

The Value in Mobile Marketing

By James Briggs

How should marketers leverage mobile to get the most out of their marketing dollars today? James Briggs offers four tips on successfully integrating mobile into your marketing mix.

As the popularity of traditional media channels is starting to wane with the larger marketers, newer interactive media, such as online and mobile, are growing in popularity with both marketers and their most desirable consumer targets: youthful demographic groups.

In fact, Forrester Research projects that spending on online and mobile marketing will experience double-digit growth rates through 2010. Additionally, more and more media purchasing discussions are starting to be framed by new interactive media channels rather than being driven by 30-second TV spots.

As the president of a mobile marketing agency, I am, of course, ecstatic that major brands, agencies and consumers have warmed significantly to new media channels, especially mobile. Even so, I am concerned that the true opportunities afforded by mobile and other new media are being overshadowed, and in many cases ignored, due to confusion created by marketers' and consumers' displeasure with traditional channels.

The true value of mobile is squandered if it is used as just another channel for invasive, tired or static marketing approaches. The true value of mobile is simple yet quite powerful. When integrated into what you do today, mobile personalizes your experience and engages audiences in new, more flexible ways, enabling your existing channels to more effectively accomplish what each one does best.

Moreover, mobile also provide marketers with something they have always desired: real-time performance indicators on campaign performance. There has never been a more real-time, always-on and closed-loop marketing channel available to help marketers quantifiably measure and quickly adjust their marketing investments.

So how should marketers leverage mobile to get the most out of their marketing dollars today? Below are four tips that I recommend to successfully integrate mobile into your marketing mix:

Maximize your investments in traditional media by leveraging mobile to close the loop on campaigns and capture your customers with fewer impressions. Broadcast media, such as TV advertising, was traditionally excellent for building brand awareness with large, well-defined target audiences. However, they no longer deliver the immediacy of response available via the mobile channel. By adding a well-positioned mobile component to your campaigns, you can reduce the number of impressions required to capture target consumers while improving the effectiveness and efficiency of your marketing budget.

When executing integrated campaigns, allow mobile to play a prominent role in the campaign. This will allow interactive channels the opportunity to perform at their best, and it reduces the overuse of more disruptive media channels. For example, McDonald's recently executed a mobile campaign to promote the Big Mac. As a part of the campaign, the company integrated a mobile call-to-action alongside a website address on Big Mac packaging to allow customers to register and participate in the promotion. To McDonald's surprise, 40 percent of the customers that participated in the campaign opted-in via their mobile phones. Needless to say, the program was deemed a tremendous success.

Respect your consumers' needs by investing in media campaigns that are relevant to their lifestyles and how they desire to interact with your brand. The majority of mobile subscribers know that the mobile phone is no longer just for voice communication; they are also powerful access portals to their information and

entertainment sources. Even so, this does not guarantee that they are willing to let your brand onto that portal. Relevant content and messaging are key criteria for successful execution in the mobile channel.

Hold your agency partners accountable. Mobile marketing provides marketers with the tools they have long required to determine the success and ROI of their marketing initiatives. However, brand managers often rely upon their agency partners to ensure that new channels are properly incorporated into their marketing mix. If your agency partner has not discussed the role mobile can play in your strategies, you should ask them why not.

If recent trends hold up, as they are expected to, it is becoming increasingly clear that new media channels are going to play a greater role in the market mix for the foreseeable future. Even though this is currently leading to a brief period of uncertainty as marketers try to ascertain the right media mix to meet their objectives, it should not be viewed negatively. After all, new media channels such as mobile are providing marketers with an opportunity to close the door on a long period of inefficient, blind and disruptive marketing and open the door to a more transparent, cost-effective integrated approach to marketing.

Now that's something even your customers will be happy about.

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