

Juntos Finanzas

A Case Study

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Myra Valenzuela, Nina Holle, and Wameek Noor



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Background

The engagement gap between customers and providers is among the key challenges to increasing uptake and use of financial services and ultimately achieving financial inclusion. Juntos (see Box 1) has developed a tool that aims to address this gap by taking advantage of behavioral research and design, technology, customer data analytics, and “[real-time customer interaction](#).” The automated and low-touch way of increasing engagement enabled by the tool makes it an appealing solution for financial service providers (FSPs) that are struggling to increase customer activity.

Box 1. The Origin of Juntos Finanzas

Juntos is an early-stage Silicon Valley for-profit technology startup. It provides a real-time automated conversational platform that enables customers to engage with Juntos Finanzas via SMS. Juntos began in 2010 as a final class project at Stanford’s School of Design. Working with school janitors, mostly Mexican immigrants, Juntos founder Ben Knelman prototyped personal financial management tools to help the janitors save and feel more in control of their financial lives. Realizing the potential impact of helping people develop confidence in navigating their financial lives, Juntos began to build and refine an automated SMS platform that worked as a savings coach to help the underbanked in the United States (mostly Latino immigrants) develop new savings habits. The company drew the attention of FSPs who saw the platforms as a new way to interact with their customers and drive engagement after winning the G20 Innovation Award for Financial Inclusion at the 2012 Mexico G20 Summit. From 2013 to 2014, Juntos partnered^a with Bancolombia, a large commercial bank in Colombia. Since then, other pilots have launched in Mexico, Tanzania, and the Philippines; several others are being planned. Juntos is a growing start-up, which employed 16 people in July 2015. Its financing comes from Aligned Partners, a boutique venture capital investor, and Omidyar Network.

a. The Juntos pilot in Colombia was financed under the Gateway Financial Innovations for Savings (GAFIS), a project sponsored by Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, managed by Bankable Frontier Associates, and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Sources: Interviews with Juntos staff and www.juntosglobal.com

With only limited experience but growing international interest to apply the new tool, this case study intends to describe the Juntos platform (hereinafter referred to as “Juntos Finanzas”), how it works, what it can and cannot do, some early results, and some issues arising from initial implementations. The case is based on interviews with Juntos staff and FSPs that have started to test and implement the platform in their organizations (see “Sources”). CGAP is particularly interested to explore the role a platform like Juntos Finanzas can play in facilitating [customer empowerment](#). To what extent can an almost fully automated system build customer trust and confidence? How does the two-way interaction affect customer behavior and do changes in customer behavior last beyond the deployment of the tool? How much customization would a platform like Juntos Finanzas require for application in other countries and organizational types? How do FSPs view this platform, and what challenges arise in its implementation?

For some of these questions, answers are not yet available. Data and evidence are limited given the short track record and life span of some of the applications. However, FSPs interested in exploring a solution like Juntos Finanzas may find lessons learned thus far to be useful.

What is Juntos Finanzas and how does it work?

The Juntos Finanzas platform enables automated two-way conversations with customers; the model is informed by behavioral science and design. Juntos Finanzas communicates with customers through SMS and adapts the frequency and content of messages based on customers' reactions (see Box 2). FSPs can engage Juntos to achieve specific targets that then guide and shape the messages developed by Juntos. These targets could be linked, for instance, to drive uptake and use of existing or new products or cross-sell products and services. The underlying assumption is that a platform like Juntos Finanzas and the tailored interaction it can generate helps customers feel more confident in interacting with their providers and builds a longer-term relationship with customers, through conversations that are designed to change specific customer behavior over time.

Box 2. Sample Conversations

Sample SMS conversation #1 (translated from Spanish): Transaction-based exchange initiated by customer

18 December 2013

Customer A:

What do I do to deposit money in my account thanks!

What should I do? I forgot my account number.

How much money can I deposit and what can I do with it?

Juntos Finanzas:

You can deposit into your account in an ABC branch or with an agent. Once you're there, all you'll need is your account number.

