

How to plan a targeted mobile marketing campaign

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Mobile marketing used to be viewed as a one-trick pony with brands using it purely to blast text messages.

In the last three years mobile has evolved rapidly and the pony can now do a variety of tricks ranging from text to multi-player applications, multimedia messaging service (MMS) and live video streaming.

With the proliferation of new mobile technologies, more brands are dabbling in mobile as a marketing tool, although often with one-off campaigns that are approached independently of larger marketing campaigns and have no strategy to link them. Having a clear strategy that capitalizes on the advantages that mobile brings, along with the capabilities to support it, are essential to the success of any mobile marketing initiative.

No sleepwalking

The mobile phone is a unique communication channel that offers brands a direct and personal engagement mechanism with an individual. As such it provides an opportunity to take the consumer through the acquisition-retention-advocacy stages with a greater degree of success than with other marketing channels. For the mobile user the phone is a personal device that is predominantly used to maintain one-to-one communication. Therefore, any dialogue between with a brand must be relevant and tailored as much as possible to each consumer. If we compare mobile to email as a communication channel, mobile is less forgiving.

When subscribed to email marketing, a person is less likely to react negatively to a high number of emails even if they are not particularly relevant, and there is a lot less sensitivity around the timing of the message. After all, people are used to the odd spam email and they do not generally sleep next to an active PC/email server. This is not the case with mobile. To be able to get to a point where brand communication is trusted, the consumer's permission must first be earned and protected.

Next begins the process of data collection, across all touch points, in order to create a user profile. When sufficient data has been gathered, communication can be tailored to best meet the known needs of that individual.

As an example, it is essential to allow the audience to choose the form in which they receive their messages (i.e. text or email), the timing and frequency of delivery and, most importantly, the content itself. An effective method of achieving this is by allowing the user to subscribe via mobile and subsequently directing them to a Web page to complete their preferences.

Here are a few key points to consider when planning a mobile marketing campaign:

Make data collection a goal. Mobile interactivity offers a wealth of information. At the very basic level individuals can be uniquely identified by their mobile phone number, facilitating the tracking of their preferences and communication. Users are likely to divulge information if they feel that they are getting something of value back, therefore creating a loyalty mechanism whereby customers are rewarded for participating and sharing information.

Personalize. Use this data to make the interactivity relevant and in line with the user's preferences and relationship with the brand. A simple example, a person who interacts more often with the brand should receive a different message than a person who just sent their first text message.

Stay informed. The mobile ecosystem is changing quickly, with big players such as Google and Apple leading the way.

Perhaps the two main topics to monitor are technological advancements that may offer better ways to communicate with your audience and regulatory changes from the likes of the Mobile Marketing Association and the Federal Communications Commission. Both can have a major impact on how best to communicate with your target audience.

It is imperative to recognize and understand that without a holistic data collection and CRM strategy that spans across communication channels, mobile's potential to engage, acquire and retain a brand's target audience will not be maximized.

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