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TapCommerce's founders are back with Attentive, a messaging startup that's raised \$13M

Anthony Ha

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Attentive is coming out of stealth today with the announcement that it's raised \$13 million in Series A funding.

The company was founded by Brian Long and Andrew Jones. They previously founded TapCommerce, a mobile ad startup that was acquired by Twitter for a reported price of \$100 million. Long and Jones both worked at Twitter for a couple of years before leaving to start something new.

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The funding was led by Bain Capital Ventures, with participation from Eniac Ventures and NextView Ventures. Bain's Scott Friend is joining the board — Long (Attentive's CEO) said Friend was "a fantastic board member" at TapCommerce, so why not repeat the experience?

Attentive is, in part, a response to broader shifts in the mobile landscape. Long told me that while TapCommerce was focused on helping e-commerce companies promote their apps, it's become clear that customers aren't going to download apps from every retailer.

"People don't really want to download an app anymore," Long said. "We see messaging as a really cheap and effective way to manage the customer relationship."

Plus, Long noted that more consumers are now on [unlimited text messaging plans](#), so they're less annoyed if they get texts from a business.

Attentive started out by focusing on the challenge of getting people to opt-in for these messages in the first place. Its customers use mobile deep links — when a user taps to sign-up, Attentive automatically creates a sign-up message for them, with the phone number and message filled in. All you need to do is hit send and you're enrolled.



This “two-tap” sign-up process sounds simple, but apparently it took months for Attentive’s engineering team to develop. (The company has also applied for a patent around the technology.) And on top of that, it’s built out additional tools to help businesses send targeted and personalized messages to users.

Attentive is already working with more than 50 customers, including Boll & Branch, Boxed, AmorePacific and Bliss. The startup says its messages see an average clickthrough rate of more than 30 percent, resulting in 10x the revenue of marketing emails. For some customers, the platform drove more revenue on Black Friday and Cyber Monday than any other marketing channel.

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