

Introduction

Over the past year my co-founder and I worked very hard on a SaaS startup.

The concept of lean startups revolutionized the way entrepreneurs start companies by mitigating their risk. This concept also enables entrepreneurs to kick off several projects simultaneously.

Many of the companies we love happened to have side projects during their early days (check <u>NeedWant</u> or <u>AppSumo</u> ones if you haven't).

Staying true to one of our core value of "act first, then observe" we thought:



Why not start a new business with a totally different product, timeline, and budget?

But we didn't want to sink all our time and resources into one side project. We gave ourselves a clear deadline: 45 days leading up to Christmas to come up with an idea, craft the business and launch it.

Today, I'm happy to share the results with you. I hope you find some of the details I've included in this case study to be valuable to your business, or to inspire you to start one.

Enjoy & good luck!

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CHAPTER ONE

STARTING A BUSINESS

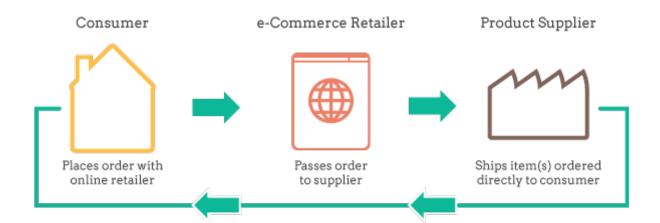
My co-founder and I went through ideas in which we had past experience. He does web freelance for online businesses for a living-some are very successful. We decided that building our own online business was the way to go.

Figuring out the kind of business

We knew we wanted to sell something that was relatively hands off, easy to get up and running, and could be an exciting business that would be fun to work with.

We also wanted it to be something that required little to no upfront cost. We didn't want to invest more than a few hundred Euros before turning a profit. We wanted to spend more money on marketing and less on inventory. The goal was to mitigate risk, so that if this turned out to be a complete failure, we wouldn't lose more than a few hundred Euros.

That's how we came up with the idea of a drop-shipping business. We had learned the concept in class, and it seemed as a good way to kickstart a business without inventory.



Drop shipping is a retail fulfillment method where a store doesn't keep the products it sells in its inventory. Instead, when a store sells a product, it purchases the item from a third party and has it shipped directly to the customer. As a result, the merchant never sees or handles the product.

Drop shipping was perfect for us. No stocks and very little upfront cost.

Figuring out what to sell

It would be hard for us to achieve high growth and brand identity with a small financial and time investment. Building a business around a brand story wasn't for us.

We started by looking at what was already selling fast, what people were truly passionate about, and something we could be interested in. It didn't have to be anything too compelling, we just needed a proven model that was approachable. We started doing some market research.

Market research & Finding a passionate community

Something truly important when you start a drop-shipping business is focusing on a niche.

The reason behind this is that there is a lot of noise on the Internet and it's really hard to be heard.

- Niche marketing is less competitive.
- Niche marketing is more affordable.
- A niche audience is easier to target.

We approached our market research by answering this simple question: What is the smallest niche we can find with a large, growing, passionate community? We didn't have time to spend months creating content. We wanted to sell fast.



We also knew we needed to be methodical in order not to spend days finding our niche.

So, every time we came up with a product idea, we went through a 5 step process:

Our 5 steps validation method

1. Can we "niche down"?

"Niche down" means being more specific in a product category. For instance, you can sell bikes or you can decide to niche down and sell fixie bikes, or you can niche down again and sell spare parts for fixie bikes. Every time we could "niche down" we would do it, because it would help us be as focused as possible.

2. Is the online trend increasing?

For every product we had in mind we used Google trend to see if the trend was increasing. If you are a starting business and want to sell something, it is way better if the market already exists and is currently expanding.

3. Is there enough research volume on Google Planner?

Before we even started our business we knew we would focus our customer acquisition on paid advertising. It's a fast and proven solution. To easily reach customers online with AdWords, you should focus on a market with at least 10k research / month on your niche.

Google Planner will provide this data.

4. Is the product retail price between 300 and 1000?

Drop shipping means making money by retaining a percentage of the sell price. Selling expensive products mean less work, less hassle, less customer service and less sales necessary. On the other end, if the product is too expensive (in general above €1,000) customers expect a high level of customer service. We wanted to avoid that, and we looked for a product that was priced between €300 and €1,000.

5. How many brands are operating in the niche and are they really famous?

When you start a drop shipping business and sourcing existing products on the market you need to take a look at the competition. If the market is already full of famous brands, then it you might be fighting a losing battle.

You'll have a hard time:

- Accessing product distribution—how hard do you think it is to be an official Apple reseller?
- Looking legitimate—how hard do you think it is to compete with Apple stores and its services?

In a nutshell: a product category where big brands don't dominate yet.

We first came up with the idea of selling Fixie bikes, because we love them.



We niched down to fixie bike spare parts, which had an insane online community! The Fixie subreddit was a good indicator that fixie bikes have a strong community.

But the Google Trend for Fixie bikes (and spare parts) wasn't huge. See below for the overtime decreasing curve.



Plus, the search volume provided by Google Planner was low. We decided that we should go for another market.



CHAPTER TWO

THE GOOD IDEA:
SELL HOVERBOARDS

That's when we came up with the idea of self-balancing scooters, a product that was buzzing all over the Internet.

We checked if the product validates our 5 criteria checklist:



Self-balancing scooter criteria verification

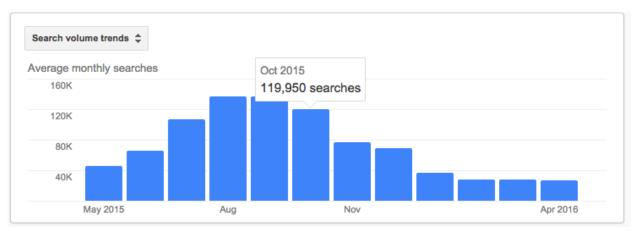
1. Google trend criteria: Great



2. Smallest niche criteria: Yes

A smaller niche would be self-balancing scooter accessories, but it did not exist at the time.

3. Google Planner criteria: Good



Keyword: self-balancing scooter

4. Price criteria: Checked

Retail price for a self-balancing scooter ranged from €400 to €1,500. We knew competition effect would lower the retail price, but it would fit the price range we wanted. (€300—€1,000).

5. Brand criteria: Good

At the time 2 brands were pretty famous in the US: PhunkeeDuck and IO Hawk.

None were in Europe.

Bingo! All 5 criteria matched. Self-balancing scooter looked as the perfect drop shipping market for the Christmas period.

Afterthought

Now that I look back, I recommend considering 2 additional criteria.

6. Recommended fixed price

Is there a recommended fixed-price?

The self-balancing scooter market was a very hot market when we launched and the retail price was not fixed as no brands really existed. No recommended fixed price is pretty troublesome when you start a drop shipping business because:

- As a drop shipper you don't want to start a price war which you are going to loose against big retailers.
- A volatile price means volatile revenue. If you can't forecast revenue it's going to be hard to convince some partners to work with you (such as your Bank), even in the short run.

So, I recommend picking a product with not-too-powerful existing brand (not in monopoly / duopoly).

7. Product risk

To me, profit comes with risk (I used to work in Finance). I'm down with taking risk, but along the rise of self-balancing scooters came bad buzz.

