

COLUMNS

The missing link in QR code and Facebook marketing

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By AN AMERICAN MARKETER COLUMNIST

By **Dale Rennie**

Mobile marketing and QR codes are part of an established tradition of promotion for a variety of industries. However, that strategy often overlooks the added importance of social media, where Facebook plays an increasingly vital role in establishing and expanding brand identity, attracting new customers and popularizing specific offers, discounts or exclusive incentives.

Without a means of bridging this divide between QR codes and social media, marketers will not reach their true target audience. More than 1 billion consumers worldwide now use Facebook via their smartphones, tablets and other mobile devices to receive and spread information, "Like" their favorite products and highlight featured brands.

The opportunity, for mobile marketers, rests with acknowledging this fact that social media must be part of any QR campaign so both marketers and consumers can thrive. The solution already exists, but first we all need to rethink the way we position and use QR codes.

Like it or not

By their very existence, QR codes are the perfect resource for busy consumers who want to quickly take advantage of a limited promotion or a special offer.

And yet, QR codes are digital resources trapped in an analog world, meaning when companies insert QR codes into newspapers, magazines, flyers, pamphlets and other forms of old media, they automatically limit their ability to create a viral marketing phenomenon.

Instead, the same hit-or-miss results leave business owners asking a predictable question: Why am I unable to be successful?

The answer to that question rests with giving consumers the chance to scan a QR code, showcase that information on Facebook and enable fellow friends to "Like" the same thing, thus generating an organic movement, where each "Like" acts as a personal endorsement for a particular business, promotion or sale.

Consumers can do this with speed and convenience, right from their mobile devices, and make a single QR code into a symbol for a massive shift for the better involving marketing, advertising and communications.

Friendly overture

This respect for the power of Facebook is the proverbial missing link in most QR marketing efforts.

Too often business owners treat these entities as two separate domains, where the former has nothing to do with the latter

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The facts belie this false division between these groups, which is why we have a duty to change the very purpose of mobile marketing.

We need to think of ways to affordably and reliably make viral marketing a reality, not a freak occurrence or some inexplicable aberration.

Marketers who appreciate this new landscape will thrive because they give consumers greater influence over the success of a QR code. They empower individuals to be the force responsible for a company's visibility online, lending a large measure of authenticity to businesses that may not reach the public with conventional marketing tactics.

THEREIN IS THE final truth: mobile marketing relies on innovative applications to inaugurate a new era of online conversation and promotion.

This unity between QR codes and social media is a necessity. The advantages are clear, and the opportunity is undeniable.

We need to seize the moment, for the betterment of consumers and marketers alike. That approach can and should be the next chapter in the way that mobile marketers use QR codes and Facebook.

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