

COLUMNS

Maximizing mobile behind-the-scenes in time for the holidays

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By A LUXURY DAILY COLUMNIST

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As mobile shopping continues to increase, retailers cannot ignore their mobile sites and applications when prepping for the 2015 holiday shopping season.

Fifty-two percent of customers said they were less likely to engage with a business after a bad mobile experience, according to a study by Google, making this time critical not only for the holiday shopping numbers, but also for creating good impressions that will lead to long-term customers.

The user experience is the most important part of a mobile transaction, but careful behind-the-scenes prep is also required to ensure a positive outcome for every customer.

Marketers and IT departments need to work together to develop a clear strategy, ensure the platform can deliver consistent high-quality experiences and invest in promoting a mobile channel all before the holiday rush begins.

Pick the right platforms

Ensure that your chosen ecommerce application platform and Web site design are able to facilitate a high-quality mobile experience. Keep in mind that there is even a big difference between the smartphone experience and the tablet experience.

Marketers and IT teams should make the decision together to choose ecommerce solutions that are tailored for their customers' desires and needs.

Do you need an option that will allow your customers to choose multiple customization options, or is a one-click-to-purchase option better suited for your product?

Mobile shopping needs are applicable to almost any customer, but different customers will want different things from their experience.

Be consistent across channels

Develop a clear strategy that will help ensure a consistent experience across all devices and platforms.

Customers who are fans of the brand want to see what they love about that brand when they use mobile, the same

way as when they are shopping on a desktop or in-store.

If a site does not work well on smartphones, customers can feel like the company does not care about their business and is not trying to make itself accessible to customers everywhere.

For example, for a company that focuses on active, on-the-go customers, mobile is going to be even more important.

Leveraging a hybrid site for responsive Web design that optimizes and streamlines displays across any device creates that continuity.

Customers can get the same experience on their phone as their desktop, and it keeps them coming back, not only during the holidays, but year-round.

Prepare for the surge

During the busiest time of the year, your mobile ecommerce site going down will inevitably lead to major losses in sale and revenue.

When scaling for a high-traffic event such as Black Friday and Cyber Monday, you can improve performance by adding resources to the stack powering the application, or by asking the resources you have to do less.

Figure out well ahead of time the better solution for you, and then execute a Black Friday dry run. Whatever strategy you choose, take the time to spin up a testing environment, throw load testing at it and see how it holds up.

It is also important to offload tasks during Black Friday as much as possible.

Likely the easiest task to offload is to put static content onto a content delivery network, or CDN.

Placing static assets onto a CDN allows them to load more quickly and we all know that potential customers will bounce quickly out of a site if slow loading frustrates them.

Ecommerce sites with beautiful, high-res pictures are very effective, but those images must be delivered quickly to customers.

INVEST SUFFICIENTLY in promoting mobile as a channel, so users know mobile is available to them.

Being omnichannel allows customers to easily shop when, where and how they want, but make sure your customers know that mobile is another way they can connect with you.

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