore when a once-in-a-century event occurs and cuts the lifeblood to a business.

BRINGING THE IDEA TO LIFE

By creating a mock travel agency, GoBookATrip.com, The Wild Detectives (WD) pranked fans with the launch of their e-commerce site.

THE RESULTS

Sales soared by 200% and the site garnered over 30K visits within the first three days with zero media investment.

THE CHALLENGE

SUMMARY

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STATE OF THE MARKETPLACE & BRAND'S BUSINESS

Over the past few decades, online bookstores have become increasingly popular for countless reasons. First and foremost, out of convenience. What you need is just a few clicks away. You can also often get what you need at a lower price than at a local, independent bookstore, and there is usually a larger selection of inventory to choose from.

But there is one thing that a physical bookstore has that an online bookstore does not. Connection and community. This is something that The Wild Detectives knows well and has been perfecting since they opened their doors.

The WD is a bookstore-bar-venue created to bring together its founders' two passions – books and booze. Not only is it a place to buy books, but it is a space to have a drink, talk, share ideas, and engage in conversation with others. The type of discourse that can open your eyes to new realities. Much care is put into their selection to foster this atmosphere. Books are curated based on recommendations from the local literary community and abroad, varying from best-sellers to lesser-known titles. They are dedicated to hosting readings, shows, tastings, and screenings that revolve around the idea of thought-provoking conversation.

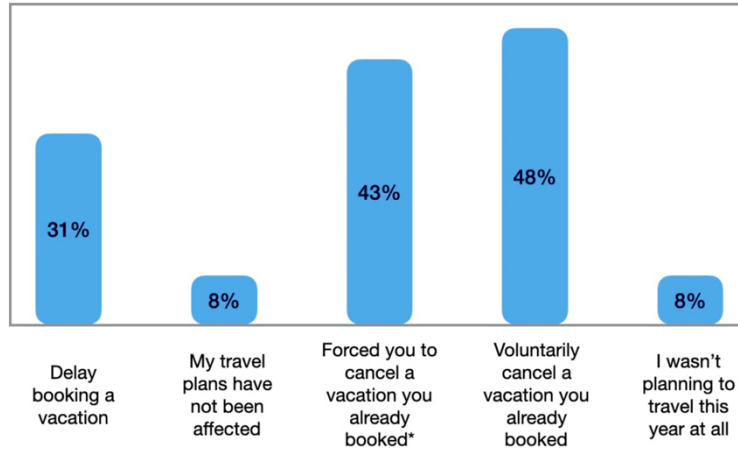
However, this all changed when the pandemic hit Dallas and they were forced to close their bookstore. The WD needed to keep business alive and find a way to continue to reach their customers and keep the conversation going.

AUDIENCE

The audience was focused on both retention and acquisition. Due to the lockdown, the bookshop needed a new way to engage with their loyal customers that frequent the brick-and-mortar store, but also expand their base with the launch of their e-commerce platform.

The WD could not survive with just its local fan base, so the target also included those who loved to travel but no longer could after they were forced to cancel or delay their plans for the year.¹ This capitalized on how many were left feeling hopeless and isolated in their homes, searching for an escape.

Coronavirus has hit travel plans hard
 % of U.S. vacationers who have done the following



*e.g. by an airline / government / workplace policy

Question: Has the coronavirus outbreak led you to do any of the following?

Source: GlobalWebIndex March 13-16 2020

Base: 731 (US) vacationers aged 16-64

Sources for the Challenge

1. How travel is being affected by the COVID-19 outbreak/GlobalWebIndex, 03/2020

THE OBJECTIVE & RESULTS

OBJECTIVE OVERVIEW	RESULT OVERVIEW
<p>The key objective for this campaign was to help sustain pre-COVID sales and operational costs while the bookstore was closed during the lockdown, with our KPI's being online book sales. We needed to be able to reach our current customer base and beyond to sustain the livelihood of the business.</p>	<p>Sales soared by 200%¹ and the site garnered over 30K visits within the first three days² with zero media investment. The WD was able to capitalize on the collective pent-up wanderlust and leverage this feeling to drive traffic to their new e-commerce website. Launching their new website allowed them to continue business with not only their current local fan base but open-up to an entirely new and national audience. They exceeded their expectations and goal to sustain 50% of their previous monthly sales by far, as more customers flocked to their site. The platform Bookshop allowed The WD to not only survive closure as an independent bookstore in the pandemic but thrive in what once seemed like an impossible and crippling online category.</p>

