

Design Project: mVite

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Introduction

The concept: mVite is a Web-based viral marketing campaign to recruit small businesses to the Mueller neighborhood.

Core mVite functionality (user stories)

- Individuals identify local businesses they would like to see at Mueller.
- They compose personalized "Wish You Were Here" messages which the mVite system delivers to the businesses.
- Invited businesses are listed and ranked by the number of invitations they have received.

Rationale

The Mueller project is a 711-acre mixed-use infill development in central Austin on the site of the city's former municipal airport. The result of over 20 years of planning, the resulting Mueller neighborhood is to be an ambitious experiment in New Urbanist design, attempting to balance goals of green construction, affordability, high density, open space, community, diversity, Austin flavor, an economic boost to the city and profits for the city's partners (Austin Chronicle, Sep. 29, 2006).

Currently a section of regional (i.e., highway-oriented) commercial development has been completed and an initial phase of single-family residential construction has begun. The next key step in the project is the development of a "Town Center" to consist of mixed-use multifamily housing and commercial property intended to serve Mueller residents, particularly through pedestrian traffic in keeping with the New Urbanist goal of reducing auto traffic in Austin. This phase of the project faces a cold-start problem: how can small businesses be convinced to move to Mueller before residents are living there in large numbers? And how can potential residents become convinced of the desirability of dense, walkable neighborhoods before businesses have committed to open up in the Town Center? Because of these initial uncertainties, the Mueller master developer, Catellus, has reported difficulty in recruiting certain anchor tenants, in particular a small neighborhood grocery store.

One possible solution is to enlist the aid of the community in identifying and recruiting beloved local businesses to Mueller. Thousands of Austinites have registered with Catellus as interested potential homebuyers. If they had a way to express their interest to the local businesses they patronize, some of those businesses might recognize the value of locating at Mueller. And once a few high-profile local businesses signed on -- particularly iconic businesses of the kind most likely to receive many requests, e.g., Amy's Ice Cream, Mangia Pizza, or Fresh Plus Grocery -- the credibility of Mueller's pedestrian-friendly retail would be secured both for other businesses and for potential homebuyers and renters.

Hence mVite: a viral marketing program in which prospective Mueller residents invite their favorite local businesses to join the party.

Context and assumptions

As described in this document, mVite is assumed to exist in the context of a larger Mueller discussion site, MuellerFever.com. mVite relies on the infrastructure of the larger site for global navigation, registration, login, RSS feeds and other common features.

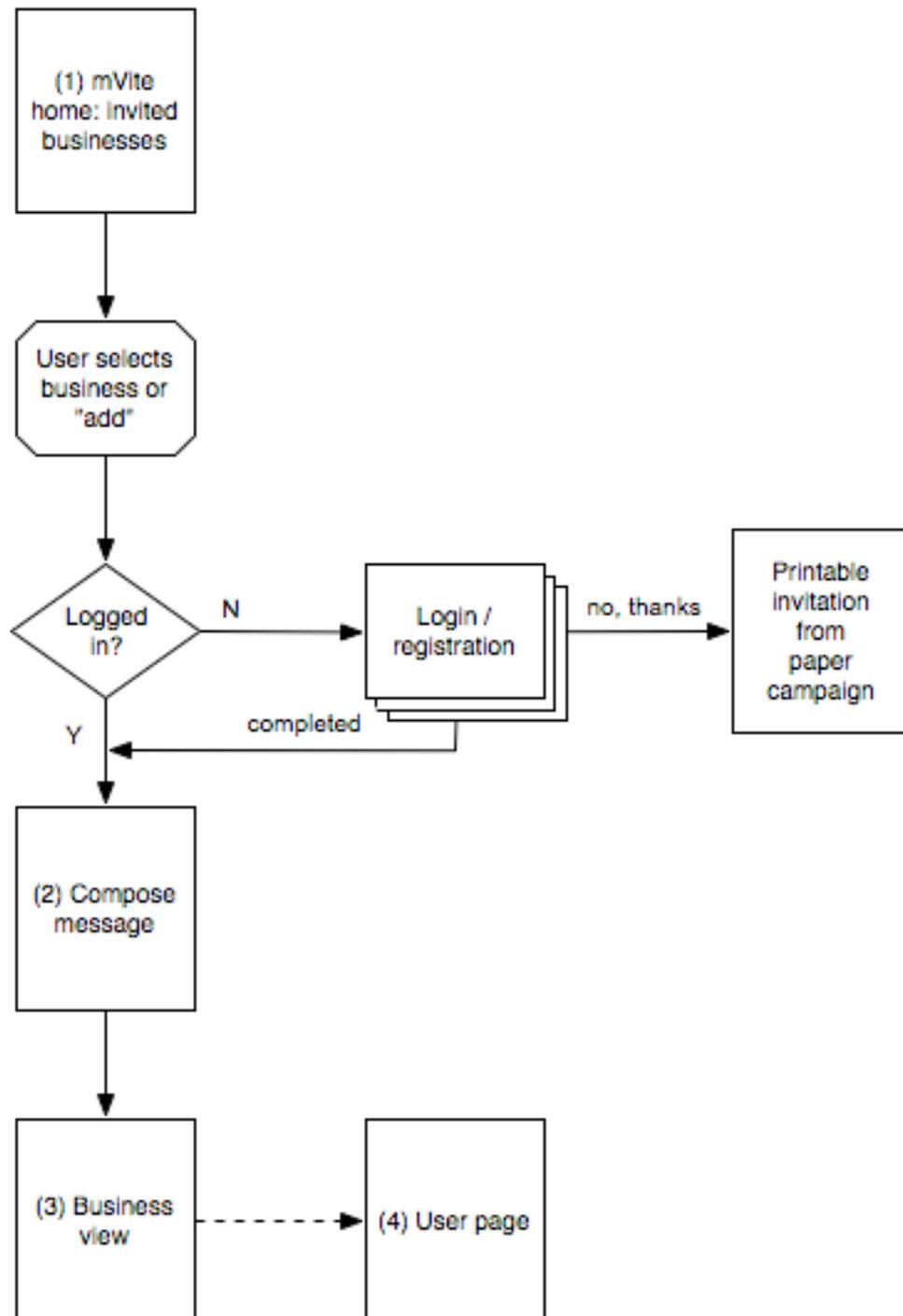
The mVite features described here may also be part of a larger marketing campaign with an offline, paper-based component. In particular it is easy to imagine the "Wish You Were Here" message appearing on postcards or in newspaper ads to be clipped and mailed, but the full campaign is beyond the scope of this document.

