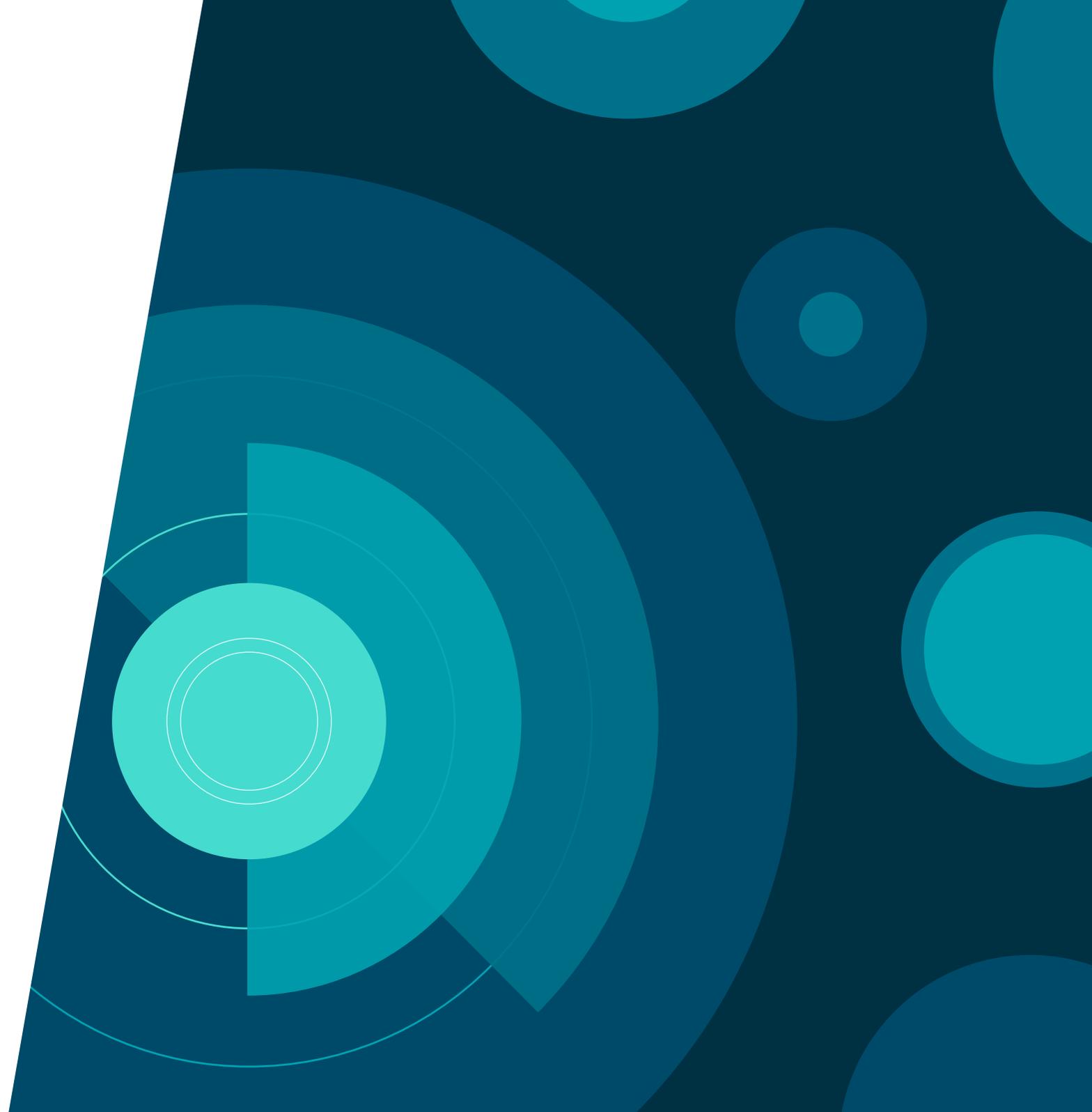


# How To Start A Beacon Project?



# “Only fools rush in,” Elvis Presley sang to us once.

Though he was certainly not talking about your first beacon project, the man makes a fair point. Express-ordering a beacon kit and sticking beacons to the wall of your venue isn't going to get you very far. In the last two years we've set up plenty of pilot projects and we have some insights to share with you.