Your ABC account number is your phone number plus one. If you don't remember, you can always call ABC BANK toll free at xxx xxxx xxxx.

In your ABC account you can hold a total of \$xxxx. You can use it to recharge your phone minutes, pay bills, and more!

Sample SMS conversation #2: (translated from Spanish) initiated by Juntos Finanzas

1 November 2013

Customer B:

Juntos Finanzas:

2000

Saving today is the way to achieve your future goals. How much will you put away this week? For example: Save 10000

Nice! Get in the habit of depositing in your ABC account when it is convenient. The habit is most important, not the amount that you deposit.

Saving is the path to advance your goals. What is your main motivation to save?

My children

We're excited to hear that you are saving for what is important for you. This effort is a big step forward. You've got it!

Set up as a third-party service, Juntos Finanzas offers a different value proposition to customers when compared to one-way SMS blasts. The latter are short-lived (sometimes repetitive) messages focused on sharing information. Typical SMS marketing campaigns include information regarding a service, promotional incentives to use the service, and/or efforts to improve branding perceptions. However, this

approach to persuading customers to use a service—using information and external motivations—runs contrary to Juntos Finanzas’s approach to behavioral change.

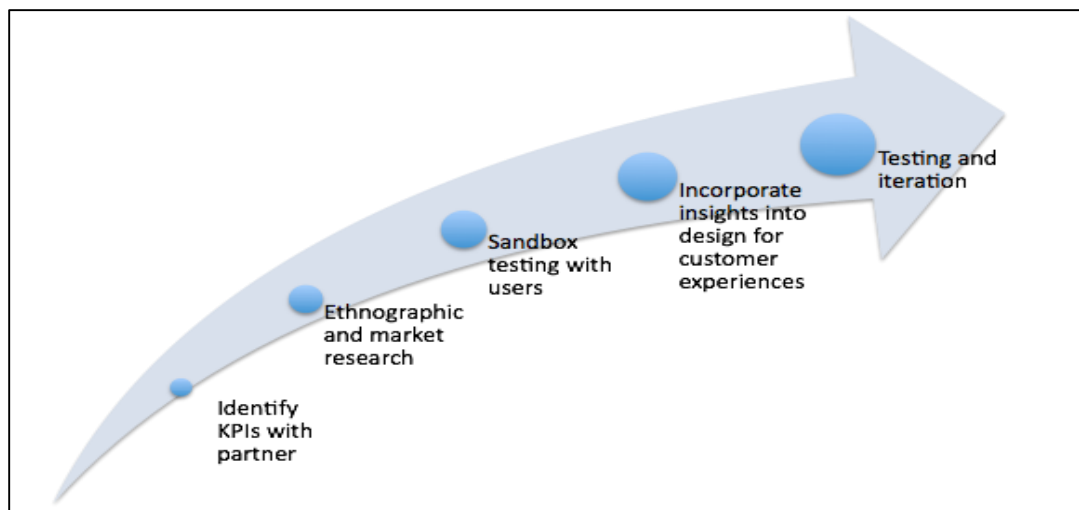
Juntos Finanzas offers FSPs a low-cost interactive SMS platform to access and engage new and existing customers instantly at scale, enabling potentially significant cost savings as well as additional revenue opportunities. In addition to the key performance indicators (KPIs), such as increased savings balances, that have been established with its various partners, the platform can also be used for other purposes, such as decongesting channels, reducing call-center volume, improving brand perception, and reducing fraud. Moreover, FSPs are increasingly seeing the value of the platform to help understand the needs and behaviors of their customers.

At the same time, the FSP often lacks or does not see the benefit of directly investing in “in-house” capacity to carry out the functions Juntos Finanzas has. Therefore, Juntos’s partners seem to value Juntos Finanzas as an outsourced platform (outsourcing may optimize time/resources and reach faster results for the partner FSP). To FSP customers, Juntos Finanzas generally positions itself as a friend of the FSP. Through its experience so far, Juntos has found that maintaining a certain distance from the FSP helps to build customer trust. A white-label approach in which the platform carries the brand of the bank is not out of the question for future deployments, depending on the partnership involved. In the deployment with Bancomer in Mexico, the white-label approach is being tested for a certain segment of the FSP’s customers but as of the time of this publication, it is too early to determine whether there are any noticeable differences when using such an approach.

