

COLUMNS

Transforming mobile advertising into mobile customer care

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Rob Malcolm is senior vice president of corporate development at Mblox

By A LUXURY DAILY COLUMNIST

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Businesses continue to focus on multi- or cross-channel marketing efforts, particularly mobile and digital, for justifiable reasons, since this is how they will communicate with customers in the near future.

EMarketer predicts that 60.7 percent of mobile phone users will use the mobile Internet by 2018. However, without a strategic plan for employing digital or mobile, businesses will never be able to build healthy and sustainable relationships with customers.

Brand stand

Customers who have positive experiences with a brand often become long-term brand advocates. Meaning, these customer relationships are critical to the bottom line of the business. But how can brands accomplish this?

By providing true customer engagement that blends technology, marketing and customer service to create a singular experience for the customer. This starts by understanding how, when and why consumers want to connect with your brand.

Surprisingly, brands have not been paying attention.

A recent survey by us found that 73 percent of brands think they care for consumers, while only 36 percent of consumers agree, highlighting a major, yet easily avoidable, problem in the consumer/brand relationship.

Mobile marketing and a well-developed customer engagement plan can help marketers close this care gap.

Brands that implement a customer-focused marketing plan that goes well beyond sending generic push marketing messages are the ones that will solve this issue. And there is opportunity for brands to be some of the first to develop these mobile strategy plans.

According to "Predictions 2015: Most Brands will Underinvest in Mobile," by Thomas Husson and Julie A. Ask, only 16 percent to 17 percent of companies have a mobile strategy. According to Forrester, only 7 percent have an organization in place that supports mobile growth.

Brands can start to refocus their marketing efforts to be more customer-focused with a few simple steps:

Stop thinking about mobile as a message channel. Mobile is a hub where multiple communication channels meet including text, voice, email, apps and mobile-enabled Web sites.

To effectively care for customers, businesses should look at how to use each messaging channel to reach the consumer on the device and how to leverage the best choice for the device. This includes determining how the message comes across and appropriate calls to action.

For example, SMS is best for quick communication such as location-based coupons or mobile alerts, but email is best for longer content including newsletters.

Determine how and when customers want to be reached. According to our survey, most consumers want to be contacted by businesses via SMS or email.

It is critical that businesses find out how, when and why their customers want to be contacted and then develop a strategy that provides guidelines for that communication.

Knowing whether your customer prefers package tracking information via SMS or email is as easy as asking the question during the ordering process.

Make the experience personal for the user. Knowing that it is not effective to constantly inundate consumers with ads that are not relevant to them, mobile gives advertisers a chance to reach consumers in a way that feels personalized just for them.

In fact, our survey confirmed that 86 percent of consumers are open to connecting with brands through their mobile devices, yet only 58 percent of brands are communicating with consumers through mobile.

Mobile can directly enhance consumer satisfaction and is an easy way for brands to reach consumers for advertising.

We have more data than ever before on consumer behavior and preferences, and that data is critical to a successful mobile ad strategy.

MOBILE OFFERS the perfect opportunity to blend practices to reach consumers at the time, in the place and using the manner they prefer whether it's through email, phone calls, texts or applications.

Consumers are constantly on-the-go, interacting with multiple screens as they go about their day.

Mobile phones are the one constant always in consumers' hands, pockets and purses.

The brands that can implement a customer-focused marketing strategy that provides the best experience are going to win.

Rob Malcolm is senior vice president of corporate development at [Mblox](#), a London-based provider of A2P text messaging. Reach him at rob.malcolm@mblox.com.