The Color Brand

The current Color product is an iPhone application that creates instantaneous social networks based on proximity and allows for photo sharing.

Color Internal Identity (DJ Patil, Chief Product Officer)

Color uses technology to enable richer experiences between people anytime, anywhere. An app that leverages technology for lowering the bar of trust for meeting new people.

The Gap

Internal: Trust, Technology, Enriching Experience vs. **External**: Innovative, confusing, why, creepy

Background and Process

Launched on March24 with $41 million dollar seed investment from Sequoia Capital, Bain Capital, and Silicon Valley Bank. The product launched on the same day as the funding announcement caused waves in Silicon Valley given the investment size and nascent stage of the business.

Given Stanford's reputation as an early adopter of technology we focused on Stanford students to learn about their perceptions and usage of Color. In addition, we spoke with DJ Patil the Chief Product Officer at Color, as the internal benchmark for identifying gaps in this early stage yet highly visible company.

Patterns, Surprises & Gaps

The **internal view** of the company believes color can be used to make simple experiences like barbeques, to grand ones like movie premieres deeper experiences. They also believe there is an opportunity for getting the truth to be exposed as DJ mentioned everyone in a protest using color to build the real story of events (very interesting given one of our interviews).

The external view of the company is not as rosy, people do not understand the underpinning and purpose of the application. Complicated by a sky-high expectation that came with the 41M funding. **Users are lost on what Color is and does**.

Views: External Survey

Relatively High   Awareness   (30/45)
Relatively Low   Knowledge   (15/45)
Very Little   Experience   (10/45)

We surveyed 45 people, mostly within Stanford community and were generally tech savvy. Awareness among the valley is high (but not outside), however awareness was mainly driven by the funding news and hence only the name was known. There remains very low level of actual knowledge and understanding of the product and fewer even had tried it.

Surveyed User views

Key words:
Innovative, Confusing, Why, Creepy.

For those that had the chance to experience the product, mostly felt the look and feel is innovative. However, there was confusion with both the user interface and, more importantly, the purpose and usage of the product. Further, a large amount users has serious concern on privacy issues. The sense of "creepiness" lingers with over 50% of the surveyed users.
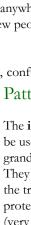
Recommendations

1. Color Positioning – Clearing lacking now (see page 3)
2. Better Explanation on purpose of Color
3. Revamp website
4. User case demonstration
5. Tackle Creepness and unease – focus on events that people have common goal and trust.
6. Patience – Trust require time to develop

Anybody Home?

The Ideal Virtuous Cycle

Open app: excited

Hype with friends, curiosity

See other people: curiously excited

Post a photo: nice   Receive comment: thrilled

News- $40M Funding

Don't see other people: useless

This doesn't really work…

Don't know what to do: less interested

Attractive interface

A little creepy

Unintuitive

How useful Is this?

Color experience challenge:
You need multiple users simultaneously using the app for it to make sense and create value.

Network effect is key and it is difficult to achieve through everyday life without purpose. Event, life blog and journaling reminds some specific usage. To achieve the Virtuous interactive cycle.

2 Star rating from 1300 Users

iTunes

Customer Ratings

▼ Average rating for the current version: ★★★☆☆ 189 Ratings

★★★★★ ▆ 48
★★★★ ▆ 14
★★★ ▆ 7
★★ ▆ 14
★ ▆ 106

► Average rating for all versions: ★★☆☆☆ 1310 Ratings

The Central Issues

Color is receiving poor ratings in the app store because of key failures in user experience:

1. If a user doesn't see other people (and thus content), the app will seem useless
2. If users do see other people, they may not have a use case in mind and not see "the point" of the app
3. The user interface is for many unintuitive and hard to navigate

Recommendations

Ensure every user can interact with something, and make the UI more intuitive. Focus on event opportunities for experimentation.

How: Build in a 100% interaction rate by expanding the area where people can find others, or coming up with an alternative interactions such as initially uploading photos from other services. It would also help to facilitate the discovery of use cases for the app. This could be done by asking questions/using Facebook information to understand the right use case for the user. Is it a concert attendance or a family barbeque?

The Voice of Color

Many Color users find the application to be overhyped and gimmicky. But the brand wants to be a powerful and intuitive interaction tool that is friends with everyone.

Just like the overly extroverted friend, Color can seem a bit creepy at times. This can be counteracted by emphasizing its reliable and trustworthy qualities. The application is smart, transparent and trustworthy.