**Are you convinced that beacons are a good fit for your business?  
Follow these 10 steps to turn your beacon pilot into a success.**



# 1

## Manage expectations

**Beacons can do amazing things and bring great value, but you have to manage your stakeholder's expectations.**

**We love beacons, trust us, we do, but they are not the solution to all of your location-based problems.**

Our customers have many questions about beacons and their possibilities. Here's the thing: beacons are still pretty rudimentary devices at the moment.

a

They are not able to transmit content. Sure, they can transmit signals that trigger an action in an app, but it's still the app, together with the cloud platform, that does all the heavy lifting.

b

Beacons consume power. Though a heavy battery and smart calibration will get you a long way, you will need a maintenance crew to periodically replace your beacons' batteries. Hardware requires monitoring and management.

c

The ideal use range for beacons lies between 1 and 50 meters. There are better technologies for other distances, more about this later.

d

Indoor positioning is rather tricky. It requires a very thorough setup.



**Does that mean you should just ignore beacons or wait for the technology to mature?**

**Not necessarily. There's great potential in this new technology, you just need a little creativity to let it shine.**

### **When to use beacons?**

Of course, beacons aren't the only location-based technology out there. So how do you know which one best suits your needs?

**In general, the playing field for beacons ranges anywhere from 1 meter to about 50.**

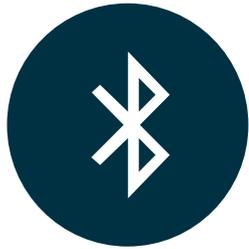
For use cases under a meter, BLE-signals are too broad, which can cause security or privacy concerns. If you want to leverage proximity-technology for use cases where security is crucial, like payments or badging, a technology like NFC is better suited (although significantly lower in adoption). There are solutions that will allow beacons to serve this purpose, but they are no piece of cake.

Above 50 meters (e.g. if you want to track a user's whereabouts at street level) GPS is the better option. But bear in mind that using a smartphone's location services is quite the battery hog. You don't want your app being the number 1 cause for drain, trust me. If you have different venues and want to track users across those places, equipping your venues with beacons and silently logging users is a much more elegant solution than keeping the GPS on all of the time.

Another downside for GPS is indoor localization, which is virtually impossible due to poor signal strength inside.

However, remember that beacons are not necessarily the magic bullet to your indoor positioning needs. As they use triangulation to determine your position relative to the beacon, you need multiple beacons per room to achieve some degree of accuracy (say, up to a meter). Throw into account that crowded spaces can prove tricky for BLE signals, and you're looking at dozens of beacons per venue. Luckily, managing beacons doesn't have to be difficult.

## Beacon readiness in numbers



29%

of Belgian users always have their Bluetooth on.<sup>2</sup>

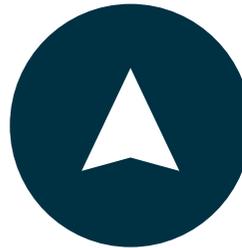
90%

of users in the 16-34 age range have location services enabled.<sup>2</sup>



72%

of Belgians have location services enabled (for some apps).<sup>2</sup>



**By 2018 over 90% of devices will be Bluetooth-ready.**

**Enabling Bluetooth throughout the day only causes 1-2% battery drain.<sup>1</sup>**



20-25%

of your app install base (on iOS7 or higher, Android 5 or higher) is beacon ready<sup>2</sup>



# 2

## Beacons are an add-on to your customer experience

Always a bridesmaid, never a bride. Beacons alone do not make experiences; they make existing experiences better, faster and smarter. They can create a contextual, richer experience for your customers. They can bring a smile to your customers' faces with an aptly timed surprise.

**Make sure you can answer "Yes!" to at least one of these questions.**

Beacon interactions are as inventive as you are. When planning your beacon pilot, ask yourself the following questions:

- Am I offering better customer service through beacons?
- Am I making my customers smile?
- Am I offering personalized and contextualized offers?
- Am I gathering valuable information that I can turn into insights?

# 3

## Pilot First

Adopting a new technology is like marriage. You need to take some time to get to know each other first. To get acquainted with beacon tech and its assets and limitations we advise you to start with a proof of concept (or POC) and work your way from there.

How do we tackle these POCs? Let's walk you through our demo setup at Brussels Airport. We started off by explaining the technology at company level. By installing a couple of beacons at BAC's headquarters and setting up simple interactions such as: "How do you like the coffee?" At the coffee machine. And after exiting the restaurant, how did you like the food? The people at BAC quickly understood how the tech worked and valued its potential to start off with 'real' cases. Did you know Brussels Airport was the first large-scale public venue in Belgium to be equipped with beacons?