Design approach

Before the launch of a pilot, Juntos works with its partner FSP to identify problems that could be addressed by real-time interaction. Its research and design approach to achieve those targets is outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Research and Design Approach of Juntos



1. **Identify KPIs with partner:** Juntos and its FSP partner jointly develop KPIs for a pilot, which could include an increased number of transactions for a particular product with good uptake but limited use, increases in balances or transaction migration (e.g., moving transactions from branches to other channels, such as through point of sales devices).
2. **Ethnographic and market research:** Based on the KPIs, Juntos develops a research agenda and conducts in-country ethnographic and market research to understand the local context and cultural norms. Juntos films the ethnographic interviews so that material can be analyzed and reviewed by Juntos analysts. Leveraging human-centered design (HCD)¹ techniques, the ethnographic research is not so much focused on people's financial behavior but mostly on what strongly triggers them and their issues around trust, so that these insights can be used when designing messages. For the first application in Colombia, this initial research took two weeks and involved interviews with approximately 10 people. Initial in-country research for subsequent deployments, for instance in the Philippines, was more limited in time and scope, lasting one week and built on lessons from the initial pilot. As deployments unfold, Juntos continues to do this type of research on an as-needed basis.
3. **Sandbox testing:** Juntos designs initial messages for testing and recruits a small group of individuals randomly selected (not necessarily customers of the partner FSP) to identify big mistakes in the tone and content of the messages. The sandbox testing is a fast, iterative process during which big mistakes or misperceptions are identified.
4. **Incorporate insights:** Based on in-country ethnographic and market research, as well as insights from sandbox testing and behavioral research and design, Juntos analyzes the results and incorporates them into preliminary designs of customer experiences and messaging.
5. **Testing and rapid iteration:** During the first couple of months of a deployment, Juntos runs many concurrent A/B message testing² with small numbers of users, e.g., six batches of 200 customers at a time. Juntos observes how people respond (or do not respond) to the various messages. Juntos continuously tests and refines which conversations work best. It uses both qualitative data from replies (e.g., "who are you?"; "This is cool!"; "How do I withdraw money from my account at an authorized retailer?"; "I wasn't able to pay off my card today but I promise that I will do so tomorrow") and quantitative data on the number of people reacting to a particular message.

Throughout this process, following on the identification of KPIs, FSP involvement tends to be limited and is not required.

Juntos faces several barriers to convince customers to engage with their service, such as a high cognitive effort on the part of the customer or fears of a scam. To help bring down these barriers, Juntos uses

¹ HCD is a process built on learning directly from customers in their own environments. See Seltzer and McKay (2014) for more details.

² In A/B testing, two versions (A and B) are compared. The versions are identical except for one variation that might affect a user's behavior.

various methods, such as those outlined in their strategies on behavioral changes, which helps to address cognitive efforts (see Box 3), or designing the customer experience so that customers can reply with just one number instead of a full, complex message. Through its approach, Juntos is not only lowering the barrier for the customer to use its own service, it also addresses some of the barriers and costs that customers face when using financial services, such as economic and psychological costs.³ Another important consideration is ensuring that customers do not have to pay for their SMS replies, the cost of which, in some countries, is borne either by Juntos or the FSP. In addition, to mitigate fears of a scam, Juntos uses a local number, preferably one that is associated with its partner FSP to gain trust.

Box 3. Juntos's Strategies to Affect Behavioral Change

Juntos believes that it is easier to begin with changing people's actions, rather than attempting to change their attitudes, thoughts, or desires first. It also believes that customers are able to truly engage in financial services and change their behavior in the long term only if they are intrinsically motivated.

