

COLUMNS

Mobile planning for social integration

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By **David Berkowitz**

At least 10 percent of consumers around the world use mobile social media, thanks to the growth of services such as Facebook and China's QQ.

Here is a sampling of opportunities to run mobile social programs that will become more important in the coming months.

Social TV

There are a lot of moving pieces in the social television space, including social networks, recommendation services, check-in applications, data and analytics providers and ad networks. Consumer behavior around sharing updates about TV programs centers around Facebook and Twitter.

Meanwhile, many of the best offerings are coming from the TV networks themselves.

New technologies are finding ways to be relevant and better serve users.

Pew Research Center reported that 28 percent of U.S. consumers ages 18-24 likes to see what others say about TV programs that they are watching, and the same percentage enjoys posting their own comments about TV programs.

Applications such as IntoNow acquired by Yahoo and ConneCTV are starting to serve those viewers by making it easy to follow and contribute to conversations from multiple devices.

Shazam is focusing more on connecting with TV ads and including calls to action to share content through social channels.

Viggle uses a check-in approach to offer monetary rewards for watching and staying engaged with TV programs.

The focus for these apps is increasingly to make it just as interesting, if not more, to interact with the ads as with the programs themselves.

Other apps such as ClipSync, Echo and Mass Relevance provide white-label technology to TV networks and brands.

Gaming

A screen in the mobile and tablet game The Simpsons: Tapped Out says, "Add a friend it's a social game for crying out loud!" Most mobile games are not so overt, but many of them do have social hooks.

Zynga has amassed some of the biggest mobile social games, including Words with Friends and Draw Something, and marketers can integrate brands into those properties.

Marketers are often creating their own games, too.

For instance, Walmart launched its Super Hero Augmented Reality game where users can take and share photos of themselves with virtual characters from "The Avengers." The characters are unlocked when people visit Walmart

themselves with virtual characters from The Avengers. The characters are unlocked when people visit Walmart stores.

McDonald's took a different approach in Europe, creating a game of Pong on a billboard and inviting people to control it from their mobile handsets.

Photo and video sharing

Facebook's \$1 billion offer for Instagram this past spring made many marketers and developers refocus on how people share content from mobile devices.

Many brands have been participating in Instagram, such as Adidas running its City vs City photo gallery. This craze is extending to video, with Viddy being one of the more popular services for brands.

For instance, Southwest Airlines invited people to submit brand-themed videos for a chance to win airline tickets.

Integration can sometimes go far deeper.

W Magazine promoted its 40-year anniversary by partnering with the Hipstamatic photo app to create a branded limited-edition virtual camera with new effects and also launched a contest to encourage people to use it.

The line between photography and video can blur, especially with advances in mobile apps.

Cinemagram lets people animate parts of photos, and such content was used by NBC on its Olympics Tumblr.

Shopping

A survey by Vibes in August found that when using their smartphones in stores, 33 percent of U.S. shoppers compared a competitor's site and 31 percent looked up product reviews.

These shoppers are engaging in the increasingly common hobby of "showrooming" using the store as a showroom while they shop and often buy through their mobile handsets.

The bright side is that 28 percent of showroomers say that they enjoy following marketers on Facebook, compared to 17 percent of all consumers. Marketers will want to find ways to turn these mobile shoppers into advocates.

Foursquare remains top of mind for many marketers, and those with locations can offer a range of specials, such as Newbie and Flash specials for acquisition and Loyalty and Mayor specials for retention.

Social commerce in general is a hot area, and Wrapp is trying to make social gifting scale with its mobile app that allows people to send and receive branded gift cards by tapping into users' social graphs on Facebook.

Brands and retailers are also creating their own experiences.

Neiman Marcus launched an NM Service app where customers can trigger interactions with a store's sales associates.

Granted, sometimes the focus for marketers is not sales but branding, and few have more memorably branded apps than Charmin with its Sit or Squat bathroom locator, powered by user reviews of facilities.

Events

Mobile social media is often most effective when it connects people socially in the real world.

Cheek'd is a dating service where people create physical cards with witty teasers that link to private online profiles, Wendr is an app to allow people to selectively invite friends to activities on a given night, and GrubWithUs connects people with shared interests to break bread and make friends.

The canvas of real-world locations and events has been a source of inspiration for some marketers.

In South Africa's Cape Town, Carling Black Label beer allowed soccer fans to coach teams during a match by selecting players and making key decisions.

In Singapore, Harry's Bar included QR codes on beer bottles to encourage people to buy patrons drinks with secret messages embedded.

As for other social beverages, Coca-Cola says it has made more than 4.5 million mobile brand connections with consumers by working with Mozes, such as through an SMS-driven campaign at a NASCAR race built on user-generated content and sweepstakes.

THIS IS JUST a taste of how marketers are using social media and the technologies powering new experiences for

users.

For instance, Facebook now includes ads in the News Feed for mobile users, and Twitter rolled out mobile device targeting earlier in the year.

Those two platforms actually offer the best opportunity to reach wide audiences through mobile social marketing but, as you can see, there are many more options marketers can and must consider.

David Berkowitz is vice president of emerging media at [360i](#), New York. Reach him at david.berkowitz@360i.com.

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