

COLUMNS

Pay per call and mobile search are the future of mobile commerce

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Some of you may have already noticed the evolution happening right now in mobile commerce, which is showing mobile commerce rapidly taking share from desktop-based ecommerce. As a result, mobile search will eclipse desktop search with profound implications for mobile marketers by this time next year.

By 2016, 24 percent of all mobile commerce sales will be done from a mobile device.

Conversations on conversions

Opportunities around mobile search are already starting to reveal themselves in the form of pay-per-call marketing driven by mobile search. Luckily, there are countless industries that rely on phone calls for their economics.

Any product or service that needs hand holding benefits from a human-to-human call, including insurance products, financial services, legal services, hotel and cruise bookings, tech support and education degree programs. These are typically all extremely large industries that actively use call centers to generate business.

Increasingly, we are seeing pay-per-call marketing as a combination of the old and the new. Although smartphones or call centers as ways to transact business are not new. What is new is the rise of mobile search in this ecosystem and the way in which mobile search stitches these formerly distinct industries into a monolithic marketing powerhouse called pay-per-call.

The amount of money in play is staggering.

Market researcher BIA/Kelsey estimates that \$68 billion is spent each year on advertising that is placed with the intention of driving phone leads. This includes ads in newspapers, radio, television, Yellow Pages and any advertising that is targeted to reach audiences in specific locales.

Over the next few years much of that \$68 billion will move over to mobile search for one simple reason: better conversions.

On the PC Web, a search is still a few steps away from an action or conversion. In the mobile world, monetization is literally one click or tap away through pay-per-call because more than 60 percent of mobile searches lead to a phone call.

BIA/Kelsey estimates mobile search conversion rates are 57 percent versus 7 percent for desktop because mobile users are "more ready to buy in the right location and with a device whose new function is to make phone calls."

users are "more ready to buy, in the right location and with a device whose core function is to make phone calls."

Make the right call

Just as the first search engines defined the rise of the first generation of the Internet and determined winners and losers, the rise of mobile search will also determine a new generation of winners.

One of the winners will be pay-per-call marketing, the fastest-growing area of performance marketing in the United States.

BIA/Kelsey adds that the call volume to businesses in the United States will reach 65 billion by 2016, a 43 percent compound annual growth rate from today.

MOBILE SEARCH that connects to a call is now the best way for marketers to reach prospects and drive revenue. But just as was the case in the Web world, mobile marketers need access to large marketing budgets from big industries.

The best way to do this is through networks that already have agreements in place with major advertisers in the key industries that are buying calls.

Mobile marketers that get into mobile search-driven pay-per-call marketing will make a huge and profitable jump into the fastest-growing category of performance marketing, driving new revenues and profits.

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