Here are strategies from its behavioral toolbox:

1. Break down larger behaviors into smaller parts, e.g., how do we get users to press keys? Get to the physical aspects of the action, e.g., what are users doing with their hands, mouth, feet, etc.?
2. Add or subtract resources to reduce friction. After identifying the specific physical actions desired, add or subtract from the environment to reduce friction to that action or increase pressure on that action.
 - a. Add mental, emotional, or physical resources: education, praise, conditioning
 - b. Off-load emotional effort: lower the stakes
 - c. Off-load mental effort: create a default decision
 - d. Off-load physical effort: create a tool
3. Capitalize on existing behaviors. Use existing behaviors as a trigger for new behaviors, e.g., have users add an action each time they plug in their cell phone. Make this additional action as easy and as motivating as possible.
4. Use rewards when appropriate. Rewards work for actions with no intrinsic benefit.
5. Use social pressure. Assume that this is what people do, and give users an opportunity to get close to people who are modeling the desired behavior. People will take on actions perceived to be dominant in a group.

Note: For more information on behavioral economics, see World Bank (2015).

³ Customers not only face direct financial costs when using a financial product or service, such as fees, interest rates etc., they also encounter other costs, such as economic costs (e.g., opportunity costs for waiting in line at a bank branch) and psychological costs (fear of embarrassment when engaging with bank staff, etc.).

After the initial testing and rapid iteration period, the Juntos Finanzas service is rolled out to larger groups of customers. Juntos Finanzas requires at least 10,000 customers of a particular segment base (e.g., newly acquired active accounts) to make the algorithms work.⁴ In some countries, Juntos is required to ask customers to opt in to the service to start their engagement.⁵ The system adapts its frequency of sending messages to individual user behavior, sending more responses if the customer is highly engaged, or fewer messages if the customer is not as responsive. While the vast majority of the messages Juntos Finanzas sends to users are automated, at this stage of Juntos Finanzas's development, every incoming SMS received by the platform is read by a member of the team for the sake of quality control and verification. Although this may seem unsustainable as it scales up, Juntos continues to improve its technology and processes to handle anticipated growth in message volume.

However, certain messages that confound the software, such as those containing misspelled words, are flagged and addressed by a staff member. In the Colombia pilot, the Juntos Finanzas platform was initially able to handle 93 percent of their conversations with customers, increasing to 98 percent automated replies nine months later. Customer messages that cannot be instantly answered through Juntos Finanzas's algorithm are escalated to a triage team that takes longer to respond. For example, the platform received some messages from customers in a rural area of Colombia asking for the location of the closest agent to conduct a transaction. The algorithm could not handle the response, but the triage team replied to the customers, asking for their general location and manually researching the information using the agent finder tool available on the bank's website. In addition, if a customer asks a question that confuses the system, e.g., about agriculture, a team member from Juntos will manually inquire what the question is about. If the same type of confounding message keeps coming up or if a message strikes the reviewers as specifically interesting, Juntos tries to make the information available via the algorithm in the future. Reviewing confounding messages is a way for Juntos to learn what is important to customers and tweak messages accordingly.

Technology platform

Juntos Finanzas's technology platform is built around two key principles: (i) rapid product testing and (ii) configurability over infrastructure customization. Juntos has developed an extensive suite of custom internal tools that create an "assembly line" of product testing. The entire product lifecycle from design to copyediting, engineering, operations, and data analysis is completed within a single internal application. This enables small teams to test dozens of product variants within the span of a few weeks. Juntos has taken a "content independent" approach to building internal tools. The individual conversations are configured within the technology platform and require no intervention from a software

⁴ A detailed description of Juntos Finanzas's technology platform will follow in the next section.

⁵ For example, regulation in Mexico and Colombia required Juntos to send customers terms and conditions for using the service, while the same is not true for Tanzania. In the case of Tanzania, Juntos provides customers a way to opt out (which is not legally required either).

engineer. This enables Juntos to start new partnerships quickly and with very low cost as there is no new technology development required.