The product earned a bad reputation because of poor quality scooters being sold, including one that caused an American house to burn down. This would have been hard to predict. That's why I'd recommend you go for a low technology product to decrease the risk.



CHAPTER THREE

FINDING A TARGET MARKET

Find your audience

We had to understand and choose a target in our market.

We researched Instagram (using hashtags such as #hoverboard and #selfbalancingscooter) and Twitter using the now closed Topsy.



Getting a visual summary can tell you at first sight what kind of people are using your product and sharing their love for it.

This is important because we were looking for a loving & sharing community.

Even though the customers seemed to be grownup adults, the market for self-balancing scooters was indeed people.

Mono-wheel scooters that existed for years were more of a mobility device, but self-balancing scooters weren't. See for yourself.



Asking around is an effective way to get actionable feedback. So we asked young people from in our inner circle if they knew anyone using this product in their school, and they did.

After a few interviews we identified 2 types of users:

- Rich kids: These kids buy self-balancing scooters as a social proof. We named them "early adopters", as we knew the price of these scooters would drop. Soon, other kids would get their own boards.
- Others: This segment included a wide audience, from urban skateboarders experiencing new sensations to casual kids. That was the audience we wanted to target because it was meant to grow.

So, how do you target a wide kid audience?

Target your audience

We had many competitors and we knew we had to find some unique and strong symbols to appeal to very young people. That's when we came up with the idea of borrowing skateboarding codes.



Skateboarding is cool. It carries awesome values like persistence and recklessness. So could self-balancing scooters.

We knew skateboarders wouldn't be our main target. Most are purists who want nothing more than a simple piece of wood. Still, it would be great to base our marketing on Skateboarding values. Even though our targeted audience wasn't made of skateboarders, they could be inspired by them.

Find out what's already selling

To make sure to be on track, we checked the internet to see what was already selling. Every company was doing the same thing, giving a fancy, high-end aspect to self-balancing scooters.

Like this.



If these were showing up in Google, it meant there was a community around hoverboards. We decided to keep one aspect of this brading: the urban aspect.

The rest of our marketing would focus on skateboarding values, not fanciness.

We knew we were headed in the right direction and started to get even more excited about this.

A few things I noticed immediately about self-balancing scooters:

- They're basic, only a few models and a few colors exist.
- They are a lifestyle product.
- Main markets in Europe were England and Ireland.

We decided to target European countries, as costs for every European countries were identical.

With that in mind, the next step was figuring out how exactly to source and brand the boards.

Afterthought

How many countries should you go for?

Focusing on all European countries is pretty hard when you are a small business because:

- It's hard to ensure delivery time & costs
- It's hard to provide a good service in every language
- It takes time (and money) to translate the website into several languages

If we were to start a new drop shipping business we would focus straight away on one country, probably France, which is where we're from.



CHAPTER FOUR

COMING UP WITH A BUSINESS NAME

I'm bad at coming up with names.

In our case, a name wasn't that important. We wanted to build a good drop shipping business, fast.

You don't expect people to say, "I'm going to buy the latest [Brand] self-balancing scooter"! They'll only buy one if the website feels safe, quality is good, and the price is fair.

It would be hard for us to create excitement around a selfbalancing scooter brand.

Here are things to at when coming up with a name:

- Easy to remember
- Available .com domain (use Bust a Name)
- Available social accounts (namecheckr does it for you)

Most skateboarding brand names are 2 syllables long, which make them striking. And skateboard is rough: people fall and hurt themselves.



I wanted our name to have a similar feeling and be a reference to the skateboarding culture... I used the Shopify business name generator while checking if the .com domain was available.

I typed words like ride, skate, wave, slide, board, kick, you get the idea. "Kick" was a good word, it made us think about skateboarding: To kick off your skateboard means to jump.

The result looked like this:

We found 3,331 available domains containing Kick

Click the business name to open your store

Think Kick .com is available	$\overline{\Rightarrow}$	Kick Corp .com is available	\rightarrow	Simply Kick .com is available	\rightarrow
Kick America .com is available	\rightarrow	Kick Expert .com is available	\rightarrow	Nano Kick .com is available	\rightarrow
Tele Kick .com is available	\rightarrow	Kick Networks .com is available	\rightarrow	Pin Kick .com is available	\Rightarrow
Apple Kick .com is available	\rightarrow	Kick Wizard .com is available	\Rightarrow	Better Kick .com is available	\Rightarrow
Kick Doc .com is available	\Rightarrow	HD Kick .com is available	\Rightarrow	Omni Kick .com is available	\rightarrow

I put together a list of names I liked, shared it with my cofounder, and we agreed on a name: UNKICK. It sounded right.

We wanted to launch fast. We would use an online-business platform to facilitate our work although these can be expensive(they take a fee from your sales).

My co-founder had previous experience with Prestashop-- a cheap solution--, but it required a lot of coding and our priority was to move fast. We went with Shopify instead.

Lesson: Know what your priority is and move fast towards it.

We signed up for a 14 days freetrial bought unkick.com for \$13.00 and got down to business.

UNKICK was born.



Note: We're not related to Shopify in any way, but the service made our life so easy that it felt right to mention them.



CHAPTER FIVE

DESIGNING A LOGO AND AN E-SHOP

We designed a logo in 1 hour. This phase is exciting, but don't spend too much time on it.

We have a decent understanding of design, but we are by no means Photoshop or Illustrator wizards. We wanted the business to be built quickly and give a feeling of quality to our customers.

The logo

We opened Photoshop and started typing Unkick with different fonts.

The "Freestyle Script" font was perfect, it an urban lifestyle feel to it, with a loose and bubbly aspect.



It was time to set up the online store.

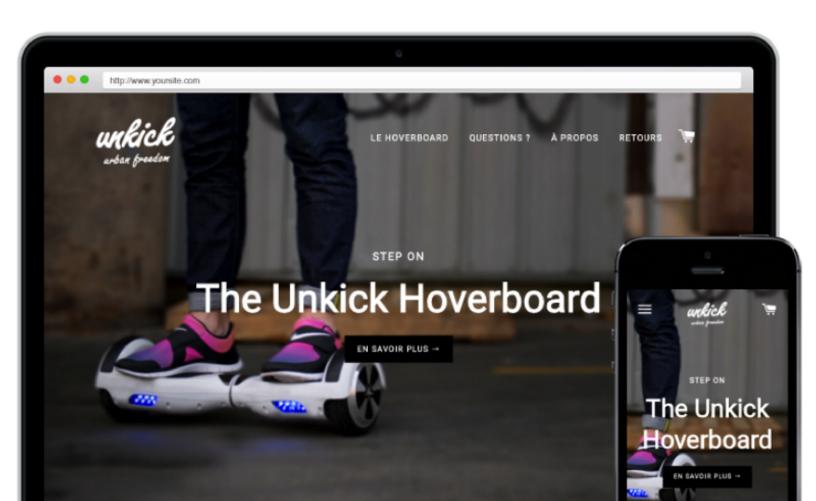
Setting up the online store

Shopify works with themes. Choose one that enhances product you want to sell, then just click "install."

We chose a free theme for 2 reasons:

- We wanted to minimize our costs
- The theme would only be a basis that we would complete with hard code

We chose the Brooklyn theme and 2 hours later the home page was live.



