Case study: Dialog, Sri Lanka

Ideamart
Telecom APIs made popular

Dialog

Overview

Ideamart was created as a separate business unit by Sri Lanka's leading operator Dialog (Axiata) back in 2012 to open their SMS and Billing APIs. Three years later, Ideamart has added USSD, Location, Subscription and IVR APIs to its self-service portal Idea Pro. The online platform also offers non developers without coding knowledge the possibility to build simple SMS API-based applications through Idea Apps. Today, Idea Apps represents 60% of Ideamart's revenue.

Outreach and approach to start-ups

To promote its APIs to Sri Lankan start-ups and developers, Ideamart is leveraging its 50+ "Agents of Ideamart" — developers who have become ambassadors and are rewarded by Ideamart in the form of free API credit for instance. Beyond the hackathons that Ideamart has organised every two to three months since 2012 (eight are planned for 2016), the team has held more than 150 outreach events for universities, schools, and business communities to showcase their programme and activities. In May 2016, Dialog announced that Ideamart was going to power Google's IO Extended event for the next three years.[17] Ideamart's goal with this strong outreach programme has always been to show developers and students the market and revenue potential of using Ideamart APIs for their mobile services and how to achieve it.

Charging model

Sign-up and registration are free to create applications, after which start-ups and developers are offered a revenue-sharing scheme whereby entrepreneurs retain 70% of revenue from services using the SMS, USSD, location, or subscription APIs, while they keep at least 80% from applications using Ideamart's billing and mobile money (EzCash) APIs.

In Figures

$270
AVERAGE MONTHLY REVENUE
FOR SERVICES ON IDEAMART

4,300+
DEVELOPERS

8,500+
MOBILE SERVICES
/APPLICATIONS

$580K
MONTHLY REVENUE FOR IDEAMART

11M
POTENTIAL END USERS

80M+
API CALLS PER MONTH

Example of a start-up using the API

Online Cabs is a mobile-based taxi booking service in Colombo, Sri Lanka. To achieve the widest possible reach, the local start-up has partnered with Ideamart to integrate its USSD, SMS, and location APIs. Using either the USSD or SMS booking option, users can now book a taxi even if they do not have a smartphone and the Online Cabs Android app. Their location is then automatically shared with the driver through the location API. The booking fee charged by Online Cabs can be deducted directly from the user's mobile airtime thanks to Ideamart's charging API.