

SOLUTION FOR FOOD ALLERGIES AND INTOLERANCES

BY SORT IT

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ABSTRACT

Sort It provides a food outlet with a ‘purpose designed’ method for communicating food allergen and intolerance information to its customers in an easy-to-use, intuitive and familiar (to consumers) platform.

The platform allows for centralized control of the communication of ‘allergens’ ensuring that the organization remains compliant with legislation and removes the weak link – training and managing staff to do this in a uniform manner.

Sorted provides consumers with an easy to use method to quickly identify products and foodstuffs that are/are not safe for them to consume, making it a better consumer experience. It is versatile and can combine different allergens and intolerances tailored to the individual and is available on their smartphone or at information points in the outlet.

Keywords: Food Allergy, Technology, Application, Allergy, Hospitality, Software, AI, Karan Ahluwalia, Sort it

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sort it concentrates on creating a new technological advancement in the Food and beverage industry. It is a mobile application that will help individuals to sort their food preferences at multiple food outlets with a single touch.

There are currently no applications in the market, primarily focused on sorting out food intolerances at any food outlet.

We have a sustainable business model which allows us to provide free use of the application for every consumer and reassure them about their food choices.

As our company grows with time, we will segment our users, in understanding buying behavior and preferences. It will help us in modifying the application and make it more convenient and informative for all the consumers. This would help to promote and market our product in specific target segments. Our revenue model is business facing and we charge our clients a monthly fee.

Our vision is to expand this application globally and help consumers to simplify their food selection.

2.0 VALUE PROPOSITION

Sort It provides a food outlet with a 'purpose designed' method for communicating food allergen and intolerance information to its customers in an easy to use, intuitive and familiar (to consumers) platform.

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Sort It provides consumers with an easy to use method to quickly identify products and foodstuffs that are/are not safe for them to consume, making it a better consumer experience. It is versatile and can combine different allergens and intolerances tailored to the individual and is available on their smartphone or at information points in the outlet.

3.0 TARGET MARKETS

3.1 Clients

Number of Restaurants in the United Kingdom: 85000+

Number of Restaurants in London: 28280+

Restaurants in London constitute of the following:

- Clubs: 570+
- Restaurant units: 13775+
- Take away and mobile outlets: 5300+
- Pubs: 3530+
- Coffee shops: 5105+

Potential outlets: Restaurant units + Coffee shops + takeaways = 24180+

3.2 Segmentation of the Potential outlets

Chains ~ 50% of all outlets Independents ~ 50%

In the early stages, we will target independents which represent 12,000 outlets approx.

Customer profile

Typically, the outlet owner/manager will be the key decision-maker. They are concerned with regulatory compliance and are also interested in creative ways to differentiate themselves.

Sort it will appeal on the basis of consumer convenience as well as underpinning their health and safety obligations.

3.3 Consumers

According to the Food Standards Agency¹ approximately a 1/3rd of the UK population suffers from food allergy and/or food intolerance.

The population of London is more than 8.5 million people in the year 2019. As per the surveys from the UK government, 1/3rd of the population which sums up to approximately 3 million people who are suffering from multiple food allergies or any kind of food intolerance. This size includes people of all age groups.

A number of target consumers initially: 3 million people (approx.)

Consumer profile

There is no specific profile for someone suffering from food allergy/intolerance- Age, ethnicity, lifestyle, sex, etc. are irrelevant. What is common is a need for information to support their retail purchase. In this respect, consumers are totally dependent on the restaurant/staff for their knowledge on allergy information. It has been proven time and again that the staffs are rarely up to date with the latest information.

4.0 REVENUE MODEL

This is a subscription model with the outlets paying a monthly amount to use the platform to inform their consumers. There is no setup fee for clients and is free for consumers.

5.0 KEY RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES

Key Success Factors:

- The application must be widely adopted by both the outlets and the consumers.
- It must be intuitive and easy to use for the consumers along with easy to update for the client base.
- To make sure that the consumers are reassured that the information provided is accurate and up to date.

Facilities:

- Providing an easy to use application for individuals, in order to help them in sorting the food that has to be consumed at any food outlet.
- Monitoring that correct information is being provided by the outlets to the consumers who want to sort their allergies.
- Regularly updating the list of allergens with proper communication with outlets
- Maintaining the customer database with secure data storage.

6.0 VISION AND VALUES

Our vision is to create a mobile application that can be used worldwide at multiple food outlets to help individuals in sorting their food allergies and dietary requirements.

7.0 EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

According to a news food magazine (2019), food companies are still facing allergy-related dilemmas which are turning out to be a huge problem to serve consumers.

As per BBC (2019), there has been a rise in the number of people needing hospital treatments due to food allergies.

There also have been multiple occasions when questions have been raised about how to solve the food allergy problem and the focus of the solution has been on proper labeling (The Grocer 2019). Unfortunately, this misses the point for the consumer experience in that it requires scrutiny in the outlet. It is not an efficient communication method.

Sort it has identified a mobile application as a more effective solution for helping consumers to make their food selections as per their allergens at any food outlet.

There are signs of development in this field. For example, Pret a Manger has put a tablet in their outlet for the customers to try and address the problem. Consumers can click on an allergen and sort what they can eat.

This has limitations: Consumers do not have the option to see whether the item they want to consume has the allergen they want to avoid or not, and it is only available at Pret-a-Manager. It is very new and not currently being used very much. It does not appear to be being promoted very well and appears to be a compliance step.

7.1 Competitor Analysis

There are no direct competitors. The alternative options can be summarized as follows:

Product Labels or Special Menu

Pros: It gives accurate information.

Cons: It is time-consuming and not efficient at all. It also needs regular printing costs.

Staff delivered information

Pros: There is a personal touch, and gives more surety.

Cons: The people are not informed properly and lack knowledge

Database Apps*

Pros: Everything can be sorted and has a wide range of allergens

Cons: It is usually restricted to either one outlet or a generic food item.

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS:

Description of the Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Plan
1. Obsolete data for the consumers	2	5	The data will be updated regularly, with the dates mentioned on the application when it was last updated.
2. Difficulties in getting allergyuk.org on board	2	2	Tie up with other organizations, local G.P's and getting people on board with personal selling.
3. Large organizations or restaurants developing their own software	2	1	Our application would have multiple outlets on board, and the prime focus would be the application.

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