This wasn't a perfect product, but it was a perfect MVP.

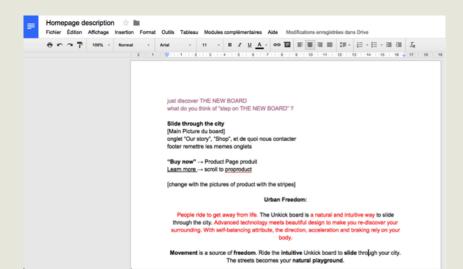
Strategic decisions we made about the store's design:

- No navigation on the homepage, forcing visitors to click the « know more » CTA linking to our product page
- A short and inspirational USP ("Step on the Unkick Hoverboard")
- We made sure the hoverboard appeared on the homepage
- We kept it as simple as possible by only having 4 pages:
 Product, Contact, Return and About pages

By limiting the scroll down navigation, the only thing a visitor could do was clicking on our Call to Action —which was our intention. Before filling up the store we had to know which products to source.

How we easily managed the project

Collaboration has to be super simple, we needed to go fast. Having too many folders would end up wasting our time-every aspect of the website should fit into one shared document. The only document used during this project:





CHAPTER SIX

SOURCING THE PRODUCT

Sourcing self-balancing scooters has been the most painful part of the process--mainly because we were looking for drop shippers inside Europe.

Finding suppliers inside Europe was our biggest priority to:

- Ensure a short delivery time for our customers.
- Ensure the boards wouldn't be blocked at customs.
- Get quality Hoverboards with a European Certification (CE).

Advice on delivery time from outside Europe

Manufacturers in China many promise delivery in less than a week. This is unlikely--European customs have the right to check (and delay) anything that crosses the border. If your focus is on delivering in less than a week, having a drop-shipping supplier outside Europe (e.g. in China) will kill your business before it even starts.

We hadn't expected how difficult it would be to access hoverboards drop-shippers. It didn't look like a classic drop shipping scheme.

How to (usually) find drop shippers

Just go on a competitor's website and check what brands they are selling.

Then simply message these brands asking for their wholesaler list.

Contact these wholesalers and ask if they can drop-ship for you.

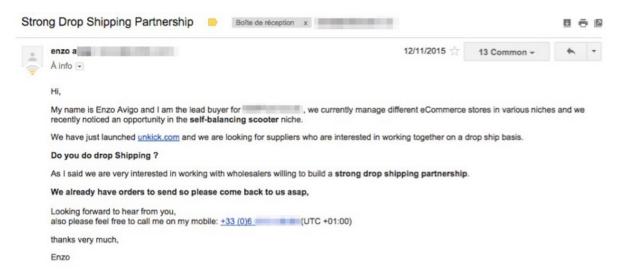
The problem with hoverboards was that no brands existed on the market.

How to find drop shippers when you can't use the normal technique

Start with manufacturers

First, I sent more than a hundred emails to manufacturers found on Alibaba, asking for their drop-shipping partners inside Europe.

This is the canned email I sent.



All of them told me they could deliver from China, but I declined again. It was too risky for us.

I usually replied this:



None of them had warehouses in Europe. Having a warehouse in Europe is expensive. The product was so hot that manufacturers found big buyers anywhere.

The rest of their merchandise was sold directly to consumers (through websites like Amazon)-- making a bigger margin.

Find manufacturers' client

The next step was to ask manufacturers for their client list inside Europe to see if they could do drop-ship their existing inventory for us.

Most wouldn't give their client's names, but some did. I contacted these professional clients, and some became our first drop-shippers inside Europe.

Drop shipping specialty platforms

At the same time, I checked professional websites such as:

- Gearbest
- DH Gate
- eBay

I emailed these professional sellers, asking if they had a warehouse inside Europe, and if they would like to drop-ship for us.

After 2 weeks, we had 4 suppliers.

Ourah,

Which hoverboards did we get access to? All of them! There are 3 models (6,5 / 8 / 10 inch wheel)



We decided to sell the 6.5 inch hoverboard in several colors. We wanted to test the market, and crafting a beautiful product page was already a lot of work.

Getting high quality product pictures

Our suppliers sent us high-quality pictures of the hoverboards. We improved them with Photoshop and uploaded them to the store.

Having high quality pictures is crucial with online businesses-make your own if you can't find any good ones online.



CHAPTER SEVEN

DETERMINING A
PRICING STRATEGY

We had little experience with pricing. We read a couple of psychological pricing tactics, but that didn't turn us into experts.

We decided to use the left digit effect--Apple does it for instance.





Instead of charging €200, charging €199 for the product makes the price appear in the "€100" range rather than the "€200" range.

Consumers perceive the price lower than it actually is -- We think of it as a bargain. Studies show that consumers prefer to pay less for products and associate prices ending with a nine with discounts.

We started thinking cost-based price

We needed a consistent profit margin of about 25% per Hoverboard.

Our first Hoverboard cost €300 -- we had to charge at least €400 (€399 with the left digit effect).

Finally agreed on value-based price

We went with a premium pricing strategy. Our price would be €499

(including shipping) and reflect the premium quality of the products we had sourced.

Hoverboards ranged in price from €300 to €1,600 on the market, depending on the brand-- not really on the quality.

Strategic pricing

Choosing a price in the middle seemed like good strategy. Our positioning was to offer the best quality boards and services at a fair price -- not at the lowest one.

We based our communication on this strategy -- including our About Us page.





CHAPTER EIGHT

THE ABOUT US PAGE

Unkick.com is something we always wished for someone looking for a self-balanced board.

A place where you can check out the best quality collection of self-balanced boards for a great price shipped right to your door.

[....]

On the one hand so-called "premium" companies—such as X, Y- would charge us massive price. We soon realized it was just about supporting these brands marketing cost at that their prices had nothing to do with the quality of their boards.

On the other hand poor quality resellers—would try to cut cost by all mean -and sell directly on Amazon or eBay. The quality of these boards and wheels would be terrible, the PC-board and the battery would crash after a few days, their boards were cheap but didn't even worth it.

That's why we started Unkick Hoverboard. To bring seamless ride and a smooth experience to anyone at the right price.

Please enjoys your visit on unkick.com!

It was an aggressive strategy. Our product was as good as our competitors', but instead of selling it €800, we made it €499.

A few days after we launched, competitor Y called u. He was madand asked us to remove his name from our website. We did it to avoid a dispute, but this day turned out to be a huge victory for us.

Remember, the day Oracle responded to Salesforce's provocative ad became Salesforce's biggest win. It was the day Oracle officially acknowledged its competitor's existence.

We were heading in the right direction.



CHAPTER NINE

THE PRODUCT PAGE

The product page was our 2nd big challenge.

Since most of the advertising we did sent visitors directly to a specific product page, we needed this page to convert visitors into buyers..

We thought: "If someone is clicking through on the product page, they are already interested in buying."

Our first product page

A few things we included on the first product page were

- Product title
- Product variety (Black and White color)
- Product shot
- A big, orange, "Add to Cart" button
- Psychological Price
- Quotes about the product (also called Social Approval)
- 3 Product attributes
- Technical information sheet
- A short inspiring text on "Urban Freedom" (our slogan)
- Our Service (Delivery times / Free Shipping / 30 Days Guarantee)
- Customer Chat
- 10% OFF coupon in the banner

THE BOARD ABOUT US SHIPPING & RETURN POLICY 🧺



UNKICK HOVERBOARD



.