# 4

## Define a few clear use cases

Beacon technology has great potential, so you'll probably be tempted to try everything at once. However, we advise you to focus on a couple of clear use cases: delight your customers with a well-timed coupon, log data to see how your audience behaves and navigates your venue, ask for feedback, send people a welcome message or surface the right app feature at exactly the right time and place.

The possibilities are limitless. Start out with a simple, singular action with maximum impact that will give you great, actionable insights and use beacons to surprise and delight your customer. The better your Call To Action, the more return you'll get from your audience.

[Template for beacon brainstorms ›](#)



Project: \_\_\_\_\_

 Location

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

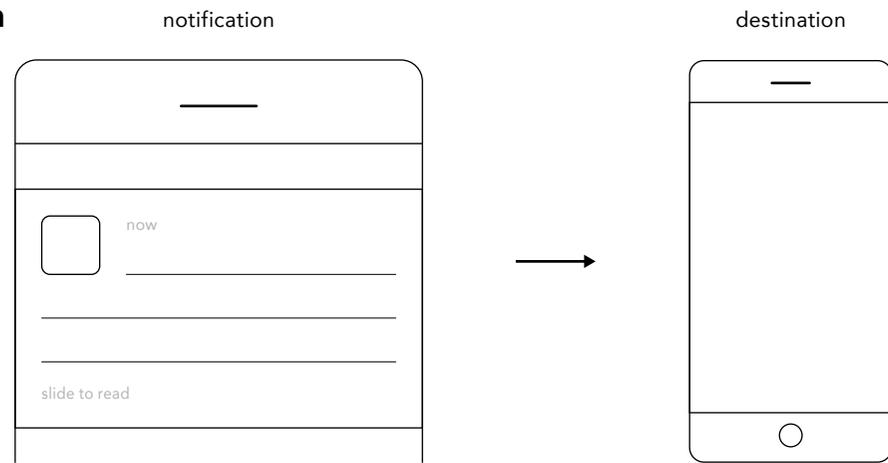
 Goals

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

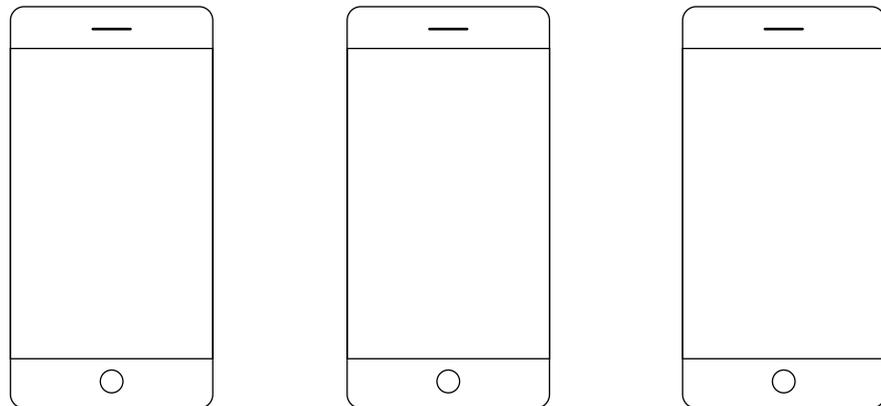
 Data

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

 Interaction



 App



# 5

## Define the KPIs

**You're starting to get the gist aren't you? Know exactly what you want to use your beacons for and measure, tweak, adapt.**

As with most technologies, beacons are only as successful as the strategy and intent behind them. Work out exactly what you want to know and achieve. Data is not knowledge. If you want valuable answers and actionable insights, you need to make sure you're asking the right questions.

Are dwell time analytics the most relevant? They can show you how people are moving around your store. Metrics like dwell time are a great way to help you identify your store's "prime real estate". Smart store layouts will soon be at your fingertips.

If that's not your speed, you can also measure the open rates of your messages. How many people are converting? And what are the most efficient messages to make people convert?

There are a lot of dimensions and opportunities linked to beacon technology. Sit your team down and brainstorm about the greatest benefits for your business in particular. Combine data and creativity for the best results.



## 6 Create a detailed layout of your venue

Next up, you need to create a detailed map of the venue. Not all beacons have equal specs. They come in various shapes and sizes, catering to different uses and situations. They have to be hung at an optimal height where they are least likely to experience interference.

