

What is the product?

LunchMixer is a mobile application that helps to plan lunch mixers for professional networking. Through seamless integration between LinkedIn, calendar, map and Yelp, it helps the customer to explore networking opportunities and plan lunch mixers within one mobile application.

There are two typical scenarios for using this application.

Scenario A.

Bob is planning his lunch on this Friday and he feels like inviting some co-workers from other departments at his company to have lunch together. Instead of sending emails through Outlook, searching for restaurant on Yelp, locating the restaurant on Google Map and asking all the attendees to mark their calendar to schedule this lunch appointment, he pulls out his iPhone and launches LunchMixer. Within a minute, he has done the research in LunchMixer and creates a virtual open table on LunchMixer with restaurant location and calendar marker. He browses through the available co-workers for lunch on Friday, chooses people he wants to network with and sends out the invitation. Within half an hour, he gets all the replies from the recipients and has the appointments confirmed. Upon confirmation, everyone on the attending list will have the calendar on his or her mobile phone marked with this lunch appointment. Bob feels very satisfied that he could arrange a lunch meeting within only one application: LunchMixer.

Scenario B.

Lauren is actively exploring career opportunities in company ABC while she is currently working for company BCD. Since company ABC is only minutes drive from company BCD, Lauren thinks it's a good idea to have an informational interview during lunchtime with someone working at ABC. She pulls her Android phone out and launches LunchMixer to explore her connections to company ABC. She doesn't have anyone from her previous network currently working at company ABC. Fortunately, she finds Jason who is at company ABC and available on LunchMixer. Why not invite Jason to lunch and have a chat? Lauren finds a nice restaurant recommended by LunchMixer and invites Jason to have lunch together on next Friday. Before sending out the invitation, LunchMixer reminds Lauren that if Jason commits to the lunch appointment, she will be charged \$10 as referral fees for connecting her to someone outside of her current network. She smiles at the cute cartoon figure in LunchMixer and presses "Yes" button without thinking twice. Because she knows the potential value of this lunch meeting could be much more than \$10. After a few minutes, she has the lunch meeting confirmed and feels very excited about the opportunities that might be opened up by this meeting.

What is the business model?

In order to grow the user base rapidly, LunchMixer will be free to install and will provide most of the services for free. But there are several ways of monetizing the service.

1. *Charging referral fees for professional networking.*

In this model, as described in Scenario B, our revenue will come from referrer fees paid by individual customers.

2. *Distributing coupons for restaurants.*

In this model, our revenue will come from customer acquisition budget of restaurants. Our sponsoring restaurants will be shown to our customers while search for lunch location. If our customers choose to visit our sponsoring restaurants and use those electronic coupons, the restaurants will pay us for bringing new customers.

3. *Displaying mobile ads.*

In this model, our revenue will come from displaying relevant ads to our customers while using the application.

At this moment, the monetization model that suits LunchMixer best remains unknown. Initially, all the basic features of LunchMixer will be free. But once we succeeded in acquiring sufficient amount of users, we will test all three monetization models and figure out the best solution.

What's the strategy?

Phase 1: LunchMixer Alpha for MBA FT class 2014

The full-time MBA class of 2014 at Marshall will be the ideal customer base for developing the first version of LunchMixer. It's a relatively small group of about 200 students who are very active in professional networking. Testing LunchMixer Alpha version among them can help validate and refine the UI design and produce a high quality mobile application.

In this phase, the focus will be on the development of basic features. To speed up the development, the function of the application will be limited to internal lunch mixers within Marshall MBA class of 2014. LinkedIn integration won't be supported. By the end of 2012, there will be a refined implementation distributed among the full-time Marshall MBA class of 2014.

Phase 2: LunchMixer Beta for Marshall MBA community

After refining the LunchMixer alpha version, the Beta version will have LinkedIn integration and enable MBA students to plan lunch mixers with Marshall alumni.

In this phase, the focus will still be on development side: experimenting how to leverage LinkedIn platform to expand LunchMixer's reach. By the summer of 2013, the Beta version will be distributed to both current MAB students and Marshall alumni community.

Phase 3: LunchMixer official launch

After the essential features of LunchMixer are polished through Alpha and Beta launch, it will be ready for the official launch.

In this phase, the focus will be on promoting our product so that it will reach the MBA students across the U.S. We will try to reach them in following channels:

- a. Conference and events targeting at MBA students.
Associations like NAAMBA, NBMBA, and NSHMBA hold annual conferences and networking events for MBA students across the country. We will attend those conferences and try to persuade our potential customers.
- b. Viral campaign through LinkedIn network.
Through careful design of the integration between LunchMixer and LinkedIn, we could leverage our existing customer's LinkedIn network to launch viral campaigns on LinkedIn to acquire new customers outside of Marshall MBA community.
- c. Organic growth through word of mouth.
Many MBA students at Marshall have friends in other business schools. If our product has won the hearts of Marshall MBA students, we would persuade Marshall students to refer LunchMixer to MBA students at other business schools.
- d. LinkedIn Ads.
In order to reach broader audience that cannot be reached by the channels mentioned above, we will launch ad campaigns on LinkedIn.com. We will still focus on MBA students but especially on those out of reach from our existing customer base.

How big is the market?

