

GRASSROOTSOCCER



Case Study

Introduction

Grassroot Soccer (GRS) is an international public health NGO headquartered in Cape Town, South Africa that uses the power of soccer to educate, inspire, and mobilize communities to stop the spread of HIV.



Challenge

GRS needed a way to send SMSes to its participants—secondary school students in South African townships— in a quick, easy, reliable manner. Grassroot Soccer uses a customized Salesforce.com database to house its program and impact data, including contact information of its participants, and they needed to find an application to send SMSes that could integrate with this existing platform. (Email was not a very effective option because web is not easily accessible to everybody, everytime.)

Solution

Grassroot Soccer uses SMS Magic to send SMSes to participants of its HIV-prevention program in South Africa. Because SMS Magic integrated seamlessly with GRS' existing platform, they can easily ensure that the correct SMSes get sent to the correct participants at the right time, and can even send different SMSes to boys and girls. Participants of the GRS Generation Skillz Intervention will receive biweekly SMSes for an entire year.

The initial results have been very encouraging, as the feedback from the participants has been overwhelmingly positive. SMSes are a popular medium among youth, and receiving HIV-related information directly to their cell phone may make a difference in graduates' sustained HIV-related knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. We hope they will continue the conversation even after they have graduated from the GRS program, sharing their SMSes and what they learn with their friends and family.

With research partners WRHI and LSHTM, GRS is running a three-year Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) to evaluate the effectiveness of its Generation Skillz Intervention on grade 9 participants' HIV-related knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. Half of the study's participants will receive SMSes via SMS Magic, to assess the impact of the SMSes on health outcomes.

“ We have been using the system for about a week now and we are ecstatic about the results. SMS Magic is assisting us to engage parties that were previously difficult to reach, and it is doing so in an affordable manner ”

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For more information, visit: www.screen-magic.com

Business Enquiries:

sales@screen-magic.com

USA/Canada: 1-888-568-1315 (Toll Free)

AUS: 1-800-823-175 (Toll Free)

Partnership Enquiries:

partners@screen-magic.com

Offices:

EMEA/APAC Headquarters

Screen-Magic Mobile Media Pvt. Ltd.,
3rd Floor, Symphony A, Range Hills Corner,
Bhosle Nagar, Shivaji Nagar, Pune - 411020.

Global/USA Headquarters

Screen-Magic Mobile Media Inc.,
2831 St. Rose Parkway,
Suite 200, Henderson, NV 89052.