

COLUMNS

## 5 factors to consider before entering mobile commerce

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We live in a world where almost anything can be bought on the Internet and consumers can access the Internet on almost any phone. However, currently only 3 percent \$8 billion in 2012 of U.S. online purchases are being made from a mobile device. This is going to change.

Analysts project that the mobile commerce market will reach \$31 billion by the end of 2017. As this growth takes place, we can expect to see more than a handful of major retailers battling for their piece of the pie.

Here are five points to keep in mind when creating a mobile commerce platform.

1. Optimize for mobile. On average, Web sites are seeing a 10 percent higher bounce rate from users who access their Web site via mobile compared to desktop users. The obvious question is what do businesses need to do to close this gap?

The first place to start is by optimizing for mobile users. By optimizing the Web sites, online-only retailers have seen engagement go up by up to 85 percent compared to their site without mobile optimization.

2. Add value with mobile. Transferring your entire Web site to a mobile device is a good first step, but not enough.

You can reach more consumers by creating a mobile Web site that adds value and offers something different than a desktop version.

By using phone features such as location services and one-click calling, mobile sites can actually enhance a user's experience when compared to regular desktop versions.

Also important is the integration of social media in your mobile site.

Studies show that Facebook and Twitter users spend more time accessing their sites through mobile devices than desktop computers, making social media sharing features important to any mobile Web site.

3. Fast and simple. When creating a mobile commerce platform, you have to keep in mind that not every user is connected to Wi-Fi or has a phone with 4G connection.

Not every user has unlimited data on his or her phone. Not every user has a phone that has the processing capabilities to handle a large site efficiently.

But every user has a point where he or she will abandon a page due to a slow load time.

According to a survey from Kissmetrics, a one second delay in load time can result in a 7 percent decrease in sales.

To maximize conversions on your mobile site, be sure to keep in mind your load times. A good number to shoot for is two seconds or less per page.

Forty percent of consumers will abandon a Web site that takes more than three seconds to load.

4. Make checkout easy. Entering payment information on a computer can be annoying, but doing the same thing on a mobile phone can be downright difficult at times.

A notable aspect of mobile commerce conversions is facilitating the impulse buy.

Seventeen percent of respondents to a Rackspace survey admitted that mobile devices have increased the frequency of impulse purchases.

Seventy-one percent of these respondents attributed the increase to a mobile Web site that made it easy to make purchases.

Based off these findings, it comes as no surprise that amazon.com, which features one-click ordering, had mobile sales in the billions for 2012.

Now this is not to say that a one-click ordering system on your mobile site is the key to multi-billion-dollar yearly revenue, but an easy to use payment system is a sure step in the right direction.

5. Do it now. The demand for mobile commerce offerings is already skyrocketing.

When looking at the U.S. market, Forrester Research predicts a 62 percent increase in mobile commerce in 2013.

When comparing this to a 12 percent increase in ecommerce, and 5 percent growth in total retail sales, you begin to get a better picture of how fast this is really moving.

And if this extreme growth potential is not reason enough, then take into account the sales you will be losing due to a new phenomenon called "showrooming" when consumers visit a store only to price compare and then buy items they see on Amazon. According to comScore, 35 percent of consumers confess to doing this.

THE FUTURE of retail can be both, exciting and intimidating for retailers.

As technology continues to evolve, so too will the tactics and tools that retailers can use to streamline their marketing and sales processes.

But for those retailers who miss out on mobile commerce, this might be the last evolution they get to see.

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