Retail Innovation Shout Out: Grocery’s Early Adoption of Localized, Real-Time Marketing

by Sara Hesson

As part of its Mobile to Mortar™ platform, inMarket began rolling out Bluetooth LE iBeacons to over 200 grocery stores in the Seattle, San Francisco and Cleveland areas, including Safeway and Giant Eagle. iBeacons are small, low energy (LE) location-based technology devices that communicate with smartphones like iPhone and Android. These tiny devices are picked up (when within thirty feet or so) and interpreted by a variety of apps - and could forever revolutionize how consumers interact with physical retail stores.

iBeacon technology in a retail context is advantageous over GPS and Wi-Fi for a few reasons. First, it’s very low power consuming. Second, iBeacons are hyper-local as compared to GPS, allowing the installer to pinpoint smartphones within a few feet the product location. Third, iBeacon technology is opt-in, meaning that the consumer will only receive advertisements, store and product data if he or she “opts in”.

The power of iBeacon technology in retail lies in the ability to provide the consumer real-time information and promotions while the consumer is physically inside or very nearby the store and at that critical point of decision. This allows retailers and consumer brands to customize the retail experience, engage the consumer, deliver enhanced benefits and – most importantly – drive increased store sales.

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