TEAM BRAINBOX

BOAFO BUSINESS PLAN
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Boafo is a service that provides a user with information on where to get help when requested. These include information on service providers, like food vendors, electrical and electronic technicians, fashion designers, just to mention a few.

The services are in the following categories:


When a user needs a service provider, they will text their location and the kind of service needed to our short code. The text message will be validated for errors, and if any is found, a feedback is sent to the user to inform them about the available services. When there are no errors, the user receives the contact details of the service provider they requested.

The target market for the product on the larger scale is the entire Ghanaian phone user population and which stands above 80 percent of the country’s population. This draws attention to the fact that the product will be started on pilot basis. We will begin with the University of Ghana campus and later expand to other campuses, and subsequently launched onto the Ghanaian market.

There is a huge market opportunity for this service, this is because it is targeted at all mobile phone users who will at any point in time need some services that will not be readily available. It is also targeted at those ready to offer their services for a fee, and those want their services to be advertised.
The Boafo Team is made up of five self motivated, young men with a positive attitude towards duty. Michael Asare is the CEO, Kwadwo Boafo Debrah is the VP, Finance, Ernest Pobee is the Engineer, Selom Nyaku is in VP, Strategy, and Anthonio Desmond is the VP, Marketing.

Two groups of people have been identified to use the Boafo application, clients and customers. Service providers are termed clients because they subscribe to the service and depend on the service to connect them to customers, whereas users (customers) only use the service when they are in need of it. The strategies to be employed in marketing the product include social media outreach which will be one of the main modes of publicising the product, channels such as facebook, twitter and whatsapp have been identified as platforms on which publicity can be done at very low cost.

Some strategies the team will implement in order to improve and retain customer loyalty include a service that will allow customers to rate the services provided by the clients.

The database will contain fields containing information of the clients and service which will be accessed by customers via SMS request, errors or invalid text formats will be handled by the application, help notices that will be provided to the user in order to enable easy usage of the application. A client can subscribe to the service via sms or online at

http://www.brainboxgh.com/cs/.

Upon analysing the costs, financial projections and expected revenue for each request based on research and assumptions as to the number of users, it was realised that should the service start off with 500 users and 50-100 service providers, and should there be a ten percent growth in usage every month, the product should break even on the third year and make profit subsequent to that.

The main competitors of brainbox in the market include telecommunication giants Tigo and MTN, also a company called Dropify. Dropify currently face the challenge of sourcing finance to
fund the project, MTN service provides no help text when subscriber makes an error and what is more, the SMS rate is still deducted. Whereas with Tigo, a subscriber texts the name of a particular company to a short-code and receives an SMS containing the contact information of that company at relatively large rates.

2.0 MARKET ANALYSIS

2.1 Market Size

Boafo SMS application will be launched on a pilot basis on the university of ghana campus, this makes our market size about 42,000 people, we expect the whole campus population to have access to a mobile phone, however we do not expect the whole population to start using the application.

Based on our marketing strategy we are targeting 500 users within the first month and between 50 to 100 service providers. We expect a growth in the usage of Boafo sms service based on the impact that the product will have on the market, therefore with good feedback from users we should be able to make adequate update to the product to attain a minimum of 10% growth in usage monthly for a few months, and within five months attain 1000 users which we believe is realistic and not over ambitious.

Boafo should be able to attain 5,000 users a month within a few years if the product makes the right impact.

2.2 Market Opportunity

This opportunity is created due to the fact that there is inadequate marketing of blue collar jobs in the country and thus these people often find it difficult to get customers to serve, customers...
are often got through recommendation of friends who have used their services before. Also on
the consumer side, it is often difficult for consumers to find people with the adequate technical
skills to help them with the service that they require, university of Ghana has about 11000 new
entries every year which we believe would be most in need of our service and therefore will
make up majority of our users.

2.3 Team Description

Team Brainbox is made of dedicated young individual, who are entrepreneurial minded and a
have a passion to solving problems. The team is made up of a CEO who is mainly in charge
of keeping the vision and making sure that the team attains its goals. A VP Finance who is
in charge of performing financial analysis, making financial projections and maintaining the
financial health of the company. He is also in charge of tracking expenses and returns on
operations to satisfy all stakeholders. A VP Engineering who is in charge of the technical
aspects of the project and making sure that all the codes are written on time and the application
is running.

VP Marketing/People who is in charge of the marketing strategy and customer and client
relations, A VP strategy who is in charge of analysing the position of the team in terms of targets
and goals and planning where the team needs to be and how to get there.

2.4 Teamwork

Team Brainbox works efficiently by brainstorming ideas and selecting through careful analysis
the best idea for implementation. The team also works on the principles of respect, discipline,
hard work and total commitment to our goals or tasks. Team Brainbox also works under a
friendly atmosphere where every member brings their experiences to complement others
towards building a good final product.