<p>Objective 1</p> <p>Purchase</p> <p>Sustain 50% of previous month sales to keep the doors open.</p> <p><i>The WD needed to maintain 50% of sales from their previous month, pre-pandemic to meet operational costs.</i></p>	<p>Result 1</p> <p>Sales exceeded expectations by quadrupling previous month sales.</p> <p><i>By moving sales online and allowing customers to travel when they missed it most, The WD flourished.</i></p>
<p>Objective 2</p> <p>Awareness</p> <p>Increase Awareness</p> <p><i>Before the pandemic, The WD relied on revenue from book sales, drinks, and food to sustain their business. When their business model changed, they needed to acquire more customers to offset operational costs.</i></p>	<p>Result 2</p> <p>The WD saw an overall increase on their social media accounts by 18%.³</p> <p><i>The campaign went viral and attracted the attention of several new fans. The WD increased their awareness by gaining new followers across all their social media platforms.</i></p>

Sources for the Objectives

1. How travel is being affected by the COVID-19 outbreak/GlobalWebIndex, 03/2020

THE INSIGHT & THE BIG IDEA

THE INSIGHT

When our life plans are cancelled, we’re left feeling restless, on-edge, and even helpless. This is when we turn to other avenues and outlets for an escape. The pandemic shut down whole cities, major businesses, and brought life to a screeching halt, including our travel plans. Without travel, we are left searching for other ways to explore and entertain our minds. It’s commonly said that the best way to discover faraway destinations without ever leaving home is through the pages of a good book. The WD understood how people were feeling under quarantine and used this as an opportunity to let them encounter new destinations through their imaginations and at the same time benefit with the launch of their new e-commerce website.

THE BIG IDEA

When we’re looking for an escape, books allow us to travel anywhere we want.

BRINGING THE IDEA TO LIFE

APPROACH

The WD desperately needed a way to stand out amongst the clutter of a pandemic-ridden news cycle. With thousands of small businesses closing, they took to Facebook and made the sad announcement that they too would be permanently closing their doors and shifting their business model to a travel agency.

Zero media dollars were spent to promote their new venture, but the surprise from their Facebook post sent fans and news outlets into a frenzy after learning that the bookstore was no more. Although shocking, this seduced those feeling trapped and desperate for an escape to visit the travel agency. The Book a Trip website was designed to look and function like a typical travel site. But a closer look revealed something unexpected. Instead of offering deals on flights, customers discovered that the destinations they wanted to “fly away” to were actually books they could now purchase online.

The WD designed and launched their new e-commerce website powered by bookshop.org not to replace the bookstore altogether, but to provide a travel-specific curatorial experience at a time when travel was impossible. Visitors were prompted to answer the question, “Where Do You Want to GO?” by simply typing a location into a search box. The results were books recommended for that specific place.

For example, type in “Kyoto, Japan” and discover *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion* by Yukio Mishima, or search “Los Angeles” and explore *Dreams from Bunker Hill* by John Fante. After picking a destination, all that was left to do was to select “book this trip” and the adventure was shipped directly to their door.

From romance, to fantasy, to thrillers, The WD sent readers around the globe.

INVESTMENT OVERVIEW

Paid Media Investment During Competition Year:

Under \$500 Thousand..

Paid Media Investment during Previous Year:

Not Applicable

Paid Media Investment Compared to Competition:

Less

Paid Media Investment Compared to Prior Year:

Less

Paid Media Investment Compared to Prior Year Elaboration:

The WD had zero media dollars and instead relied heavily on their own social media channels of Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to post about their closure and business model pivot. Both their loyal fans and local news outlets helped spread the word and amplify their message.

Asset Production & Other Non-Media Investments:

--- - Under \$500 Thousand

Production & Non-Media Other Expenditures:

To bring Book a Trip to life, all video and website production was pro-bono. Campaign images and videos were also royalty-free. The WD was able to do a lot with very little to launch their new website with the help and support from their community.

Owned Media:

The WD utilized their own social media channels including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to first, create shock surrounding their business model "change" and then to keep directing people to gobookatrip.com.

Sponsorships and Media Partnerships:

Not Applicable

Elaboration On Sponsorships and Media Partnerships:

Not Applicable

CREDITS

Advertiser 1:

The Wild Detectives

Lead Agency 1:

Dieste, Inc.

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Contributing Company 1:

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Contributing Company 2:

Pixel Power

Contributing Company 3:

Breed Music

Contributing Company 4:

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