Product Build

Beauty & Pharmaceutical Retailer

As part of a fast-track ideation and rapid-build development project, gravity9 partnered with MongoDB to help a popular health and beauty retailer and pharmacy build a new Beauty Concierge application to increase customer loyalty and encourage repeat business in the retail domain. Prior to gravity9's involvement, no history of customer consultations or recommendations was stored, meaning returning customers would have to "start over" be re-interviewed, providing them no advantage at this vendor versus their competitors. The client outlined the project requirements, providing a starting point for a more profound consultation process in which gravity9 challenged, revised, and reached a consensus on the form and shape of the project.

A web-based solution was created, tailoring the customer experience via an accessible in-store app. The app maintains customer profiles and preferences allowing consultants to access this information as well as sales logs and KPI's, creating a more personalised, bespoke service unique to the client. The product is built with a .NET Core backend, Angular frontend, and MongoDB database.

The solution has been delivered to the client and initial reception has been extremely positive, with scope for additional functionality, integration, and quality-of-life improvements to be added later. Customers can enjoy a more intimate shopping experience which encourages trust, brand loyalty, repeat business, and increased footfall versus competitors.

Review of Challenges

When a popular health and beauty retailer and pharmacy contacted MongoDB, seeking assistance in delivering their retail Beauty Concierge project, MongoDB recognised that gravity9 were the ideal choice to deliver the project. So began a fast-paced approach to development work which gravity9 have rich experience in; helping clients achieve their goals in short periods of time.

Traditionally, the companies' Beauty Concierges (who provide public customers with consultations on skin-care regimes and beauty product recommendations in high-street retail stores), had no method for tracking their customer's consultations or recommendations. Records of sales were kept as physical notes and then transferred to a basic legacy system for tracking daily sales.

This process is undeniably manual, slow, lacking in detail, impossible to search or track, and omits useful customer information which means the customer must repeat the consultation process with every visit, leaving them frustrated and more open to shopping elsewhere.

The client's request was to develop an application suitable for in-store tablet devices that could track customer consultations, preferences, product recommendations, and sales across all high-street stores. It was also to enable KPI calculation, reporting tools for managers, and allow integration with internal systems for client data tracking. This would allow customer consultations and purchasing histories to be tracked, increasing trust, loyalty and repeat business for their brand.

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Utilised Technology Stack

Cloud: Microsoft Azure

Database: MongoDB

Backend: .NET Core

Frontend: React

Our Approach

With the basic shape of the product understood, gravity9 conducted deeper investigative consultation which reviewed and challenged various requirements and ideas, providing a consensus on the best paths for design and implementation. With this method, gravity9 brought rich experience and insight to the table discussing proposals and solutions not previously considered by the client.

The proposal sits in line with the client's request: gravity9 would build a web-based solution (accessible via desktop, mobile and tablet). This would allow consultants to save their customer consultations (including details of purchased and recommended products and routines, personal information and communication consent preferences).

Our Solution

The delivered solution is developed with a .NET Core backend, Angular frontend, and MongoDB database, using REST HTTP communication to allow integration with the client's system. This allows aggregation of data across the business's stores and systems (and integration with different APIs).

The solution consists of several sections including a consultation form (presented as a stepper component, to be filled in step-by-step), user management, and consultation history for customers. There is also KPI tracking functionality, which allows stores and regional management to review consultant performance and identify trends and analytics. Furthermore, there is integration with their Derm Scan System, providing data about customer skin care scans for use during consultations.

As a proof of concept, it was not necessary to deeply involve UX or Quality Assurance teams in the project. The gravity9 development team used the existing business's online appearance and mimicked the style for a similar look and feel. Functionality was checked with unit testing conducted on the back end and manual testing at the front end.

gravity9 was able to bring our own rich knowledge to the table, for suggestions and solutions not previously considered by the client.

Subsequent Outcomes

The project has been completed by gravity9 and delivered for evaluation and review by the client.

Initial reception has been extremely positive, paving the way for further development of an expanded feature set, additional functionality, integration, and quality-of-life improvements for the end user.

Customers of the retailer benefit from a streamlined, better-informed customer experience. The companies' consultants will be able to provide their customers with better quality of service and track their progress to provide the best recommendations possible for their needs. They'll enjoy a more intimate shopping experience, increased trust and investment towards the company brand and will be more likely to return to them for future business.

Consultants also benefit, with access to better customer and product information at their fingertips as well as a streamlined approach to logging sales, freeing them to focus on providing the best possible customer experience.

The businesses leadership can enjoy more efficient employee processes, accurate sales information, and access to expanded analytics across many touch points of the customer sales and consultation experience across their entire chain of stores. Stepping back further, this should translate to savings in product costs via real-time tracking of most and least popular products as well as increased footfall thanks to improved levels of customer loyalty.

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