

Navigating Indoors

MORE REVENUE POTENTIAL AND HAPPIER CONSUMERS

By LBx Staff | Published August 14, 2013

****Locationomics Series: Customer Experience**



Pole Star is a France-based indoor location company founded in 2002, with offices in France and the United States. Pole Star was originally focused on portable navigation devices, and has since migrated to the smartphone as the optimum device platform for delivering indoor navigation services. Pole Star's customers have ranged from emergency services to shopping malls to airports to exhibition centers. Christian Carle, CEO of Pole Star recognizes that "many people do not understand the importance of indoor location." His focus at Pole Star is on making indoor location capabilities as seamless and compatible with consumer devices as possible.

LBx Why is indoor location so important?

Carle Believe it or not, it is difficult for people to find their way around shopping malls, airports, and train stations, especially if they are in a foreign country and do not speak the language. Being able to easily orient yourself indoors is essential to efficiently moving through that building, for example if time is your issue because you are running late, in transit between trains and planes, or responsible for emergency response, or for operating and maintaining the facility.

That explains part of the reason why indoor location is important to individual mobile users. However, there are a few other ways to look at why it is important. From the facility owner's and app developer perspective: The perceived value to the user is very high. Any tools that appear to improve the user experience are highly valued by a facility owner.

When it comes to interactions with new or even familiar buildings, people are looking for:

- 1. help, or what we call basic services, in finding a specific place within a building where something or someone is located, along with step by step navigation to that specific location;**
- 2. customized context-aware information that is delivered through a product search engine; and**
- 3. the ability to share information on what is found with friends, or in the case of emergency responders with other government agencies (the ability to collaborate on the information).**

Social networks and social media play a vital role. Indoor location information increases in value with the ability to share it. Social media allows this information to become instantly useful in answering daily, real-life questions: Where are my friends, my kids, or my partners? Sharing indoor information, along with context around that location, is what is valuable—for example, sharing “I am ok” in the event of a natural disaster or personal safety situation, or “here’s a great deal on something of interest to you,” to specific comments, ratings, and news regarding something of interest around a person. Ensuring that seamless, uninterrupted flow of information from indoor to outdoor to indoor is critical.

LBx Is there an art or science to indoor location?

Carle Simplicity and usefulness are the buzzwords today. To make a mobile service successful, the mobile app, which is the visible part of all the technological magic that takes place behind the scenes, must be easy to use, useful, and with a beautiful “look & feel.” Indoor location information connects a lot of intuitive information and will contribute to the provision of simpler yet more sophisticated services.

LBx Let's talk about some concrete examples. How does indoor location technology help an airport manager?

Carle The most important sources of revenue for airports are parking and shops and retail. Duty free shops in particular are important revenue streams. Retail revenues at airports are becoming more and more important.

The focus of the airport manager is...

The **complete** article is available in the **Spring 2013 Digital Edition** of LBx Journal.

Bio



Christian Carle is Chairman and CEO of Pole Star SA, (France), and CEO of the Pole Star USA Inc. subsidiary fully owned by Pole Star SA (California, USA). Carle has more than 15 years within the Industry (5 years in SME, 10 years in large industrial groups in the areas of business development, sales and marketing, as well as complex international cooperation) before the creation of Pole Star in 2002.

