

Coinstar – Coin changing machine



Coinstar manufactures and operates a network of self-service coin counting machines located at the front entrances of 8,900 leading supermarkets in the USA. Coinstar's machines count shoppers' accumulated coins and dispense a voucher that can be exchanged in the store for cash or groceries. Since its beginnings in 1992, Coinstar has turned nearly \$4 billion worth of coins into cash. With self service kiosk transactions predicted to reach \$1 trillion annually by 2007, Coinstar has expanded its services. Customers can now receive proceeds from their coins as a cash/grocery voucher, prepaid Mastercard, or purchase/reload an Alltel, AT&T Wireless, Cingular, T-Mobile or Verizon prepaid wireless account.

Making new features usable: When Coinstar added the ability to redeem coins for a prepaid Mastercard they added considerable value to the Coinstar product. The new feature would appeal to new customers who were attracted to the prepaid card concept. But the Coinstar team had two problems – (1) how to ensure the new feature was understandable for new customers who had never cashed in coins with Coinstar, and (2) how to avoid confusing existing customers who were used to the existing interface on the machine. Zanzara conducted a **usability test** to validate a prototype of the new interface before the machine went into production. Our findings and recommendations helped ensure the design was right before the machine was put in stores.

Coping with complexity: Prepaid wireless phone accounts are popular in Europe but are not well understood by North American customers. When Coinstar added the ability to purchase or reload a prepaid wireless account, the interface became more complex. Zanzara conducted **usability tests** with potential users before the machine went into an in-store pilot test. Zanzara's recommendations helped Coinstar fine tune the user interface so

customers could understand how to purchase or refill prepaid wireless accounts and long distance calling cards.

Design coaching: Coinstar's 'big green machine' is growing from a 'coins to cash' vending machine to a platform for financial transactions. As the machine acquires more features, the user interface will grow in power and complexity. Coinstar recognizes the need to keep the machine 'walk up usable' so customers can operate the machine without any help. As Coinstar has explored new features and technologies, Zanzara has provided **expert design reviews** and **design coaching** to help the internal design team architect the user interface to deal with these new challenges.

Benefits

Zanzara's usability testing has helped Coinstar validate and fine tune its new product features. Our design consulting has helped the internal design team allow for future feature expansion. These efforts have helped Coinstar remain in the leadership position with its 'big green machine'.