

Case Study: POWERBID



Genesys helps POWERBID revolutionise the housing auction industry, provide transparency to bidders.

POWERBID is revolutionising the housing auction industry. Designed for use at real-estate auctions, POWERBID provides complete transparency by giving bidders a clear view of the current bid amount and who has the bid.

The patented system consists of an electronic sign that clearly displays the current bid and bidder number, and is operated by agency staff via a simple iPhone app. The POWERBID app has been designed with user experience in mind; it is simple to add bidders and bids, and quickly correct any mistakes on the fly.

The Challenge

Craig Marshall, director at Savills Cordeau Marshall Roseville, is the founder of POWERBID.

“Auctions can be stressful events for bidders; because auctions are conducted verbally people can easily miss information, causing them to become confused about who has the bid and the current bid amount. This can lead to higher stress levels and a tendency for bidders to drop out of the bidding process earlier than they may have otherwise.”

“I realised a visual representation of the current bid amount and bidder would improve transparency, and provide a better experience for both bidders and auctioneers.”

To solve these challenges, Craig came up with the idea of an application-operated electronic display board that would clearly show bid information and could be updated in real-time by the auctioneer. In order for the product to be fit for purpose it needed to be easy to use, lightweight, portable, battery operated and wireless.

“I originally went in search of off the shelf products that would do the job,” explained Craig. “Not finding any, I engaged a supplier to help build the

POWERBID system. Unfortunately I was left with a sub-optimal prototype solution from my original supplier, so I engaged local electronics design company Genesys Electronics Design to re-work the final product.”

The Solution

James Lawson-Craig, Mechatronics Design Engineer at Genesys headed up the POWERBID project. “Craig presented us with a prototype of his concept, but it needed some work to get it market-ready. This meant ensuring the product had all required features and that the technology was robust and reliable,” explained James.

“It’s easy to use and provides full transparency of the auction process. Bidders are able to relax as they can clearly see the current bid amount and bidder, and there is no confusion around the process at the end of the auction.”



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“We started by looking at Genesys’ existing range of proprietary hardware and firmware modules, to see what technology we had on-hand that could be applied to this project. Using these existing modules significantly decreased the time and cost required to develop the market-ready POWERBID system, as well as decreasing the risks associated with any new technology development.”

The Genesys RTOS software platform was used for the basis of the POWERBID product. This allows for the integration of other application modules developed within the Genesys software library, meaning further time and cost savings for POWERBID and a quicker entry into the market.

A Bluetooth low energy module was included to enable communication with the latest technologies such as iPhones and iPads. It also allows for the use of lower power modes to help improve battery life.

The last step required to finalise the hardware component of the product was to source a suitable LED panel that met all electromagnetic certification requirements.

With a slick LED sign ready to go, the other important piece was to build a robust app to control the bidding content. Failure isn’t acceptable – the application needed to work and needed to have a simple and attractive user interface.

The team decided on iOS for the first version of the app because of the general maturity and robustness of the iOS implementation of Bluetooth, over Android. With Android you have far less control over the user’s hardware platform configuration, so to ensure the app would work flawlessly from day one, iOS was the obvious choice.

In developing the app, the first step was to understand how the auctioneer would use it; this knowledge was used to guide development of the information presented, screen design and transitions between screens – or workflow.

The more important components, however, are the ones the user does not see. In particular, it is key that there is a separation of the application’s business logic and the screen presentation, plus an intermediate layer, or layers, that modularise the custom screen controls or concepts.

“Genesys calls these the bottom of the iceberg,” explained James. “The tip consists of the parts that the user sees and interacts with, but the majority is hidden beneath the surface, supporting the tip.”

Results

Craig Marshall put POWERBID to the test in early November 2016, and has been thoroughly impressed with the results.

“POWERBID is easy to use and provides full transparency of the auction process,” said Craig. “Bidders are able to relax as they can clearly see the current bid amount and bidder, and there is no confusion around the process at the end of the auction.”

“I am also certain that POWERBID will help improve sales prices at auctions. In fact, at one of our first auctions using POWERBID, the property sold for almost 30% above the reserve price, and I am 100% certain POWERBID helped achieve this fantastic result.”

Craig was also fully impressed with the service he received from the team at Genesys.

“The product is great and Genesys has been a pivotal part in helping to develop and commercialise it,” stated Craig. “POWERBID is now available for sale to realtors across Australia.”

“We are also looking at other use cases that could benefit from this product, such as sports fields and charity auctions.”



To find out more visit
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