CASE STUDY: Dote
Setting the Retail Bar High With Live Commerce

LEVERAGING EXPERT HELP TO SYNCHRONIZE A COMPLEX ECOSYSTEM

In an economy where customer experience dictates which brands make it, Dote delivers an old-school mall vibe to mobile users by fusing online shopping with live streaming. The e-commerce startup architected their mobile app’s interactive Shopping Party feature by engaging the engineering expertise of Wowza Professional Services.

CHALLENGES

• Deep streaming expertise was required to develop Dote’s complex ecosystem.

• Dote needed to reduce 40-second latency to support interactivity.

• Their team identified a critical bug after already announcing the feature’s launch date.

SOLUTIONS

OUTCOMES

• Designed and architected a unique solution that solved a variety of technical issues with the help of Wowza Professional Services.

• Implemented the Ultra Low Latency plan to achieve sub-three-second delivery.

• Met launch date and piqued immense interest by leveraging an updated SDK.

Designing a Virtual Mall for Gen Z Consumers

Today’s celebrities aren’t necessarily on the big screen. Reality TV put media personalities like Kylie Jenner on the map, and an increasing number of stars rise to fame via streaming. This has in turn opened up new opportunities for revenue. Just look at the numbers: The top 81 influencers on Taobao— an Alibaba-owned Chinese e-commerce website — generated over 15 billion in sales last year.

Lauren Farleigh, the founder and CEO of Dote, wanted to tap into this trend while benefiting from the explosion of live streaming. Social media influencers were already a big selling point for Dote’s users, but the addition of video and interactivity brought consumers one step closer to a personalized shopping experience.

This customer-centric approach just made sense. Streaming and retail now go hand in hand, with 40% of consumers claiming that video increases their likelihood to purchase a product via their mobile device. Dubbed live commerce, this movement is already well established in many Asian markets.

Even so, streaming ain’t easy. Dote Product Manager Maria Luisa Rhodes explains:

“We realized that video requires a lot of knowledge, and we had a small team of engineers without streaming expertise. We were developing a complex environment with multiple risks due to interactivity and dual streams. This made for a very unique configuration that required the help of Wowza Professional Services.”

Dote initially contacted Wowza to help develop the Shopping Party feature. As they worked to make the app more robust and sophisticated, Wowza’s team of engineers addressed any challenges that arose.
Successfully Launching Despite Technical Issues

Problems tend to pop up at the eleventh hour, and for Dote’s development team, this adage held true. Just days before the launch date, they identified a critical bug in their app. Wowza got to work updating their SDK and solved the issue in no time.

“We wouldn’t have met our launch date without enlisting the help of Wowza Professional Services,” says Rhodes. “We started working with Wowza for this reason. They sped up the process significantly and tackled roadblocks that we wouldn’t have otherwise been able to solve.”

Nor was the Dote team unambitious in what they were trying to achieve. Shopping Party initially delivered two live streams — one from the influencer’s camera phone and one of their computer screen — synchronized with chat. Not unlike Twitch, this required ultra low latency to achieve the intense interactivity of chat and multiple streams.

By combining the free Wowza GoCoder SDK with Wowza Streaming Cloud, Dote had all the tools necessary to bring this concept to life. But Wowza Professional Services played a crucial role in accelerating deployment and optimizing their platform.

“Wowza’s engineers helped us with a variety of technical issues, including users disconnecting from the stream, synchronizing our complex ecosystem, and ultimately architecting an experience that works.”

Delivering Consistently High-Quality Streaming

The virtual mall experience now combines scrolling products on display, a live video of the influencer promoting each item, and a chatbox for viewers to ask questions. The app is digitally transforming the retail space and raising the bar for any major brands looking to engage with customers.

“We had a huge launch,” Rhodes says. “Both creators and users loved the live-streaming experience. This feature was highly experimental but gained a lot of traction.”

The premise of Shopping Party was that big influencers going live would attract more viewers. This audience wouldn’t likely be fleeting, either. Live video keeps viewers tuned in eight times longer than on-demand videos, and the fun social features that Dote built in helped further enhance this interest.

“Scalability was always a concern, but we never had any issues with Wowza’s technology,” says Rhodes.

The icing on the cake? Dote’s now able to leverage an extension of their in-house team in the form of Wowza Professional Services. That way, they’ll have the tools to tackle whatever comes their way — now and as Shopping Party takes off.

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Product Manager, Dote