

COLUMNS

## Five strategic tips to make mobile work for you in 2012

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The potential and opportunity of mobile marketing is astounding to professional and do-it-yourself marketers of all levels.

Mobile is along just enough in its life cycle where it can aid in gaining or sustaining a serious competitive advantage for any sized business. And, tactics and technologies that remove traditional barriers to content publishing and distribution are finally accessible to the masses.

Assuming you have finally convinced, or are in the process of convincing, management to commit to a mobile strategy and budget of some kind, be prepared to clearly answer, "Now what?" closely followed by, "What have you done for me lately?"

If the Internet, email and social media have taught us anything, brace yourself for intense marketing ROI scrutiny in the coming months. You can be ready with the following five strategic tips on how to optimize your mobile marketing, and minimize risk in 2012:

1. Plan your mobile marketing as if your business (or job) depends on it.

The opportunity in mobile is huge yet fragmentation runs deep. Leverage fundamental marketing principles of getting the right message to the right people to create, gain or sustain profitable customer relationships.

Research your audience, as well as the phones, carriers and data plans they subscribe to. Use it to create an overall picture of how they behave, wirelessly. Document a defensible brief that spells out success metrics for your mobile marketing, including revenue, branding, new customer acquisition and/or loyalty, to name a few.

Clearly indicate how your mobile strategy fits in with your business strategy for additional boardroom points. Lastly, be sure to include how you will track success for ongoing accountability and improvement.

2. Engage your audience with a sound mobile content strategy

Bill Gates had it right in his 1996 essay, and it rings truer than ever with mobile "Content is (still) King."

Create meaningful interactive experiences with your content, for your customers. Can your mobile content answer these basic questions: "Are my customers interested?" "Will they keep my content on their phone?" "Will they access it often?" And, most importantly, "Will they respond?"

Consolidate content such as news, offers and/or updates streaming from other internal digital channels, across mobile, when applicable.

3. Reach all customers and provide easy access by choosing your mobile marketing weapons (tactics) wisely.

connect with customers and provide easy access by choosing your mobile marketing response (websites, mobile).

SMS, mobile web and/or apps can serve different marketing objectives. Consider the reach and access of each, cost of entry and available Do It Yourself (DIY) content creation and publishing tools to best mix and match your tactics to reach desired objectives.

Build a mobile customer Profit & Loss statement (P&L) illustrating customer acquisition, retention, monetization and growth of each relationship, as a result of your mobile marketing mix.

Do not exclude any segment of your target audience from accessing your mobile content as it may very well cost you the relationship along with valuable lifetime value, eventually opening the door for your mobile marketing competition.

4. Get mobile content noticed with a clear path to discoverability and promotion.

How will you promote your mobile content, get noticed and drive success? The efficient integration of mobile with your traditional and digital marketing efforts is critical.

Consider contemporary methods of generating frequent engagement of your mobile content such as proximity, location-based services, search, shortcode/keyword calls to action, QR codes, mobile gaming, viral forward-a-friend and/or push notices, to name a few.

Consider an affiliate program with partners to help market your mobile content, keep costs low and drive more immediate adoption. Think beyond the App Store.

5. Make money and drive return on your mobile marketing investment.

Consider a model that yields direct or indirect revenue and profitability. Whether it's pay per download, advertising/sponsorship, in app purchases, freemium, or simply driving online sales and/or brick and mortar foot traffic, establishing rough estimates for mobile marketing success will make your mobile marketing strategy that much more defensible.

Track your efforts and remain flexible with revenue models that the market may dictate along the way.

Calculate a mobile Lifetime Engagement Value (LEV) estimate for your efforts showing value over the long haul.

Mindshare + Response

$mLEV = \text{Brand Access} \times \text{Frequency} \times \text{Reach}$

In other words, the longer your brand, content and offer stay on a customer's phone and in front of them, the more chances you have for ongoing and frequent engagement, and therefore, a sales response.

It is hard not to get excited about the opportunities that mobile marketing affords, mostly the immediate reach, influence and communication with new and existing customers wherever they are, 24/7.

As a mobile marketing instructor for NYU SCPS (upcoming online/mobile class entitled "Mobile Marketing for Small to Medium-sized Business starts March 17), I believe it is imperative that, to achieve success, marketers employ best practice yet stay focused on marketing fundamentals.

This will earn you a competitive advantage early on, significant value per mobile marketing dollar spent, and perhaps your own mobile marketing executive seat in the boardroom.

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