

COLUMNS

How touch screen can transform your brand

November 10, 2010



By AN AMERICAN MARKETER COLUMNIST

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Back when touch-screen technology first came on the scene, it was hard to get past the sheer "cool" factor, and just how much fun it was to touch a screen and make a computer or MP3 player do whatever we wanted it to do with a single stroke of the finger.

The ease-of-use and convenience were immediately obvious, but what was less obvious at the time was just how dramatically this technology would transform the way brands communicate and interact with their consumers.

Today, the visual nature of touch-screen technology provides the right conduit through which brands can finally satisfy their consumers' immediate needs and wishes.

Combined with mobile, location-based technology and the pervasive data cloud, touch suddenly can turn brand interaction from selling into consumer engagement and enablement.

Let us look at an example of how this happens.

Tapping into touch

Imagine walking down a street and seeing a restaurant that interests you. Instead of physically typing the name of the restaurant into a tiny mobile browser, the consumer simply holds up his phone to the restaurant and up pops information on recent reviews, menus, table availability and other information to browse and consider.

This is called augmented reality, and it works by combining the direction the user is facing (compass) with location (GPS) and contextually relevant information based on that location.

Add touch-screen technology and all of the information the consumer needs to make her decision is served up automatically in a simple, quick-touch fashion on the mobile device.

If the consumer had to physically look up this information, the opportunity would most likely be lost and the consumer would move on.

Without the visual and intuitive characteristics of touch-screen technology, the effect of all the other technologies would be significantly reduced.

The great improvement in user experience that comes with interacting with pictures layered with relevant cloud data versus typing phone keys makes all the difference.

All in all

What the convergence of all these technologies and advancements means for marketers is that, for the first time,

brands will be able to interact with consumers in a visually compelling, contextually relevant, on-demand way, providing 100 percent utility to the buyer.

Such convergence turns the brand from purely a product for sale into a service that helps the consumer find exactly what she wants directly at the point of sale. Just like magic.

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