**CO.LABS & TARGET RETAIL ACCELERATOR**

**Written Description of the Proposed Mobile Experience for TARGET'S *IT***

***A mobile application to recruit a customer's friends as trusted shopping advisors for a social and personal in-store experience.***

**THE PROBLEM - WHAT SHOULD I BUY?**

Target's promise of getting "***more of what you need every da****y*" is a powerful one. As an example target.com lets me choose between 145 different women’s flat shoes, 177 baby sleepwear options, and 96 different flat screen televisions. But variety can also cause anxiety. How do I know what option to pick? A conventional approach to the problem would be to create a mobile utility that narrowed down the options to save the customer's time.

**It's just that this is a problem people actually enjoy to have even if they complain about it.**

**THE SOLUTION – LIKE *IT*, LOVE *IT*, BUY *IT***

Sometimes entertainment is the best utility. This is why instead of shortening the time of making choices we have created ***IT***, a native mobile application for iOS (later Android) that helps people spend more time solving the problem and enjoying every second of it. With the help of ***IT***, Target creates a media that connects the physical store environment to the virtual social environment.

The user can make the most out of ***IT*** by:

* Download the app from iTunes (later also Google Play)
* **View** polls without registering by browsing polls on the app or in target.com/IT (example)
* **Register** to activate features.
* **Vote** on someone else’s poll.
  + Add **comments** to votes
  + Create **alerts** for interesting ***IT*** polls
* Create her own ***IT*** poll by **taking pictures** from any two alternative purchases (a product, an outfit, anything)
  + Alternatively, the user can **scan the barcodes** of products to pull up product info (especially useful in comparing technology products).
* After **uploading her two options** on IT, the user can **share** her alternatives on target.com/it (example).
  + The app as well as target.com/IT is a repository of all the polls the customer has initiated. (User can delete any poll at any time).
* In addition to posting on ***IT,*** the user can also further **share** on Facebook and all other relevant social media.
  + Users can flag inappropriate content for moderation.
* After the user has received feedback, she can proceed to **buy** the product.

***IT* IS A POWERFUL MEDIA-IDEA**

Target.com/it is a media destination that aggregates all posts made by users as well as all the advice their friends have casted. While Facebook connect friends can interact using their true identity, non-friends can only see the polls. The customer can use the media to seek advice from a larger peer group of people if she wants to. She can post a poll for everyone to answer instead of just friends. She can also ask for professional advice from a Target expert or a visiting expert or a visiting celebrity. In this way IT helps her get intimate advice from people she trusts but also get a wider variety of opinions and understand what's popular from a wider range of helpers.

**HOW ABOUT A MILLION PEOPLE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE?**

IT is extremely powerful in recruiting the people the customer trusts the most, her friends, as the customer service staff of Target. It would be only fair to transparently compensate the people for the social interaction they provide not only for their friend but also on behalf of Target. Hence, IT features a points system where when you help you earn points (that can be capped per month). The points can be converted to REDrewards or mobile coupons. IT points is a true virtual currency that rewards people for helping Target customers. The point system can be expanded in many ways such as awarding people who often help others with a special status inside IT to be recognized as "experts".

**GET NO-LATENCY MARKET DATA**

The process of selecting one choice over another is very close to a market research technique called conjoint analysis. Therefore the data that IT generates in volumes helps Target understand the preferences of its customers. Target can follow near real time of what is trending. When integrated with an analytical CRM system, IT enriches the individual profiles of customers based on what they poll for. Target can also administer its own polls on IT and do instant research amongst a large but well identified population. For example, it can have people vote for what should be tomorrow's "daily deal" for a more personal experience.

**A HUMAN FACE ON SOCIAL**

Whether it be shopping for shoes together or debating what camera is the best we all have experienced the fun of shopping together. IT amplifies this fun by scaling the opportunity to receive advice to the whole Target community, or just two closest friends who could not make the trip to the shop.

But its true power relies in enhancing the in-store; physical or virtual, experience by recruiting the people the customer personally trusts the most as advisors for Target and openly compensating them for the effort. Polly gives Target a human face on social. Like ***IT***, love ***IT***, buy ***IT***.