**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 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.

A customer can use IT to discuss and debate any Target purchase. She can activate the mobile app in-store and immediately snap pictures of the two options she has. A product, a full outfit, a combination of products...anything. Alternatively, she can scan the barcode of a product and the app automatically pulls up the relevant product information (e.g. technical specifications) for comparison (requires integration to the existing mobile barcode service / database).

After uploading her two options on IT, the user can share her alternatives on target.com/it (example). Her friends can opt-in for text alerts (using the existing Target mobile service) whenever she posts something. The IT web service acts as a repository of all the polls the customer has initiated. Needless to say, the customer can delete any poll at any time. In addition to posting on IT, she can also further share her polls on Facebook and all other relevant social media. To make the interaction in- and outside of IT fast, there is no up-front moderation of content. However, users can flag inappropriate content for moderation. The customer's friends can then cast an immediate vote. We call it a Polly to assist their friend in making her selection. Friends can also add comments in favor or against an option.

The usage of IT is not limited to in-store only. Users can also post pictures directly from Target's website, mobile web and the existing mobile app for voting.

**NOT JUST EXISTING FRIENDS - 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 SALESPEOPLE?**

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".

**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.

**IT GIVES TARGET 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.