EUR 590 BLACK WHITE

The Unkick Board is sturdy and incredibly stable w moving. It is made of high quality and can roll on a

- ✓ Worldwide Free Shipping
- ✓ 30 Days Guarantee
- ✓ 3-7 Days Delivery
- Jump to technical details

"Our generation is gonna be riding hover boards so if you don't like it eat a dick!"

- Wiz Khalifa

"They're fun as hell, and anything that offers to bring a fun thing [...] is in my book"

"The next best thing is already here if you're ready to take a ride"

- Fortune

URBAN FREEDOM

Movement is a source of freedom. Ride the intuitive Unkick board to slide through your city. The streets become your natural playground.



SEAMLESS CONTROL

Get comfortable within a few minutes. Once you find your balance, you'll naturally get a hang of it. The sensors are so precise that it's almost like it can read your mind.



SURPRISINGLY POWERFUL

Step on it and the board will detect your presence. The high-quality rubber wheels can get you anywhere you need. The Unkick Board is sturdy and will never let you down.



FAST CHARGING

Plug it just like you would with your phone. Meanwhile you can go get a beer. In less than 3 hours it's charged. Then spend up to several days riding it.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

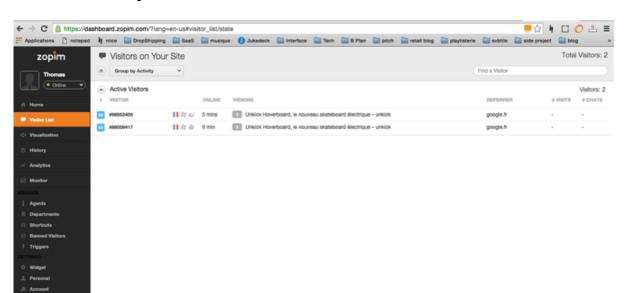
22 LBS (10 V-A	
22 LBS (10 Kg)	
0 - 7.5 MPH	
Up to 100kg	
Samsung 36V 4.4 Ah	
AC 220V, 50-60Hz	
6.5 inches (16.5cm)	
2 x 250W (300W peak power)	Chat w
	Up to 100kg Samsung 36V 4.4 Ah AC 220V, 50-60Hz 6.5 inches (16.5cm)

About customer chat



From the beginning, we knew that customer service would be key to our success. Chat helps sales, that's it. It was also a good way for us to get customer feedback and questions--essential to get information about our early stage business.

We installed Zopim, which is easy to integrate with Shopify, and isn't too expensive (a couple of Euros a month only), but you can find some for free. This is what Zopim looks like on our side when 2 people are on the website. A bell rings whenever they start a conversation.



Zopim to popped-up 45 seconds after a person landed on the website asking the prospect if they needed some help. 45 seconds isn't too intrusive and helped us focus only on people interested in our products.

My co-founder took care of the chat and had dozens of discussions a day -- omn of which led us to add elements on our product page. For instance, we added a European Custom Conformity Certificate to the website by customer request.

Of course, some conversations were a waste of time.

Still, you should get a customer chat as soon as your online business is live and has traffic.

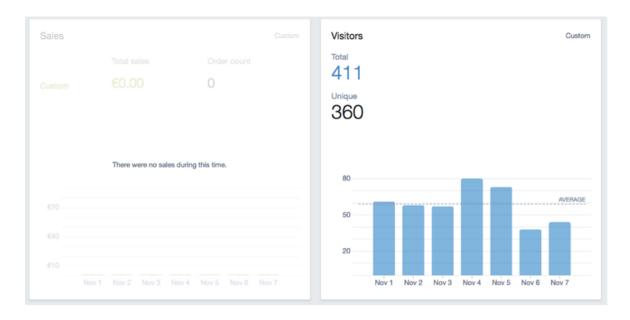


CHAPTER TEN

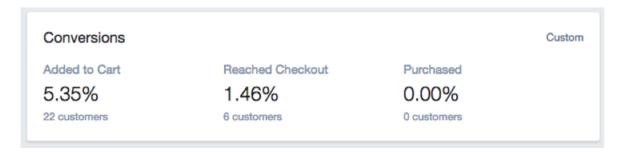
TRYING TO SELL

Early failure

During the first week, 360 different people came to the website--none of them bought.



Our conversion funnel looked like this:



5,35% of our visitors added our product to their cart, but none of them bought. It was qualified traffic--they were supposed to be interested in our product.

There was an issue.

A normal online business should already make some sales with such traffic. In addition:

- We knew the product was hot and that people were buying it on the Internet.
- We knew the traffic was qualified.
- We believed our pricing strategy was good.

The conclusion: people did not buy because our page didn't provide enough value for them.

We focused on making the product page more effective. It had to be enticing and safe looking.

Back to work

We asked experts about our website. Here's what one of them told us:



"Your website doesn't feel safe enough. It doesn't look like we can trust you to buy products worth hundreds of Euros."

That was hard to hear, we had been working hard. Yet, this sentence made a huge difference in our website's redesign.

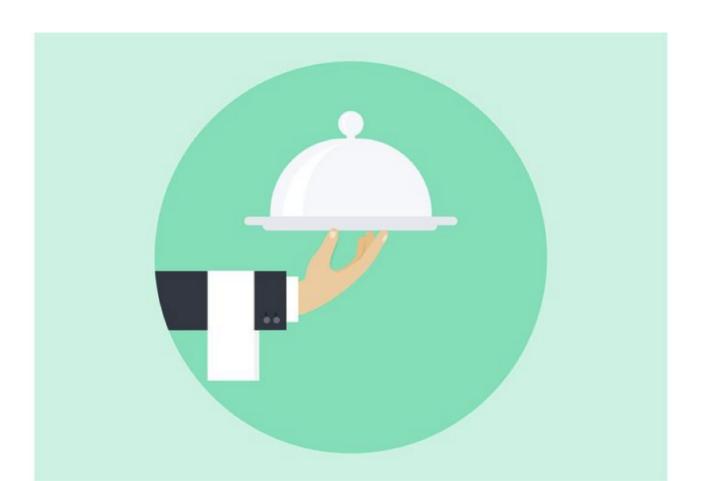
Service is king

4 elements that had been in front of us since the beginning would prove key to make our first sale--we had undervalued them so far. These 4 elements were:

- Shipping time 3–5 days
- 1 year warranty
- Free delivery
- 15 days money back guarantee

Service is tremendously important when you run a drop shipping business. You're not an exclusive reseller, and you will never compete with a big retailer on prices.

So, what's your competitive advantage? Service.

