Mobile App Design and Test

Innovative iPad application offers competitive advantage to field sales teams

Summary

In the highly competitive world of classified advertising, having a well-organised and suitably equipped field sales team can make all the difference.

The client identified a new iPad application with the ability to help visualise how a potential customer's advert would look across multiple delivery media. The in-house developed tool, the first of its kind anywhere in the world, could offer a massive competitive advantage to the company.

However, following an earlier poorly received iPhone based field sales application, the client turned to Sogeti to help with the critical design and testing phases. Over a three month period, Sogeti helped deliver four continually improving versions to finally reach a live product.

The new application has been successfully deployed to hundreds of staff. Management and sales teams have described it as a "huge competitive advantage" which is helping the client to retain its market leading position.

The Client

An industry leading international directories business operating in the classified advertising market across Europe and the Americas. The client has over 10,000 staff running a multiple billion dollar operation to create and promote a range of printed editions as well as advertising products via the Internet and both fixed and mobile telephone services.

"Mobile application development and testing is a critical requirement for a growing number of organisations. Our work with this client is typical of many of the projects we undertake where stretched internal resources need expert help to create and test applications in an area that they have limited expertise or tight deadlines to contend with."

Nikunj Chadha, Managing Consultant, Sogeti

The Challenge

The client is an established leader in the business directory space and an early adopter of new technology to help drive growth. In such a highly competitive industry with many purely internet based rivals, the firm prides itself on having an active sales force that provides a personal service to clients with direct touch and onsite interaction.

This mobile field sales team has traditionally used laptop based tools to show examples of potential advertising propositions to clients. However, although portable, these laptops still proved cumbersome to operate in busy locations and offered poor connectivity.

With the Arrival of new form factors computers such as the iPhone, the client began a process of developing replacement field sales applications to take advantage of smaller devices, touchscreens, built-in data communication capability and improved reliability.

However, the first set of in-house developed iPhone applications proved unpopular with staff who highlighted bugs, poor design choices and lack of critical features. It was clear that the applications were not well designed and lacked proper testing procedures prior to going live into production.

The Solution

The new iPad offered the client a platform to host its field sales tools that would finally solve the

challenges it had with both its legacy laptop and iPhone sales tools. The larger screen and improved interface could offer a canvas for a better application. Its highly mobile staff would also welcome its great portability coupled with improved battery life.

Recognising the failure of its previous iPhone app and its limited experience in developing and testing iOS applications, it sought help from Sogeti, a key strategic partner that had successfully delivered other critical software deployment and testing projects for its core ERP systems.

Sogeti assembled a team with extensive experience of developing and testing Apple iPad and iPhone applications. Although the client's in-house team would be developing the code, the Sogeti team was brought in at an early stage to provide guidance on key iPad design considerations and to plan the test methodology.

The Benefits

The client had an aggressive go to market time frame. So once versions started to become available, the Sogeti team went into a high intensity test phase using a combination of scripted and exploratory testing. Tests included making sure standard feature and functionality met the design brief as well performance and data integrity testing for back-end systems that needed to communicate with the mobile app. Sogeti also conducted tests using low bandwidth connections, public and private WiFi, encrypted and open networks and a whole host of environmental conditions that could occur out in the field.

Sogeti also did extensive usability and exception testing to ensure that the application experience for the field sales teams was in line with expectation. Working diligently over a 3 month period, Sogeti tested and provided detailed feedback on the initial four versions of the product.

Conclusion

Within just three months, the iPad application, with extended functionality, went fully live in the UK. The client is currently contemplating globally extending its use to several hundreds of field sales staff across their global subsidiaries. The application is described as a "huge competitive advantage" by the client and has helped sales people to be more productive.

The core application has shown no critical bugs following a further few months of intensive real world usage. The success of the iPad application has helped the client enhance its reputation as a technological innovator within its industry sector.

Contact us

To learn how Sogeti's Testing Solutions can help organisations achieve their testing and QA goals, please visit: www.uk.sogeti.com or contact your local testing representative for more information:

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