

66 APPLAUSE IS AN EXTENSION OF OUR TEAM AND HAS PROVIDED CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO SOME VERY DIFFICULT TESTING CHALLENGES."

SUBROTO CHAKRABARTY, DIRECTOR OF MOBILE DEVELOPMENT, SAFEWAY

# **CUSTOMER**

In 2011, Safeway stood as one of the premium grocery retailers in the U.S. The Pleasanton, California company ranked No. 4 in Supermarket News "Top 75 North American Food Retailers" in 2011 and in 2010 had estimated sales of \$41 billion. With a growing enterprise and an already successful loyalty program, Safeway understood the need for a mobile app to strengthen its connection with shoppers.

Mobile phones were quickly becoming the connective tissue between a brand, its customers, and its physical stores. With more than 1,300 stores spread across western and central North America, building a seamless digital experience was no whimsical undertaking. To be successful, it needed to be done right from the start.

## **CHALLENGE**

The first version of the application was launched amid much fanfare. Safeway loyalty members were able to receive personalized promotions based on shopping history, create custom shopping lists, scan products, and browse weekly deals. This resulted in more than 1.5 million app downloads in a short period of time.

However, Safeway quickly ran into trouble when adding new features to the app. Upon the next release of the Safeway app, developers were having a hard time replicating critical bugs in the labs.

### COMPANY

Safeway

#### INDUSTRY

Retail

## TESTING TYPES

Functional | Exploratory

#### APP TYPES

Mobile

#### CHALLENGES

- Personalizing offers and shopping recommendations to a national user base
- Launching new app features in pace with demand
- Testing in-store functionality with only in-house resources

# RESULTS

- Expanded test coverage across a wide range of devices and operating systems
- Eliminated internal bias by using actual Safeway customers to test
- Scaled testing in the wild to improve accuracy of in-store functionality

APPLAUSE

Said Safeway Director of Mobile Development Subroto Chakrabarty, "We had our entire testing team trying to duplicate the issue, but the reality is that they were all sitting in Pleasanton, all on the same network, all probably hitting the same cell phone tower. There was no diversity in terms of locations or devices and we began hearing complaints from our customers."

Safeway tried to test with internal employees at its stores, but the results were unsatisfactory for multiple reasons. Internal biases were quickly shown by employees who not only understood the app, but were being tasked with doing testing that was not in their job scope. As a result, employees were often asked to perform their regular jobs in addition to new test cases, creating numerous scheduling and workload issues.

## **SOLUTION**

Chakrabarty turned to Applause to make sure the Safeway app and its subsequent updates were ready for its millions of customers.

He added, "The biggest thing about a mobile app is that it is showcased in a public app store where you can see comments that other people have posted. The visibility is extremely high, so there is little room for error. This is particularly true when the app comes from an established brand like Safeway."

Applause provided a team of vetted testers who were loyal shoppers at Safeway. This allowed Safeway to test its application across a wide range of devices and operating systems and ultimately increase the quality of their application.

More importantly, this allowed Safeway to thoroughly test its app in real-world store settings. This not only provided diversity in testing conditions, but feedback directly from an unbiased user base that the retailer could quickly act upon.

### **RESULTS**

With Applause, Safeway saw a big increase in the stability of its application over the following releases. Said Chakrabarty, "Applause gave us coverage across a wide range of devices and OS versions that we couldn't reproduce in the lab. Just as importantly, they gave us testers who were actual Safeway customers that understand the shopping experience."

In particular, Safeway enjoyed and employed the exploratory testing that Applause offers. By incentivizing testers to provide the best bugs quickly, Safeway was able to find some difficult-to-reproduce bugs.



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Applause's project manager also provided significant value and served a critical role in improving Safeway's mobile experience. Said Chakrabarty, "He's an extension of our team, extremely helpful and responsive and has provided creative solutions to some very difficult testing challenges."

As for the return on Safeway's investment, he added: "A small bug can wreak havoc in what you're trying to achieve through the mobile channel. When you have a 4-star app and then you push out a new release and it drops to a 2- or 2.5-star app, that's when you realize the value of QA. That's the value that Applause brings."

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### **ABOUT APPLAUSE**

Applause is the worldwide leader in crowd-sourced digital quality testing. Software is at the heart of how all brands engage users, and digital experiences must work flawlessly everywhere. With highly vetted testers available on-demand around the globe, Applause provides brands with a full suite of testing and feedback capabilities. This approach drastically improves testing coverage, eliminates the limitations of offshoring and traditional QA labs, and speeds time-to-market for websites, mobile apps, loT, and in-store experiences.

Thousands of leading companies — including Ford, Fox, Google, and Dow Jones — rely on Applause as a best practice to deliver high-quality digital experiences that customers love.

Learn more at: www.applause.com