

COLUMNS

Are you abusing mobile marketing?

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By [Clive Maclean](#)

Year after year, industry pundits have proclaimed "The Year of Mobile." Finally, we have all grown tired of waiting as mobile has become not just viable but an exciting part of engagement-driven marketing campaigns.

And while there is fervor around how to leverage mobile to reach consumers, some brands already have developed fairly substantial opt-in SMS databases. But to what end?

While we all like to focus on the more innovative applications of mobile LBS, QR codes, augmented reality the truth is that the bulk of mobile marketing activities have been, until recently, SMS-driven.

Essentially, taking what is a very personal medium and treating it like push media.

While this approach has and will bring some short-term benefits, it will not take long before customers tire of this one-way barrage and the medium becomes less effective.

Evolving mobile strategy

Consumer expectations around digital interactions evolve constantly. In turn, brands must adjust their strategies to meet the current needs of an audience.

Right now, mobile marketing needs to be based on a foundation of consumer engagement, where reciprocal value is delivered between both marketer and customer.

Consumers do not want messages shoved in front of them. Instead, they want to be engaged in a conversation.

This applies even more so to the Millennial generation the segment of our population born between 1980 and 2000.

Reaching Millennials

A recent Euro "Prosumer" study, focused on Millennials, revealed that when deciding between two brands, Millennials rank the following attributes as the most important considerations.

1. A solid reputation and reflects positively on me.
2. It is innovative and offers something new.
3. It listens to me, asks my opinion, and takes my views into consideration.
4. It respects the environment.
5. It gives me special offers and preferred customer benefits.

The study also found that 77 percent of prosumers thought it was important to find brands that reflect their personality and 69 percent said it was important to find brands to which they could be loyal.

This generation desires a more personal approach to brand relationships. And they want them to fit seamlessly into their social worlds.

Four-part mobile marketing strategy

To succeed with mobile requires a multifaceted strategy that encompasses not just SMS, but a diverse group of mobile channels.

Considering all areas, and dabbling in more than one, shows a dedication to reaching an audience not just when it is convenient to a company, but when it is appropriate for the individual.

I. Mobile Web

The very name is in itself misleading. There is in fact just one "Web."

Mobile serves as an access mechanism, sitting on top of it. The most important step any brand can take is to be sure its Web presence is as mobile-friendly as possible, since most of the mobile traffic the brand will experience will come through this environment.

II. SMS strategy

The next most important stage is the SMS strategy. Within this stage, brands need to consider three further sub-strategies:

1. Offer-based texts
2. Engagement texts
3. Brand news texts

Offer-based texts: The revenue engine for the program. Valuable offers sent out at regular intervals that are relevant to the customer are very powerful.

The most important thing to remember with offers is reasonable frequency and offer relevance. The more relevant, the more perceived value and, therefore, the more frequent they can be.

Engagement texts: A critical component of a successful mobile strategy, engagement texts go beyond offers, allowing the customer to participate.

Examples include special partner offers that require no purchase, text to vote and added-value content. They are not promotional in any way and require no purchase to benefit. They enhance the overall brand experience.

Brand news: These are texts that leverage what the brand is doing in other media and out in the marketplace such as YouTube videos, charity events, new store openings, and new product news.

III. Location-based services (LBS)

LBS is a fast growing segment of mobile marketing. Companies such as foursquare and others have been around for a while.

Facebook Places is growing quickly and in July Groupon launched Groupon Now, a service that allows subscribers to check in wherever they are and immediately find out what deals are available near them.

Brands have the opportunity to align with the excitement around daily deals and location sharing to build loyalty, engagement and interest in their brand, and to develop intelligence about regional and local behavior surrounding their brand.

IV. Mobile search

In today's marketplace, the evaluation of marketing and sales strategies must include a review of how an audience searches digitally for a product or service. That includes mobile.

Behavior around how a person searches for a product or services can vary by the type of product, where they are and how urgent their interest is.

Ensure that content is accessible to anyone regardless of their platform. This includes mobile users and mobile search engines.

A recent study shows the role mobile plays in shopping behavior. Locating a business is at the very top of the list

when people are on-the-go and ready to make decisions.

EXECUTED WITH proper research, insights and strategy, mobile can be a powerful piece of marketing for corporate and local store marketing.

Used as merely a low-cost way to deliver push messages, it will never realize its full potential.

At its best, mobile will deliver short-term lifts that peter out over time as the irritation factor grows.

Mobile facilitates more personal and immediate interactions with customers and that coveted thing that all brands are looking for: engagement.

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