



ICT Solutions to improve restaurant's work efficiency, customer base and experience

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1. Your consultant customer background

LeadAhead is a leading ICT consulting company based in Helsinki that provides ICT solutions for different fields and businesses to improve their work efficiency and productivity. The primary area of expertise revolves around customized IT infrastructure implementation, IT security, Business Intelligence, enabling products as services, mobile technologies and web development. The vision of the company is to achieve high reputation and recognition in IT consultation services on global basis by these in depth analytical solutions. We constantly innovate in different business scenarios to build ourselves in broad intelligence and consultation services.

We are a company of 10 consultants working in the fields of supply chain management, specifically shopping chains and restaurant chains, health care services, manufacturing divisions, and financial investment sectors. Our secondary offices are located in India and South Korea in Asia with operations



existing in Washington DC in United States of America. Our partnerships exist with IBM, Tata Consultancy Services, Microsoft and Wall-mart.

2. Customer background

The customer is a privately owned restaurant in the luxurious neighborhood of Washington DC in United States of America. They provide breakfast, lunch and dinner buffets related to different ethnic cultures like Indian, Chinese and Greek. They also offer catering services for wedding, reception and other family occasions. It is spread over an area of 200 m² and managed by a staff of 30 people. Its customers primarily include local citizens and tourists visiting the city. They have been operating for 14 months and succeeded in building a local reputation among the local citizens.

3. Contact with the customer

The mode of communication was primarily using Skype and involved interviewing different staff members of the restaurants handling different work responsibilities. It also involved discussing the impact of possible IT solutions to their problems in Focus Groups.

All the communication was based on Skype



The **first meeting** was arranged on Skype with **Michael Scott** who is the co-owner of the restaurant with **Anika Jindal** on 2nd March 2013.

In this meeting the founders primarily explained about their and restaurant's background . They explained about their operations in detail and work responsibilities that different staff members handle. Their primary reason of seeking consultation was to improve their work efficiency, customer base and experience by the use of Information Technology. The owners had only a vague idea about their problem and so I came to realize that I need to form questionnaires and mock interviews to know about their working environment so as to provide adequate and detailed consultation solutions. So I decide to arrange meeting with the staff members working in different scenarios.

The **second meeting** was arranged with the staff members who handle the goods procurement in the restaurant on 3rd March 2013.

One of the problems that the restaurant faces is efficient procurement of goods. Since the menu of the restaurant is a different ethnic buffet for all the three times of the day, few staff members are always busy preparing and shopping for next meal. The ability to quickly find the goods in the supermarket becomes a tough job to do as the required food items are priced differently at different shops and the price comparisons are not available before hand. Also the logistics of these



items becomes an issue when the shopping is done from multiple shops most of the times.

After the first meeting I tried to come up with the solution to this problem. I came to realize the way mobile technologies could be used to solve this problem and increase the work efficiency. The solution involves building an application where the food items required by the restaurant are formed digitally and they are made available on the field on a mobile device. Also the discounts and price information about the food items can be attained from different shops and the best possible price is given the highest priority. Also the mobile application will form a purchasing route between different shops so as to minimize the time of transit between those shops. Also the information about where these items are found within the shops needs to be implemented by use of Indoor Positioning System technology.

The **third meeting** was arranged on 5th March 2013 with the owners and provide them with the solution of the first problem and explain them how their work efficiency would be increased by such mobile application. The owners were surprised with such solution and could immediately realize the elimination of pain in buying the products on the field. The meeting also then discussed about what types of customers visit the restaurant and how do they become aware of the buffet menu at a particular time of day. They said that the menu was just



available once the customers decide to enter the restaurant and was not available on prior basis with any other means. This made way for how the customer base of the restaurant could be increased by pitching menu information to the potential customers.

The solution involved was again building a mobile application about the restaurant aimed towards the customers. The application will tell the menu of the upcoming meal buffet of the day to the registered customers on the application. This way the customers could also recommend the meals to their friends by means of social media sites like Facebook and hence a better customer base would be developed with time as more customers seem to like the restaurant. Also there was a suggestion from me about how they could inculcate live music bands and orchestras to add an extra attraction to the customers. The same application could be developed further to show possible show opening for different musicians to apply for a particular time.

The **fourth meeting** was again arranged with the owners on 8th March 2013 and explain them how this application would increase their customer base and Customer Experience. It also involved all the staff members and regular loyal customers in the meeting as a Focus Group and evaluate how this mobile application leverages on the inter connection of Customer Experience and development of Customer Base. Interestingly the owners and the customers



involved in the focus group were satisfied and looked forward towards this application.

4. Consultation problem

Some of the issues that this solution is limited upon is the availability of price and discount information from the shop merchants on real time basis. If the prices are not available on quick basis from their database then the best possible price comparisons are not available and hence the restaurant is making bad decisions by means of the application. Also, the mobile application aimed towards the customers needs to be promoted by different channels and identification of these channels and extra costs incurred by the restaurant is an issue of discussion and further analysis.

All these problems and issues are directly affecting the applicability of the mobile technologies on immediate basis and hence re very important. Also the feature aimed at showing live performances by the the musicians needs to be linked with existing music communities on different channels. The registration of these musicians on these channels is not followed thoroughly and also the existence of different channels calls for an integration of database results from these same channels



5. Consultation process

5.1 Meeting/Interactions with customers

Due to the limited means of personnel in the client location, the means of communication was by video conferencing over Skype. The number of consultation hours were recorded and logged in the consultation time sheet on regular basis. The first and the last meeting were aimed towards introduction and conclusion of the consultation process

5.2 Alternative solutions

As discussed, the solutions involved aimed towards improving the work efficiency by increasing the effective way of procuring goods or food items. Also the mobile application intends on increasing the customer base and experience

5.3 Real implementation

The data was collected by the means of questionnaires and story telling from the staff members of the restaurants. The impact of



solution was discussed with the target group in details by means of adequate positive changes brought about in the working environment. I also analyzed the data by holding the focus group meeting including both the customers and the restaurant owners and creating a bridge between the two parties.

5.4 Work plan

The activities were organized in a way that in each meeting I held the interviews and questionnaire session with the restaurant owners and staff members. I discussed about the specific problems and potential areas of improvement in the work flows and work environment. Each meeting was followed by personal brainstorming sessions and research over internet. The innovative solutions generated were the discussed in the next meeting and its impact was studied and discussed with the target group involved. All the meeting were organized by the means of mutual consent over email and initiated by the consulting company.

6. Conclusion"

6.1 The restaurant business involved during this consultation process is a small organization striving towards creating



a brand image of themselves. So the consultation services were quite customized and might not hold exact relevance to other organizations. Although it can be further customized to fit the requirements of similar types of restaurant business or chains. The organization had little to no knowledge about the ICT services and solutions and hence had to be explained in easier terms with means of imaginative impact theory. The use of mobile technologies and its impact on such an organization in regards to increasing work efficiency, customer base and customer experience became evident. Also, since the owners come from American and Indian background respectively, I think as a team they have good knowledge about American Culture and Ethnic Culture of India and other places.

6.2 Your own lesions learned from this consultant practicum.

This consulting practicum provided me the means of handling long distance customers by video conferences. It provided me with the exposure towards American restaurant culture handled by an international team of staff members. Also I developed the temperament of handling a customer that has little knowledge about



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his own problem in detail and needs to be stimulated by means of
questionnaires and interviews to acquire consulting requirements.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Scott'.

Signatures:

Date: 15th March 2013