

COLUMNS

The many ways of incorporating video on mobile

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Being constantly connected has revolutionized the way that consumers access information, especially while on-the-go.

Google reports that 79 percent of smartphone owners use their phones while shopping to seek product and pricing information, and 90 percent of smartphone searches result in an action, such as on-the-spot purchase or visit to a business.

Connecting with consumers through mobile requires moving away from text-heavy pages and abandoning Flash, while still delivering a rich, informative experience.

How can retailers step up their game to take advantage of consumers' desire for information instead of losing customers because of it?

The answer lies in engaging customers, and nothing captivates consumers on the small screen such as video.

With the use of the mobile Web, mobile applications and strategically placed QR codes, retailers can deliver video content to further explain or answer questions about products while controlling and enhancing the customer experience.

Mobile Web

The mobile Web is morphing bricks-and-mortar shopping into a digital experience.

According to a mobile research study by ForeSee, almost 50 percent of shoppers use their smartphones' browsers to look at competitor Web sites while in-store, often using geo-location to point the shopper in the direction of the least expensive local alternatives.

Retailers have typically responded to this trend by ensuring that their Web sites are optimized for mobile browsers.

In doing so, it is important to consider video as well; eMarketer reports that in 2010, nearly 25 million people watched video from their mobile devices.

Does your site, when viewed on a mobile browser, deliver your video content?

IPhones and other iOS devices cannot render Flash video content in their native browser.

An HTML5-compatible solution is needed to deliver video content to such platforms, unless the user launches a non-native browser.

Ensuring that video is prominently placed and accessible on your mobile site gives shoppers a reason to engage

with your content instead of surfing to competitors' sites for more information.

Mobile apps

Mobile apps create a specific experience for the customer that is centered on a user friendly interface with streamlined access to information.

As smartphones become a dominant shopping tool, retailers must find new ways to connect with customers who can easily browse the competition through an array of apps such as eBay's RedLaser and Google Shopper.

Just as with the mobile Web, reading text from a four-inch screen can be cumbersome.

Video, with its ability to deliver rich information in a limited space, thrives on the small mobile screen, delivering stimulating product details in a more efficient way.

Many retailers such as Golfsmith and Toys "R" Us are incorporating easily accessed video on their mobile apps.

Videos, such as the ["Tickle Me Elmo" clip](#), show customers a human experience with the product that helps increase purchase rates as customers feel more empowered and informed about the benefits of products they consider purchasing.

According to a study by Edelman, an expert's opinion is the most widely trusted source of information, far surpassing a "person like myself" and a company employee.

Video in apps should feature an expert giving a credible, personable perspective while not being perceived as the puffery-filled ad man.

QR codes

Another way to bring your video content into consumers' hands at the point of purchase is with QR (Quick Response) codes.

When people shop in bricks-and-mortar stores, they have the opportunity to physically touch, see, and interact with the products, but may miss out on some of the less obvious key features.

A tactile experience can be augmented by making video easily accessible through scanning a QR code.

EMarketer reports that QR code scans for the first quarter of 2011 increased 181 percent over the previous quarter.

By placing a scannable QR code next to a product display, retailers have the opportunity to control what pops up on the shoppers' smartphones as they search for product information at the point of purchase.

As Loyalty360 discovered, the majority of QR code scans are to access product information, and 25 percent of those scans are to access video content.

In short, QR codes are a tool that consumers are rapidly coming to expect.

Plus, your customers' life just got easier. Instead of scrolling through tiny search results and waiting on page loads, all they have to do is push one button and they are taken directly to your content.

Mobile connections

Mobile commerce is taking off, with or without you.

By 2014, there will be more mobile Internet users than desktop or laptop users. Already, 50 percent of local searches are executed on mobile devices, according to the Microsoft Tag Mobile Marketing Report, 2011.

Waiting around is simply not an option in the world of rapidly emerging technology.

Connecting video content with mobile delivery via the mobile Web, apps and QR code scans will power the way consumers gather information regarding their purchase decisions while bridging the gap between online and offline shopping.

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