

Chapter 10

Cardmobili: Innovation Technology in Everyday Life

Cândida Silva

Polytechnic Institute of Oporto, Portugal

Isabel Ramos

University of Minho, Portugal

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The developments of the internet, the proliferation of the use of Web 2.0 tools, and of the technology in general, are leveraging new ways of people to communicate, collaborate, and interact. This new world and new markets, in a daily change, are enabling the emergence of new innovative enterprises and services, taking advantage of the new technologies and of the global network. Cardmobili is a Portuguese start-up company working in the area of mobile services. This company provides a mobile service to manage rewards and membership cards, enabling users to store them in the cloud, while using mobile applications to present them in store, collecting and using the rewards, sharing cards and information with other users and friends in social networks. Cardmobili is linked to merchants' loyalty management systems, enabling users to access exclusive offers, delivered to their mobile application and web account. The company provides complete services to make any loyalty or membership program mobile: branding, new customer registration, integration of customer account balance, mobile vouchers, coupons and offers, and mobile communication.

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COMPANY BACKGROUND

History and Motivation

Cardmobili is a very recent company. Its formal constitution happened in June 2008, but its activity in fact began in February 2009, by hiring a working team of five people - three programmers, one for marketing and communication, and another for sales and management.

They started the implementation of the service in Portugal, but quickly left for internationalization all over the world. By now, the service is launched globally, in four languages (Portuguese, English, Spanish and French), it has users registered from over 20 countries, and the working team grew to 12 collaborators.

The idea of the service arose from a day-to-day problem that the founders were experiencing in their professional lives, with many trips and a huge number of loyalty cards, and the difficulty of bringing all these plastic/paper cards with oneself. They also realized that they needed to use the cards, but for this should not be necessary to “carry” so many plastic cards in their wallet. So, they came up with the idea of dematerialization of plastic cards.

Allied to this idea, was the experience and know-how from the founders to verify that the mobile phone is a key tool in people’s lives, ubiquitous, ensuring proximity between people, is always present, and has many capabilities.

Thus, they came up with the concept of mobile customer loyalty, a virtualization solution for customer loyalty cards, which allows communication between customers and company, and also a marketing tool for businesses.

Service

Cardmobili¹ is a service for registration and management of customer loyalty cards, available to its registered users. The user can subscribe all the loyalty cards, whether belonging to brands avail-

able in the platform or not. He is solely responsible for all the information they record and any activity carried on the website. Users only need to add their cards, and just show the phone in a store. The service is free and includes hundreds of brand cards from all over the world. Users can also get coupons from Cardmobili partners. The mobile application only needs Internet access to synchronize the user cards between the web platform and the mobile phone. The service already has more than 1500 brand cards available.

After entering the cards in the Website, installing the mobile application in the mobile phone and synchronizing them, it is ready to be used. Users can always use the Cardmobili service, even though the companies of their loyalty cards are not clients of the service. They simply need to present the card number at the store from their phone. The service also includes the possibility of cards barcode reading in the phone, being only necessary to use a POS² scanner for reading barcodes. The service cannot be used only at stores that use stamps on the card itself.

The key benefits of the service are: it is free, simple and convenient; the cards are gathered in one place: the mobile phone; subscribing new cards is quick and easy; and the person does not need to carry cards in the wallet.

Market studies have been conducted to analyze the feasibility of introducing this concept in the market, and therefore, if the idea of digital loyalty cards could become a business. First, it was examined if there were already companies that implement this concept, and it was found some solutions were identical, but only in the aspect concerning the mobile applications. Afterwards, they have the need to analyze all the different types of cards in the market and mode of operation, namely, what are the existing cards, which technology they use, what are the costs associated with creating the card, and sending messages and vouchers. Moreover, the market was also analyzed to see which mobile phones are being used by most of the people, if they use applications that

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