When an FSP contracts with Juntos, no technical integration is required between the provider's management information system and the Juntos Finanzas platform, unless the FSP (such as a telco) can provide free SMS for the deployment. In that case, Juntos Finanzas integrates with its SMS center (SMSC),⁶ which presents Juntos Finanzas messages as originating from a distinctly separate number so that customers perceive them as an outside, more objective, service. In addition to these technical implementation issues, the FSP must also conduct a segmentation exercise to provide Juntos with the targeted customer cohorts (e.g., active accounts older than three months), within which customers are randomly selected to receive the Juntos Finanzas service. For these customers, the FSP periodically shares their transactional data with Juntos so that they can monitor behavioral changes (e.g., account use) and program those into the software. The data shared by the FSP are typically in Excel files that the FSP uploads onto a secure platform, from which a Juntos staff member downloads the files and subsequently uploads them into Juntos's secure data repository, which has restricted permissions among Juntos staff.

Results so far: Effect on customers and on the business

Although Juntos is still in the early stages of its business and there is limited information on publicly available results (partly due to challenges around confidentiality of customer data), this case study seeks to shed some light on preliminary results from the Colombia pilot and initial insights from pilots carried out by FSPs in Mexico and Tanzania. Juntos Finanzas's results can be measured on three levels: (i) customers' direct response rate to text messages from Juntos Finanzas, (ii) targeted behavior change (as measured by KPIs set by partner FSPs), and (iii) increased trust and self-confidence of customers.

Response rate. In its first international pilot in Colombia, Juntos Finanzas's response rate increased from 4 percent after one month to 32 percent after 3.5 months. This is considerable, especially compared to other similar tools, such as email marketing, that typically generate less than 1 percent response rates (HBR 2013). Juntos Finanzas's partner, Bancolombia, conducted a randomized phone survey asking its customers about the mobile money product and the service provided by Juntos Finanzas. Through that survey, the bank learned that customers were very satisfied with Juntos Finanzas, rating it an average of 9 out of 10. In addition, Juntos Finanzas's net promoter score (NPS)⁷ of 66 was "best in class." Even nonresponding customers seemed to value the platform's text messages—when informed that the service would stop soon due to unresponsiveness, some customers still opted to continue receiving messages. Additionally, Juntos Finanzas observed that another set of customers did not respond to messages but still changed their behavior eventually. If the response rate to a specific set of messages is low, Juntos Finanzas uses this information to tweak future messages accordingly.

⁶The purpose of the SMSC is to store, convert, forward, and deliver text SMS messages.

⁷ NPS is a management tool that gauges the loyalty of customers. It is based on a direct question, "How likely is it that you would recommend our company/product/service to a friend or colleague?"

Change in transactional behavior. In the case of the Colombian pilot, Juntos Finanzas targeted Bancolombia's customers right after account opening, which appears to be a crucial time period to successfully engage new clients. Three months after the introduction of Juntos Finanzas, active new accounts increased by 32.5 percent and average account balances by 50 percent compared to the control group during the pilot phase. At the six-month mark, compared to accounts that were not exposed to Juntos Finanzas, inactivity rates were 14 percent lower, and balances increased almost twice as much in six months. The effects were largest with customers who actively engaged with Juntos Finanzas. However, passive Juntos Finanzas users interestingly still showed the desired behavior change, albeit to a lesser degree. Juntos considers the increase in account activity and other related KPIs as good proxies for customer impact as it shows that customers have more trust, confidence, and knowledge in using a product.

Box 4. Value Perceived by FSPs

Bancolombia, Colombia: The Juntos Finanzas platform was successful in driving many customers who were unaware of available agent banking options to use more efficient agent and mobile channels, or to simply make a transaction using a mobile wallet. This reduced the costs to the customer as well as the bank, whose transaction costs at a bank branch was approximately five times more than the cost of transactions at agents. Juntos Finanzas's messages also convinced customers to enhance their savings balances. This offered additional revenue opportunities for the bank from the larger float and revenue from cash withdrawal fees at agent premises (even with this fee, cost to customers would still be lower relative to visiting a bank branch).

