

COLUMNS

3 key mobile takeaways for marketers this holiday season

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By AN AMERICAN MARKETER COLUMNIST

By **Chad Gallagher**

With all the buzz around using mobile to take advantage of showrooming and geolocation data, many of today's marketers will be tempted to jump on the bandwagon this holiday season.

But before your business starts throwing dollars toward mobile campaigns designed to reel in armies of shoppers at the mall, buyer beware: much of the conventional wisdom about how and where people use their devices is wrong.

Earlier this year, AOL and the University of Virginia School of Engineering and Applied Science (SEAS) conducted an in-depth study of how consumers engage with content across multiple devices, and the findings have provided some valuable, no-BS insight into real-world mobile usage trends.

Here are three key takeaways that should come in handy for marketers this holiday season:

1. Focus on scaled results. One of the biggest misconceptions about mobile marketing is that it is all about reaching people "on the go."

The concept of "mobility," after all, is built into the name. But while the idea of serving Gingerbread Latte ads to consumers as they walk by a coffee shop sounds cool, the reality is that this is not how most people currently interact with marketing on their mobile devices.

The AOL and SEAS study found that a majority of mobile ad impressions were not being delivered while device users were out and about, being "mobile."

Rather, a whopping 75 percent of all mobile impressions were viewed within the home.

Of the 25 percent that are viewed elsewhere, less than 3 percent contain the latitude and longitude information that makes them eligible for geo-fencing. And of those, an advertiser has to be able to strike when the consumer is within a specific radius of their business.

So beware of the real-time geo-fencing fantasy it is simply not something that can be leveraged by anyone today beyond a very minute scale. You will reach far more mobile consumers as they roast chestnuts at home by an open fire.

2. Yes, people do buy on mobile. For too long now, marketers have just assumed that consumers will not use their mobile devices to actually buy something, focusing their efforts instead on rich media or games and applications.

You have probably heard some of these before: *The screen is too small. We don't know our mobile strategy yet. Nobody is going to navigate 15 fields and enter credit card info to make a purchase on a smart phone. People are*

only likely to use mobile for quick/easy "one click" actions.

Well it turns out that people do carry out all kinds of transactions on mobile devices, from buying apparel on a retailer's site to booking a hotel, signing up for a cellular plan or even configuring a new car.

In fact, the AOL and SEAS survey showed that nearly one-third of digital conversions across travel, retail, automotive and telecom verticals occurred while a consumer was on a mobile device.

One-third of all digital conversions equal a heck of a lot of commerce, and this number is only going to go higher as people get more comfortable making purchases on mobile devices.

So instead of worrying about whether or not consumers will buy on mobile, you should instead be focusing on marketing that helps drive them towards the things they want to buy, whether it is a Christmas sweater for Grandma or smartphones for the kids.

3. Deck your digital halls with a cross-device strategy. In a multichannel and multi-device world, it simply does not make sense any more to have separate marketing strategies for mobile and desktop.

Yet day after day, I speak with agencies and brands that continue to develop and execute campaigns within these silos.

A digital impression is a digital impression whether a consumer encounters marketing on her desktop, smartphone or tablet.

To consumers, these devices are in many ways interchangeable. And since we know that cumulative impressions are often required to realize a conversion a person may view a retailer's ad on her mobile phone while reading news headlines in the morning, and see one on her desktop at work before making a purchase on her iPad that night one multi-device holiday strategy that focuses on analyzing, targeting and engaging with consumers across devices is a must.

THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, do not get sidetracked by mobile marketing fads that are based on buzz rather than facts.

Instead, focus on a holistic digital strategy that is shaped by current data about how real consumers use their mobile devices.

Chad Gallagher is director of mobile at AOL Networks, Baltimore, MD. Reach him at chad.gallagher@advertising.com.

1 thought on "3 key mobile takeaways for marketers this holiday season"

1.  **Jan Niemantsverdriet** says:

December 17, 2013 at 12:11 pm

Although the perception that people only use their mobile when they are "mobile" is wrong, mobile users still differ from desktop user. Mobile is mostly used casually. This means they will react more on impulse (what may be a good thing for most webshops) but also that their attention span is shorter. The trick is to get the most out of the first, and prevent losing visitors on the second.

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