



Mobile Strategy - Get it right first time

Ian Patterson, Managing Director of tech specialist DigiPoS Store Solutions, says retailers cannot afford to take a trial and error approach with their mobile strategy - they must get it right first time.

New innovations present opportunities and challenges alike; and embracing the full potential of mobile within the retail environment is no exception.

Those retailers seeking to move with the times and to adopt new technology which challenges 'business as usual' are often required to create a whole new team to manage the earmarked project.

These newly developed teams are generally under pressure to deliver the project to the highest standards, and to develop a robust and 'best of breed' solution both on time and on budget. They will face myriad challenges along the way; from researching the market and competitive landscape, to identifying applicable solutions. From there, they will then work on implementation, roll out and overall project evaluation – it is often a long and drawn out process.

As with any new venture, there is always an element of risk attached to implementing new technology within a business. And, what we have clearly seen is that many retailers have sought to employ domain experts, or to outsource entire projects – perhaps even more so in the current economic climate. Outsourcing to a third party – more often than not – presents a viable option, which will minimise the risk, providing the appropriate service levels are agreed.

But finding the right experts with the right levels of experience can also present a real challenge when it comes to outsourcing. Mobile in retail provides a good example – as retailers begin to explore the new opportunities offered through this channel, they would be well advised to outsource relevant projects to those with domain expertise. Even if the long-term plan is to bring the innovation in-house, utilising industry experience up-front to kick-start a project will reap real return.

Selecting the company to outsource to is a critical decision, and one which is usually determined by time and budget. The key factor, however, should be down to whether or not the supplier has the capability to fully support and deliver the project. I'd argue there are few operating within the mobile arena, who have real on-the-ground experience when it comes to defining and delivering solutions for retailers.

We only have to read the news of retailer closures from recent weeks, to appreciate that the onus is on the high street to innovate, in order to attract and retain customers. I firmly believe that the time has come for retailers to focus on their mobile strategy, and to look at ways they can differentiate themselves through this channel. As I have said before, it will change the face of the sector, but retailers cannot afford to take a trial and error or wait and see approach. Fashions, Harrods, Superdry, Next and Game.

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