3.0 MARKETING

3.1 The Customer/Client.

Boafo sms application will be dealing with two different groups of people who we are defining as the clients (service providers) and customers (users). We term the service providers as clients to the service because they are subscribed to the service and are always on our database, whereas the customers only use the service when they need help. Service providers here means blue collar job in the likes of plumbing, masonry, electricians, and fashion designers. Boafo targets all mobile phone users as its customers who are going to use our service. Our services would not be limited to a single network provider, rather it would cut across the various telecommunication networks there are in Ghana. This will make the service very flexible and user friendly to our customers and service providers as well. This is because, our customers or service providers don’t have to be customers of a particular telecommunication network before they can use the service provided by Boafo.

Boafo service intends to reach out to customers by using the right social media for our business. Social media is not about doing something new, it is about using new tools to help us spread our business, ideas and vision or message to the users and service providers. This can help us create brand loyalty and connect with our customers and service providers in a very personal way. There are so many social media tools available that choosing the right one for our business can be confusing, therefore Boafo is going to focus on a few of them such as twitter, facebook and whatsapp.
Our customers and service providers are our primary concern, therefore Boafo will also consider offering incentives to our customers and service providers such as discount for their next monthly renewal with service providers and with customers next order. Encouraging referrals from existing customers or service providers. Referrals from satisfied customers endorsing our business are the best way of getting new customers. So if customers or service providers are happy about the service Boafo offers them, we ask them to recommend us to potential customers or service providers.

4.0 PRODUCT/SERVICE OVERVIEW

4.1 The Product

Boafo is an SMS based application that gives users vital information from its database on where the user can find help (technical skill relating to their needs). The Boafo Database contains information on the clients (service providers) and provides this information to users whenever they make a request to the service.

4.2 General Overview

The general mode of operation of the Boafo service is dependent on the user group, the clients subscribe to the service either online or by SMS and their data is stored into the Boafo database. The customer however requests for the client information through SMS or online and this queries the Boafo Database which returns a list of clients and their contacts via SMS to the user.

4.3 The Customer Request Tree
When the customer(user) sends a request to the service, the message is first passed through a check to see if it is blank, if the message is blank a reply is sent to the user containing a list of services on the boafo service and the user replies with the service id and location. However if the message is not blank or the user replies after a blank message, the Boafo Application checks for error in the format of data sent, if there is an error and the application is not able to determine the intended request then the user is sent a help info, or suggestions and asked to reply in the correct format.

Once the format of message is identified and request is registered by the application, a reply is sent to the customer containing the list of clients offering the service requested.

4.4 Subscription Tree

Clients can subscribe to the service by SMS or online. The SMS subscription mode is fairly simple, the client sends a keyword, service and name via SMS to the Boafo application shortcode. the application checks if the user has enough balance for the subscription, if YES, the client is subscribed. check brainbox subscription site

4.5 Building Boafo

Boafo application will be built using django framework, django is an open source web application written in python and is a MVC framework.

4.51 Models

Models will be created in the the django framework which include Service, subscription, category, service-provider and Location models. Models declaration should be completed by friday 27th july 2012.
4.52 Views

Views will be created using the django framework which include list_service, request_service, add_service, add_subscriber etc. Views should be completed by Monday 30th January 2012.

4.53 SMS

Sms functionality will be added to enable the user interact with the service through sms. this is to be completed by Monday 30th July 2012.

4.6 Boafo Prototype

The prototype for the Boafo sms application will be displayed on the demo day 3rd August, this should include a subscription service to allow clients to subscribe, the prototype should be able to take request from users and send an adequate reply.

The expected outcome is illustrated below.

1. user sends blank msg to shortcode
   list of services

2. Boafo should reply with
4. Boafo replies with list of clients and contacts. either with service id or service name and location.

5.0 Financial Component

5.1 Revenue Projections

In our first month, we hope to begin with about one hundred (100) service providers and five hundred (500) requests. For each of the subsequent months, we hope to increase our customer base (customers and service providers) by ten percent (10%).

In the case of customers, any request made will cost GH₵ 0.30 and since we will be partnering with other parties, we hope to gain about 25% of that amount which will be about GH₵ 0.08. For the service providers, for each subscription made, we will charge a fee of GH₵ 10.00 in like manner we also gain 25% of this amount which will be around GH₵ 2.50.
Based on these assumptions and projections, we hope to break even and make more profit in our third year since by then, we would have paid off the debt we incurred raising our capital.

Below is a breakdown of our revenue projection for the first three years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>(GH₵)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>16,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>45,405</td>
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5.2 Cost

In our start up year, we will require a lot of investment to initialize and implement our operations. This is because, it is at this stage that we will incur higher costs. Listed below are the purchases we will need to get us fully operational.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost (GH₵)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting and Legal</td>
<td>2,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet and Telephone</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16,100</td>
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Our estimated growth is around a two percent (2%) increment after the first month which will result in a 24% growth annually.
Apart from the first year, we will also incur operational costs for some services which include internet and telephone, accounting and legals whilst we pursue infrastructural development and recruitment in the subsequent years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>(GH₵)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>16,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>25,000</td>
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6.0   COMPETITORS
The Boafo Mobile Service Helper currently has no competitor in the market in terms of organizational setup and operational scale. There are however, a few organizations which offer some services which, though are not on the functional level of the Boafo Mobile Service, can be viewed as 'competitors'.

