

SkyMall enters mobile commerce at 30,000 feet

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"Big Foot the Garden Yeti" Sculpture With his characteristically big feet, our over two-foot-tall Garden Yeti will have guests doing a double-

[1]

You can buy just about everything via mobile these days

In-flight catalog retailer SkyMall is reaching out to its target audience of affluent, well-educated travelers who are receptive to unique product offerings with a mobile commerce application.

Since many of its customers are business travelers who rely heavily on accessing the Internet via a mobile device, SkyMall considered the development of a mobile application a logical next step in its overall marketing strategy. Initially, SkyMall is focusing on offering the application for the iPhone and iPod touch.

"The strategy behind the SkyMall app was to produce a true retail experience on the iPhone that could be used without regard to network connectivity," said Charles Stack, CEO of iNomadics Inc., Cleveland, OH. "So we put the entire 10,000-product catalog on the phone, and only used the network to place the order.

"This allows users to shop at 30,000 feet, in tunnels or the dentist's office," he said. "Payments are made using the wide array of choices provided by our partner Cardinal Commerce, without using iTunes."

[SkyMall](#) [2] is a multichannel direct marketer offering merchandise from manufacturers and other direct marketers through its SkyMall catalog and Web site. The printed version of SkyMall is on most major United States-based airlines.

Both the SkyMall print catalog and Web site prominently feature the availability of the [iPhone/iPod touch application](#) [3].

[iNomadics Inc.](#) [4] is a technology group that focuses on mobile application development and training. [PocketMall](#) [5] is iNomadics' iPhone application development framework specifically geared toward the needs of Internet retailers.

Pie in the SkyMall

Since the SkyMall catalog is known for offering the latest in cutting-edge electronic devices, an application would be expected from the large number of technologically savvy SkyMall shoppers.

SkyMall presented various requirements and challenges to iNomadics.

For example, the application had to effectively showcase the 10,000-plus items available in the catalog, and had to stand out by offering features and functionality not available in other mobile shopping applications.

The application had to support multiple in-application payment options and include an interactive game and social networking elements in order to fully engage its customers. It had to both stand alone and work in conjunction with the catalog.

Since the target audience is on-the-go travelers, the complete catalog and all product descriptions had to be available 24/7, with or without network connectivity.

The application, like the SkyMall catalog, had to be free.

iNomad at you

iNomadics focused on creating an optimal and safe shopping experience from within the SkyMall application.

Rather than reroute users to mobile versions of SkyMall's retail Web site, iNomadics partnered with CardinalCommerce Corp. to allow SkyMall shoppers to make secure purchases without leaving the application.

The free SkyMall application is now available as a free download in the [iTunes App Store](#).^[6]

Application highlights include 24-hour access to the SkyMall catalog, with or without network connectivity, and a persistent shopping cart, meaning consumers' cart will not be cleared if they close the application or leave it to answer a phone call.

The shopping cart supports swipe delete and quantity changes.

The application provides consumers with the ability to both search and browse, and features support for multiple categories and subcategories. Consumers can sort search results by name, price or level of popularity.

A built-in "Concentration" game features SkyMall products. There is also in-application access to SkyMall's Twitter page.

Consumers can send content-rich email from within the application in order to share catalog item details and thumbnail images with friends, all without leaving the application or interrupting the catalog browsing experience.

The application stores shipping and billing information on each user's own device.

Addresses are shared with the phone's built-in contact database to eliminate or minimize typing.

The application supports customizable styles and product options such as sizes and colors.

Users can enter catalog numbers from the paper catalog into the application in order to view and order items.

Sky is the limit

SkyMall application downloads, and orders placed from within the application, have increased every week since launch, according to iNomadics.

Mr. Stack said that this increased activity signifies product acceptance and promising market penetration via word-of-mouth referrals.

"iNomadics has extensive expertise developing mobile apps for iPhone and Android," Mr. Stack said. "Cardinal Commerce provides sophisticated data management and transaction processing.

"Together we were able to deliver the SkyMall app in under 90 days," he said.

URL to article: <http://www.mobilecommercedaily.com/skymall-enters-mobile-commerce%E2%80%9430k-feet/>

URLs in this post:

[1] Image: <http://www.mobilemarketer.com/cms/lib/6811.jpg>

[2] SkyMall: <http://www.skymall.com>

[3] iPhone/iPod touch application: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZnQcf7npgk>

[4] INomadics Inc.: <http://www.inomadics.com>

[5] PocketMall: <http://www.inomadics.com/PocketMall.html>

[6] iTunes App Store.: <http://itunes.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewSoftware?id=326163955&mt=8>

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