

AVMore and Sheridan: New app creates “digital” coffee run



It’s a question asked in offices and places of business across Canada every single day – “Who’s going for a coffee run?”

This normally involves gathering orders on small pieces of paper and collecting change, both of which are often lost along the way. Then there’s the hassle of giving change back to everyone afterwards. Someone may also be missed if they are not at their desk.

AVMore wanted to develop a smartphone app called “Gedit” that can make daily “coffee runs” quicker and easier.

The Mississauga-based marketing firm worked with Sheridan College through FedDev Ontario’s (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario) Applied Research and Commercialization (ARC) Extension initiative, which made developing this app possible.

The ARC initiative matches small- to medium-sized companies with Sheridan faculty and students to conduct applied research, development and innovation activities that help companies become more productive, competitive and ultimately create jobs. (Funding of up to \$100,000 is matched by a 50% cash or in-kind contribution by the participating company.)

AVMore’s “coffee run” project intrigued students who participated in the intricate programming that brought this app to life.

“We were introduced to Sheridan’s ARC program and thought it would be a great opportunity to work with students who benefited by real world experience,” said Adolfo Proietti, AVMore’s Managing Director. “With Sheridan’s support we were able to collapse the production and development time from a year to about three months.”

Students from Sheridan’s Faculty of Applied Sciences and Technology (FAST) worked on the app that allows a user to create a network or group of contacts such as friends or co-workers. When a user downloads the app, he or she can add people from their contacts list. By adding them they will be invited to download the app and join a Gedit Community.

The “Gedit” app will allow any one member to initiate a “coffee run” and invite people to place orders and pay electronically. The Gedit app, with its patent pending application, will also support multiple retailers.

Members of the group can then place their order within a specified time and the “runner” who now has a complete list can place the group order. The app will even remember each person’s favourites for future runs.

“We presented our concepts and needs and the students got it,” said Adolfo. “They got excited, saw the potential and showed belief in our concept. In fact, I wouldn’t call them students, I would call them programming developing partners who were really good to work with.”

Sheridan Faculty of Applied Science and Technology (FAST) professor Kevin Forest agrees. “These students are a year away from being employed – the code they’re writing now is the code that they’re going to write for a future employer.”

And future employers will look for experience like this, believes Sheridan project manager Robert Skoczen, who worked with the students.

“When Sheridan is able to produce graduating students that have development experience directly into the work force, that’s not something that goes unnoticed,” he said.

With a working prototype ready, as well as a marketing and business plan in place, AVMore will conduct further tests and seek investors, with a target of launching the app early in 2013.

What’s especially exciting for AVMore is the fact that this app could be used for more than coffee – it could be applied to sandwiches or just about anything a group would order.

Once the app gets to market, the company hopes to bring the Sheridan students who worked in developing the Gedit app to join the team.

“The students were cordial, professional, detailed, worked on everything in a timely manner and responded and replied to any questions or requests we had.” - Adolfo Proietti, Managing Director, AVMore



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