An example of such an organization is Tigo, which is a mobile telecommunications service provider to about 30% of the Ghanaian mobile network service market. Now, as an add-on feature to their services Tigo provides a directory service to their subscribers.

This directory service can be accessed only on the Tigo mobile network. To use this service, a subscriber texts the name of a particular company to a short-code and receives an SMS containing the contact information of that company at relatively large rates. The customer must make no mistakes in typing in the name of the company as this will result in the occurrence of an error and the deduction of the SMS rate for the service. Tigo also fails to maintain the directory database and as such, consumers are sometimes provided with outdated...
information which is useless when employed. Since this service being provided is only an add-on service, Tigo has not fully committed its resources to the maintenance of this service. This usually leaves their subscribers frustrated and helpless upon completion of a SMS transaction involving the directory service. Tigo may re-evaluate their continued provision of this service and may or may not abandon it based on the evaluation results.

Another company which is attempting and has succeeded to a point in providing directory services to its clients is Scancom Limited, the organization behind the Mobile Telecommunications Network service (MTN). MTN is currently the largest mobile telecommunications service provider in Ghana with over 65 percent of the mobile service market as its clients.

A few years ago, MTN came up with the idea of directory service similar to that being implemented by Tigo. MTN dedicated enough resources to the implementation of the directory and succeeded in setting up a fully functional database with information about most companies in Ghana. Over the years, MTN has expended a lot of resources advertising and marketing this services mainly through SMS to its subscribers. However, in spite of numerous advertisements and popularization, MTN has failed to capture the interest of the majority of Ghanaians with regards to this service, and for good reason. This is because MTN after setting up the directory service, dedicated most of the resources towards the advertisement of the service and shelved the maintenance of the service and as such, the service though thoroughly advertised, gradually became outdated and began to provide erroneous information to subscribers. Another nail in the coffin of the MTN directory service is the outrageously large amount which is charged per SMS. This amount has currently risen up to about 50GHp, an amount no one will pay for SMS service which provides out-dated information.
The service provides no help text for instances where the subscriber makes an error and what is more, the SMS rate is still deducted, as if to serve as punishment for making the error in the first place. The service being provided by MTN is also limited to their subscribers and provides nothing more than the contact information of the company the subscriber entered.

Though it is still in the incubator of Meltwater in Ghana, M Power is worth mentioning due to the fact that, that idea for its conception is a directory service which will provide the clients of the service with contact details of service providers in the immediate vicinity or closer of the client. Drupify, the company which finds itself the owner of a very lucrative idea is still floundering around with the whole concept of the idea. As such, it is still being nursed along with its idea within Meltwater University.

The main problem being faced by the members of Drupify is the financial resources for the funding of such a project. This has come about as a result of setting initially unrealistic standards which has in turn, led to a ridiculous rise in the company's budget. As such Drupify is still looking for an investor who is daring enough to invest the amount of money they require to start operations. Though the whole operational plan of Drupify is not known, the startup amount they are looking for suggests that the project will most likely have a very successful implementation and gradually poorer and poorer maintenance.

The main advantage of Boafo is the availability of the service to everyone in the mobile market, regardless of the mobile service provider network they're on. The Boafo Mobile Helper services has the advantage of a full time dedicated team which will constantly update and maintain the directory of all service providers featured. As a dedicated mobile service provider, Boafo will put
into place features and special error detection and handling mechanisms to ensure that all our clients get their money’s worth.

Also, Boafo does not work just as a directory service but goes further to provide detailed information pertaining to the service a client requires in a particular location. This is far better and different than the directory service being offered by the Mobile Telecommunications service providers. Since this service happens to be Boafo’s main initiative, all available resources at being employed to ensure the continuance and stability of the Boafo database in order to provide customers with current and accurate information regarding the various service providers. This is made possible due to the fact that, the service providers who subscribe to the service are responsible for the accuracy of the contact information they provide. Also customers are given the opportunity to rate and comment on service providers’ services. This keeps the service providers in check and ensures that they provide the best services they can, if not for anything at all, to boost their ratings on Boafo. Incentives like discounts on subscriptions for service providers and bonus SMS transactions for regular clients will also increase Boafo’s popularity and establish Boafo as a dependable household service, a level still not achieved by many companies in Ghana.

It is also worth mentioning that Boafo rates are relatively cheap compared to those being charged by the mobile telecommunications service providers for their below average directory services which have less than half the functionalities being supported by Boafo.

In the near future, when people in Ghana find themselves in a fix as regards to finding the best service provider for a particular task, they will look no further than their mobile phones and send a text to a shortcode, which they would know offhand, to the Boafo service.
7.0 Reference

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