

COLUMNS

Creating a mobile monetization survival kit

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With more than half of the U.S. population owning a smartphone and 60 million-plus tablet users nationwide, there are ample opportunities to reach consumers on the small screen.

This proliferation of mobile devices has unsurprisingly led to a dramatic increase in mobile advertising budgets. In fact, global mobile ad spending is primed to increase roughly 44 percent in 2013, including an estimated 73 percent growth in the United States.

The shift will have a significant effect on brands and retailers from two perspectives.

First, bricks-and-mortar stores must be prepared for shoppers using their mobile devices in-store to compare prices, find additional information and, yes even look at competitors' sites.

Second, brands and retailers must ensure that they have a strong mobile presence.

When done right, mobile can actually be a money-maker, rather than just a cost center.

To make this a reality, retailers should develop their own Mobile Monetization Survival Kit (MMSK), a tool kit including everything a retailer needs to take advantage of mobile marketing and shopping opportunities.

Here is a list of what the kit should include:

Mobile-optimized Web site

Apple's notorious refusal to support Adobe's Flash on its mobile devices began a bit of a revolution in the industry that all but turned "Flash" into a dirty word among mobile developers.

However, just because a site is Flash-free and can be viewed on a mobile device does not make it a mobile site.

A true mobile experience must be designed, created and fully optimized specifically for mobile.

With the myriad of mobile devices, operating systems, screen sizes and networks, ensuring that sites render properly on mobile is no small task.

Simply promoting a desktop site via mobile is inviting criticism, as traditional sites provide a poor user experience on mobile. They often involve side-scrolling to read text, images that do not load properly and overall poor performance.

This navigation becomes frustrating for users and a poor reflection on brands and advertisers. Think mobile-first when developing a Web experience.

Ad serving and tracking

In today's competitive retail and ecommerce landscape, the ability to serve and track mobile ads can be a real differentiator

Advertisers demand results and want to be able to view historical performance and comparisons for their programs.

Use an ad server that allows for reporting metrics, controlling campaigns, unifying platforms and offers advanced targeting, including demographic and behavioral.

According to a recent survey of 95 online and mobile publishers fielded by InsightExpress on behalf of Mocean Mobile, almost half of respondents had at least tried DART for Mobile over the past two years, but 41 percent had also tested AdMarvel, 34 percent Mocean and 19 percent Nexage.

And when it comes to the currently used solution for many publishers, DART (17 percent), AdMarvel (14 percent) and Mocean (13 percent) have to contend with 15 percent of the market that still relies on in-house or custom ad-serving technologies.

Drive traffic

Having a mobile-optimized experience with advertising integration points is great. However, a mobile destination should be consistently populated.

Traffic is key. Promoting the mobile site or application is extremely important.

There are several options for mobile publishers to increase users and interactions. These can include marketing on the retailer's preexisting Web outlets, social mediums or in-store promotion on marketing collateral via QR codes.

The most effective method for increasing mobile traffic is consumer-relevant targeted mobile media that links back to the retailer's mobile destination.

Include strong calls-to-action within the mobile banners. The more traffic that a mobile destination has, the more premium the CPM can be for advertisers. This will also increase the sites and apps' engagement level.

Information

When developing a mobile site, it is important to keep in-store shoppers in mind. What are they most likely to be looking for when visiting a retailer's mobile site?

The likely answer is basic information such as store locations and hours of operation. This information should be clear and easy to find, as should information on sales, coupons, hot new products and buyer incentives.

Location, location, location

One of the most powerful things about mobile is its ability to reach a customer at the point of impact.

With the popular emergence of geo-location services and geo-fencing, shopping locally via mobile has begun a giant upward trend.

Users should be able to find the closest retailer location for a brand deal, product or promotion. Location is imperative for bricks-and-mortar retailers. These included options will make the mobile publisher more appealing for advertisers and give the retailer further capabilities and outlets for monetization.

Coupons and offers

Everyone loves a good deal.

Also, with the recent announcement of Apple's new PassBook in iOS 6 a technology which aims to simplify and consolidate loyalty programs, coupons and eventually enable direct purchases via mobile mobile coupons will be even more in demand than ever.

Retailers should be prepared to integrate with the new technology and be sure to train in-store staff on how to redeem offers. Advertisers and brands have already begun requesting that retailers include these options.

Cross-collaboration

Although mobile monetization is the key topic, the most successful mobile campaigns come full-circle and feature a 360-degree approach to marketing. This means that the mobile experience should mirror campaign messaging via tablet, desktop and in-store, when applicable.

This cross-channel approach will synchronize and strengthen the overall branding and campaign messaging, thereby delivering better results for the advertiser and likely repeat business.

THE DAYS OF mobile are truly upon us. As Facebook founder/CEO Mark Zuckerberg recently proclaimed: "On mobile we are going to make lots more money than on desktop."

Now is the time to take advantage of this technology surge and have your Mobile Monetization Survival Kit ready for immediate use.

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