

COLUMNS

How to choose a winning mobile strategy

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The executives who make the decision on strategy already have first-hand experience and an existing relationship with their phone. They understand the importance of mobile and are constantly reminded by friends and family that its influence is becoming increasingly broad on all levels.

Secondly, the numbers are simply impossible to ignore. Businesses are moving their strategies in line with the evolving user behavior and companies of all sizes and sectors are putting mobile at the center of their business strategy.

Increasingly, mobile is at the heart of development strategies and as an industry we are moving beyond thinking of mobile as merely a channel.

Four core

Encouragingly, we are seeing more sophisticated clients use mobile as a core medium and they really understand that it needs to work with other touch points.

The world is clearly moving to mobile, and companies are now putting it at the heart of their business. As such, the natural progression is to create a winning strategy.

For the strategy to be really meaningful and profound, it should not just be a channel strategy. It is not just about how to publish material, but it should answer five key questions:

How can I use mobile to increase innovation?

How can I use mobile to create better customer touch-points?

How can I build deep mobile expertise in house, so that I am not completely at the mercy of external agencies?

How do I come up with a strategy that is in touch with real trends and shifts in the market, rather than a strategy that is developed from a business perspective only?

Compared to other markets, mobile only truly became huge three or four years ago nationwide. But the United States does not have large numbers of people with deep understanding and decades of experience, such as in Asia.

That said, many U.S. companies want to understand how to match up the skills with a winning execution.

Ultimately, many find themselves asking: "Who do you work with to create a winning mobile strategy?"

A natural option is to give it to the advertising agency of record. The danger is that a brand will get a strategy that is biased to mobile only as a marketing channel.

The recurring problem is that it will be focused on marketing communications, rather than something that focuses

on the company's core services and offerings to its users. It may be a good mobile campaign with good advertising solutions but that is only one part of the overall strategy.

A traditional management consultancy will offer processes, good set-up advice and bring the business foundation behind it. But it will almost certainly lack knowledge on cutting-edge market trends and lack understanding of what is actually needed.

Spin on win

The challenge is finding a company that can do the following:

Understand both digital and consumer trends

Realize how technology is changing the world, but from a consumer perspective, and not business

Bring deep mobile experience

Train and educate people internally around mobile

Put simply, hire a technology company and receive a technology lead strategy that largely ignores consumer needs and business fundamentals.

Hire a management consultancy and get an organizational strategy that includes a business plan, but one that will lack mobile depth and most likely lack consumer driven strategy.

Option three, asking the existing full service ad agency to come up with a strategy, will probably result in something that treats mobile only as a channel rather than as a strategy that impacts the organization and drills into the core services that it offers to its clients.

A remaining option is to hire a senior team internally or hire a team of freelancers that can meet all of the strategic needs. The issue is finding them.

Companies will probably struggle to find them or truly understand what is best for them. Go for one of the few agencies that can deliver all of this.

A winning mobile strategy consists of a solid foundation and six different outputs.

Before getting started, the foundation needs to be in place, ensuring that the person/company or agency has deep mobile ecosystem knowledge, spanning education about the most important and dominant platforms.

Also, there is the need to really show understanding as to how money moves in the industry, how to make money and understand the key technology to make it happen.

Mobile cannot be treated in isolation. It must sit within the broader cross-platform offering and the thinking needs to be consumer- or customer-centric.

Six fix

Following the foundation, the below six components of a mobile strategy are:

A view on mobile's role on service delivery

A view on mobile's role in marketing communications

A business case and an organizational strategy for your company

A distribution and partnership strategy

A high level mobile roadmap and some form of delivery capability in mobile. It could be hire an agency for the different aspects (deliver, creative)

Finally internal education, motivation and understanding in the organization so that it is not built in silo, but is a key part of the business.

Remember, the real key to success is putting the user at the core of the business and building around that.

Never lose site of the core offering and ensure that mobile is not treated as a separate entity it should be one of many effective touch-points.

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