

TIME AND BUDGET SAVER FOR OUTLET INSPECTION

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The company

JTI (Japan Tobacco International) is a leading international tobacco company, which makes and sells some of the world's best-known brands including Winston, Camel and Mevius.

JTI Stats

Today JTI does business in more than 100 countries, it has over 26,000 employees and is currently represented across 120 countries with the headquarters in Geneva. JTI opened its branch in Belarus in 1998.

Here it represents such well-known brands as Sobranie, Camel, Mevius, Winston, LD, Glamour, Monte Carlo.

It has more than 200 employees and operates in all country regions. In 2015 the company was awarded the certificates "Top Employer Belarus 2015", "Top Employer Europe 2015" and "Top Employer Global 2015".

Business Objectives

- Cut costs on outlet inspection staff
- Eliminate data losses

Date Completed

03 August 2013

Time Terms

1.5 month

The Team

The team working on the project included:

- Business Analyst
- UI Designer
- Android Developer
- Quality assurance specialist
- Project Manager

Technologies

- SQLite
- Android SDK 2.1

Platforms

- Android

“ The solution provided eases the data collecting process in outlets and helps save the budget up to 67%

The problem

Every year the company has to inspect all retail outlets where its production is represented. In this regard, it hires employees called outlet agents who get a special form to find out about the sales result, the placement of the product, the condition of the shop etc. Outlet agents spend about an hour to inspect one shop (4-5 shops a day) and then they have to come back to the office and type in the information on the computer which takes them about a half an hour more (per shop). The solution provided helped to save approximately one hour on inspecting and describing just one shop.

The solution

We suggested creating an application for the special corporate smartphones being used by the agents, which would allow to input the information being inside the shop. The application eases the data collecting process providing special intelligent templates with forms to fill in and lists to choose from. Every template is generated automatically, depending on the type of the store.

The data is collected and sent to the backend in a format, that requires no additional preparation. The application structures the information and the outlet agents are able to adjust the form and the questions to the outlet chosen. When the work is done, all the gathered information is sent to the cloud database for further analysis and decision making. It is also possible to take some photos and attach them to the form.

The process

Step 1

The first meeting where our business analyst was discussing the task and deadlines with the JTI officials showed that a lot of work should be done to clear the goals and get the right understanding of the working process. Our business analyst had to interview all the stakeholders to get a clear idea of the working process and was able to find some problem areas in it, after what the business vision was formulated.



"There were quite a lot of stakeholders in the system (sales department managers, IT department managers, outlet agents) and our first aim was to meet all their requirements although they sometimes contradicted one another. Eventually, we were able to find the best solution that turned to be the most effective and suited everyone."

(Business analyst)

Step 2

When the business vision was approved, to integrate the application with the existing IT backend infrastructure, our team also held the investigation of the existing infrastructure and consultations with the client side tech. teams.



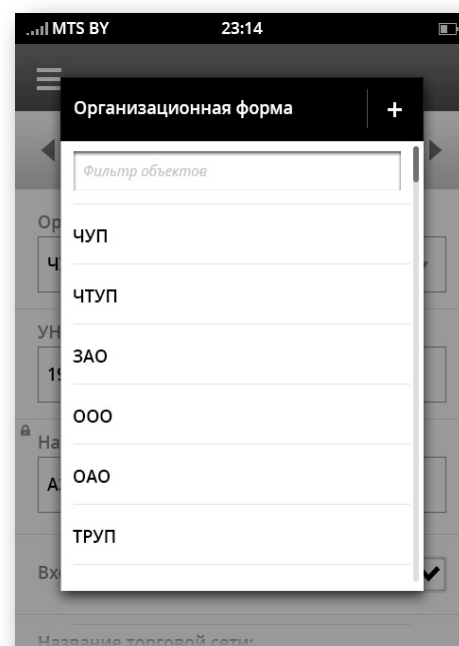
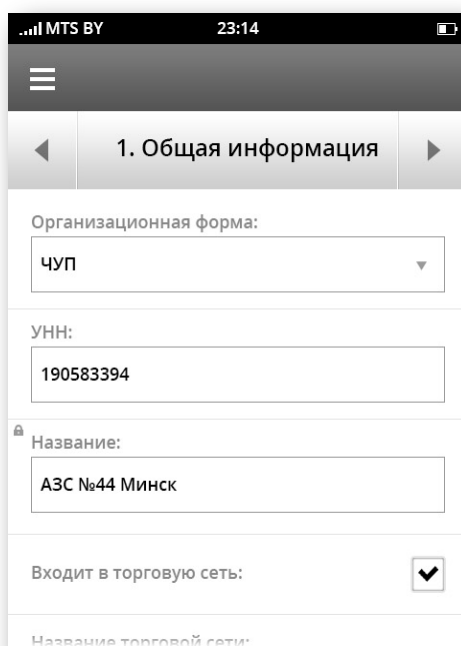
"The main challenge for the technical team was to find a balance between supporting old IT systems of the company and implementing new technologies in developing mobile applications. We have managed to do that by using a distributed application structure"

