

MOBILE

SMS still crucial to driving holiday foot traffic for retailers

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Image courtesy of Michael Kors

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Retailers who fail to implement a text program could miss out on significant sales this holiday, with 78 percent of consumers claiming to be more likely to visit a store following an SMS deal or mobile notification.

Consumers are now reachable anywhere and anytime through their mobile devices, and that opens up a huge range of possibilities for in-store experiences. Retailers should be bringing customers in their doors through deals and promotional content specific to departments with mobile messaging tactics such as push-notifications and SMS.

"Mobile cannot be ignored at any point in the customer journey, least of all the in-store experience," said Rob Malcolm, senior vice president of corporate development, [Mblox](#). "The opportunity to connect with consumers anywhere any time is already a well understood benefit of mobile communication.

"However, retailers ought to more fully embrace its role in the in-store experience," he said. "For example, the survey showed that 62 percent of survey respondents would be likely to adopt in-store mobile notifications or offers, based on the department in which they are shopping."

Texting with customers

The holiday season is the biggest quarter of the year for retailers, and maximizing sales during this time period is important. Many retailers are missing out on opportunities in driving foot traffic through mobile.

sms

It is important to reach consumers at particular points within their customer journey, and the untethered aspect to mobile allows retailers to connect with consumers are at all times. Notifying followers of a particular deal or promotion happening at that time through messaging is likely to cause customers to enter the stores relatively soon, acting as a call to action.

Discounts through this medium are highly important for retailers, because this drives a significant amount of traffic. Consumers are always looking for the best deal so personalizing a discount through a message is a tactical method in luring in more

SMS practices

A welcome incentive is also highly effective in deal redemption, with customers often returning to a retailer following a first-time user discount with SMS and messaging opt ins. Retailers should also track other stores' pricing to stay competitive and inform opted-in users of their lower prices.

For instance, online retailers eBindle.com and Grainger were among several brands monitoring competitors' price changes to provide near real-time push notifications to customers of their own adjustments so they can stay competitive in the fast-moving mobile shopping space ([see more](#)).

Also, Pizza chain Papa Murphy's stepped up efforts to integrate mobile with in-store promotions via more personalized text alerts and incentivized calls to action at more than 1,400 locations ([see more](#)).

"Almost 40 percent of respondents have made 6 or more mobile purchases in the past year," Mr. Malcolm said. "That is a significant level of adoption.

"Many marketers perceive mobile as a tool for browsing and price comparison, but this statistic makes a strong case for the reality that shoppers are a step ahead of retailers when it comes to the mobile purchase" he said. "Add to this that three-fourths of shoppers are likely to visit a store as a result of an SMS promotion or other mobile alert, and it becomes even clearer that marketers cannot afford to forgo mobile communication."

Final take

Brielle Jaekel is editorial assistant at Mobile Commerce Daily