

COLUMNS

Apple Watch set to become gatekeeper to the iPhone

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By **Scott Townsend**

The impending market release of the Apple Watch is generating a lot of hype and is being met with polarized opinions of how successful it will be.

After watching the keynote I was surprised to hear people dismiss it. I am excited for the Apple Watch and believe that it is going to be a game-changer for consumers and marketers alike.

Out of pocket

When the iPhone and iPad were first introduced, they were met by similar skepticism but now it is hard to remember life without smartphones.

According to a recent Forrester Research study, consumers are checking their phones 200 times a day, on average.

Think about how much time is spent pulling phones out of pockets and purses. Now think about how often you check your phone to react to a message, a call or just to see if anything happened in an application since you last checked 20 seconds ago.

The Apple Watch is going to change our phone checking habits forever.

Unlike the iPad, the Apple Watch is a true companion to the iPhone.

Forrester recently reported that in the United States, 40 percent of online consumers are tired of pulling their phones from their pockets and purses. The watch is going to help solve problems that most people do not even know we have yet.

As it gains adoption, the Apple Watch will become the main entry point for most of their digital experiences.

Together, the watch and phone will help a user get to information faster and will provide a filter to help decide which information is worth paying attention.

With a watch, the majority of mobile time will be spent in quick glances to the wrist looking at the alerts and information that lead to deeper experiences.

Consumers will get real-time information without having to dig into their pockets. They will only pull out their phones if the message sparks an interest to go deeper or respond.

With this new filter, consumers will have more control over their digital experience.

For brands, this new consumer control is going to create new marketing challenges.

For brands, this new consumer context is going to create new marketing challenges.

Watch out, watch in

On the smaller screen it will be harder to gain attention and spark engagement using tried-and-true methods of media buying and broadcast messaging.

With the new filter of a watch screen, content targeted to a user based on that user's wants and needs will be the only content that has a chance at getting through to the big screen.

Marketers will have to understand the personal context of their customers including preferences, behavior, current location and location history in relation to the brand's offering to be effective.

For example, if a clothing brand was to send an alert letting me know that there is a sale happening now, there is a good chance I would ignore that message.

But if they were to tell me that the shirt that I was looking at last week is on sale and there is only one left in my size, there is a very good chance that I would pay attention.

The point I am trying to make is that high-volume, high-repetition, low-relevance messages are going to get less attention in the world of Apple Watches. It will be easy to tune out or turn off noise.

THE WATCH will be the new battleground for marketers and new practices will have to be learned to win.

My bet will be on permission-based, highly targeted, utility-driven marketing. Brands are going to have to show their value to stand out.

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