THE TESTD STORY: OUR PANDEMIC COMMITMENT
TO GETTING EVERYONE SAFELY BACK TO WORK

"Lockdown." In Florida, it came on April 4th, a bit late by some accounts. Four months earlier, no one predicted it. No one wanted it. We all hated it. Except, of course, the Charmin people. But while many people stuck at home started posting pictures of the record albums that made them who they are today, or hunkered down to practice baking bread, our product and marketing team started meeting (remotely, of course) to help plan a way out of it.

The story of TESTD.com – the first, full-spectrum mobile app and website for COVID-19 testing and reporting – is the story that took us from first conversation to first sales call in three months and three days. In that span, we had to become subject matter experts of the state of testing and the realities of a wide array of business needs. We had to create a brand that had sticking power and an industry-leading approach to building confidence, from the point of origin of the tests themselves to the badge on a smartphone screen showing the user's safe status.

And we had to do it fast, because we could tell this disease wasn't going away.

Time to act

"TESTD came out of our obsession to use blockchain technology to make life better for people," says Nicholus Andrews, the CEO of TESTD. "We were already hard at work building financial tools for micro, small, and medium sized businesses around the world. Tools that could raise entire nations out of poverty, and give hundreds of thousands in our country who have no access to banking a way to manage their finances without being forced into the predatory world of payday loans and other practices."

Nic says, "When the pandemic hit, and everyone was frantic to find ventilators, we wondered, 'Why is every governor in America searching for ventilators? Why aren't the ventilators telling us where they are?' It was a supply chain issue, and blockchain is great for supply chain management. So as an exercise, we started scoping out a workflow that would use blockchain technology to track ventilators." As Nic and the rest of us discussed the idea, it grew and grew to include a database of ventilator parts manufacturers. Then, companies that could be CONVERTED into ventilator parts manufacturers. And then, we got a Thursday afternoon call that changed our focus in minutes.

"Eric Forst called about the farmers' market in his town, and what could be done to make sure its staff was safe to be in contact with customers," Nic says, "and he was curious if there was a way blockchain technology could play a role."

We had met Forst – who has a marketing background -- in blockchain and cryptocurrency enthusiast conventions, and immediately hit it off. As the team thought about the question, one of us looked at the board with the ventilator workflow and asked, "What if instead of ventilators, it's people?"

Building the platform

Within minutes, on that very first call, we drew the process to move a test taker through opening an account, pairing a COVID-19 test with the user's biometric data on the phone, and reporting the results with a badge on the phone screen.

We figured out how blockchain technology would be used to encrypt all the information, make it HIPAA compliant, and give control to the user, so that sensitive medical information could be protected, but test results could be made available at the user's command to gain access and provide confidence in that person's health.

"At first, we were thinking about Gig Workers who might never be in a central office – rideshare drivers, food delivers, that sort of thing – but then we realized, if we built a dashboard for executive managers, large businesses could use it to see at a glance how many were ill, where the hotspots were, and when recovering employees could return to work," says Nic, "and a whole other way of protecting the workforce became clear to us."

Still on that first phone call, the team came up with the name and bought the domain. Three days later, we briefed the blockchain developers. The next day after that, we already had a rough sketch of the home page and collaborated with Forst on the messaging that would communicate the need and the target.

Three months to the first sale

Then, we went to work to build the site and the mobile app to make it intuitive, clear, and uncluttered. By Thursday – one week after the first phone call – the technology team had a working demo of the process for collecting and encrypting the data.

"How to" videos followed, as did marketing presentations. Understanding there could be a temptation to falsify tests in a world where workers were starving to get back to work, the team came up with a way to build a telemedicine call into the app for the test to be witnessed, and Nic brought on a medical advisor. We also forged a relationship with a testing lab to handle tests that might need to be mailed in for processing, as well as to advise on the whole testing process.

In just over three months from the initial phone call, TESTD had its first sales call with a nursing home director, whose enthusiasm was off the charts. We've got a long way to go before this pandemic is under control. Fortunately, we have TESTD to help us get there.