



Bharti Airtel: Offering mobile education to improve spoken English and enhance career chances

Global telecommunications giant Bharti Airtel's mEducation services mirror a classroom experience on a mobile technology platform, making education more convenient, accessible and affordable. Spoken English is one such innovative service which has been launched in partnership with Aptech, one of India's leading training providers and Hungama Digital Media Entertainment Pvt Ltd., South Asia's largest digital entertainment company. A novel voice-based course for mobile customers, it has been designed for young learners who cannot afford the time or money, or both, to enrol for regular classes and uses the native language of the customer. It is available across India to all Bharti Airtel mobile customers allowing them access to affordable services on the go, anytime, anywhere, and has received an overwhelming response in a short timeframe.

- The advantages of Bharti Airtel Spoken English:**
- 3-month course on your mobile phone focussed on 'Workplace English'
 - mirrors a classroom experience with a real teacher taking classes
 - short audio lessons with lots of practice, weekly recap of the lessons
 - real-time speech recognition gives instant feedback and improves pronunciation
 - voice-based question and answer sessions at the end of every lesson to test understanding
 - voice-based regular assessment through weekly and monthly tests
 - two SMS messages a day to reinforce vocabulary and/or application of the day's lesson
 - live expert help available to answer questions.



Learners

The Spoken English course is designed for young people (aged 18–30) in full-time entry-level jobs, such as secretary, junior government official and account executive, IT staff, trader, frontline staff, retail staff, medical representatives, insurance agent, and the self-employed in small and medium-sized companies. It is also relevant for first-time job seekers.

These young people possess a basic knowledge of the English language and want to improve their career opportunities. They therefore need to improve their ability to converse fluently and confidently in English but lack the time and/or money to enrol in a classroom.

Key partners

Bharti Airtel Limited is a leading integrated telecommunications company with operations in 20 countries across Asia and Africa. Bharti Airtel launched

their mEducation services in January 2012, offering mobile customers across the country easy access to a range of education services, including language skills, entrance exam preparation and career counselling from industry veterans any time, anywhere at affordable prices.

For more information see www.airtel.in/education/

Aptech is a leading IT education institute and pioneer in IT software and hardware training. They have trained more than 6.5 million students through a network of education centres in 40 countries for international certification exams held by major IT companies like Oracle, Java, Microsoft and Red Hat.

For more information see www.aptech-education.com/

Hungama Digital Media Entertainment Pvt Ltd. along with Aptech, powers education services on the digital platform. It is the largest aggregator, developer, publisher and distributor of Bollywood and South-Asian entertainment content in the world. As a Digital Media company it has partnerships with over 400 content creators, record labels, studios, broadcasters, game publishers and has licensed worldwide exclusive digital rights to over half a million music and video titles. Hungama serves content to consumers in 47 countries across mobile, internet, IPTV services and has more than 150 partners across the world. The business has built its expertise in the following areas - mobile content, mobile marketing and mobile media.

For more information, please visit www.hungama.org

Core technologies

The mEducation services are based on IVR (interactive voice response), SMS or WAP (Wireless Application Protocol) format and offer interactive learning in the native language of the customers.

Learning content

The Spoken English course has been designed on the IVR format, supplemented by SMS and accessed on a toll-free number. It starts with an optional 'pre-test' to determine current proficiency and based on the results customers are recommended one of two levels – Basic or Advanced. Each level lasts three months (90 days) and customers are allowed to change their level once during the course if they decide they are on the wrong level.

Over the three months, the course offers:

- five lessons per week of about 6–7 minutes each
- one recap (summary) lesson per week
- weekly tests
- monthly recap and monthly tests
- voice-based end-of-course assessment consisting of 25 questions and leading to certification by Aptech.

The audio lessons and tests are offered over IVR, supplemented by two SMS messages every day, with vocabulary and instructions for key applications of the words from the day's lesson. Keeping in mind the evolving needs of the consumer, the service content is regularly upgraded to ensure that the best content is offered to its customers at all times.

Each lesson consists of:

- an interactive class on a topic such as dealing with customers, colleagues, seniors and juniors in day-to-day office situations
- vocabulary and pronunciation practice
- multiple choice questions to test understanding.



“English is required in our daily use. I like the way the teacher explains everything. We learn a lot by repeating and the weekly summaries help us remember.”

