

Finding New Business Clients for Wi-Fi Services

Introduction/Business Problem

Many dining establishments such as restaurants and cafés now offer Wi-Fi as a way of attracting and keeping customers. People who do not have a high-speed internet connection in their home often utilize Wi-Fi at such places, and this can result in a steady customer base (since patrons are expected to order food and beverages at such establishments). Wi-Fi availability is also useful for people who are traveling and don't have access to their usual home or office internet connection. Given a choice between having lunch at place that does have a Wi-Fi connection versus one that doesn't, a businessperson on the road would likely choose to eat at the café or restaurant that provides fast and free internet access.

It would make sense then for companies that provide Wi-Fi to businesses to try to identify those businesses which could benefit from the increased customer traffic (that often results from Wi-Fi availability). However, finding those businesses is not simple: it first involves an effort to identify **which types of businesses** would most benefit from making Wi-Fi available at their establishments; there are many types of dining establishments, but not all of them may benefit from the addition of Wi-Fi – for example, customers may care a lot about whether or not Wi-Fi is available at a sandwich shop, but they might not care at all about whether or not it is available at a steakhouse.

One way to determine the importance of Wi-Fi for a given **type** of dining establishment (such as coffee shops) is to compare the Foursquare ratings of businesses of that type that do offer Wi-Fi versus the ratings of those which do not. For example, if it could be demonstrated that the average ratings of donut shops with Wi-Fi were significantly higher than those without Wi-Fi, this would lead to a business opportunity (for the internet provider) because venues with higher ratings are more likely to attract customers than those with lower ratings. If you can demonstrate to a business owner that the installation of Wi-Fi will lead to increased customer traffic, then that should help to sell internet services to that business. Fortunately, the ratings for each company can be obtained electronically from Foursquare (as described in detail in the “Data” section).

Once it was determined which **types** of businesses would benefit from the addition of Wi-Fi, then the next step would involve identifying which **specific** businesses of that type do not yet have Wi-Fi (so that marketing efforts can be directly towards them). The Foursquare data also provides a way to easily obtain this information. First, a list of businesses of a specific type with a certain region can be obtained electronically by requesting it from the Foursquare website (using one of their application programming interfaces (i.e. APIs)). For example, if you wanted to obtain a list of all coffee shops within a 10,000 meter radius of the University of California, Los Angeles, you could do so by sending an electronic request with those parameters through a Foursquare API.

Once list of businesses were obtained, you could analyze it to identify potentially candidates. On key step would be to narrow it down to only those businesses which do not currently offer Wi-Fi. Also, it would be essential to obtain contact information for all the businesses on the list. This is also available through Foursquare, so for each business on the list, you extract the contact information from the data received and use this contact information for direct mail campaigns, cold calls or in-person sales calls. A diligent marketing campaign that utilized all of the information available from Foursquare could certainly result in new business for a Wi-Fi provider.