DEMO Fall 09: The "Smart Money" Category

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The Smart Money category at Demo 09 made one point clearly: the smart money is betting on mobile payment systems. Adding to these were a variety of financial innovations that were focused on everything from a revised take on the ATM to a credit rating service for small business.

Freeddom Technologia presented a fully SMS and pin verification based mobile payment platform that is completely merchant and customer accessible with current application in their primary launch market of Sao Paulo. Merchants can set up an online store through their SIM card, accept mobile payments, and even offer credit to customers at competitive rates. Customers can make payments with PIN verification and web integration is possible with payments from an online site directly on one's mobile.

There are times when the success of a company's product is based on the widespread adoption of a technology. Molo Rewards is that product and the widespread adoption of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) is that technology. MoLo rewards would eliminate paper coupons by allowing the scan of your phone at grocery store isles beside an item; discounts can be integrated into items and then be scanned by phone; time stamps can even be set on products to give a discount window as was shown in the DEMO presentation with the pasta that was only on sale only in the morning. Great product, but all of this is dependent on the adoption of RFID.

Just in case you were thinking about how to monetize the estimated $50 billion paid in cash to employees each year, Point of Wealth Systems is right there with you. Their mobile ATM is in a way the opposite of an ATM; installed on-site in cash payment establishments such as restaurant and bars, it takes in cash and allows those funds to be directed to a set of options that differentiate the product from a typical bank-operated ATM. Users can, for example, contibute to their IRA, fund a debit check card, or even contribute funds to a specified charity right at the point of deposit with 100% of the funds being allocated to the cause. With a planed nation-wide roll-out and international partnerships being considered, Point of Wealth Systems is betting on finding an audience for their take on the ATM.

What was better? The energy infused into the audience by Cazoodle's presentation or their new Cazoodle Shopping Beta. Although not as popular as other apartment search aggregators based on traffic alone, one can argue that the quality and expanse of results of Cazoodle Apartment search is among the best. What they do with apartments–giving more listings than other aggregators and generating these listings organically–Cazoodle now does for consumer electronics. Their presentation was simple: first we search for a laptop on every other major consumer search portal, then we search for the same laptop on our portal, and immediately the abundance of results on Cazoodle, the ability to sort through by color or item model, and the rapidity of the results generation is clearly evident.

Closing out the group were Piryx and Cortera. Priyx provides effective, social media integrated, and individually customizable payment platforms for social commerce. They have a list of third party apps that makes the integration of their payment platform even easier and Piryx's services are currently being used by prominent social campaigns. Cortera provides a corporate focused product with effective crowd integration: it is, in effect, an online small business exchange that provides not only business information but more importantly a credit ranking system for small business based on both data and community. The Corera Credit Exchange aims to be a market leader in creating an effective credit system for the small business community throughout the United States.

(Photo by Demo Conference)

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