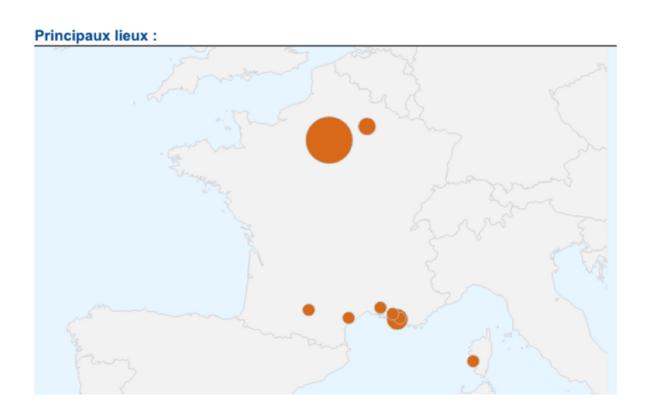




CHAPTER ELEVEN

FAILURE AND FIRST ITERATION

Shifting our target country to France



If service is your main competitive advantage:

- Tell your suppliers that you're going to rock at service.
- Explain this level of service clearly on your website.

Unkick was a small business, we needed to focus. We decided to shift from the European market to the French market.

It took us one day to fully translate the website to French and shift traffic acquisition to a French audience.

Better content and better design

We read many articles on how to make a good product page, and after 10 days of brainstorming and code, we came up with a brand new product page:

2nd product page

New elements:

- Red header (promo 20% Off i/o 10%)
- · Our standards of service at the top.
- More pictures for each product.
- Diversity: 2 more colors.
- Original price crossed to highlight the discount.
- Scarcity (how many units are left).
- Pictures of our first users (our friends).
- Complete product description.
- Customer feedback (found on Amazon.com).
- A pretty footer.

We also created a few other pages to make the website feel safer and more serious:

- FAQ
- Return policy

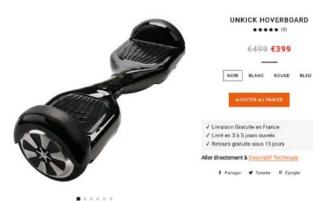


UNKICK BOARD UTILISATION A PROPOS RETOURS





LIVRAISON GRATUITE EN FRANCE RETOURS GRATUITS SOUS 15 JOURS (1)













LE NOUVEAU HOVERBOARD ELECTRIQUE

Unkick Board est le nouveau hoverboard électrique. Facile à prendre en main, vous pouvez apprendre à rouler en quelques minutes. Vous vous déplacez simplement en penchant votre corps dans la direction désirée, ce qui confère une utilisation intuitive et sans aucun danger.

En savoir plus our Futilisation du board --

Une fois que vous vous êtes familiarisé, il devient aisément votre nouveau mode de déplacement, que ce soit pour aller chercher ses courses ou promener le chien. Pouvant aller jusqu'à 12 KM/H et avec une autonomie de plusieurs heures, vous pouvez effectuer plus de 20 KM en ne l'ayant chargé

A la fois solide et puissant, cet hoverboard utilise la pointe de la technologie pour vous faire découvrir des sensations inédites et représente un divertissement hors pair.

QUESTIONS FRÉQUEMMENT POSÉES

En combien de temps livrez-vous ?

Nous livrons gratuitement en 2 à 5 jours ouvrés partout en France.

Combien de temps faut-il pour le prendre en main ?

Il faut a peu près 3 à 5 minutes pour comprendre comment fonctionne le board et être stable, puis 15-20 minutes pour être complètement à l'aise.

En savoir plus sur l'utilisation du board \rightarrow

Combien de temps peut-on l'utiliser avant que les muscles ne fatiguent ?

Au début, cela peut être fatiquant d'être dessus car on est crispé. Une fois confortable, on peut l'utiliser pendant toute la durée de sa charge sans

Le Unkick Board est entièrement chargée en moins de 3 heures.

AVIS CLIENTS

*** Base sur 9 evis

本文文章
Content I
Victor in Nov 22, 2018
You not show to a superior of the side of on apprend is
Fur, stable of softe. Clest artife total vite of on apprend is
Fulfillar on mome de 2 minutes, passandat
Reporter comme inapprend

Comme flotter our de l'air
Placonas le Nov 20, 2015
De se sent courre flotter our le soit, c'est très difficile de décere la serousion. LIVEAGON RAPIDE en moins d'une semaine, rare !

Vaut son prix

Ben lo Nov 19, 2015

unkick est bade en Flance, très serviable et beaucoup moins
che que les concurrents. Un ami a eu le même modèle pour
trais fois le prix.

後後後後 Tôes agrésable Lola le Nov 15, 2015 Effect quelques minister pour le prendre en man. Ca grend un pou de temps pour trouver son diquilitére et comment se positionner. Use fois qu'on trouve comment se stabiliser. Biel Super sensatord D

Tres blen dans l'ensemble!
Julieo In Nov 01, 2015
Le Unicic board marche tres bien, et est resistent vis a vis des coups qu'il prend pendont l'apprentissage. La batterie

VOUS AVEZ DES QUESTIONS?

CHATTER AVEC NOUS →

DESCRIPTIF TECHNIQUE

Dimensions	585 x 185x 180mm	
Poids	9.6 Kg	
Vitesse	0 - 14 Km/H	
Autonomie	15 - 20 Km en une charge	
Capacité	Supporte jusqu'à 110kg	
Batterie	Samsung 36V 4.4 Ah	
Courant	AC 220V, 50-60Hz	
Temps de chargement	De 2 à 3 heures	
Diamètre de roue	16.5cm	
Moteur	2 x 250W (300W capacité max)	

Garantie de Prix

Commerce électronique propulsé par







CHAPTER TWELVE

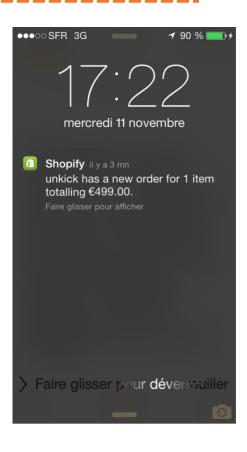
OUR FIRST SALE

My phone rang. I had a notification.

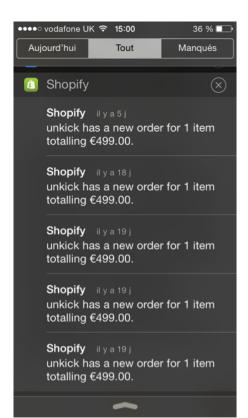
Our first sale!

It was the best feeling in the world. That notification validated all the work we had done--someone was interested in our product.

If one person was willing to spend hard earned money on this product, others would too.



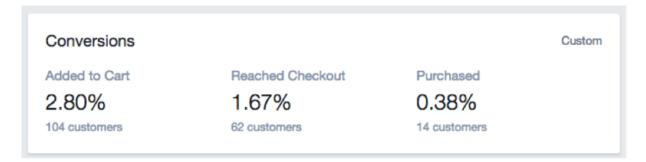
Soon, other orders came in. Many more than we had anticipated. The results?



Our figures during the first 9 days



One simple acquisition channel made a total of €6,986.00 in revenue, 3,232 unique visitors and 14 orders--in only 9 days of activity. The conversion rate was still very low, but this was the validation we had been looking for since the beginning. Our second milestone was achieved.



The next steps were straightforward. We just had to optimize our metrics.

Let me tell you about our traffic acquisition.



CHAPTER THIRTEEN

TRAFFIC ACQUISITION

Some channels are better than others, and some are doomed. It depends on your target market and the product you want to sell.

Remember, channel Acquisition is not only about bringing people on your website-- It's about getting qualified traffic.

