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TAKING GIFTING TO THE DIGITAL AGE

*Vift is the new e-commerce product that allows online shoppers to send personalized videos as gifts to their respected loved ones. The videos can be received via email or SMS and bring a new level of intimacy to shoppers. We recently sat down with the **founder and CEO, Jon Loew**, and the **VP of Marketing, Mike Shelton**, to talk about Vift's beginnings, future and its plans for the upcoming holiday season.*

■ **PQ:** What was the idea or motivation behind Vift?

■ **LOEW:** Vift is actually a product produced and created by a company called Keep Tree, the parent company of Vift. Keep Tree allows people to record videos and send them to people at anytime in the future or a scheduled date. This was primarily used by people who were traveling overseas to get in touch with people back home, people in the military used it and people who have health concerns used it to record videos for their kids and grandkids for when they are no longer around. So after a couple of years of seeing what people use the tool for, we saw that a lot of people were using it to send video messages for people's birthdays. We took that usage and came up with the idea to allow people to record a personal gift

message along with an online gift purchase, so that when the gift is delivered to the recipient, the recipient also receives the video at the exact same time. It was born out of our core business of sending videos automatically in the future.

■ **PQ:** Can you give us a breakdown of how the product works and how someone would go about sending a video to their recipient?

■ **SHELTON:** Basically it's a simple plug-in that goes into an e-commerce company's website shopping cart and then when a customer is actually purchasing a gift, they have the option to add the vift to their cart. Then after 'checkout,' they are then prompted to record their video gift message. They can do it right there on their computer or on their mobile device, if they order from a mobile

device, or they can do it at a later date if they're not ready to record right there. They can record it anytime up until the gift package gets delivered.

■ **PQ:** As you know the Holiday season is around the corner, what are you guys doing to prepare for this upcoming shopping season? Do you think that consumers are going to be more likely to use Vift for sending their holiday gifts?

■ **LOEW:** We have already launched with a dozen clients and we expect to launch with one of the most recognizable names in retail before the holiday season kicks off. We anticipate a lot of people learning about our product through them but we're also creating a consumer facing version of our technology. So that anyone who buys anything

anywhere, if they're shipping it, they can come to our website, Vift.com, and purchase a video gift message and send that out for a \$1.99. We'll sync up with their tracking information, so they just record the video and we take it from there. So we're going to be doing a big push this last quarter, not only to retailers but to consumers. Also one of the things we're going to be doing is offering free video gift messages to anyone sending a gift to a member of the U.S. military. Around the holiday season lots of people send gifts to men and women deployed overseas whether they're in an active war zone, like Iraq or Afghanistan, or if they're posted in Asia or Europe, we're going to let them send a personal video gift message for free. We do quite a bit to support the U.S. military with our core technology so we felt that this was another way to give back to them.

■ PQ: Do you think this is going to be a product that is going to become synonymous with gift giving? Do you think that personalized gifts are the future of gift giving?

■ LOEW: Yes. When we attended the IRCE conference, which was our first conference of its type. Everybody at every booth was talking about personalization and I can't think of a way of making something more personal than attaching a video of your person to the gift. When we were thinking about the gift giving process online, we realized that gift giving and the options associated

with it, have been the same since the 1800s. People buy a gift and from some of the most amazing technology companies in the world, like Amazon, eBay, Target.com, you name them. They have the most advanced technologies but they have the same gift options: 'Would you like to wrap the gift?' 'Would you like a gift note to go along with that?' And that's what my grandfather was able to do a hundred years ago. This is actually one of the first, if not the first, capitalization on technology that we've seen. So now there will be three options. Gift note, gift wrapping, or a video gift message. My guess is if retailers are giving this away for free to their customers, a good percentage of those customers are going to choose to personalize their gift giving.

■ PQ: Lastly, where do you see Vift fitting into the gift giving sector?

■ LOEW: We would like to see our video technology as ubiquitous as PayPal, so that anytime somebody is sending a gift to someone anywhere anytime, whether it's online or offline, they think that they need to personalize it. We would like to become a part of every retailers' gift giving process.

Citrus Pay & Qwiksilver Get Together For Gift Card- Driven Mobile Payments

Citrus Pay is one of India's biggest names in payment services, and it's recently joined up with Qwiksilver's Woohoo gift card services to give fully 17 million users access to in-store mobile payments on the strength of gift cards.

Basically, the service allows users to take funds stored in the Citrus Wallet system and route these to a gift card, which can then be used like a debit card at over 5,000 stores throughout India. Users log into the Woohoo app, and generate vouchers good for in-store use by just choosing a certain brand name.

Meanwhile, merchants need only scan a barcode to accept the voucher, and if the voucher isn't used in 30 minutes time, the voucher essentially breaks apart, becoming useless, and the funds involved in establishing the voucher go back into the Citrus Wallet app.

Several major brands ranging from Arrow to Van Heusen are in on this action, and several entertainment venues like PVR Cinemas will also accept the setup.