COLUMNS

Do you know your mobile users' experience? If not, start measuring now

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Before marketers invest more time and effort to growing and maturing their mobile marketing strategy, they need to understand their mobile users better.

At first glance, it might seem like a good idea to take the same approach to measuring your mobile applications and Web site as you do for measuring your PC Web site.

After all, regardless of whether they are using a native app, a mobile Web site or a desktop Web site, your customers' goals are the same.

For example, consumers go to Zappos.com's Web site to find a great pair of shoes or accessories. They also use the Zappos iPhone app and mobile site for the same reason.

The point is, if you are like most industry leaders, your customers are already engaging with your company via their mobile devices, but you are probably not measuring your mobile users or services very effectively.

Truth be told, few companies do.

While part of this challenge is in technology itself, a big part of the issue stems from not being aware of how different mobile measurement is and what to measure.

Here are some important differences that are unique to mobile, with suggestions on what to measure for greater marketing success:

Mobile technology-related measures
Device gesture and user behavior: Did your customers have to change the screen's orientation to see the full page of your mobile site or app? Did they have to pinch and zoom the screens to increase the view because the font size was too small? Which pages did they scroll up and down?

These measures help to understand how many times and how a customer performed an action before they succeeded or failed to perform a certain activity.

Network reachability: Were your customers online and reachable while they were trying to complete something important, like a purchase on your mobile application? Were they on 3G, 4G, Wi-Fi or other while your app was trying to send important bits of data? Do you know if network connectivity issues negatively impacted your customers' experience?

Figuring out where the points of failure are in transmitting data will help you make better decisions in how you want your mobile app to work. You may decide that your app only needs to be online for certain cases and can remain

offline for others, without disrupting your user's experience.

Application crashes: How many times did your mobile application crash on your customers? What devices were they on? What was your customer trying to do in your mobile application when it crashed? What was the network connectivity, battery level and memory usage when the application crash occurred?

To find a fix, it is necessary to see the type of mobile app errors, but correlating that application error with device information, user experience and network data will help you better understand the myriad things that can go wrong with your mobile app, and ensure you make smart decisions in resolving the problems.

Key performance indicators by device: By measuring, you may find out that there are key differences between iOS and Android, for example, and even between iPad and iPod touch customers, most likely correlating to the socio-economic difference between the two types of owners. In the race for development bandwidth, this will help you set your priorities.

User and channel measures
Average order value (AOV): Is the average order value increasing over time? How does it compare to your desktop Web site? Measuring the AOV seems obvious, but the important thing to understand is how much of a haircut you are taking on the mobile app or Web site in comparison to the full Web site experience, and how to continue to shrink the dollar delta between the two channels.

Time spent on key activities: How much time do your users spend on key activities? Is the time reasonable given they are on a mobile device? Regardless, this metric should always be going down over time.

For example, if your company's visitors spend an average of 7 minutes to complete a transaction, you should set goals to reduce the time to below 5 minutes for a typical, successful order.

Mobile users' geography: Where are your users accessing your site? Are they accessing your mobile site at certain times of the day and your desktop Web at other times? While a typical ecommerce Web site probably has a bicoastal following with a few key cities in the middle of the country added on, you may find that certain states such as California or New York take the lead for mobile usage in comparison to the desktop Web site. With this knowledge, your company can prioritize its mobile marketing budgets based on geography.

Conversion rate: The term "conversion rate" has different meanings from one industry to the next. For example, in retail, it could mean how many customers made a purchase; while in financial services it might refer to how many customers completed a transfer or paid a bill. Regardless of how the conversion rate is defined, it should be tracked and it should increase over time as the mobile channel matures.

IN CLOSING, it is important to fully understand your users and how to measure success before building a mobile app or site or even embarking on a mobile campaign.

In addition, you should identify measures to track your progress long after the initial launch. A mobile analytics package is a good start but to truly gain insights and optimize your mobile app or site and ensure ongoing success, you will need customer experience management solutions.

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