Our two main acquisition channels were:

- Google Adwords (Paid advertising)
- Instagram (Social Media)



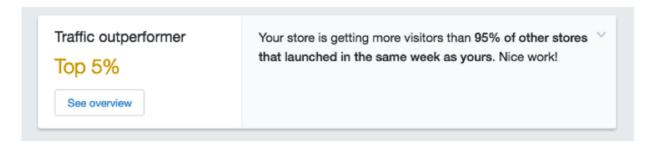
Google Adwords

We wanted to test our market fast, and picked Google's famous traffic acquisition tool: Adwords.

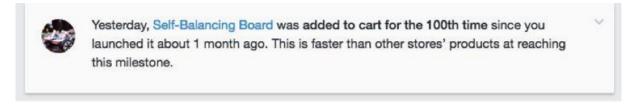
Google Adwords:

- Takes only a couple of hours to review your ad and display it.
- Guarantees traffic (you pay by the clic)

We had made sure in Google Planner that the search volume was high enough to operate this channel. As expected, our website outperformed most other Shopify stores.



People kept adding our product to carts.



Adwords campaign

We constantly had 2 campaigns (advertising) running. Every day we kept the winning one and killed the other one-replacing it with a new campaign.

To compare campaigns looked at the CTR (Click Through Rate) to see which campaign had the biggest number of click in relation to its number of impression.

This strategy is when you use Google Adwords and are cash savvy-- And it's efficient.

---- OUR FIRST SALE ----

Google Search

•	Ad ↓	Status ?	Labels ?	% Served	Campaign type ?	Campaign subtype	Clicks ?	Impr. ?	CTR ?	Avg. CPC	Cost ?	Avg. Pos.	Conversions ?	Cost / conv.
×	Le Hoverboard Electrique 20% de réduction pour Noël ! Livralson Gratuite en France unkick.com	Campaign paused	-	1.17%	Search Network only	All features	2	681	0.29%	€0.18	€0.37	1.6	0.00	€0.00
II	Hoverboard France 20% de réduction pour Noël ! Livraison Gratuite en 2-5 jours unklok.com	Campaign paused	-	0.36%	Search Network only	All features	9	210	4.29%	€0.34	€3.05	2.2	0.00	€0.00
II	Hoverboard Electrique 20% de réduction pour Noël ! Livraison Gratuite en France unklok.com	Campaign paused	-	2.23%	Search Network only	All features	90	1,298	6.93%	€0.32	€28.47	2.3	0.00	€0.00
II	Acheter un Hoverboard Promo Noël -20% Livraison Gratuite Express unklok.com	Campaign paused	-	1.61%	Search Network only	All features	48	940	5.11%	€0.30	€14.18	2.3	0.00	€0.00
II	Acheter un Hoverboard Promo Noël -20% I Livraison Gratuite Express unklck.com	Campaign paused		0.46%	Search Network only	All features	17	269	6.32%	€0.28	€4.72	2.7	0.00	€0.00
×	Acheter {Keyword:Hoverboard} 499€ Promo Noël -20% ce Weekend ! Livraison Gratuite en 3-6 jours unkick.com	Campaign paused	-	0.00%	Search Network only	All features	0	0	0.00%	€0.00	€0.00	0.0	0.00	€0.00
•	Acheter {Keyword:Hoverboard} 499€ Promo Noël -20% Cette Semaine! Livraison Gratuite en 3-6 jours unkick.com	Campaign paused	-	3.56%	Search Network only	All features	54	2,073	2.60%	€0.26	€13.88	3.2	0.00	€0.00
•	Acheter {Keyword:Hoverboard} €499 Promo Spécial Noël -20%! Livraison Gratuite, Garantie 1 an unkick.com	Campaign paused	-	4.41%	Search Network only	All features	76	2,572	2.95%	€0.31	€23.75	3.0	2.00	€11.88

& shopping Ad

•	Ad	Ad group	Status ?	Labels ?	% Served	Campaign type ?	Campaign subtype	Clicks ?	Impr. ?	CTR ?	Avg. CPC	Cost ?
•	Shopping ad Promotion: Promo Spécial Noël -20% · Livraison Gratuite	Self Balancing Scooter	Campaign paused	-	100.00%	Shopping	Shopping Ads	729	31,517	2.31%	€0.50	€364.13
×	Shopping ad Promotion: -20% Promo Spécial Noël !	Self Balancing Scooter	Campaign paused	-	0.00%	Shopping	Shopping Ads	0	0	0.00%	€0.00	€0.00
	Total - all ads ?							729	31,517	2.31%	€0.50	€364.13
	Total - all campaign ?							729	31,517	2.31%	€0.50	€364.13

Adwords keywords strategy

Our goal was to find buyers. We decided to focus on searches with a very high buyer intend, and targeted people doing research in Google using words like:

- Buy
- Get
- Purchase

Even though the cost to target this traffic is more expensive, it would definitely worth it as it was more qualified.

We combined these qualified words with generic ones to describe our product, such as:

- Self-balancing scooter
- Smart balance
- Hoverboard
- Swegway

Match example: "Buy Hoverboard"

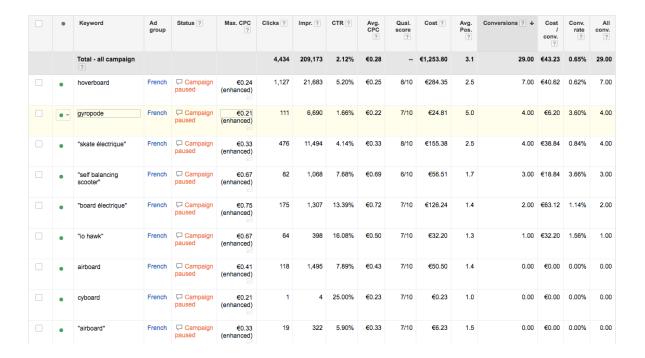
We also tried specific brands like:

- PhunkeeDuck
- IO Hawk

Match example: "Purchase PhunkeeDuck", "Get IO Hawk Swegway"

For each combination of keywords we asked Google to display our ad by choosing the "exact keyword match" option. Hence, ads only appeared on searches including the exact words we picked. Rigid keyword matching options make the keywords more relevant to someone's search.

This screenshot shows 9 different Campaigns that ran on different days, we were spending € 50/day total.



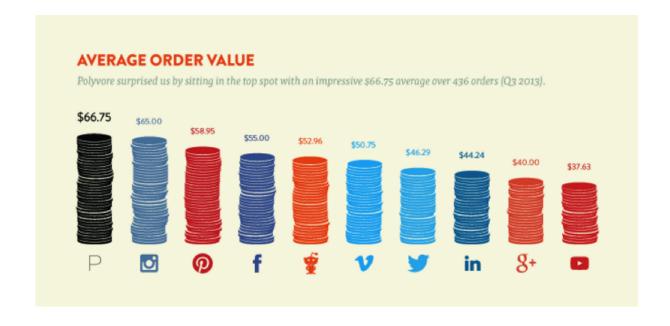


Instagram

In parallel to paid online acquisition, we needed at least one free channel.

We chose Instagram for several reasons:

- It had just hit 150 million users.
- It gave brands 25 percent more engagement than any other social platform out there, including Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest (study published by L2 Think Tank)
- Instagram average order value was among the highest compared to other social medias--and our product was expensive.

