

COLUMNS

Mobile experience is key as messaging apps evolve into mini-platforms

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There has been a lot of talk lately about how to improve the mobile experience and yet we also continue to see updates on how many brands are using mobile in an innovative manner to interact with their customers. So what is the gap?

Could it be an advertising industry shortcoming where we are all thinking about effectiveness and efficiency largely driven by programmatic and not enough on the creative experience that will influence the most interaction with consumers on their mobile device?

Do we need to slow down and think more strategically and creatively to launch engaging mobile programmatic experiences?

Flurry of activity

Mobile already offers us experiences that engage audiences by its innate functionality in connecting communication, conversation and entertainment.

Messaging in mobile has revived effective guerrilla marketing as applications continue to grow in popularity, scale and influence.

Over the past few years, WhatsApp, the messaging platform acquired by Facebook last year, has grown into the largest messaging app in the world with about 700 million monthly active users.

Together with other services such as Facebook Messenger, WeChat, QQ, Skype, Kik and Viber, messaging apps are quickly overcoming social networks in terms of popularity and engagement.

A recent Flurry study indicates that messaging apps outperform other apps in terms of customer retention and engagement.

In fact, messaging apps' retention rate is almost six times greater than other apps in the first 12 months, an impressive figure considering the number of apps available on both Android and iOS.

Not only do audiences keep messaging apps downloaded at a higher rate, but they also engage with the apps on a more regular basis as compared to other apps.

Flurry data illustrates that an average daily session lasts almost five times longer than other apps, which gives messaging apps an enormous advantage when it comes to connecting and engaging audiences.

The greater frequency and length that audiences (a.k.a consumers) engage with these apps provides marketers with

multiple reach and relationship-building opportunities.

Platforms issues

Given how messaging apps continue to evolve into mini-platforms, that incorporate payment, communication and browsing features, marketers looking to improve the mobile experience need to look no further.

The key to engaging consumers and creating a seamless mobile experience that will not threaten brand affinity is integration with messaging apps.

In doing so, marketers are digitizing word of mouth promotion and creating organically viral campaigns that reach consumers and their closest network of friends.

In sum, messaging apps seamlessly connect brands with consumers in a platform that they are comfortable with, use frequently and, as a result, create conversations that build brand awareness and increase sales.

More than any other channel, messaging apps are a throwback to good old word of mouth promotion that takes advantage of the value of personal opinion.

A recommendation from a close friend or family member to check out a video or try a new product creates a higher impact on engagement than serving a video ad run of site.

Messaging takes social sharing to the next level by making it more personal and direct, both drivers of high engagement.

Using this channel organically integrates a brand into the conversation and in doing so amplifies its engagement with consumers.

SO AS WE venture towards the second half of 2015, brand marketers have a new opportunity in mobile to integrate into their planning that focuses on the ultimate engagement with consumers and their close friends.

By integrating messaging into their mix, marketers will create a mobile experience that will promote a stronger connection to the ad being shared and, thus, a mobile experience that has a greater effect on influencing sales and post campaigns actions.

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