Testimonial from a customer

Teaching and learning

Every course in Bharti Airtel's mEducation portfolio has been designed with the end consumer in mind – this is why the native language of customers in different geographical locations is used as the instruction language for the Spoken English course. Technological innovations, such as automatic speech recognition with instant feedback for pronunciation practice, and multiple-choice questions on IVR, are used to personalise the experience.

Learners also receive text messages to remind them of missed classes, or wish them the best for upcoming tests, etc. thus ensuring an interactive and supportive learning process.

Solution support

Customers subscribing to the service receive a toll-free short code that they can dial from their mobile phone to access the course. Each time they dial in, they are taken to where they last left off so they can continue their lesson. They also have the option to repeat lessons if they want to.

Business model

The Spoken English course is available at a daily subscription of Rs. 5/day with 10 minutes of free usage per day. This allows the customer to complete one lesson for Rs. 5. The course lasts for 90 days, with an automatic renewal on the daily subscription.

“English has become very important for conversing with others. This course on the mobile phone gives us an opportunity to learn English at our own convenience.” **Testimonial from a customer**

Bharti Airtel customers can call a toll-free number to subscribe to the course, or send an SMS, or optionally dial a USSD string. If the customer confirms their intent to subscribe, Rs. 5 is deducted from their mobile account and they are automatically placed on the daily subscription plan.

Success to date

Even though awareness of the Spoken English course has been driven using traditional tools, the customer conversion rate has been exceptionally high, which suggests growing acceptance of the mobile phone as a means of learning.

Key features of successful learning on mobile devices:

- short, crisp learning modules, with the teaching component limited to 2–3 minutes
- defining a learning objective at the beginning of the lesson and providing a summary at the end
- as much interaction in the lesson as possible – through multiple choice questions, pronunciation practice through speech recognition, repetition after the teacher
- question and answer sessions at the end of the lesson so the learner can assess their understanding
- opportunity to learn at own pace by offering to repeat a lesson, rewind, forward
- regular reinforcing what is learnt (weekly/ monthly) through recap sessions and assessments
- an opportunity to talk to a live person in order to clear doubts and practice.

Lessons learnt

- It is helpful to mirror the classroom environment with a ‘teacher figure’ and a course structure. Customers subscribing to the service progress by completing one lesson before going to the next, but they can learn at their own pace as long as they complete the course within a stipulated time period.
- The content must be relevant, engaging and designed specifically for mobile learning. This, combined with a classroom atmosphere and a teacher, has helped to drive usage.
- Regular sessions with live experts allow customers to address their concerns and practise what they have learnt. They also introduce an element of personalisation, which helps increase engagement.
- Customers appreciate the daily text messages, especially as they are in a written format and can be referred back to whenever required.
- The product must be designed for customers’ needs and deliver on its promise.

In summary, mobile education services can be very successful if they:

- solve a specific need for the customer – especially related to upskilling
- show a tangible benefit, such as a certificate from a recognised authority or possibly a link to placements
- have good quality content
- are interactive and engage the customer
- are customised and personalised.

“English will help me progress. I had failed in English in my high school. But now at least I can learn to speak. They keep asking us to repeat till we get the words right – that is a good thing.”

Testimonial from a customer



About Bharti Airtel

Bharti Airtel Limited is a leading global telecommunications company with operations in 20 countries across Asia and Africa. Headquartered in New Delhi, India, the company ranks amongst the top four mobile service providers globally in terms of subscribers. In India, the company's product offerings include 2G, 3G and 4G wireless services, mobile commerce, fixed line services, high speed DSL broadband, IPTV, DTH and enterprise services including national and international long distance services to carriers. In the rest of the area it offers 2G and 3G wireless services and mobile commerce. Bharti Airtel had over 275 million customers across its operations at the end of May 2013. To know more please visit www.airtel.com

Contact

For more information contact:
Ankur Jain
ankur5.jain@in.airtel.com

About the GSMA Connected Living programme

Connected Living is a market development initiative whose mission is to help mobile operators accelerate the delivery of new connected devices and services. Our target is to assist in the creation of 700 million new mobile connections, whilst stimulating a number of service trials and launches in the Automotive, Education and Healthcare sectors. The Connected Living programme is also working with the city of Barcelona, the Mobile World Capital, to develop and showcase smart city services. We are working in mEducation to help bring the operator and education industries together to address market barriers, foster collaboration and speed up the adoption of mobile education services.

For further information please contact us at meducation@gsma.com or visit www.gsma.com

"I repeat loudly on my phone after the teacher. This is giving me confidence to speak." " Testimonial from a customer



Connected
Living