

Ideal Boilers

How Sauce's IoT solution made Ideal Boilers' heating systems smart

THE CLIENT

Ideal Boilers is one of the UK's largest and most successful boiler manufacturers. It produces around 400,000 boilers a year, employs 500 staff and has an annual turnover of nearly £290 million. The company is owned by Groupe Atlantic, a major European player in the heating, ventilation and air conditioning sector.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Ideal faced a business-critical challenge to meet the growing expectations of its customers for energy efficient, intelligent and convenient heating systems. It had an excellent reputation, but needed to embrace smart Internet of Things (IoT) technologies to meet these requirements and maintain its position as a market leader. Ideal's "waterfall" model for product development had been successful in its traditional boiler manufacturing business. However, this method lacked the flexibility required as it moved to apply technology. It needed to be "agile".

THE PROCESS

Ideal came to us for help developing a mobile app which would connect to its boilers through its IoT cloud platform. The platform provided a solid foundation, but additional functionality was needed to improve the overall user experience. At this point the company did not employ any IoT specialists. We came in as co-collaborators with the Ideal team, educating them about our agile iterative and flexible software development methodology and the business benefits of utilising IoT technologies. Together, we explored new ideas and approaches to revolutionise Ideal's business.

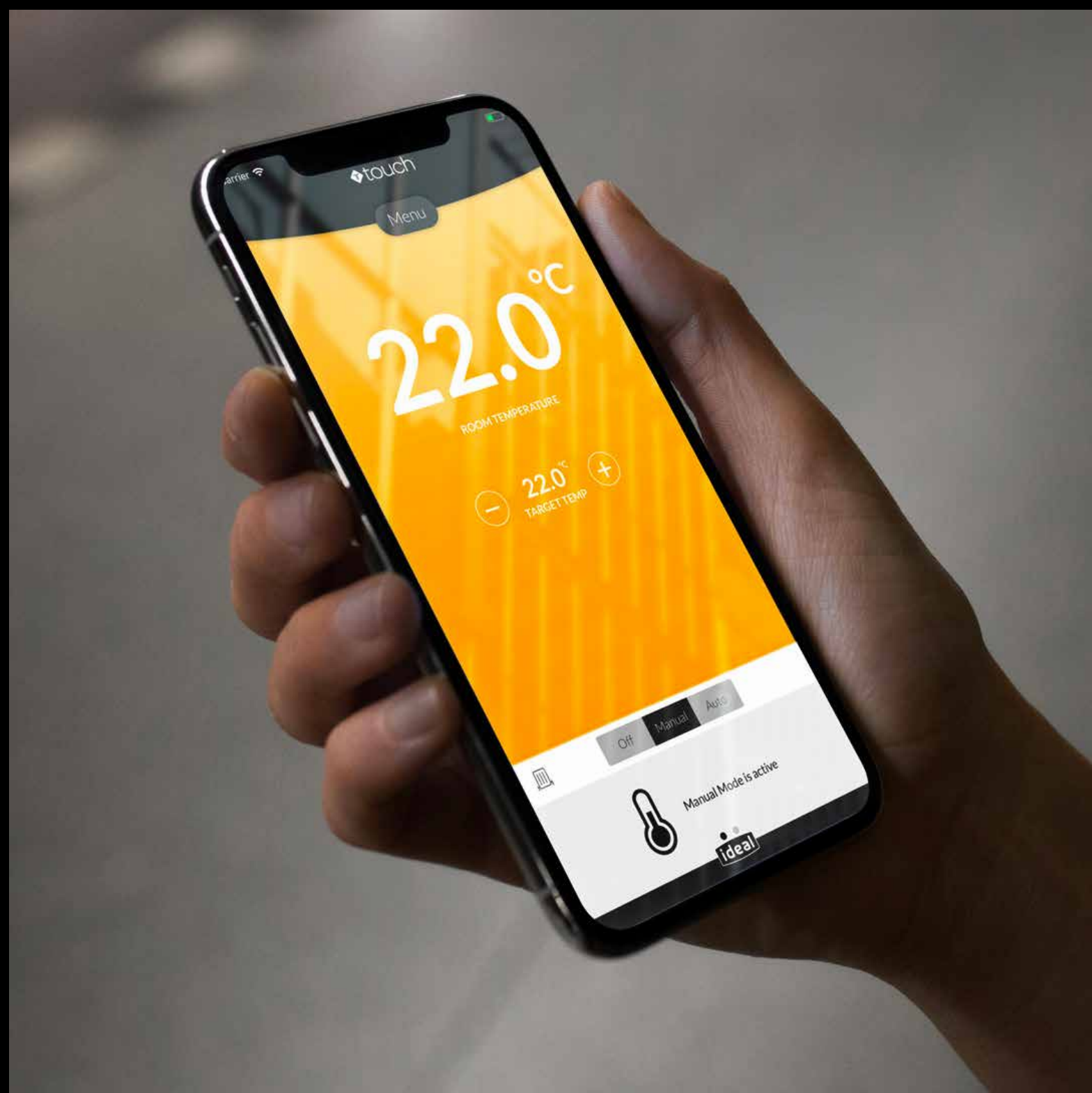


THE RESULTS

Launched in 2018, Ideal Touch Connect is a programmable room thermostat linked to a mobile app or desktop online platform.*

These functions have transformed Ideal's traditional boilers into smart tech heating systems and made IoT technologies integral to the company's business model. Ideal has been able to accumulate three billion lines of data to inform maintenance, customer service and product development. The business impact has been significant, with customer care greatly improved as Ideal can now see any issues as they arise from the data. As a result, the company realised further IoT developments were required.

Ideal now has its own IoT department, with our specialists continuing to work collaboratively with this team, and further developments are in the pipeline. Unlike competitors, Ideal is not dependent upon a third party provider for its smart heating technology. Our partnership gives Ideal the freedom and flexibility for further product development in response to customer and market requirements.



THE SOLUTION

We concluded a fully integrated smart heating system was required, which could be remotely monitored and controlled by customers over the internet. Ideal required a completely bespoke, in-house solution to meet its objectives.

This included the development of a new mobile app, improving connectivity and extracting and using valuable data to move the business forward. This necessitated a cloud-based middleware to augment the IoT platform and handle vast amounts of data for analysis. Our solution was Ideal Touch Connect.

App Features*

Advanced scheduling, so users can adjust timings and temperature settings wherever they are in the world.

Automatic fault reporting, alerting users if an issue is detected.

Service support, with remote smart support from the Ideal Customer Care team.

Amazon Echo and Alexa integration, so householders can operate their heating systems through voice commands.

Geolocation, so heating automatically turns off when the home is empty and switches back on when the first person starts to return.

Weather functionality, meaning the heating system constantly adjusts to current, local temperatures, informed by real-time information from weather stations across the world.