Bancomer, Mexico. While still at a pilot stage, the bank indicates that the ability of Juntos Finanzas to migrate customers to cheaper ATM and agent channels yields the bank significant cost savings, even though additional revenue opportunities were not a focus of its particular pilot. The bank believes its ability to receive key intelligence from a larger number of lower-income customers with whom it has less knowledge regarding their financial needs, aspirations, and desires will ultimately yield longer-term benefits/return on investments for the bank.

Tigo, Tanzania: The Tanzania pilot had only just begun when this paper was written. One aspect that intrigues the provider the most at this early stage are the types of messages the provider is hearing from customers. For example, among the most popular SMS received from customers are requests for shopping tips: "Where do I shop? Which shops would offer me greatest discount for these types of goods?" Lower-income consumers naturally want to save and get the best bargains. Therefore, the provider is exploring how such messages might offer key intelligence to better segment its customer base and perhaps optimize on specific categories of merchants offering these products or discounts.

Source: Interviews with FSPs in Colombia, Tanzania, and Mexico that introduced Juntos Finanzas

There may be various reasons as to why Juntos Finanzas is able to increase customer activity; these could be tested in future research. One reason may be that Juntos Finanzas provides relevant just-in-time information, e.g., how to make deposits, where the nearest automated teller machine (ATM) is, etc., and is more responsive than a one-way messaging system. However, Juntos hypothesizes that the longitudinal relationship with the customer is even more important. People often feel isolated in their financial lives and the text messages make them feel that someone is with them. Many interact with the technology as if it were a person—in Colombia, customers even texted Juntos Finanzas “Merry Christmas.”

Customer trust and confidence. To achieve the desired behavior change, Juntos Finanzas aims to create both **self-confidence** and **trust** through its interaction with customers. Lack of self-confidence and trust are significant barriers for people’s interaction with FSPs and their use of financial services.

Juntos Finanzas works to boost self-confidence through its messaging, for instance, by providing relevant information at the right time (e.g., sending reminders for payments)⁸ and positive reinforcement for certain desired behaviors (e.g., compliments for depositing money).

Juntos Finanzas’s messages also aim to create trust. The phone survey with customers conducted in Colombia showed that people started trusting Juntos Finanzas, and that this had a positive spillover effect on the FSP. Juntos Finanzas tries to foster customer trust directly by designing the communication with its customers based on insights from the ethnographic research about what and whom people trust. For example, the research identified reliability as a condition for trust. Hence, the platform is consistent, responsive, and timely in its messages. Juntos Finanzas texts the customer that it will contact her again on a certain day. Then it does exactly as promised to demonstrate its reliability. This is especially important in country contexts where people are accustomed to the lack of reliability of both private and public institutions. Through their research, Juntos also discovered that customers can be too ashamed to clarify questions with a bank representative through interpersonal interactions. Having a more anonymous communication channel helps some customers acquire important information and voice their concerns without feeling ashamed or embarrassed.

However, building trust happens differently in different markets. For example, in Colombia, one of the first messages Juntos Finanzas sent to customers told them how to opt out of the service. It found that many users tested this feature by texting “STOP” to Juntos Finanzas, but then immediately re-entering the service. Many of those customers subsequently became some of the most highly active users in their Colombia pilot. In Mexico, a market where SMS has been frequently used for fraudulent purposes, customers first receive a privacy notice from Juntos Finanzas that seeks to build trust. In addition, the bank’s customer service phone number is provided during the first week of the pilot, giving participants an opportunity to confirm that the messages are in fact coming from their bank. Particularly during this early stage of the relationship, Juntos Finanzas’s messages aim to provide immediate value (such as names of agents where customers can transact for free) and consistent content. At the same time, Juntos

⁸ Such reminders can serve to free up mental space, in line with scarcity research (Mullainathan and Shafir 2013).

Finanzas requests little to no personal information from the customers during this time. These strategies have helped to build customer trust in that market.

Issues arising from experience to date

Access to customer data. To successfully design and test SMS messages, receiving customer-level data from the bank in a timely manner is key to Juntos's operations. This is especially true for behavioral (i.e., transactional) data that are needed to meaningfully iterate the design of the messages based on the behavioral data. However, FSPs can be reluctant to share customer data.

