

COLUMNS

Treat mobile holistically rather than as a silo

March 11, 2013



By **Larry Harris**

The consumer's obsession with mobile devices, from smartphones to tablets, will only continue to grow.

Whether it is the unique advantage mobile has in providing instant access to social networks, news and shopping, or the constantly updated operating systems such as iOS, Android and Windows 8, content creators, advertisers and advertising technology players are being forced to keep up with a rapid pace of development.

As an industry, we have made significant progress, but we still have a long way to go to decode the most effective ways to leverage and integrate mobile.

Getting mobile marketing right is not easy, yet we see signs that publishers and advertisers are finally starting to create media opportunities and crafting messaging and media plans that make the most of the mobile medium.

No longer can companies simply launch an application and expect adoption to automatically follow. The focus must shift towards creating a more efficient and engaging mobile experience for users.

Traditional ways of gauging success no longer apply

With mobile devices, the advertising and publishing landscape and the means of gauging success has been turned on its head including the principles of traditional mass audience advertising.

Location and personalization are the big drivers in mobile. It is part of the need to incorporate location-based advertising, geo-targeting, device detection and integration of rich media ads into existing applications.

Truly cross-platform and integrated user experience

The ability to maintain consistent and integrated programmatic offerings across mediums will separate the publishers who come out ahead from those that will fall behind.

Maintaining the integrity of a Web site or app and having a seamless, interchangeable display across smartphones, tablets and laptops will ensure that the end user feels comfortable engaging with content on any device. Windows 8 immediately comes to mind, since it was built as a touchscreen operating system.

Importance of first impressions

The old adage, "You don't get a second chance to make a first impression," probably applies more in mobile marketing than in any other field.

Users who engage with your content will make determinations based on that first impression, which is something that many publishers are still figuring out.

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However, with opportunity comes risk and finding the right balance to avoid overwhelming the mobile consumer with too many impressions.

A recent IDC report highlighted the fact that private marketplaces provide a low-risk way for publishers to enter the front door and let programmatic do the rest to test new strategies with premium mobile inventory.

From there, it is a much easier sell and often only a matter of time before publishers notice their CPMs rising quickly.

From a display advertising perspective, we believe that we will begin to notice more creative ways to engage the end consumer via smartphones and tablets. Imagine, playing Angry Birds Star Wars on your Android device that would feature seamless advertisements for a Blu-Ray Star Wars trilogy set.

AS WE MOVE further into 2013, look for real-time bidding's delayed adoption of mobile advertising and the resistance to allocating more of the budget to mobile as descriptions that no longer apply. Granted, greater standardization when it comes to ad formats on mobile devices is a necessary step.

Despite these opportunities and challenges, it is still early on in the mobile game and publishers and advertisers need to both introduce and anticipate advances to tap the rising consumer demand.

If mobile is treated holistically, rather than as a separate silo, mobile will continue to scale and earn its rightful place in the marketing arsenal.

Larry Harris is chief marketing officer of [PubMatic](#), New York. Reach him at larry.harris@pubmatic.com.

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