

MOBILE

Google exec: Leverage omnichannel touch points to drive app awareness

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Google advises brands to promote their apps

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NEW YORK A Google executive at Mobile Marketer's Mobile FirstLook: Strategy 2016 advised marketers to implement transformational experiences into their applications and use a mix of paid, search, social and organic channels to drive installs.

During the "Google: So You Have Developed a Mobile App. Now What?" session, the executive doled out advice for brands seeking to roll out their first mobile app or revamp a current one. While the primary factor of app development hinges on creating something of value to the user, marketers should also ensure they use a slew of available advertising channels to ramp up app awareness and grab the attention of more consumers.

"Apps don't exist in silos," said Jonathan Pelosi, head of industry-mobile apps for the Americas at [Google](#). "You've got a mobile site; leverage it to promote your app."

"Don't spend a penny until you need to. Leverage every organic channel you have at first."

Mobile FirstLook: Strategy 2016 on Jan. 20 was organized by Mobile Marketer.

Smart marketing

Mr. Pelosi named five core principles needed to build a best-in-class app: it must serve, delight, simplify, perform and attract. Brands must be smart in how they approach the app development process, as taking a made-for-desktop initiative and transferring it to mobile will not suffice.

Marketers must add real value and utility to their mobile experiences. For example, several banks recently hit a home run in rolling out mobile capture capabilities, which enable users to snap a photo of a check and automatically deposit it into their accounts.

Another example of a transformational experience is OpenTable's app. Customers dining out at a restaurant may pay the bill with a few taps of their finger and leave at their leisure, eliminating the need to flag down a server and wait for the check to arrive.



Mr. Pelosi presents at Mobile FirstLook: Strategy 2016

"Establish KPIs up front: things that matter to you that have definitive value," Mr. Pelosi said. "And of course, have an attribution method in place."

It should also be as simple as possible for the user to get to the action they most care about.

Once the app's core use has been determined, attention should turn to promotion techniques. One brand excelling in this respect is Expedia. Consumers who call Expedia's customer service line with an inquiry will have their representative ask them if they have downloaded the brand's app yet.

Additionally, Expedia entices mobile app users with three times the rewards points if they book on mobile rather than desktop.

"These are all touch points to drive awareness of the mobile app," Mr. Pelosi said.

Marketers should also focus on maintaining lifetime value rather than driving initial app installs. Incentives such as welcome offers or in-store deals are effective in fueling consumers to download apps, but not enough to promote long-term usage.

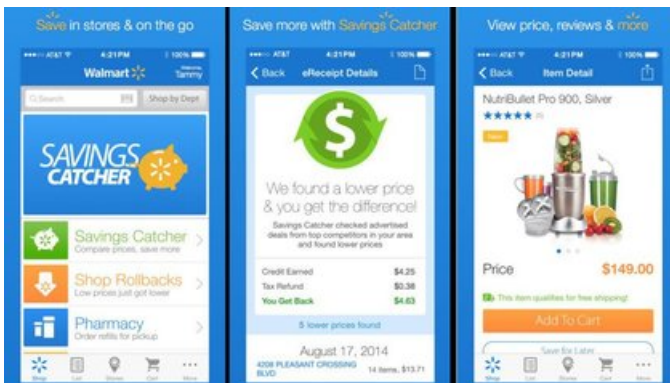
"Make sure you're optimizing your marketing spend toward lifetime value," Mr. Pelosi said.

Tapping into advertising channels

Brands must spread their wings when it comes to promoting apps on digital platforms. Considering paid channels, Google search, Gmail and YouTube should be of paramount importance.

"People are spending time on other channels like social; you want to make sure you're there as well," Mr. Pelosi said.

Setting up an advertising campaign on Google's AdWords platform will help reach users on mobile display, search, social and email. Other app promotion options include leveraging engaging video advertisements and lookalike audience targeting, as well as building re-marketing lists.



Walmart engaged in TV-supported promotion for the Savings Catcher app last year

Urgency on mobile also tends to strike a chord with consumers, making it a desirable component for several brands, including flash sale retailer Gilt.

Mobile typically tends to follow the 80/20 rule, which dictates that 20 percent of app users will fuel 80 percent of value. Therefore, offering app-only features could be another way to provide exclusivity and cater to the most loyal customers.

Companies that are unsure of the effectiveness of their current offerings should place themselves in their customers' mindsets and test out the app personally.

"If you're using your app and not finding a reason to go back to it, you're not passing the litmus test," Mr. Pelosi said.

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