

CASE STUDY

E-COMMERCE AGGREGATOR DEPLOYS IN-STORE, IBEACON POWERED LOYALTY PROGRAM

Client Background

The client is a US company that launched a quick shopping browser mobile application to make online shopping smarter. Their application processes and aggregates online eCommerce websites and provides the users with the ability to browse online catalogs through unified and mobile optimized user interface while staying completely anonymous. The application allows users to tag items to create visual bookmarks and organize their browsing, as well as offering recommendations based on the users' tags and shopping history.

Business Challenge

The app provides end users with considerable benefits but the initial monetization modes were limited to selling premium accounts with higher (compared to free app) monthly page views limits. To introduce a new revenue stream and provide additional benefits to customers the client decided to implement in-store messaging functionality with offers and promotions as well as customer loyalty program based on customer recurring visits to stores that participate in the program. The company chose SoftServe as the main technology partner to implement this solution.

Project Description

The team decided to use state of the art proximity sensors - known as iBeacons - to help retailers attract and reward repeat visitors. Shoppers who have the free Mobile App earn rewards just for visiting and returning to their favorite local stores and restaurants. Additionally, when the shoppers pass near the store participating in the program they receive context and location based notifications with offers and promotions from the store.

iBeacon is a technology that enables the usage of a new class of low-powered and low-cost transmitters that can notify nearby mobile devices of their presence. The technology enables a smartphone or other device to perform actions when in close proximity to an iBeacon. iBeacon uses Bluetooth low energy proximity sensing to transmit a universally unique identifier picked up by a compatible app or operating system. The identifier can then be looked up over the internet to determine the device's physical location or trigger an action on the device such as a check-in on social media or a push notification. Various vendors produce hardware iBeacons in a variety of form factors, including small coin cell devices, USB sticks, and generic Bluetooth 4.0 capable USB dongles. In contrast to GPS, iBeacon devices work indoors providing unique possibilities for their usage.

SoftServe developed the In-Store Messaging and Loyalty Program solution with the following main components:

- iBeacon devices installed in stores and configured using vendorsupplied mobile application
- Back-end system covering:
 - iBeacon device registration and management
 - Dashboard for retailers to configure their location based notifications, promotions and loyalty programs
- Improved mobile application capable of interacting with iBeacon devices and back-end systems

To participate in the program retailers need to:

1. Sign up, receive their iBeacon device, and plug this device in
2. Use merchant dashboard web interface to set up their visitor reward levels and proportional notifications
3. Invite customers to join the loyalty program

To join the loyalty program customers need to:

1. Install the free application
2. Visit a store that participates in the program. No additional check-in is required.
3. Redeem their reward using mobile application

Value Delivered

After this solution was developed the application's monetization has become much easier and the application became a leader in the market segment. In addition to charging end users for premium accounts, the client now has the possibility to secure deals with shops and shopping centers. Recently the client signed a deal with a large shopping mall to launch joint promotions and loyalty program for all shops and restaurants in the mall.

The additional benefits of the solution include:

- Retailers can create multiple rewards and communication
- Easy and non obtrusive engagement for shoppers. All shoppers participate by visiting. The only equipment needed is to download and sign up for the mobile app.

ABOUT US

SoftServe is a global digital authority and consulting company, operating at the cutting edge of technology. We reveal, transform, accelerate, and optimise the way large enterprises and software companies do business. With expertise across healthcare, retail, media, financial services, software, and more, we implement end-to-end solutions to deliver the innovation, quality, and speed that our clients' users expect.

SoftServe delivers open innovation – from generating compelling new ideas, to developing and implementing transformational products and services. Our work and client experience is built on a foundation of empathetic, human-focused experience design that ensures continuity from concept to release.

Ultimately, we empower businesses to re-identify their differentiation, accelerate market position, and vigorously compete in today's digital, global economy.

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