

COLUMNS

Optimizing the mobile app for future mcommerce success

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Shira Anderson is marketing manager at Como

By [Shira Anderson](#)

This holiday season, businesses that successfully adapted to consumers' changing shopping habits stood to see their innovation pay off. Today's buyers want to buy what they want, where they want and when they want and the companies that make it easy for them are the ones poised to cash in with serious sales.

Given this reality, small retailers embracing mobile commerce are better positioned than ever before to offer customers that flexibility and reap those profits.

Why mobile commerce?

By letting shoppers make purchases anytime and anywhere, mobile commerce allows businesses to offer a level of convenience that would have been unimaginable just a few years ago, without the kind of investment in additional employees that traditional sales demand.

It is not surprising that a study published earlier this year found that nearly 90 percent of United States mobile consumers said they use these devices to shop.

In the past, tablet users accounted for the majority of mobile commerce, and tablet applications were seen as crucial to mobile commerce success. This often meant businesses needed to build and maintain at least four apps: one each for iPhones, iPads, Android phones and Android tablets.

However, this is expected to change as smartphones increasingly boast large, easy-to-use screens. This is good news for small businesses that can now focus their energies on building one really good app.

If you are still on the fence about entering the fray, consider this: Mobile commerce accounted for nearly \$60 billion in sales last year.

Getting started

The key to putting your mobile app to work this holiday shopping season was in creating an in-app store, including a secure payment option for your products and services.

Many apps designed for small businesses offer relatively simple integration with PayPal, Apple Pay, Google Wallet and other trustworthy payment platforms.

If you are unsure as to how to do this, your app provider or developer should be able to offer the assistance you need.

It would also be worth your time to make a contingency plan for fulfilling the orders you receive.

Decide where your shipping and packing materials will come from, which vendor you will entrust those packages with for delivery, and whose extra hands will be available to ensure that the orders are properly picked, packed and shipped.

You may also want to add new items to your inventory and create a new listing of those items.

Preach to the converted

It is important to note that your mobile sales boost is most likely to come from consumers who have already shopped with you, either in your physical store or via your app.

As loyal customers, they should be made to feel they are being granted special privileges for their past patronage, and your messaging should reflect that.

With this in mind, it would help to put some extra effort into promoting your app in your store and on social media, letting shoppers know that great deals are coming throughout this month.

Keep in mind that every time a customer uses your app, you have a chance to let them know about your products, services, and special deals. But just because a certain shopper is not using your app right now does not mean you cannot communicate with them in real time.

Sending push notifications to your app users is a useful way to let them know that your store is open for business and to advertise special offers.

By promoting your mobile store through compelling push notifications, you can grab your customers' attention a golden opportunity to increase your in-app sales.

IF YOU HAVE not yet incorporated a mobile app into your sales strategy effectively, this month is a perfect opportunity to see what a top-notch mobile store and some irresistible push notifications can do for your sales numbers.

Finally, keep an eye on the big picture: With the right mobile commerce strategy, this season can serve as a springboard for higher sales year-round.

Shira Anderson is marketing manager at [Como](#), New York. Reach her at shira@conduit.com.

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