

COLUMNS

How brands and retailers can improve their mobile marketing efforts

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There is little doubt that the rapid growth of mobile computing poses a major challenge for marketers.

Google reports that mobile searches surpassed desktop searches in the United States for the first time this year. Mobile phones will account for about one-half the time that U.S. consumers spend online this year, but just one-fifth of retail ecommerce sales, according to eMarketer.

U.S. consumers now spend close to three hours each day on their mobile phones, yet they do the bulk of their online purchasing on desktop and laptop computers with larger screens and physical keyboards, making it easier to browse and type in credit card numbers than on smartphones.

Buying it

Even the majority of the millennial generation who were raised on smartphones do not regularly purchase products or services on their devices.

Millennials have the highest adoption rates for shopping-related smartphone applications, but they are still more likely to use a mobile Web browser to make mobile purchases.

In this shifting landscape, some of the largest Web properties such as Google, Facebook and Twitter have implemented a simple one-click “buy” button to bridge the divide between mobile browsing and desktop purchasing.

In this way, the big Web companies can extend one-click ordering to thousands of small retailers on their platforms.

Too few companies have made such appropriate adjustments to their content, despite a dramatic rise in the use of mobile devices to access videos, images and texts.

Large enterprises have been especially slow to change due to the huge volume of content they have to convert to mobile platforms.

In addition, many companies simply resist radical changes to their established publishing processes.

Yet we know when content is not optimized for preferred devices, buyers will give up and search elsewhere. This means content has to be delivered to customers in a seamless fashion over the devices of their choice.

Here are some suggestions for how to improve your mobile marketing efforts.

Optimize for mobile comparison shopping

Digital consumers demand fast access to information. They get impatient with content that is unreadable or too time-consuming to find and download.

Content providers should focus on this dynamic, seeking an optimum balance of text and videos to meet each consumer’s preferences.

For instance, mobile comparison shopping is a trend in which customers go into a store to do some quick research on a mobile device before making a purchase.

Retailers can use this opportunity to ensure that the online information they provide is helpful and easy to read on mobile devices. This situation also presents a chance to cross-sell by serving up recommendations for other related products.

Capture the value of Big Data

The proliferation of social media, smart devices, sensors, cameras, digital maps and the Internet of Things have all created massive volumes of data that can be analyzed to gain insights about customer behavior and preferences.

The next big trend in mobile commerce will involve mining this mountain of Big Data to understand what consumers want, and providing relevant information in the manner that they want to consume it.

Going forward, successful manufacturers and retailers will be able to quickly adapt their content to serve up what people want to see and read.

Content providers can start preparing for this future by winding down any legacy content that is not interactive or responsive.

Getting out ahead of mobile business-to-business

Another concern involves business-to-business mobile marketing.

Only a slight 51 percent majority of business-to-business marketers say their companies have invested in mobile marketing already, according to a recent poll by Regalix.

And new data from eMarketer shows that 70 percent of B2B marketers generate less than one-fourth of their company's site traffic and revenues from mobile devices.

The eMarketer survey shows that 75 percent of B2B firms have allocated less than 10 percent of their marketing budgets on mobile, and none have invested more than 25 percent on mobile efforts.

The good news is that nearly two-thirds of respondents to the eMarketer B2B survey plan to increase their mobile marketing budgets over the next 12 months.

Adapting to market adaptations

The only thing that we know for sure is that technology will continue to change.

New mobile platforms and unexpected types of wearable devices will emerge that have not even been conceived yet.

Since marketers do not know which technologies will win out, it is critical to stay updated about these emerging trends and not fall behind the technology curve.

To sum up, put your mobile marketing systems in place, take small steps to begin and become more agile over time.

This process of knowing how to adapt will become just as important as adapting itself.

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