Data privacy concerns (and in some countries, bank secrecy laws prohibiting the sharing of account information) are among the main reasons FSPs might be reluctant to partner with Juntos, although interest in its services may be high. Juntos is a young company and is just building its track record; it has to prove its value and trustworthiness to FSPs. The results from the Colombia pilot are encouraging. However, more evidence from ongoing and future pilots will be necessary to convince FSPs at a larger scale to use the type of "two-way triggered, behaviorally informed" (akin to the Juntos Finanzas platform) real-time messaging as a way to engage their customers.

Product cross-sale opportunities. Over time, providers engaging with the platform may be interested in the cross-sale of various other products and services through the Juntos Finanzas platform; this longer-term interest was expressed by the bank in Mexico, for example. While not the case in Mexico, in some countries, there are legal restrictions to product cross-sale opportunities, premised on a variety of factors, including the FSP engaging an outsourced platform in which customer consent was received under very specific terms and conditions. Such legal restrictions are faced by the bank in Colombia, for example.

Therefore, should product cross-sale opportunities be pursued in contexts where it is legally permitted, a careful balancing act will need to be made to not compromise a customer's relationship and trust. Juntos Finanzas has expressed that it does not want to transform purely into a marketing or sales platform for the partner FSP.

Behavior change. With only a limited track record to analyze thus far, there are several outstanding questions regarding Juntos's effects on customer behavior. Will the targeted behavioral changes by customers, such as increased uptake and use, be sustainable in the medium or long term, even without the Juntos Finanzas service? Can the Juntos Finanzas platform drive behavioral change in more challenging cases, such as long-dormant or never active customers? These questions likely will be addressed by more data coming out of current and future pilots, but qualitative research into these issues would also help to round out the whole picture. For example, Juntos's approach to using response rates and KPIs as proxy measurements for customer trust in its service lacks specificity into the deeper, perhaps more qualitative, drivers of customer trust and related changes in behavior. Interviewing customers before and after participating in a Juntos Finanzas pilot, for example, could shed some light on these questions.

Cost-benefit. Bancolombia was satisfied by the results of the pilot and continued to engage with Juntos on a commercial basis for one additional year as an internal vendor of the bank. Juntos works with the bank using a subscription model of a per-active user, per-month fee, which also includes the cost of sending texts to the customer. This model changes when partnering with a telco as the cost of the SMS is free for Juntos. Juntos also charges an up-front design and engineering fee. Potential future revenue models with FSPs include a revenue-sharing model based on average revenue per user. Juntos is also considering expanding its services to include data analytics on FSP's customers' needs and behaviors (the latter based on tracking transactional data with customers' engagement with the Juntos Finanzas platform).

Going forward

Juntos is still in the early demonstration stage of proving its concept and replicating across several other countries. In addition to establishing a presence in other countries, Juntos is interested in expanding its services to new products with current partners and developing new partners within its existing markets. Juntos believes that it is possible to overcome the engagement gap between customers and their FSPs. Preliminary results look promising and suggest that Juntos Finanzas can contribute to narrowing this gap. But more pilots and research have to be done to fully understand if and how Juntos Finanzas is creating value both for customers and FSPs. The ongoing experiments will shed more light on this and focus in on some of the questions that are yet to be answered.

Solutions similar to Juntos's platform have not yet entered the market. This lack of competition is both an opportunity as well as a challenge for Juntos. While it is the only company offering this exact service and therefore in high demand, competitors would legitimize Juntos's area of work as a new business space. Competition could arise from financial institutions, broader financial players, or other start-ups. Some of the emerging "virtual lenders," such as Inventure or AFB in Africa and arguably Safaricom's M-Shwari (all now operating in Kenya), are similar in that they are using algorithms and mobile phones to encourage financial behavior and to "engage" back and forth with automated messaging and offers reactions to behavior. It will be interesting to see how these different business models evolve over the next few years and what services come closer to addressing the engagement gap and truly empower customers.

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