

Callan Consulting

AT&T: New Product Development



"Ed Callan has been instrumental in assisting AT&T to create a compelling and ubiquitous representation of the VoIP service and its advanced features across AT&T's websites, web portal, and various types of literature"

Helen Guider, VoIP Product Management Vice President

Background

On December 11, 2003 AT&T announced a major new initiative to deliver a full complement of Voice over IP (VoIP) services to consumers starting in 2004. This is a highly strategic effort for AT&T; according to AT&T Chairman and CEO David Dorman, "VoIP is the most significant, fundamental new technology shift in telecommunications in decades."

Business Problem

Ed's involvement with AT&T's VoIP new product initiative dated to spring of 2003, when the product was in its very earliest stages of definition and development. The technology promised to provide a revolutionary new set of services, but many features would not be instantly familiar to consumers, thus creating the challenge of how to best package and communicate the value of the product and its new capabilities.

Solution

Ed assisted the AT&T product development team in two respects. First he coordinated a series of research efforts, beginning with consumer feature/functionality assessment of early-stage product prototypes in a usability lab setting. Multiple rounds of testing with product iteration in between yielded a significant improvement to the product in a very condensed time frame, in addition to a wealth of understanding of how to communicate the value of the new features to customers.

Ed then took the findings of these studies and worked with the product development team to develop content to describe the product, features, and functionality, ultimately creating all content on the product website as well as all documentation including printed usage and installation guides and online FAQs.

Results

The product entered a consumer trial stage in October 2003, with strong reviews from customers for both the website and the documentation. The strength of the customer feedback was instrumental to AT&T's decision to launch a new VoIP offer in key markets across the nation beginning in the first quarter of 2004.

Further, AT&T's satisfaction with Ed's content development work for the trial prompted them to retain him to perform a similar role coordinating, editing, and developing all customer-facing product content for the consumer launch of the product.