It's important to study the dimensions of the rooms, the thickness of the walls, and other environmental elements. The last thing you want to happen when introducing a new service for your customers are technical hiccups.

**Fun fact:** people contain 60% water. Water makes wireless signals less effective. Once your beacons are up and running it is wise to test your setup with a full crowd. You'll get a more realistic view of the functionality and can easily adjust where needed.

## 7

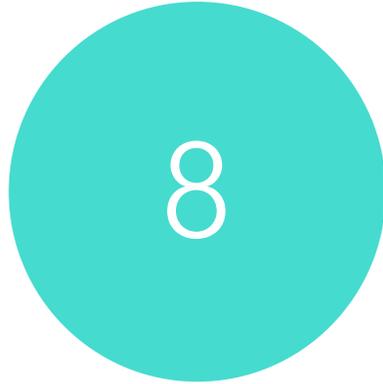
## Choose type & n° of beacons

We've touched upon this briefly in the previous paragraph. There are many types of beacons available and they all serve a different purpose.

Your beacons should be selected based on your venue, the goal of your campaigns and the type of interactions you want to have with customers. The amount of beacons heavily depends on the type of use case. If you want to measure dwell time flows between groups of beacons it's logical you'll need a bigger setup.

Most beacons are battery powered because it's not possible to completely rewire an entire venue at the perfect height for beacons. Also keep in mind that you will have to replace your setup in a few years as technology matures.





# Educate your users

You're all set, you understand beacons, but your users might not. If our experience in app building has taught us one thing, it's this:

**Make sure your users are on board.**

**Immediately. If you don't, you're very likely to lose them.**

Beacon interactions require localization permission on iOS and notification permissions on all platforms. On top of that, Bluetooth needs to be activated.

So set up a superb onboarding flow to help them get on the same page. Set the context for your beacons. Explain how the interaction is going to work. Help them understand why they need to enable their location. Once you lay down the extra value for them, they'll be happy to accept the change in their settings.

What's great about this is that people are consciously opting into your marketing efforts and thus more likely to be responsive. Our mobile coupon POCs show a conversion rate of a whopping **12 percent!** Traditional coupons rake in a mere 1.8 percent conversion rate.

# 9 Communicate clearly

New technology can be confusing so your customers might be a bit apprehensive at first. Don't make it harder on them. Ensure that your communication is crystal clear and the copy of your notifications is not ambiguous. If you explain to your customers what you want them to do in a clear and transparent way, they'll be way more likely to be open to what you have to offer.

**A good example from one of our proofs of concept: "Open this notification to enjoy a free soda at check-out."**

Give, give, give: you're interrupting people and demanding their attention, make it worth their while. Beacons are precision instruments: don't misuse the technology by using it as just another mass broadcasting tool. **Enrich. Surprise. Gratify. Personalize.**



HLN-app | onboarding phase.



HLN-app | give users control over settings

# 10

## Ship, measure, analyze, tweak

The most important aspect of running a pilot is to learn from it.

Therefore, it is highly critical that you analyze the results and take decisions for your future course of action.

**Firstly, check the adoption rates.**

**Did your visitors receive the notifications?**

**And if so: did they open them?**

Also ensure that you ask your first users for feedback – what they liked about their beacon experience and what they didn't.

Ask them if they saw any added value to their experience or whether they found the messages too 'pushy'?

Were they happily surprised to receive an offer in a particular section, or did they feel it was delivered too late or too early? Taking this feedback into account will help you go ahead with your full-blown beacon strategy with confidence.

What also proved very effective is live QA & exit polls. Put some people in your venue to get live feedback from your first users. You will gain valuable insights that will put you on the right track. You could also have a look at the analytics to check if the campaign resulted in an increase in foot traffic, sales,... Or you could perform A/B testing with some product and location combinations within your store. This will help you optimize product placements and layouts.



# Follow these 10 steps to turn your first beacon project into a success.

- 1 Manage expectations
- 2 Beacons are an add-on to your customer experience
- 3 Pilot first
- 4 Define a few clear use cases
- 5 Define the KPIs
- 6 Create a detailed layout of your venue
- 7 Select type and number of beacons
- 8 Educate your users
- 9 Communicate clearly
- 10 Ship, measure, analyze, tweak

Taking this strategic, step-by-step approach to beacons will allow you to use beacon technology to the fullest, with purpose.

Questions?  
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