From 15 Taps to Near Zero: With Frustration-Free Setup, Setting Up TP-Link's Smart Home Plugs is as Simple as Plugging Them In

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On the leading edge of the smart home device industry is TP-Link Research America. Known for its Kasa line of products, it produces smart plugs like the Kasa Smart Plug Mini Smart Home WiFi outlet to control standard home appliances, as well as an array of other devices like smart security cameras, light bulbs and light switches.

TP-Link's products have been a hit with its customers since 2015, but the company wasn't content to stay with the status quo. Instead, it challenged itself by asking: How do you differentiate and improve on a product that customers already love?

The answer came with Amazon's Frustration-Free Setup (FFS). Frustration-Free Setup uses millions of existing devices in customers homes to assist devices, like TP-Link's connecting to a customer's network. FFS also assists with connecting TP-Link's device to a customers Alexa account. Both steps, network and account linking typically take around 30 seconds. For FFS to work, customer's must purchase their device from Amazon.com, agree to simplify setup from the detail page, have a provisioner in range, and Wi-Fi credentials in the Amazon Wi-Fi Locker. If this criteria is checked, once a customer unboxes and powers on their TP-Link smart plug, it will connect to the customer's network..By integrating FFS, TP-Link made its already popular smart plug even easier to set up and operate. Now customers can simply plug the device right out of the box and get connected in as little as under a minute.

"We knew that controlling our devices through Alexa was the way to go and Frustration-Free Setup makes it even easier," says Aakash Mangal, Cloud Developer at TP-Link Kasa.

smart plug in 2015. The unit plugs into a regular electrical outlet and allows the user to control home appliances such as lights, fans, coffeemakers and much more. TP-Link now offers an entire line of voice-controlled Kasa smart devices, including security cameras, light switches, and light bulbs.

While Kasa smart home devices were originally controlled only via the Kasa mobile app, with the popularity of Alexa, the obvious solution was to add Alexa voice control to the smart plug. TP-Link first built a custom Alexa skill to control their devices, then eventually created an Alexa Smart Home skill. However, the company knew there was still room for improvement, especially with the initial setup.

"Our products were well-received by customers, but there was still a pain point with device setup," says Mangal. "The user had to download the Kasa app and perform a dozen taps to make the device controllable. That's too many."

For example, with the Kasa app alone, it took a customer 10 to 15 taps to configure a Kasa smart plug on their phone before they could control it with Alexa. TP-Link's goal was to offer customers a simpler, more intuitive and more out-of-the box process, reducing the number of steps to near zero.

The Magic Behind a True Plug-and-Play Customer Experience

Today, when a customer buys a Kasa smart plug, they simply take the device out of the box, plug it in, and within seconds, the device is connected and ready to be controlled using Alexa smart home voice commands.

The process appears seamless to the customer, but there's much more happening in the background. The first time a Kasa device is plugged in, it tries to locate a provisioner—such as a nearby Echo or other Alexa-enabled device—to help it connect to the internet. The Amazon cloud then coordinates with the Kasa cloud to authenticate the device, verify user credentials, and announce the device to the network. Customers can then use Alexa to control the device connected to the smart plug. Customers can also use the Kasa mobile app, if desired, to access a number of features specific to Kasa devices.

"With FFS, the customer's overall experience with setting up the Kasa is so much simpler that it was before," says Mangal. "This approach provided the zero-touch setup we desired and provides a true plug-and-play experience."

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Customers Give Their Approval on Voice Control

How do TP-Link's customers feel about the simpler, zero-touch setup? Since adding Alexa voice control and now FFS to the Kasa smart plug devices, customer feedback has been positive, with an average 4.5-star product rating in the Amazon Store.

Mangal believes that FFS will attract more new customers to use smart home devices, especially those who don't consider themselves "tech savvy". FFS eliminates technical hurdles during setup, which is why it's the foundation for Certified for Humans (CFH), Amazon's program that identifies high-quality smart home experiences across setup, usability, and performance.

"We've worked hard to make the setup experience as simple as possible from the very beginning," says David Li, CEO, TP-Link Kasa. "Adding Frustration-Free Setup from Amazon, we've been able to take our straightforward onboarding process and turn it into a truly magical experience."

Get Started with Frustration-Free Setup

To learn more about onboarding, finding the right solution for your product, and getting started with development, head over to the Frustration-Free Setup page here.

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