

Waitrose showcases the future of shopping to attract and engage customers



O₂ supported Waitrose in developing a conceptual showcase of future technology at an innovation event hosted at their new Swindon store. The event explored and simulated how innovative technology and digital services might be used to improve customers' in-store experience.

About Waitrose

Waitrose is the food division of the John Lewis Partnership (JLP) and one of the UK's leading retailers. They have over 300 branches across the UK and 60,000 employees within the Partnership. Waitrose employees, known as partners, have a share in the company and everyone is focused on providing the best possible customer service.

The Challenge

In a fiercely competitive market, retailers need to find new ways to differentiate themselves. As customers are increasingly technologically savvy, employees need to be equipped with solutions to engage with them digitally. Waitrose plans to explore the digital experiences that will attract and retain customers through an innovation showcase at their Swindon branch. To succeed, connectivity must be seamless as it underpins any digital solution.

Waitrose Managing Director Mark Price said "in Waitrose you'll see services and experiences that you won't see in other supermarkets. It's about really looking after our customers when they come here and making it an experience".

The Solution

Waitrose chose O₂ to help deliver its innovation event hosted in their new branch.

With fixed connectivity restricted by a short lead time, O₂ supported Waitrose in ensuring they had the right infrastructure in place to manage the project by boosting the 3G signal for the branch and supporting in-store connectivity with O₂ Wifi.

O₂ brought innovation to the project from Ensygnia, a start-up company supported by Telefónica's WAYRA initiative, and Smart Steps Telefónica's crowd data measurement tool, expanding the vision to encompass a wider range of digital solutions including mobile payments, interactivity and data analysis tools.

Waitrose

Results

- Better connectivity
- Creative interactive experiences
- Improved customer insight and engagement
- An exciting concept branch

Products and services

- O₂ Wifi
- 3G
- Telefónica Smart Steps
- Telefónica On The Spot Digital Signage
- Ensygnia Onescan app

Attendees were provided with smartphones designed to showcase futuristic capabilities including; location-based offers and information, sample product pre-ordering and frictionless mobile payments. The phones were loaded with a Waitrose branded version of Ensignia's Onescan app that demonstrated how guests could use their smartphones to check prices and complete purchases by scanning Onescan codes displayed on screens and tablets in the area instead of going to the check out.

Digital signage – instead of paper posters – guided customers around the branch and showed them what was on offer. It demonstrated how Waitrose's static Community Matters display could be made interactive by allowing users to drag and drop tokens onscreen to help decide which charity to support. The interactive signage was created for Waitrose by On The Spot, a Telefónica digital content platform.

Mark Price said "we're always looking for ways to interact with our customers which reflects how they use technology. We have embraced technology both in terms of what it can do to drive efficiency and how it can improve the customer experience".

To understand the impact of the new store Waitrose also used Smart Steps, a movement analytics solution that provides insights on the movements of crowds using anonymised and aggregated mobile network data. The data showed a 5x increase in footfall when comparing the area before and after the store opened, as well as evidence the store was successfully reaching a more widespread customer base within the local area. Smart Steps can also show Waitrose hourly, daily, weekly and monthly trend patterns combined with unique insight on anonymised customer demographics. This helps them to plan and measure the effectiveness of employee rotas, promotional materials and seasonal events.

The future

O₂'s capability, from partnerships across the UK business and Telefónica globally, creates the opportunity for innovation showcase experiences to be enhanced even further.

Customers could use interactive messaging to give feedback, or receive recommendations based on their shopping habits. Live-streamed video assistance could be provided via Tokbox (a Telefónica web-conferencing solution), or Onescan could enable customers to complete their entire shop without ever visiting a till. Waitrose could even use the O₂ Wifi insight tool to access information on demographics of the customers who have visited the branch.

As Waitrose demonstrated using its own iBeacon deployment, context-specific marketing messages can be delivered to customers as they move around the branch by using geofencing technology to make recommendations when they reach a certain aisle. These sensors are also offered as part of the Telefónica portfolio and can be moved to reflect the merchandising strategy by promoting high-margin products or encouraging customers to take up seasonal offers.

O₂ worked with Waitrose to help them explore the art of the possible at their Swindon branch and is paving the way for the future of retail by delivering a seamless shopping experience enhanced by technology and digital innovation.

We'd love to hear from you. [To find out more about how O₂ can help your organisation, just contact your Account Manager or call us on 01235 433 507.](#)

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**Mark Price, Waitrose,
Managing Director**