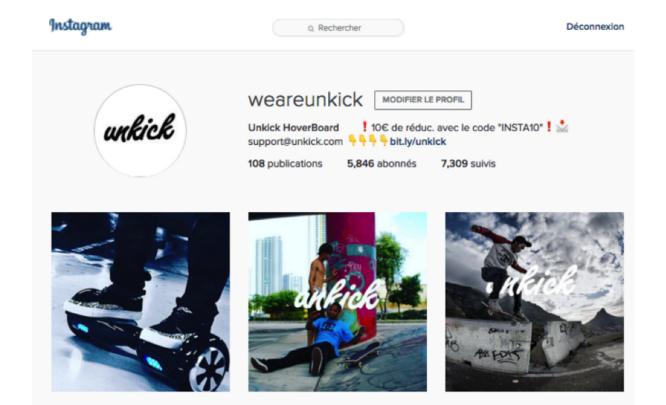


Instagram conversion rate was among the highest.



- The product was hot and could appeal to the Instagram community.
- We wanted to master Instagram--this project was a way for us to acquire more skills.

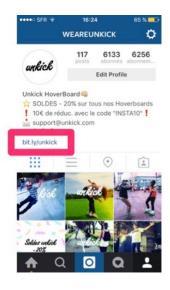
Instagram can be incredibly effective. At the time of writing, our Instagram account had 5,846 followers with 108 posts.



Beginner's guide to Instagram

Here are some things to cover every time you create an Instagram account.

- 1. Get a username that is your business name or something close. In our case, we chose "we are unkick" since "unkick" was taken. To us the prefix fosters the idea of crew that also exists in skateboarding.
- 2. Get a strong profile picture that will capture user's attention when they scroll down your feed
- 3. Make your biography fun with emojis
- 4. Make your feed really aesthetic
- 5. Use bitl.ly track clickthroughs, and sales, to your store
- 6. Be sure your website is responsive--your customers are almost exclusively coming from their mobile (Instagram is native mobile).
- 7. On Instagram the only place where you can put an external link is the Bio on your profile, that's where you should put your bit.ly link.



You're ready to roll.

Customer experience

Brands share touch points with their customers--the moments when companies and customers get in contact. The sum of these touch points leads--or not--to the buying decision.

Instagram touchpoints operate like this:

- The picture you post triggers Follower's attention when scrolls.
- Follower goes to your profile.
- Follower checks the pictures on your feed and reads your Bio.
- Follower clicks the link in your Bio.
- Follower gets on your website's mobile version.
- Follower decides to buy from you--or not.

The goal is to master these touch point to trigger sales.

Growing an Instagram account from zero

The simplest way to grow any Instagram account is to be active, and post content on a regular basis. I tried to post pictures twice a day: one in the late morning, the other one in the afternoon. You can only do this with your phone.

There are many studies about the best time to post. You can use iconosquare and their analytics tool to see what works best for you. I used Publish App (on iPhone) and their feature "Publish at The Best Time". The app decides on the best time to publish based on your past engagement (likes, comments).



Instagram content

I started by researching Instagram for cool pictures of Hoverboards. My strategy was to find a few different accounts, and repost their images of people using Hoverboards. These pictures needed to match our "skateboarding" culture, which is why I chose to post the picture below on the left over the one on the right.

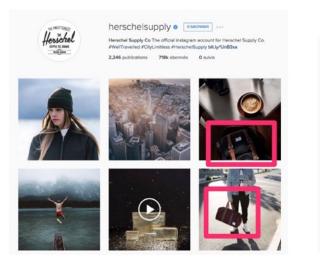


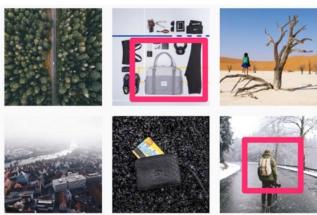


Instagram ratio

We didn't want to post only pictures of people using selfbalancing scooters--it would have made our account too salesoriented. Instagram is about publishing beautiful content, not being pushy.

We checked a couple of Instagram profiles we loved and realized they didn't post much about themselves. For instance, Herschel Supply Co has approximately one third of its Instagram pictures talking about its products, the rest being landscapes.





We decided to do the same: 1 picture out of 3 would talk about Hoverboards, while others would show Unkick's "skateboarding" culture and inspiration.

Inspiration

I love the web artist Davide Bedoni -- he became our main inspiration for creating content.

His work looks like this:





I loved the contrast between the logo and the background--it's catchy. I wanted a similar aesthetic. Hoverboards are easy to ride, skateboards are not, why not show the contrast?

I picked skateboarding fails and integrated the Unkick logo. The early results were like this.









Growth strategy

I had one strategy: Engage with people.

Now that you post regularly, you need to engage with as many people as you can in order to gain followers. This strategy is basic and is called "follow for follow" ("follow 4 follow", "f4f"). It is useful only if you engage with the right people. Instagram limits you to 60 interactions (comment, like, follow or unfollow) per hour, don't go above or you might regret it.

I decided to try different combinations to see which one resulted in the best follow-back rate. Then scale.

Follow / Like	1	3	5	10		
No	10%	11%	14%	20%		
Yes	18%	26%	27%	22%		
Yes + 1 comment	22%	31%	32%	34%		

Unkick Follow Back Results

- a) If I didn't follow someone but liked 3 of his pictures, I would get an 11% follow-back rate.
- b) If I didn't follow someone but liked 5 pictures, then I:
- Increased their follow-back rate from 11% to 14%.
- Increased by 2 the number of our interactions.
- c) If I followed someone, liked 3 pictures and commented on 1 of his photo then I:
- Increased their follow-back rate from 11% to 31%.
- Increased by 2 my number of our interactions compared to a).

Instagram limits the number of interaction, so I chose my winning combination according to this constraint:

- Follow account
- Like 3 pictures
- Comment 1 picture
- \rightarrow 1 person out of 3 would follow me back. That was good.

In order to planify these actions I settle an account with instagress.

At the end of the week, I unfollowed as many people as I could--up to 600 people a day. I recommend using Crowdfire App that does it in one tap, better than Instagram where you need 2 taps.

Who to follow, comment and like?

As I said the "follow for follow" method is only good if you engage with the right people. Pick a profile on Instagram with a fan base that matches the one you want to copy. Go to this account followers list and interact with these people.

I ended up picking:

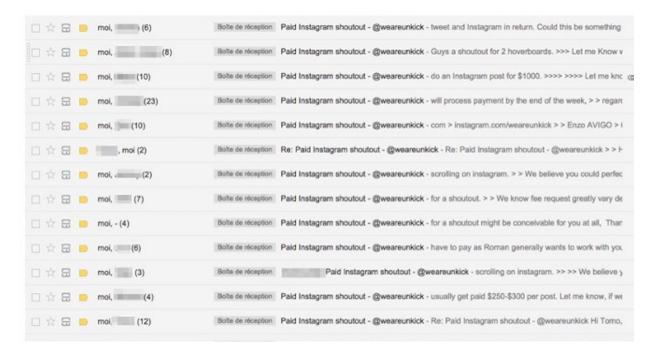
- French Hoverboard competitors.
- French Youtubers with a young fanbase.

