

# Ex-Yahoo execs create ChoozOn to sift through the daily deal clutter

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Groupon, Living Social and hundreds of other daily deal sites are great ... when they offer something of interest. But, more often than not, these sites miss the mark with irrelevant promotions. A new Bellevue startup called ChoozOn thinks it has solved that problem, helping people find compelling offers that are suited just for them.

ChoozOn allows individuals to create their own “personal deal networks” in which users pick the brands and stores that they like the best in order to receive tailored offers. That means a guy interested in skiing and hunting will no longer get deals for local nail parlors and salons.

At least, that’s the hope.

“The world does not need yet another deals site,” admits ChoozOn co-founder and chairman Usama Fayyad. “But what is sorely needed is a way to benefit from this confusing cacophony of deals and special offers that is growing daily.”

ChoozOn will do this, Fayyad says, by sifting through daily deal offers to find only the most relevant and timely deals for that individual.



ChoozOn co-founder Usama Fayyad

“We are bringing order to the chaos, in a way that allows you to really take advantage of what brands have to offer both in terms of deals as well as loyalty programs,” Fayyad tells GeekWire.

In addition, the company says it using “personalization algorithms” to help customers find and share relevant deals that may not even be on the radar for the individual.

“It is the unique combination of deal discovery, personalization and social network capabilities that make the personal deal network a compelling service,” he says.

Fayyad and the rest of the crew at ChoozOn — including Nick Weir and Hunter Madsen — have plenty of experience when it comes to the personalized targeting of advertising. They all worked together at Yahoo in various data mining capacities, experience that should serve them well as they enter the intensely competitive field.

Fayyad is probably the best known of the bunch, at least in Seattle. The former Microsoft researcher previously founded digiMine, the behavioral ad targeting company now known as AudienceScience. From there, he went on to serve as Chief Data Officer at Yahoo for a number of years.



The rest of the ChoozOn team also has connections to Yahoo. Weir previously served as vice president of data strategy. Meanwhile, Madsen helped establish the product marketing unit of Yahoo! Worldwide Sales.

Fayyad said he never really left Seattle after taking the job at Yahoo in 2004, and he returned to the area permanently in 2008 after leaving the search company.

Of course, the daily deal arena is among the most crowded on the Internet, even giving rise to a new term: “Groupon clones.”

But it is that level of noise which leads Fayyad to think that ChoozOn could make a mark.

“What we are aiming to do — and we believe no one else is doing this with intelligent algorithms, personalization, and proper privacy policies — is bring smart, personalized organization to this crowded space,” he says.

ChoozOn plans to formally launch service later this summer, but it has already lined up 300 brands which have pledged to participate. The company declined to disclose its financial backers or the total amount of funding.

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