

Mobile Sales Platform Reappropriated as Employee Training & Alert System

By Tristan Lejeune
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Ara Ohanian calls K-Tango his “fourth child,” after the three biological ones, and lately, his youngest kid is going through some growth spurts.

Originally a mobile sales enablement platform, Infor’s K-Tango has recently been appropriated by fast-food company Sonic as a training and alert system for the chain’s nationally dispersed workforce. Sonic had “very little budget to use toward a mobile solution,” says e-learning manager Stephany Wilson, but they “needed a solution that allowed [them] to make updates” in real-time.

“The tool also provides us with the ability to send out critical food safety alerts to all store managers instantly,” says Wilson, who adds that “the ability to upload video was also critical to our development. K-Tango allows us to upload training videos which then are automatically formatted for viewing based on the device accessing it. I only have to upload the video once, the tool handles the rest.”

Ohanian, vice president and general manager of Infor learning technologies around K-Tango, says as companies are “rethinking employee training from being a back-office thing, to a front-office, revenue-generating activity,” they’ll need digital-speed programs and platforms to help them do it. Ohanian recently discussed the past, present and future of K-Tango with EBN, as well as specifically where he sees this dance going.

Tell us about your fourth child.

Ohanian: K-Tango. The name created had a meaning behind it. We looked at what was happening in the marketplace with our customers, and we can bring them technologies to train people, especially with sales forces and anyone who’s around distribution, but unfortunately products and processes change so rapidly that the thought that anyone could remember everything at once just didn’t make sense. In addition to a product to prepare talent to perform better, why don’t we put in their hand mobile technology, call it an electronic cheat sheet on steroids that would allow them to have access to knowledge and information in a variety of forms.

The background of why we called it K-Tango – the K standing for “knowledge” – is that a lot of time live customers have a lot more information than those who represent the product, so they’re not really in sync. Being in sync with your customer in terms of knowledge will greatly better your relationship and sell more product. It’s the same thing with the dancing tango, if you have two partners and one is not in sync it’s not a beautiful dance.

There are a few constant concepts behind K-Tango that are critical, and that’s where the change in the way knowledge is being imparted. One was we realized the traditional provider of knowledge had been the subject matter expert, the recipient had been the person who performed – the salesperson, the partner – and that had changed. Because of collaboration and rapidly moving consumer needs, a lot of the knowledge shifted to the person touching customers. We decided to democratize the sharing of knowledge. The recipient of knowledge has become the most important contributor of knowledge.

The second thing is we needed to increase communication between headquarters and the field. As the products of our customers change more and more often, one of the problems was by the time you’d create a knowledge initiative to prepare and train your organization to sell and support that product in the market, often that material is obsolete as soon as it has launched. So we said we need to have a different way of doing it. ... Whether it was an imitative or a product – maybe a recall – you need to have a rapidly aligned sales force.

And finally the third one was to be able to personalize your knowledge environment. We created a training system where the unit of knowledge is no longer the “lesson,” but contextually relevant business information. And then we provided tools to anyone who’s on the user side to configure what is most important to them, so that each individual who is receiving knowledge through accessing K-Tango has a unique experience based on their own environment.

What is it that you think really sets K-Tango apart from other platforms and information delivery systems?

Ohanian: The first one is speed. Some industries are changing so rapidly that the traditional way of accessing [information] isn’t enough. It’s not enough [just] to be mobile, you also need to have speed for information. Doing this required creating an environment that puts information at your fingertips, both in terms of inputting and exporting. Today most companies that have created mobile apps around products, they’re mostly created around a specific platform, whether it’s an IOS or whatever. And your individuals use multiple ones, so you have to have multiple systems to support it. So we built it to go from multiple streams to single-stream.