

COLUMNS

## How to get mobile-ready this holiday season

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By [Alan S. Knitowski](#)

Everywhere you look, at any time, everyone seems to be using their smartphone. Whether they are texting, using social media or shopping, these on-the-go consumers are living a digital lifestyle and taking their mobile devices with them.

With 64 percent of U.S. consumers now owning smartphones, more brands are turning to mobile, not only to reach and engage with consumers, but also to drive offline traffic and sales.

In fact, according to Forrester Research, mobile and marketing are the top two digital priorities for 59 percent of North American retailers.

As the holidays approach, mobile has the ability to make or break retailers' peak shopping season.

Preparing now will help brands be mobile-ready for this year's holiday rush by increasing brand awareness, driving online and offline traffic and increasing sales.

In our experience, retailers can do that two main ways: with mobile monetization campaigns that users will not want to ignore, and with contextually-triggered digital messaging that drives action in the real world.

Think user-first to create breakthrough mobile campaigns and experiences

With a smartphone in nearly every pocket, mobile will be the key to driving brand awareness and loyalty this holiday season through branded experiences never before possible.

For true mobile monetization success, brands must think beyond basics such as banner ads, which are disruptive and often drive consumers to tune out or, worse, block the content all together.

Instead, they should take advantage of the immersive experiences that mobile enables, letting users interact in new and engaging ways, via swiping, tilting or shaking their phones.

In an industry experiencing a 90 percent global growth in mobile ad blocking last year alone, it is imperative for brands to explore immersive and integrated ad experiences that go beyond sticking a standard banner on the screen.

With mobile now representing nearly two out of three digital media minutes, marketers must understand how to

engage their users, leveraging creative approaches to break through the thousands of ads that consumers will encounter during the holidays.

Digital drives traffic and conversions both online and off

As brands prep for the holidays, success driving store traffic and influencing digital conversions will depend on understanding who and where your customers are.

Through mobile applications, marketers can tap into the billions of data points that users leave behind, using these extensive digital trails to gain deep insights into consumer profiles and behavior.

Thanks to mobile, brands have incredible opportunities to reach consumers throughout the day, with the ability to engage targeted audiences anytime, anywhere.

A recent study from Deloitte shows that U.S. consumers check their phones an average of 46 times per day, giving brands a staggering amount of time to reach and interact with consumers. What is more, consumers now spend 90 percent of their mobile-media time in apps.

Where brands traditionally relied solely on traffic data and cookies to gauge success of mobile Web sites, apps provide an unprecedented level of user insight.

From time spent per page to in-app advertising impressions and conversions and even lat/long location data, apps give brands a more detailed view of engagement and success.

Coupling app analytics with data from technology such as GPS, Bluetooth and Wi-Fi allows brands to drive mobile consumers to online stores and bricks-and-mortar locations more effectively.

During the holiday shopping season, tools such as mobile marketing automation and proximity marketing give marketers a way to drive consumers in-store and engage them 1:1 with a click of a button.

For example, through geo-fencing, brands can create virtual boundaries around neighborhoods and retail stores, sending triggered messages alerting nearby consumers of in-store sales, inventory updates or app-specific discounts, then driving in-store foot traffic and conversions.

Marketers can also take advantage of boundaries around competitor stores.

Tired of seeing consumers pass your store for another? Geo-conquesting allows you to geo-fence competitor locations and trigger campaigns when your users cross them.

Mobile gives us the ability to monitor X, Y and even Z coordinates latitude, longitude and floor level to engage users when it will be most powerful and relevant.

Physical and virtual beacons will also be critical for connecting with 1:1 with consumers during the busy holiday season.

Beacon technology is forecasted to influence more than \$40 billion of United States retail sales in 2016, and 61 percent of consumers plan on increasing their smartphone usage in-store.

The ability to send relevant, timely and personalized messages will be crucial. Because beacons are small and inexpensive, they can be placed in a variety of places such as store entrances, shopping carts and dressing rooms, and can be used to trigger friendly welcome messages and special offers for frequent shoppers.

CONSUMERS WILL ONCE again turn to mobile for a faster, more convenient holiday shopping experience.

In 2015, holiday shoppers spent a whopping \$12.7 billion on mobile, and that number is expected to increase once again.

Even better news for brands is that data shows that one-third of consumers who use mobile devices to shop have a 20 percent higher conversion rate than those who do not.

Whether in-store or not, enabling fast and easy mobile purchases will be critical for capturing busy, on-the-go holiday shoppers.

For a successful 2016 holiday retail season, think mobile-first.

Taking advantage of mobile's many opportunities and tapping into the extensive user insights it provides will help retailers better engage consumers during the busiest shopping season of the year, driving awareness, traffic and sales.

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