E-mail fulfillment

The e-mail must follow best practices for bulk e-mail, including but not limited to:

- Dual plaintext / HTML view.
- CC to sender (i.e., inviting user), BCC to mVite administrator.
- Duplicate detection.
- Stoplist for administrator intervention.
- Opt out link and contact info for mVite administrator.

Basic user workflow



Screen 1: mVite home: invited businesses

mVite branding		Invite your favorite local businesses to Mueller
Global navigation - mVite tab highlighted		
Invitations		Don't see it here? Add a business
Top 10 - latest - ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ		
Shopping 1. Lorem Ipsum nnn invitations Invite! 2. Lorem Ipsum nnn invitations Invite 3. Lorem Ipsum nnn invitations Invite 4. Lorem Ipsum nnn invitations Invite 5. Lorem Ipsum nnn invitations Invite AM	Dining 1. Lorem Ipsum nnn invitations Invite! 2. Lorem Ipsum nnn invitations Invite 3. Lorem Ipsum nnn invitations Invite 4. Lorem Ipsum nnn invitations Invite 5. Lorem Ipsum nnn invitations Invite AM	Services 1. Lorem Ipsum nnn invitations Invite! 2. Lorem Ipsum nnn invitations Invite 3. Lorem Ipsum nnn invitations Invite 4. Lorem Ipsum nnn invitations Invite 5. Lorem Ipsum nnn invitations Invite AM

- "Top 10 - latest - A...Z" selects among display modes. Top 10 is default. Switching among them preferably takes place without a page reload (i.e., by ajax magic). Rank numbers appear only for top 10. Hopefully with 26 buckets we can avoid pagination.
- Business names link to the business view (screen 3).
- "Invite" link and "Add a business" link both go to message composition (screen 2), by way of a login/registration interaction if necessary.

Screen 2: Message composition

mVite branding Invite your favorite local businesses to Mueller

Global navigation - mVite tab highlighted

Send an invitation

Business name

E-mail address

Website URL optional

Type Shopping Dining Services

Subject: USER NAME says, wish you were here at Mueller!
From: USER NAME <user e-mail address>

Greetings from a loyal customer. I am moving to Mueller and wish you'd come to Mueller, too!
(user-editable portion of message)

Mueller is the lorem ipsum in the heart of Austin.

To inquire about commercial opportunities at Mueller, contact: John Doe, 512-555-5555, johndoe@cat3llus.com

To see all your invitations, go to: <http://mf.com/biz/nnnnnn>

mVite and Mueller Fever are legal boilerplate blah blah.
For questions about mVite or to stop receiving these messages contact: blahblah@mf.com

Note: Your name and e-mail address will appear in the message!

- Fields are pre-filled with information known about target business, if any. Previously unknown companies are added to master list upon Send.
- System requires business name, address and type, prohibits repeats.
- It would be nice to have additional smart ajaxy error and duplicate detection: e-mail addresses could serve as unique keys and the system could urge but not force consistent spelling.
- Send goes on to business screen, Cancel goes back to mVite home.

Screen 3: business view

mVite branding Invite your favorite local businesses to Mueller

Global navigation - mVite tab highlighted

Lorem Ipsum, Inc.

mgmt@l0r3mipsum.com
<http://l0r3mipsum.com>
2 invitations
rank: 252 out of 341

Invite!

[Add a comment](#)

 **Invitation 4/1/2007 by J. Doe**
Greetings from a loyal customer. I am moving to Mueller and wish you'd [\(more\)](#)

 **Comment 3/29/2007 by J. Roe**
Doe anyone know how Lorem Ipsum makes their products so marvelously tasty? I've looked for similar products elsewhere without success. The main thing to keep in mind is lorem ipsum blah blah.

 **Invitation 3/25/2007 by J. Schmoe**
Greetings from a loyal customer. I am moving to Mueller and wish you'd [\(more\)](#)

Add a comment

Submit

- Invitations and comments are in reverse chronological order.
- Invitation text is truncated unless user clicks "more" (because invitations tend to be repetitive).
- "Invite!" button disappears if user has already invited this company.
- "Add a comment" is internal link to comment form at bottom of page.
- "Next - Prev" appears only if there are enough items to require pagination.