Influencer program

I looked for the following influencer criteria:

- The account should have 100k+ followers (anything less wasn't worth it).
- The account should have an email address in their biography.
- The account should charge less than €100 for a post.
- Each picture should have a few thousand likes, no matter what they post.

I sent 90 emails in one week. Not all of the accounts I emailed wanted to work with me—and that was okay. Most of them didn't want to promote products they didn't have, because it didn't seem authentic.



The influencer

I realized after many discussions that the product was very appealing to influencers. So I changed my strategy, and decided I would leverage our product notoriety to negotiate.

I looked for influencers with big fan bases—we could not afford to pay—and asked them if they would do an Instagram post in exchange for one Hoverboard. A French reality-show winner with a huge fan base was looking for the product. She could do a post on Instagram against one self-balancing scooter. Her agent requested a second one for the agency, and said it was non-negotiable.

That influencer account matched a lot of our criteria:

Location: France

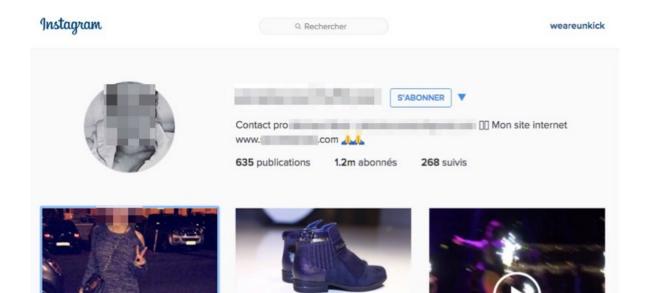
• Age: 15–25+

• Interests: Fashion, High Tech

• Fan base: 1.2M

• Engagement of approximately 2% (likes per post / number of followers)

• Estimated reach: 10,000 – 20,000 people



Doing the math

Two self-balancing scooters cost us €600 at the time, €300 each .

To appeal to the influencer community we had to grant a significant discount, we agreed on €50.00 (10%).

Each self-balancing scooter would make 499–50–300 = €150 profit. To be profitable we would have to sell 6 boards. We went for it.



Sweethearts, the future of mobility is at unkick.com. I love mine! Code 'X' for €50 OFF before Christmas. Hurry up! @weareunkick.

It contained all the important points:

- Authenticity (by using words such as "Sweathearts", "mine")
- A promo code (incentive 1).
- A urge to hurry up (incentive 2).
- @weareunkick (our account to get inbound).

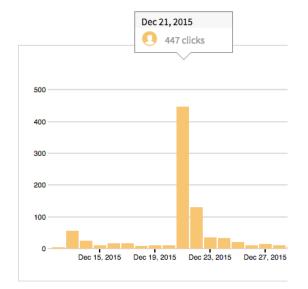
We sent the influencer a board right away and waited for the post to go online. Christmas was only 2 weeks ahead--we were running out of time.

10 days later--instead of 2--the influencer posted the picture. It was on the 21th of December, 8pm. The message was the one we had written, engagement was fair (1.5%—almost 18k likes and 80 comments) and traffic rose on the website.

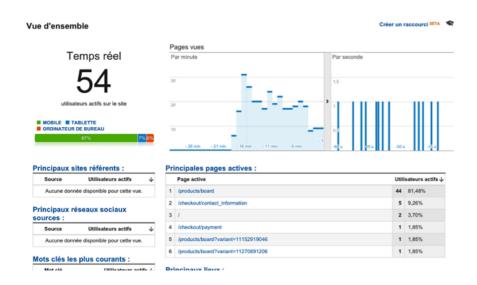


Effect:

- Our account gained approximately 300 followers (0.03% of influencer fan base)
- 447 people (0.04% of her fan base) made it to our website through the bit.ly link.



For 4 hours more than 50 people were constantly browsing unkick.com, mainly from their mobile devices.



We had a bad feeling about this. What if posting on the 21th of December was a waste of time as people had already bought their Christmas presents?

We told the influencer agent about our concern. She apologized and posted for free on her Facebook account as well. The account had 120k followers - that was nice of her.

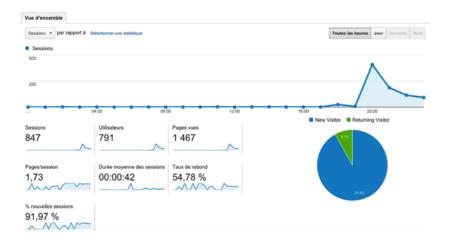


110 visitors from Facebook made it to our website (0.09% of her fan base).

		Acquisition			Comportement			Conversions Comm	
	Réseau social 💿	Sessions ↓	% nouvelles sessions	Nouveaux utilisateurs	Taux de rebond ?	Pages/session	Durée moyenne des sessions ?	Taux de conversion du commerce électronique	Transactions
		111 % du total: 13,11 % (847)	100,00 % Valeur moy. pour la vue: 91,97 % (8,73 %)	111 % du total: 14,25 % (779)	24,32 % Valeur moy. pour la vue: 54,78 % (-55,60 %)	2,08 Valeur moy, pour la vue: 1,73 (20,16 %)	00:00:19 Valeur moy. pour la vue: 00:00:42 (-55,08 %)	0,00 % Valeur moy. pour la vue: 0,12 % (-100,00 %)	0 % du total: 0,00 % (1)
0	1. Facebook	111(100,00 %)	100,00 %	111 (100,00 %)	24,32 %	2,08	00:00:19	0,00 %	0 (0,00 %)

The Facebook traffic bounce rate was 24%-- much better than the general bounce rate of 54%. In our case, people spent less time on our website when using a mobile device.

But both Instagram and Facebook overall session times were short (< 30 sec). A total of 791 people visited our website that night.



We didn't sell a single Hoverboard that day. The Instagram program was a failure, but one we learned a lot from.

Influencer program afterthought

- 1. Don't choose influencer programs if you haven't sold a single product on Instagram yet. Influencer programs are a way to scale sales on Instagram, not a way to validate your business.
- 2. Selling expensive products on Instagram is hard. The more expensive the product, the longer the decision to buy.
- 3. Don't expect anything from Instagram if your product isn't unique. We couldn't keep our audience until the purchase moment--our target likely forgot the name of our brand and went with a competitor's product.
- 4. Tell EVERY detail about the post to your influencer. We expected our influencer to show the product properly. If you look at the picture, we can barely see it.
- 5. The promo code you provide the influencer with should last at least 2 weeks so people can take their time to make their buying decision.
- 6. Obvious: An influencer campaign on the 21th of December is too late if you target Christmas gifts.



CHAPTER FOURTEEN

OVERVIEW AND MARKETING CHANNEL RESULTS

Overview

Revenue: € 6,986.00

Marketing & Setup Cost: € 1,853.00

• Adwords - € 1,253.00

• Instagram - € 600.00

Shopify Fees (2.9% + 30¢ / trade): € 206,80

Stocks: € 4,200.00

Profit: € 726,20

Congratulation if you made it until here!

If you found our story of interest please feel free to share it. If you have any question don't hesitate to contact me: enzoavigo (at) gmail (dot) com I'd love to hear your thoughts ©

writeriow helped me improve this ebook.