SYKES Assistance Services Corp: BlackBerry Usability Testing

A global leader in customer contact management, SASC provides an array of services and solutions to Fortune 1000 companies in communications, financial services, healthcare, technology transportation and other industries. Since 1977, the company's mission has been to make their clients more efficient and profitable while improving brand loyalty.

One of the many ways SASC accomplishes this is by developing mobile applications for its clients. In 2011, as the company put the finishing touches on a custom **BlackBerry application**, Drew Lidkea (Director of Client Relations) and Laura Young (Coordinator of Client Satisfaction) were required to **test the usability of the application with real-life users**.

As Laura searched for a testing partner, she found that boutique agencies were expensive and time-consuming, whereas outsourcing firms were not equipped with the necessary devices. At that point, she turned her attention to crowdsourcing, where she discovered uTest's global community of professional testers.

This case study will show how SASC tested the usability of their BlackBerry application with uTest's community of software-savvy professionals. Topics will include the quality of user feedback, device coverage, uTest's project management team and more.

Testing Projects @ a Glance

- **Testers:** 20 testers per release
- **Geographic Coverage:** Canada
- **Testing Type:** Usability
- **App Type:** Mobile
- **OS:** BlackBerry (5.0 and higher)

Customer Spotlight

- **Location:** London, Ontario
- **Industry:** Emergency Systems
- **Company Size:** 1,800+ worldwide
- **Dev Methods:** All software applications developed in-house

Testing Scope and Objectives

Drew explained that the application – a roadside assistance app for a major OEM – had passed with flying colors in terms of functionality…with the in-house staff. But how would non-biased users respond to the application?

"Our primary goal was **to get objective feedback** from people with no vested interested in our product or company," explained Drew. "We thought the app was functional, intuitive and frankly, pretty cool. But we wanted to make sure we weren't the only ones who felt that way."

With the help of a dedicated usability expert (there's one assigned to every usability project), Drew and Laura would establish their testing scope and objectives in terms of the following:

- **Devices**: For this project, all participants were required to have BlackBerry OS versions 5.0 and up
- **Features**: All features and functionality of the app were in scope, including installation, setup and others
- **Feedback**: In addition to free-form comments, testers answered a series of multiple choice questions
- **Location**: All of the participants were required to be residents of Canada
- **Experience**: Participants needed to range from smartphone "power users" to novices

With the testing scope and instructions complete, testers began the full-scale review of the application.

Test Cycle Results

In addition to being able to review feedback through uTest's online platform, Drew and Laura received a custom report from their dedicated usability expert. In all, the insight they were able to capture was well worth the investment.

"I really like the ability to go online to read comments and interact with testers," said Drew. "The reports were great as well. It's a very easy model to work with."

As for the feedback itself:
"The quality of comments was terrific," said Drew. "The testers weren't just running through the application - they provided useful feedback every step of the way. There were some really neat suggestions and recommendations from users, with good criticism as well."

Summary and Next Steps

For less money than a typical boutique agency – and in less time than an offshoring firm – uTest was able to provide SASC with comprehensive usability testing of their BlackBerry app prior to launch. Like other uTest customers, it didn't take long for SASC to realize the unique value that crowdsourcing provides.

"This was our first foray into crowdsourced testing, so we didn't know what to expect, but it turned out to be a cost-effective way to get valuable user feedback," said Drew. "We're now big promoters of uTest."
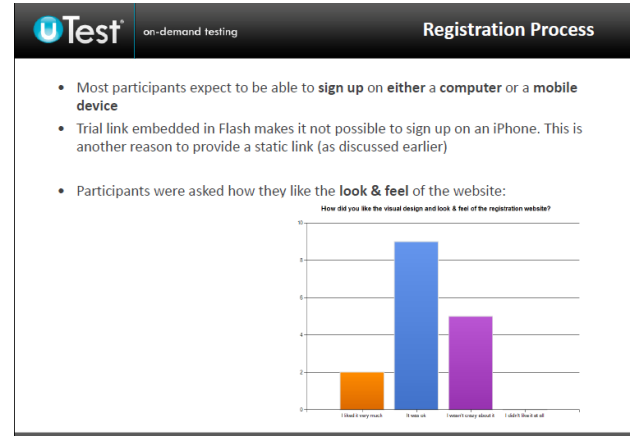

Figure1: Sample page of uTest's custom usability reports (not an actual customer)

For more on how uTest can help your own company improve the testing process, check us out online at **www.utest.com** or call **1 (800) 445-3914**.

In their own words…

On crowdsourced usability testing:

"This was our first foray into crowdsourced testing, so we didn't know what to expect, but it turned out to be a cost-effective way to get valuable user feedback. We're now big promoters of uTest."

On the value of user feedback:

"The quality of comments was terrific. The testers weren't just running through the application - they provided useful feedback every step of the way."

On the uTest advantage:

"We thought the app was functional, well-designed and frankly pretty cool, but we wanted to make sure we weren't the only ones who felt that way. That's where uTest made the biggest difference."

- Drew Lidkea
Director of Client Relations, SYKES Assistance Services

In-The-Wild Testing for Functional + Security + Load + Localization + Usability