(Tech lead)

Step 3

Having sketched the future User Experience (UX) and User Interface (UI), the team of the Business Analyst and the UI designer set up the UX prototype to present to the stakeholder's board for intermediate review and feedback.

Already at the prototyping stage, the team showed the inclination to combine the best practices of Android Guidelines (for that period of time) with taking into account the collected preferences of the potential users. Due to it, the subsequent presentation showed the UX prototype met almost all the stakeholders' requirements, so after several minor changes the UX project was approved.

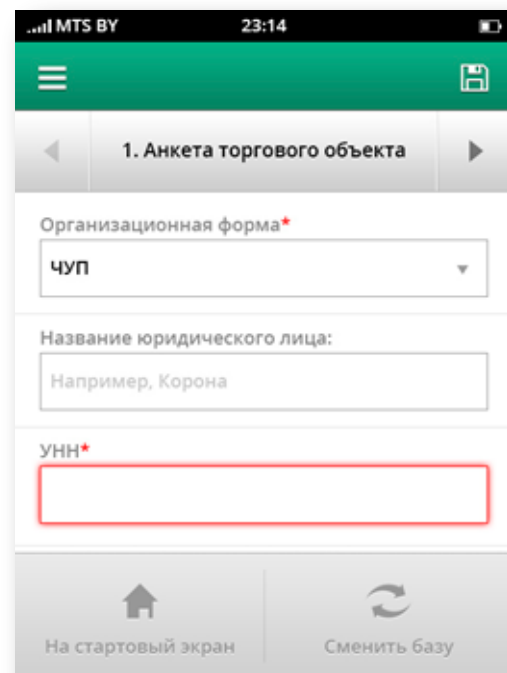
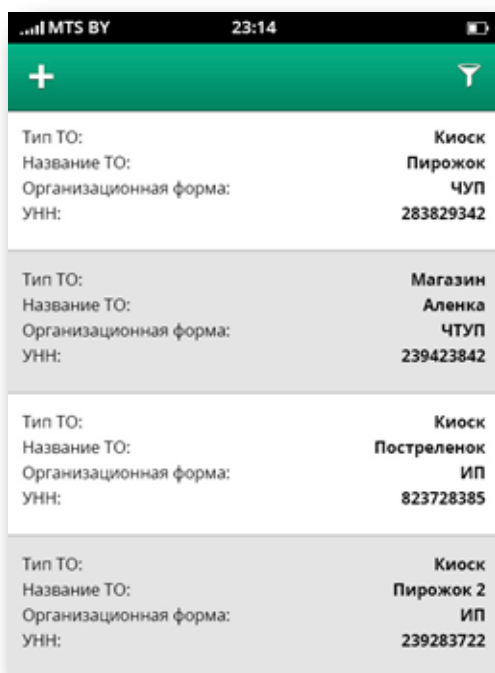


Step 4

Basing on the approved UX project, and the results of steps 1 and 2, the business analyst started to compile the specification, that would cover all the aspects of the application functioning, in terms of user experience, integration with the existing infrastructure, and meeting the business goals. When ready, we presented the specification to the client, to make sure our vision on the details of application functioning was still in line with the ones of the client's. As the specification was based on the materials that had got the client's previous approval, the process of confirmation did not take a long time.

