How AI enables dynamic information access to a truly mobile retail workforce

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Mobile has changed the world

32 million hourly service employees are under performing without access to mobile apps. Less than 10% of retail associates have access to mobile devices, while 85% of consumers do.

**Hourly associates are:**
- Disconnected from peers, business systems & productivity apps
- Dependent on unreliable channels: phone, email, bulletin boards, intranet, cascading, overhead paging and walking around
Why do associates not have access to mobile devices?

Employers of large hourly workforces have tried and struggled using smartphones & tablets as “the single employee mobile device”

Pain points of mobile devices
- Screens create distractions
- BYOD pitfalls
- Loss of productivity
- Hardware management
- High cost
The market is picking winners and losers. Empowered hourly employees create market winners.

- Simple voice commands allow quick access and exchange of information
- No complex software interfaces that create distractions
- Our Intelligent Assistant connects directly with companies’ enterprise systems
- Associates are networked and know what’s going on, how to help and how to get help quickly.
- Every employee has access to our Intelligent Assistant, making them knowledgeable and efficient.
Connect everyone

Talk to any employee in any store, anywhere in the world.

• Manager’s App
  • Live conversations
  • Voice messages
  • Employee location
  • Store announcements

• Associate Wearables
  • 1:1 & 1:group conversations
  • Verbal inbox
  • Indoor location, check inventory, etc.
  • Performance analysis

• Content Distribution Manager
  • Distribute company announcements
  • Executive & management updates
  • Targeted product/strategy bulletins, e.g. product recalls
Our communicator

- **Voice-controlled wearable device** - Light, durable and has a battery that lasts up to 8 hours.

- **SaaS Model** - Hardware is included at no cost, monthly subscription-based service per employee

- **Allocation** - every employee working a shift has a communicator
Our Intelligent Virtual Assistant Makes It All Possible

How Does It Work?

Simply Say...

“Hey John” or “Message John” ...creates a one-to-one chat with or a message for John

“Hey Lumber Team” ...creates a group chat with all Lumber associates

“Where’s John?” ...immediately provides John’s location in the store

“Check inventory” ...to use a SKU to look up product availability or prices

“What’s my next task” ...to query task management system for next assignment

“Notify Security” to instantly alert remote security system of incident or threat

All Using Intuitive Speech
How it works

Locate
One to One
Group Chat
Check Inventory
Request & Respond
Pain Points

- Training
- Discoverability
- UX isn’t one-size-fits-all
- Reaching the right person
Pain Points

• **Training**
  - How do users learn how to use the device and interact with the Intelligent Virtual Assistant?

• **Discoverability**
  - Once they have some idea of how to use the platform, how do users know what the boundaries are – what can the IVA do and not do?

• **Design: does one size fit all?**
  - How to design and adapt to the fact that our users become power users in relatively short order?

• **Reaching the Right Person**
  - a.k.a. “the John problem“ – how to reach the John you meant, rather than the one you didn’t?
Pain Points – Training

• Challenges
  • It’s new technology and a new interface.
  • How do users learn how to use the device – and the apps?

• Solution
  • Rules engine that determines whether a user is brand new and/or struggling.
  • Intelligent Assistant then provides immediate, in-ear training.
Pain Points – Discoverability

• **Challenges**
  • Once they have some idea of how to use it, how do they know what the boundaries are – what’s possible, and what’s not possible?
  • How do users become aware of newly released functionality?
  • Once they know some functionality exists, how do they know what to say?

• **Solution**
  • Track the depth and breadth of the apps that a user has used.
  • Proactively notify users of apps that are available to them and might be useful to them; and give them brief instruction on how to use the app.
Pain Points – User Experience

• Challenges
  • “One size fits all” model for UX doesn’t work!
  • Need to balance the training and discoverability issues with the fact that the majority of our users become power users in relatively short order.
  • Verbose, hand-holdy prompts are useful for new users or for employees that take a while to adapt to the platform. But these kinds of prompts feel slow and inefficient for an expert user who wants to do everything as quickly as possible.

• Solutions
  • The IVA monitors each employee’s behavior and learns what apps a user accesses and how successful or proficient they are in each app.
  • We then tailor the IVA’s interactions to be most suitable for each user and each app.
  • Examples:
    • For proficient users, play shorter, more concise prompts.
    • For non-proficient users, play more contextually helpful prompts and/or provide best practice tips on how to use a particular app.
    • Speed up or slow down the playback of system responses where appropriate.
Pain Points – Reaching the Right Person

• Challenge
  • How do users reach the intended person when there are multiple people with the same (or a phonetically identical) name?
  • How do we disambiguate who they mean?

• Solutions
  • Brute force disambiguation (make the user figure it out)
  • Better yet, figure out the most likely answer(s) based on what we’ve learned about a user over time, based on their history and patterns.
  • Can be as simple as seeing that when they talk to a John, it’s almost always John Smith. Or we can take into consideration other information, e.g. a user frequently talks to the Electrical and Plumbing groups, so prioritize the John that is in those groups.
Summary

• Widescale deployment of an IVA that is an essential work tool is challenging.

• Gaining familiarity with the IVA and learning how to leverage it for various tasks can be difficult for users.

• By learning users’ individual experiences and patterns, we are solving many of these problems and making the IVA a faster, more accurate and more efficient tool for employees.

• As a result, employees are better and more efficient at their job responsibilities; and shoppers have a better experience.
Our clients

Theatro has deployed to:

• 80,000+ users
• 800+ locations
• 20+ Brands

Walgreens  Macy's  Total Wine & More  NORDSTROM
DSW  Neiman Marcus lastcall  Micro Center computers & electronics
VANS "OFF THE WALL"  Frys  LIVING SPACES  Bunnings
Lowe's  The Container Store  CB2  Cabela's
Officeworks  The Home Depot  PETCO
Thank You!

Questions?

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