

Empire Code Launchpad Uses AWS To Deploy A SaaS Solution For The Education Industry



Executive Summary

Empire Code Launchpad created a solution where schools can proudly own a mobile app, available for download on both the Apple app and Google Play stores with their very own visual identity, from logos and imagery, to colours and fonts. This enables schools to differentiate themselves from their competitors, as the customised branding solution meant that their students and parents, will always be reminded of them. Empire Code Launchpad's SaaS solution runs on AWS cloud.

A Disruptive Solution Lands Itself in the Education Industry

The SaaS solution includes the provision of a customised mobile app, and a dashboard for school managers to facilitate the management of the app content, on an affordable subscription fee at just \$150 a month. Managers can add, edit and delete their app content anytime of the day, with immediate data updates from dashboard to app.

The functions of the app include: (1) a streamlined bookings application solution, for students and parents to book the services they require instantly and at anytime of the day; (2) an in-app loyalty rewards program to encourage student loyalty, while enabling a seamless redemption of rewards; and (3) in-app marketing solutions, to showcase existing courses and a marketing broadcast feature for exclusive offers.

In summary, the functions enable schools to increase student satisfaction, and in return, ensure higher retention rates. With time reduced on managing operations required for existing students, schools can now allocate resources in acquiring new students.

Empire Code Education Centre, a computer science private school approved by the Singapore Ministry of Education, was the first to come onboard the app as a sister company.

The School Response

Felicia Chua, who heads up the school, found that relationships with parents have improved as a result of the app. "I realised that there is more customer loyalty now, people love the idea of cash rebates and being able to chalk up points for merchandise. There's a gamification aspect to it, so it's fun too. As a parent, you go into the app as and when you want to book slots and purchase packages, plus, you get to see your points accumulate overtime. Parents love that".

Parents are also far more incentivised to embark on a referral program created by the school to encourage app downloads, so that they can obtain bonus points through referrals. "I noticed an uptick in referrals since the app. Also, parents are more proactive in providing us with reviews because of the app now, whereas previously, we had to actively ask them for reviews."

The above benefits to the company have been great for client relations, and as a business owner who is passionate about her work and the brand, Felicia loves the boost in personal branding that has resulted from the app. "It's so nice to have our very own branded app, with our logo and with its functions tailored to our product and customers. It shows dedication, that we value our students, and that we went through the effort to create this, just for them."

About Empire Code Launchpad

Since 2016, Empire Code Launchpad has been developing customised software solutions for MNCs, government ministries, SMEs and schools. Aside to the launch of the mobile app SaaS solution, the company focuses on building mobile apps, content management systems, learning management systems and gamification of systems.

As a centre manager, Amber Tian views the app as a good initiative to keep clients returning for more. “Clients who redeem points are enticed to buy follow-up packages. Also, loyalty rewards programs are new to the education industry, usually, you see loyalty programmes in F&Bs and retailers, so I feel like we are getting ahead of the game by using this technology.”

Familiarisation of the dashboard does not take long, as on-demand training is provided to users. Also, as Eric Wong, who heads up operations says, “The system is intuitive, so it’s easy to learn to navigate it. Staff and student management are all in one database, so no details go missing, and all you need is Wi-Fi.” The dashboard is fully under your control, so you can input preferred time slots, and parents would only see the slots available for their booking, so there’s no surprise students showing up without one.

You can also create a different weekly schedule, customising the schedule for one day to be different from another (for example, if it’s a public holiday or an off-peak period). “Maximum capacity for the hour can also be factored in, so, if you have 3 teachers available for that particular day, and a class takes 60 minutes, then the system will register when the slots have been filled, and automatically block off bookings for that particular hour.” These factors can be changed anytime, from staff capacity to available hours and even lengths of classes. You can also add and edit your list of courses, and even set the duration for each course so that the system can help you manage your bookings based on staff availability, duration of services and time slots available.

“To summarise, the system prevents overbookings and unhappy parents; it maximises your resources and knows how to allocate your staff capacity.”

The Parent Response

Mrs Arunyingmongkhol, mother of an 8-year-old, has found the convenience of the app helpful due to her busy work schedule as a sales director. “The app feels good, I can earn points and get money back via vouchers. It’s convenient to use and to top up packages as well.”

Mrs Ching, mother of 2 primary school twins, likes that she can avoid paper rewards. “The app is great because the rewards system is stored there, which makes it completely transparent. Plus, I can claim for rewards as and when I feel like it.” When asked if having another app on her phone is an issue, she doesn’t think so, for her twins are both regular students at the school and she’s happy to have apps on her phone if there is a rewards programme she can benefit from. “With the loyalty rewards programme, I feel valued as a parent.” In addition, once a reward has been purchased via points, the redemption can be used anytime, all she has to do is to inform the school when she’s ready to redeem.

AWS Services and Partner Programs Help With SaaS Scalability

In deploying the AWS infrastructure for our SaaS solution, Empire Code Launchpad relied on Amazon Elastic Computer Cloud (Amazon EC2) server instances, to ensure the content availability and scalability of the app and dashboard. The Amazon Simple Storage Service (Amazon S3) buckets were set up to host content, with Amazon CloudFront for content distribution.

In addition to the above, the AWS partner programs have helped Empire Code Launchpad scale their solutions, through funding benefits, promotional support, and opportunities to engage with new clients. The AWS partner network advertising wasn’t all talk, they were totally true.

Empire Code Launchpad highly recommends the development of services that rely on AWS technologies according to its Chief Technology Officer. “The experience has exceeded our expectations, and we will continue upskilling our developers with trainings provided by AWS. To add, AWS solutions are not only secure and reliable, they are also affordable, and without AWS, we would not have been able to deploy our SaaS solution to disrupt the mobile app development industry.”