Step 5

After that, the UI designer started to work on the final version of the design: he drew the ready-to-market UI, taking into account the peculiarities of the client's unified smartphones model range (every outlet agent used a smartphone of the same model); introduced the traits of JTI corporate style; and created the screen compilation for the developers. The final design also went through the procedure of approval, which we got having covered a couple of corporate style preferences. Afterwards, our team proceeded to development.



Step 6

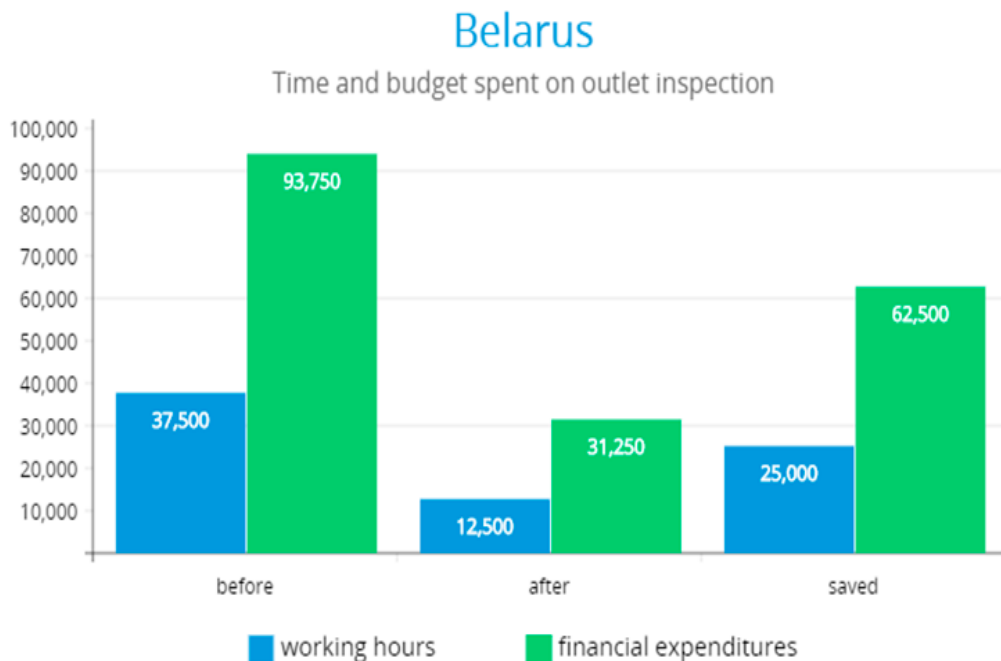
The application development process took about 1.5 months and was carried out by using the waterfall model with the clearly defined scope and deliverables to meet the company's needs. The reporting process consisted of a report and a collective phone call twice a week, and a weekly on-site meeting with the product owner. The quality assurance was included into the process as well.

Step 7

The application was tested on a small area in Minsk and some features for better usability were implemented. The application was released in Minsk and then followed by the areas of the whole of Belarus and Kazakhstan.

Conclusion

We have created an application for special corporate smartphones (used by outlet agents) that makes the data collecting process much easier by providing templates with forms to fill in and lists to choose from. As a result, the outlet agents do not waste time on writing reports, so they are able to inspect more retail outlets. This helped to save about 62 500 dollars per year in Belarus alone. Moreover, all the information collected is saved in the cloud database just after the outlet has been inspected. The solution suited all company's stakeholders and was spread on two more larger areas.



The chart shows the decrease in the amount of working hours and finance expenditures (US dollars) spent on the inspection of all outlets, along with the hours and finance saved due to the usage of the application.



"Though the amount of work done for the project was not too big, the team has implemented the solution which has greatly improved the efficiency of the business process in the company and has become a benchmark for JTI offices in other countries."

(Project manager)