Looks

Color is simple and beautiful. The application is a frame or enabler, the content and star is your own photo collection. This is reflected in the mainly black and white interface (except for the Color wheel logo), the colors and life being provided by pictures.

Color is minimalistic, and puts forth a very clean presentation. It also avoids too much text or anything that could interfere with the focus on user-generated content.

Personality

Color's goal is to empower richer interactions between people. It is simple, intuitive, and visually appealing. It is the friend that understands you just by looking at your expression. Noticing you have been a wallflower at the high-school dance, Color is that friend who swoops you up and makes sure you have been introduced to everyone else at the party.

Color aims to be James Bond – sophisticated and always in the right place at the right time.

Tone

Color uses conversational, friendly tone, though usually avoids slang. It speaks with a smile and with confidence, evoking images of robustness and attempting to be a trustworthy ally.

It is also efficient with words, reminding that the true protagonists in the experience are the users. Instructions are not provided – instead users are encouraged to experience Color as they deem fit.

Color Hour at Stanford

Tuesday May 24, from noon to 1pm

For one hour, members of the Stanford Community were invited to use Color together.

Single Focused Goal

Get Stanford Community members to:

1. Participate in nearby Color groups
2. Snap pictures and witness the full Color experience

The Metrics

Number of Participants
Number of Photos

Why?

When we researched the user experience, it was clear that satisfaction dropped users were by themselves. Since we could not change the product, we decided to try and get users to experience the product at its **BEST**.

Color is most powerful when used by multiple people in a concentrated area. The richest experience is when a high volume of different images and videos propagate, allowing for multiple objects of interaction.

The Royal Wedding

http://www.color.com/royalwedding

Color partnered with the Telegraph to get users to share their perspective of the royal wedding- real time!
Over the course of the day 512 photos were taken. We were hoping for a respectable showing given our event was slightly less notable than the Royal Wedding.

Getting the Word Out

We launched this via **Facebook**, **Twitter**, and targeted **emails**. We specifically used the Facebook Events Function as the central point of the campaign.
We also used flyers with a QR codes for downloading the application to make it easier to participate.
Finally, Color provided us with a unique URL where they would stream all of the photos taken at Stanford all in one place.

Color Hour at Stanford
Tuesday at noon

See through walls

1. Download Color from the App Store or Android Market.
2. From noon-1pm, snap photos with everyone around you.
3. Check out everyone's shots real time. See through walls.

www.bit.ly/DownloadColor

The Message

Color allows individuals to see through walls.

During our brand audit, users thought Color had exciting technology and we wanted to highlight it's power by illuminating the ability to get multiple perspectives from Color's photo stream.

We selected an image of x-ray vision goggles with the Color logo to create intrigue and alignment with the people we were inviting to the event.

A Successful Hour!

The Results:
Number of Participants: 57
Number of Photos: 270

How did it Happen?
There were over 1,000 people invited via Facebook.

We created a QR code that linked to the Color download page, and distributed it on numerous informational flyers around campus.

We emailed each of the Brown-Bag-Lunch speakers to invite attendees.

Battling the Elements
There were a number of things that occurred on Tuesday that slowed down adoption:
1. The GSB email server was down for hours before the campaign
2. There was a View From the Top Event where a significant number of GSB students attended
3. Color does not work on the Droid

Medium and Strategy
During the process we learned to align our campaign with the constraints of the product. Color works best in a scenario where a large amount of people using the app are concentrated in a given area. Trying to drive random people to try the application through a general campaign seemed to be a recipe for disaster, as they would be spread too thin for the application to be valuable. This led us to choose a constrained community and time.

What we Learned
There were a few core learnings:
1. Color needs to go cross platform
2. Color needs to cater to earlier iphone OS
3. Facebook events is a powerful tool, but we may want couple it with an outlook calendar invitation
4. We should have been more explicit in our instructions. Some people didn't realize it was a virtual event, but we recovered by adding comments on the Facebook group.

Recommendations for Color
Make your application cross platform. In this era of ubiquity and mobile computing, it won't go viral if the person sitting next to you can't participate.

The interactivity layer around the photo needs to be enhanced. Right now there is a nearly perfect substitute in Facebook photos, SMSing a photo to a friend.

Recognize there is competition. Cooliris's Liveshare has been in work for 2 years and has launched in the market with better features including linkage and upload to any social network.