

COLUMNS

## Mobile path to purchase enters marketing lexicon

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By [Jeff Weidauer](#)

Celebrated science fiction author Arthur C. Clarke once said, "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic."

As advanced as many of his ideas were, even he never imagined the full impact technology would have on our daily lives. But the real wonder of technology is in how humans choose to make use of it there is no way to predict how people will, or will not, make use of new gadgets.

This is being felt today by retailers, whose core business the buying and selling of product has remained essentially the same for millennia.

### Paper trails

As recently as 10 years ago we were still looking in the daily newspaper for advertised specials. But then that activity moved to the Web and from there to our mobile devices.

Just three years ago no one had uttered the term "mobile path to purchase." Today, those words have the ring of either opportunity or risk, depending on the individual and his or her view of change.

One thing is for certain ignoring the changing role of mobile in the shopping habit is not an option.

A recent article on this site made the point that shoppers convert 17 times more often in-store via their mobile phones versus online.

Shoppers have an expectation of always-on connectivity, and if you think they are not using their mobile devices to shop, then you are not paying attention.

This applies to all retail, from cars to cantaloupes. We are information junkies, and the mobile device has only fed that addiction.

### Mobile path to purchase

Engaging the shopper when and where she is in the shopping mode is where the opportunity lies for retailers. Once upon a time that meant a home-delivered advertisement in the mail or newspaper.

Today that means providing access to data that spans a number of media, with mobile being the newest and possibly most complex.

The demand for information has deepened as well.

Simple item and price is no longer sufficient. Shoppers want more information, such as ingredients, expanded nutrition information, peer reviews and even alternative products.

A number of services and mobile applications exist to provide this information, but savvy retailers are packaging this content in a branded application to more fully engage the shopper.

While the "mobile path to purchase" may be one of many new terms, chances are this one will be with us for some time.

Mobile devices are expanding in both market penetration and capabilities, and there is no telling what new opportunities

mobile devices are expanding in both market penetration and capabilities, and there is no telling where consumers will drive this technology.

There is no turning back. Mobile has taken a permanent seat in the media consideration set.

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