

du, the Telco Off to a Flying Start



Country:

United Arab Emirates

Industry:

Telco

Customer:

du

Executive Summary

When the UAE second telecommunications operator, du, decided to roll out a 055 number booking campaign across the Emirates, ITWorx, Egypt's largest professional software services firm, was asked to develop its web registration and booking system. The results? Instant market penetration and a highly impressed user base of half a million future customers. For du NBA innovation and unmatched customer satisfaction, ITWorx was awarded the 2007 Worldwide Microsoft Custom Development Solutions Partner of the Year, Web Development.

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ITWorx joined forces with du in multiple strategic projects and established its name as an innovative trusted partner. We entrusted ITWorx with the core of our pre-launch campaign; the online Number Booking Application. In a market with more than 100% penetration, the rates of early booked numbers exceeded our expectations. ITWorx team was flexible and committed. Most important, ITWorx shared our vision and pursuit of ultimate client satisfaction.

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Osman Sultan,
CEO,
du

The Customer

The UAE second national Telco and the newest service brand of Emirates Integrated Telecommunications Company (a.k.a. EITC), du is the first telco in the Emirates to offer the full spectrum of voice, data, video, and content services over fixed and mobile networks to both residential and business customers.

The Challenge

Prior to the launch of its mobile services in the first quarter of 2007, du rolled out an integrated marketing plan with two key objectives: to create a distinguished image for itself within the UAE telco market, and to establish an initial and reputable customer base. A key component of this marketing plan was its pre-launch number booking campaign, named '055 My Number'.

The concept behind 055 My Number was simple; to enable potential consumer and business customers in the UAE to book and purchase their preferred 055-prefixed mobile phone number online. The challenge however was that this process be quick, simple, and effective to impress customers from the off and create a positive brand experience for would-be du phone service subscribers. In addition, the process should handle massive numbers of customer requests, concurrently, without affecting its stability, and be secure enough for customers to complete their payment process online.

Technologies and Software

- Microsoft .NET 1.1
- Microsoft SQL Server 2005
- Microsoft Reporting Services
- Microsoft Integration Services
- Microsoft Remoting Services
- Web Services
- Microsoft Ajax

The Solution

With its background in application development, ITWorx proposed the implementation of an exclusive, secure, and reliable web-based number registration and booking system named Number Booking Application (or NBA). This solution would be designed to allow both local UAE citizens and expatriate residents alike to key in their preferred 055 mobile numbers using online registration forms following a series of clearly explained steps. ITWorx would fully engineer this successful Web application, factoring in and providing system security, high availability, and fully optimized performance.

ITWorx carried out the NBA development process working hand in hand with du, firstly by developing a thorough understanding of the telco's particular business requirements and processes. These needs were subsequently translated by ITWorx team into detailed functional work modules and then shortly after into targeted objectives with accompanying deadlines. For example, a comprehensive and detailed set of du business rules were applied, including the division of received customer data into individual and business user groups as well as the categorization of mobile numbers into regular, silver, gold, and platinum groups. Of course, the website and booking system ITWorx created also needed to be fully bilingual and easy for internet users of all abilities to follow.

The first function of the NBA was to keep a record of every booking request made by a user. The NBA could handle large numbers of concurrent requests; mounting up to 3500 requests per hour on the first days of the launch. As designed, the application then ran an intensive analysis of this data based on du market segmentation and business rules. Such critical and confidential information was protected using ITWorx strict security measures. Using different infrastructure hardening techniques, secure coding practices, and penetration testing procedures, from day one the NBA was a completely secured application.

Once a number had been allocated, an SMS message from du was automatically sent to each user via their SMS service provider, a smooth process thanks to the NBA's seamless integration with the SMS service provider and payment gateway.

Each and every such SMS included a unique pass code, enabling the user to continue the online purchasing process. The purchasing process supported simultaneous payment gateways to ensure reliability and high availability of the application as well as secured transactions. The payment transactions were authenticated and processed through secured Https. The NBA then registered the user's payment transaction to be sent to du billing system to close the number booking and purchasing process.

In order for du team to gain ownership of the data stream created, ITWorx included within NBA various simple-to-use 'dashboard' software management interfaces. These enabled du staff to create and view usable reports displaying the system's performance and presenting analytical data with which to predict future subscriber behavior and booking rates.

The Benefits

More demand than anticipated

From the launch of the 055 campaign in mid-November, through its extension in December due to unprecedented demand and on to its finish in mid-January 2007, du pervasive marketing campaign and ITWorx NBA worked together to help du strongly infiltrate the UAE telco market. The demand was so huge that du acquired a remarkable market share: approximately 12% (500,000) of the UAE residents signed up for mobile numbers.

Huge take-up

055 My Number also produced some extraordinary numbers of its own during its seven-week run. It received an average of 3500 055 number requests per hour and over 100,000 booking requests were received within just the first two days of the campaign. This prodigious start was just the beginning however, with over 750,000 mobile numbers booked by the campaign's close.

Instant positive impact in the market

As such, thanks in no small part to ITWorx faultless booking system, du managed to effectively address its target market segments - signing in opinion leaders, early adopters, and thousands upon thousands of regular mobile users. In addition du immediately positioned itself, in the minds of users, as the operator of choice in the UAE; a professional provider of mobile services with a core emphasis on customer satisfaction and the professionalism to provide it. In short, the NBA impressed users with its speed, accuracy, and stability, and in turn sent du off to a flying start.

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