

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Location technology a game-changer for SA retail

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#### KEY POINTS:

*Coveted real-time communication between brands and customers – as well as detailed shopper analytics – available to retailers, brands and loyalty programmes thanks to partnership between Gimbal Inc and Stellenbosch-based Skybird Technologies (Pty) Ltd*

- Drives engagement, boosts brand loyalty and increases sales
- Baywest Mall deploys highest density of Gimbal location beacons in Africa

In a first for South African retail, game-changing smartphone technology has been introduced that allows brands and stores to communicate in real-time with their customers while at the same time identifying shopper browsing habits and alerting customers to deals tailored specifically for them.

Using a unique combination of geo-fencing technology, Bluetooth low energy beacons and analytics, Stellenbosch-based [Skybird Technologies \(Pty\) Ltd](#) has launched an integrated software platform called ONE, powered by global location and proximity-based mobile engagement leader Gimbal.

The new platform gives brands and retailers a powerful and effective way to engage their mobile app audience.

ONE has been successfully deployed at the new R1.7-billion, 90 000m<sup>2</sup> Baywest Mall in Port Elizabeth. Harnessing Gimbal technology, Baywest Mall now hosts the highest density of deployed beacons in Africa.

Baywest managing director Gavin Blows said Skybird's ONE allowed the property developers to manage and control their entire digital inventories – from advertising screens, to touch-screen info pods and full-mesh Wi-Fi in public areas.



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“The ONE system means we can manage the digital experience the way we manage the physical one. Integration of Snapscan as a payment method allows for frictionless purchasing and the security of not needing to enter credit card information into a wireless network,” said Blows.

“ONE, when combined with the Gimbal functionality, makes Baywest Mall the most technologically advanced mall in South Africa, if not Africa.”

For Blows, the biggest benefit was having control of all the data and the ability to leverage the unique understanding of shoppers' movements, preferences and dwell times.

“This allows us to understand our tenant mix and traffic flow in a way that wasn’t possible before,” he said.

With Vodacom lighting Baywest’s dark fibre, Blows said tenants and shoppers would also enjoy the benefits of speed and stability for which the network was known.

[Click to watch the YouTube video explaining the Baywest Mall app (<http://bit.ly/BaywestMallApp>) or see what makes Gimbal’s technology so unique (<http://bit.ly/-GIMBAL>) ]

## **ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY**

Driven by the Baywest Mall app, incorporating ONE’s unique application programme interfaces (APIs), some 300 Gimbal proximity beacons have been deployed throughout the mall. Skybird and Gimbal’s partnership sees Skybird acting as Gimbal’s reseller within South Africa.

“The assistance from Gimbal allowed the technology to be uniquely designed to deliver only content relevant to the user, meaning its very design ensures content is relevant to shoppers based on their location and context,” said Skybird director Kyle Porter.

For app users, this means that they will not be bombarded with irrelevant messaging but can manage and search for specials on specific items throughout all stores in the mall and monitor other deals and events by scrolling through the “Pulse” feed in the app – a play on the Baywest tagline: “The pulse of the Bay.”

Before the roll-out, stores had only been able to identify customers’ shopping habits via their loyalty cards, said Porter. Integration of Gimbal technology allows retailers to understand shopper habits in-store – from the times spent in certain aisles to total time spent – and also increase the richness of their customer relationship management (CRM) data and enhance relevance in future or real-time communication.



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The options for integration at a retail level, said Porter, were endless.

“Gimbal’s enterprise approach means the focus is on management of large-scale, national networks of beacons with cloud-based remote management and on-the-fly adjustments without needing to touch any code.”

Installation was also simple, he said, as the units did not require containment or a power source.

“This technology is going to be a game-changer for SA retail,” said Porter.

“Already major national brands are very excited about being able to interact directly with their customers, rather than wait for their customers to touch base with them online or via social media.

“And the ability to know that I’m in your store before getting to your till opens up many possibilities to engage, up-sell and enhance my experience with a personalised offer at just the right time – that’s before we even start to talk about the massive data benefits to drive business intelligence.

“We firmly believe Skybird’s experience with the operational, software and user adoption elements of implementing this technology places us in a great position for the year ahead.”

## **BRIDGING THE PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL DIVIDE**

Delivering personalised live mobile content based on a user’s location and their CRM history can drive engagement, boost brand loyalty and increase sales while providing a contextually relevant stream of useful information and value to customers – all in real time.

With powerful controls ensuring customer privacy, and an easy-to-use application programme interface (API) for developers, Gimbal bridges the gap between the physical and the digital worlds. This, in turn, creates new possibilities for brands, venues, retailers, advertisers and developers, and allows for rich retailer insights into the movement and behaviour of the shoppers who use the mobile app.

Skybird’s ONE is a managed cloud-based marketing and engagement platform that harnesses the location data from Gimbal beacons within a building, as well as geofences set up across the country.

ONE extends to not only smartphone apps, but also other digital inventory required in modern malls – such as Wi-Fi, fibre, advertising screens, information directories and the mall’s website – reducing the operational costs associated with meeting the needs of a modern development.



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The analytics from this technology provides meaningful insight to retailers and property owners, answering questions such as shopper dwell times, conversion ratios, routes of travel and footfall patterns. This is in addition to the context and value the demographic data provides.

According to Keri Danielski, vice president of marketing for Gimbal, retailers are always looking for ways to better reach and engage customers to increase relevance, loyalty and sales.

“Consumers are looking to their mobile devices to enhance their real world experiences with location relevant and timely information. Once South African shoppers see the value in sharing their location with their mobile apps and experience the convenience and rich, instant engagement with brands or loyalty programmes they’re interested in, we will see the adoption of location and proximity-triggered engagement accelerate tremendously.”

[Ends]

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Images:

**CONNECTING SHOPPERS:** Baywest Mall shopper [image 3: Lindsay Steele; image 4: Azola Tybosch] is greeted by the Skybird-powered app which aims to connect customers and retailers in real time, providing personalised information to app users about their favourite brands, stores and specials.

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