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The Search

A JARGON-FREE GUIDE TO FINDING THE NEXT BIG TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENTS

More jobs for those drones

Mechanical servants deliver your groceries – and one day they may mend roads

Coffee power will soon be with us

Left-overs from the popular beverage can heat homes and fuel buses

Company profile

E-hailing a cab at your fingertips

Drink to this!

The beer machine that does everything

PLUS: Cars without drivers, energy from train brakes, ice-free surfaces, and a solar-powered holiday resort



INTERVIEW

Taxi! You can e-hail, it's only a click away

People on the move just want to get from A to B more efficiently. And they like the idea of wider choice. So what could make hailing a cab in New York a smoother experience? **Mike Epley**, the product management director at Arro, believes his company's e-hailing smartphone app fills a void in that industry. The Arro solution is integrated with the cab, giving the driver the customer's name and location, supplying the customer with the driver's identity and number, and allowing credit card payment. **Epley** explains from his office in Long Island City, Queens

ARRO

In a market that was already highly competitive why was Arro started? Uber, for example, is widely used and the company is valued at US\$50bn (£35bn, €45bn). Wasn't the market saturated?

We first launched Arro in New York City in 2015 as an e-hail app specifically for taxi fleets and for passengers. Having an e-hail app for the taxi sector made perfect sense both for passengers and for drivers. The app benefits taxi drivers because they now have an easier time picking up rides. And passengers benefit from the service and consistent pricing, as well as having confidence that the vehicles with which they are traveling and their drivers are fully licensed and regulated by local authorities. We have also launched Arro in Boston and Chicago and today we are seeing a great deal of interest there.

So what makes Arro different? What is its appeal? Is it the technology?

Arro is a convenient, affordable and safer way to e-hail a taxi. The app has already enjoyed great success in New York City on everything from the shortest wait times in the industry to our honest, no-fee, no-surge-pricing, no-hidden-cost model. The technology is versatile, allowing passengers to pay with the app in the taxi even if they have hailed the ride the traditional way.

Arro users can call a cab with messages sent directly through a data terminal in front of the driver, while an Uber driver accepts e-hails through a smartphone on the dashboard. What is the advantage of the Arro method? Any examples?

Incubated out of the taxi industry payment processing powerhouse Creative Mobile Technologies (CMT) and

Mobile Knowledge, Arro capitalizes on CMT's in-vehicle technology currently installed in taxi fleets throughout North America. Arro also leverages CMT's in-vehicle GPS-based credit card processing equipment.

There is no surge pricing, which means that the fare remains the same even during peak times. Are the drivers and Arro just passing up a commercially reasonable opportunity?

Passengers know the exact price they will pay from the meter. This is the rule of thumb in taxis across most cities, certainly in New York City. We believe our passengers do not want to be ripped off – they want an affordable and reliable taxi service in clean, well maintained vehicles and they want to get their taxi quickly and efficiently. This is what Arro has to offer.

Arro was hoping to add VeriFone Systems to its methods of payment. Is this happening and what are the benefits?

Arro is constantly reaching out to potential technology



Mike Epley: The convenient, affordable and safer way to get a cab



The familiar splurge of yellow, here on Seventh Avenue: Arro's bosses recommend their app to be sure of service in thousands of New York taxis

partners in an effort to improve service for our customers. Integration with the VeriFone payment system would improve service by making more taxis available on the Arro network especially during times of peak demand. We are continuing to explore opportunities for integration with VeriFone.

Has the Arro system experienced any teething problems? What reception have you had from the drivers of the yellow and green cabs?

A great deal of driver training went into launching Arro in New York City, Chicago and Boston. Reception from taxi drivers has been overwhelmingly positive. Drivers understand that in order to survive in today's marketplace they need to provide service that meets or exceeds the competi-

tion. Arro gives them a way to do that.

As a tech startup Arro is constantly looking for ways to improve customer service. Every player in the on-demand ride space wants to provide service that is fast, convenient, reliable and professional. Taxi fleets and drivers fit this mold perfectly. But we discovered early on that reaching all of the drivers in a large fleet to educate them about Arro is a challenge. For example, there are 50,000 taxi drivers in the New York City yellow fleet. We had to work hard and get creative to reach as many of those drivers as possible as quickly as possible, and the effort is ongoing.

Are you getting any feedback from cab users?

We have had more than 100,000 downloads in New

York City. Users have called it "super-convenient" and "easy to use." And we have heard of users switching over to Arro after using other e-hail apps. We are always trying to improve the service by providing updates and enhancements to the app.

It is said that Arro's biggest rival Uber adds a premium to fares because it guarantees a ride. Presumably Arro does not do this, so what guarantee does it offer?

We are not aware of any guarantees by competitors that a customer will always get a ride when they ask for one – there is no such thing as a 100% success rate. As for Arro, our large inventory of taxis out on the street at all times of the day or night means our success rate remains high even during periods of peak demand.

Every lively company looks for ways to push back the boundaries. In terms of expansion and technology use what is the next move for Arro?

Arro is growing and expanding to other cities across the United States including San Francisco and Washington, DC. The combined CMT-Mobile Knowledge user base includes customer operations in more than 150 cities and five countries. That is a large geography for Arro to grow in. We are also exploring car pooling options for our passengers. CMT is working on a pilot program with Bandwagon that would allow passengers to use Arro in order to offer ride sharing in about 6,600 of New York City's yellow taxis. ●

ARRO.