

COLUMNS

## Driving mobile commerce 2011 holiday success from the lessons of 2010

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By [Gary Lombardo](#)

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Mobile commerce hit its stride during the 2010 holiday season, with some retailers driving up to 7 percent online revenue through mobile devices.

EBay reported a 134 percent increase in mobile sales in the United States during the 2010 holiday season, resulting in almost \$100 million in mobile commerce sales, and “highly connected” mobile power users accounted for an estimated \$127 billion in consumer spending during the 2010 holiday season, according to a recent study published by IDC.

Even with these impressive numbers, many retailers didn’t pursue a mobile commerce strategy in time for the holiday season, and many of those who did, didn’t realize the full potential of their investments in mobile commerce.

So, what steps can online retailers take to make sure they have an effective mobile commerce strategy for the 2011 holiday season?

Some suggestions include:

- Invest in a mobile-optimized site. Mobile commerce starts with the mobile Web, and if you haven’t optimized your Web site for mobile devices, you are not only missing an opportunity to drive online sales, but also the opportunity to grow competitively as a result

as the nascent mobile commerce market matures.

- Adapt to what your consumers want in a mobile experience. Having a mobile site is ultimately about making it easier for consumers to transact, whether it be online or in-store.

Understanding how consumers use your mobile site and making sure it reflects that experience will determine whether they transact or not.

According to a recent survey by eMarketer, the top activities consumers performed using their smartphones in the 2010 holiday season included: finding a store location, research specific products, browse products, price compare products, look for discounted deals, and check product availability, among other activities.

Are these the same preferences of your consumer? If so, does your mobile website reflect these capabilities? If not, consider incorporating them in time for the 2011 holiday season.

- Do something different. The retailers who experienced success in the 2010 holiday season with their mobile strategy were those who did something different to make mobile shopping more attractive to consumers and to make their brand stand out, such as Steve Madden's use of gift cards and mobile coupons and JC Penny's Christmas themed promotional offer featuring badges and coupons.

Mobile commerce is a fantastic area of innovation and a great place for retailers to "WOW" consumers, raise awareness and further differentiation of your brand.

The time is now to start thinking about what you could do differently in mobile commerce in the 2011 holiday season.

- Expand to other devices. While smartphones should remain the primary focus, especially as their penetration rate among total mobile device usage rises, retailers should consider other devices part of their strategy.

Feature phone (or WAP) enabled sites will continue to be used by the majority of mobile users, so reaching that audience will remain important.

Also, with the explosion of tabular devices recently (in addition to the iPad), optimizing a tabular-specific site will become important, especially for retailers who have a lot of web traffic coming from tabular devices and consumers that tend to shop from on their sofa, coffee shop or other places where tabular devices are likely to be used.

If you didn't think beyond the smartphone in 2010 holiday season, do so in time for the 2011 holiday season.

Ready your consumer base. While consumer adoption of mobile commerce is rising rapidly, many consumers still do not associate shopping with their phone.

Even fewer probably realize that your brand offers a mobile shopping channel.

Promote mobile shopping early in 2011 so that maximum awareness and adoption can be

achieved in time for the holiday season.

Promote it online with your traditional website (Target is a good example of this), social media (Twitter, Facebook page), online ads, as well as in-store, such as in-store signs and training associates.

The 2011 holiday season will be the biggest yet for mobile online sales. Getting ready to capitalize on the opportunity should start today, beginning with the lessons learned from the 2010 holiday season.

*Gary Lombardo manages mobile commerce marketing for Demandware, Burlington, MA. Reach him [atglombardo@demandware.com](mailto:atglombardo@demandware.com).*

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