



Coffee Breaks Transformed

Costa personalise the coffee break experience

COSTA

Digital Transformation may be one of the most overused phrases in the IT lexicon, but at its heart is the concept of enhanced customer service – the drive to give people exactly what they want, when, where and how they want it, and to make purchasing an easy, speedy, enjoyable experience.

That's exactly what Costa Coffee has done with a major programme of front and middle house innovation currently rolling out across the organisation. With several major cross-company transformations, the project is creating a stir in the industry due to the scale of its achievement and the short time it's taken to deliver it.

The programme involves:

- Introducing its customers to a new, state-of-the-art digital proposition
- Replacing the company's current till estate with a new EPOS platform and training staff to use it
- Selecting and delivering a new finance platform for the Roastery, which prepares and packages coffee for Costa's 3,000 plus shops around the world
- Integrating the new systems into the business – delivering a middleware layer to enable change to be delivered at pace

Steve Sharp, director at Searchlight Consulting, who worked with Costa to devise, manage and deliver the programme recalls how it all started: "In November 2015, Costa's CIO undertook a review of the company's IT capability. He brought us in to look at Costa's IT strategy and align it with the business strategy, and from there we

worked together to take it to the Board and draw up a road map for delivery in 2016."

"At the heart of the programme is how Costa seamlessly interact with their customer using a cloud based integration platform to enable different channels and technologies to come together to provide a consistent business process," explains Steve. "Costa have introduced 106 API's in three months, which should usually have taken about two years at three times the cost."

The digital proposition has been further enhanced with a new app, developed by Costa's new digital team at parent company Whitbread's headquarters. Searchlight worked with Costa CIO to bring digital development capability back in-house, after it had been sourced to a third party, and have worked with the team to identify features and requirements and crucially, to integrate the app with back end solutions such as finance and the loyalty platform.

Not only will the app fulfil the functions of a loyalty card – customers will simply swipe it at the new till system to receive points, offers and review their balances, it will enable other services such as store finding, pre-ordering and pre-payment. Costa's focus was to enhance the customer experience – when you have a coffee, you're giving yourself a treat. You feel good, and the goal was to make the experience as positive as possible. Today's customers have very specific sets of wants and needs. Busy professionals want to be able to order and pay for their coffee while still on the train, for example. People working on their laptops in the coffee shops prefer to order from their tables, and nobody likes queuing

so we aimed to make transactions quicker, easier and more convenient than ever before.

“We set out an ambitious plan to put in place the capabilities that would enable Costa to place the customer at the heart of its proposition. But more importantly, our strategy focused on ensuring that we understood our customers and were able to evolve our service and product offering at pace. In 2016, we have delivered the foundations in terms of loyalty, EPOS, integration connectivity and digital capabilities, which will be further leveraged in 2017. Steve and The Searchlight Team have worked with Costa to shape and then deliver the transformation – they really understood our challenges and helped us navigate through the complex transition and continue to help leverage the new platforms.”

– COSTA CIO

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Notes for editors:

Searchlight Consulting (the trading name for Searchlight Business Services Ltd) specialises in IT-enabled business transformation for customer-facing businesses, helping them connect with their customers, accelerate change, work smarter and increase value. Our services enable clients to align their IT and business strategies, define business and IT operating models, select and implement the right digital and enterprise solutions for their business journey. And, using our unique Beacon Delivery Framework, we help to reduce the risk and increase the certainty of successful implementations.

Searchlight Consulting was founded in 2008 by Steve Sharp (ex-Xansa, Capgemini). After six successful years of trading, Steve teamed up with Bryan Oak (ex-CSC, Xansa, IBM, Atos). Today, the company has over 300 senior level Associates who bring high quality experience across a range of business areas and a multitude of industries.

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