

COLUMNS

Effective mobile engagement and why marketers are not applying it

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When did you last check your smartphone? Minutes ago? Seconds ago? According to eMarketer, the amount of time people spend on mobile devices is growing 11 times faster than time spent on desktops.

This trend provides marketers with an unprecedented opportunity. At no time in history have we had more direct and constant communications vehicles with which to reach consumers.

However, success in this new era of marketing is squarely reliant on not simply a connection with consumers, but on a meaningful one. I call this connection context marketing and it has the potential to revolutionize the consumer experience by delivering mobile moments that are relevant to the context that they are in right now.

Right context

Marketers who underestimate the value of context marketing in the mobile world do so at their own peril.

Consider these statistics. According to research, 60 percent of consumers feel their expectations for a good mobile experience are not being met.

What is more, 93 percent say that they would take action as a result of those unmet expectations, including buying from another brand, requesting compensation for their unmet expectations, or even never again purchasing from the brand.

On the upside, when they have a positive mobile experience, 75 percent report that it increases their loyalty to a brand.

It is clear that marketers have much to gain by improving their ability to deliver mobile experiences that better meet consumer expectations. So what is preventing them from doing so?

The reality is that most marketers are stymied by the challenges inherent in managing, creating and investing in context-driven campaigns designed for a mobile-centric world. Those challenges include:

Experience gap

For many marketers, there is a gap between what they would like to do with mobile and what they actually are doing.

There is a lot of chatter around being customer-focused, but most marketers continue to focus on the device or on

creating a more responsive, adaptive device experience.

What is needed to bridge the experience gap is a real understanding of every customer in the context of how they interact with marketers, both now and in the past.

Brands and advertisers need to understand exactly where consumers are and what they are doing, as well as what device they are using. That is difficult to do without integrated data from every customer touch point data that for most businesses today resides in isolated silos.

Mobile only one piece of customer experience

The reality is that during the course of their individual journeys as customers, consumers interact with companies in many ways and through many channels.

To completely understand customers and the paths that they take on their journeys with a brand, marketers need a more thorough view of every customer interaction across every channel.

Marketing should move well beyond generic Web site banner ads and progress to engaging in conversations with customers at every possible turn: store kiosks, mobile applications and ecommerce sites, to name just a few.

Success is hard to measure

Multichannel customer journeys create a big attribution problem for mobile marketers.

Customers may use mobile devices to research products or enhance their experience, but if they buy on desktops or in-store, how do marketers attribute the role played by mobile in making the sale?

And if they do not understand the impact that mobile is having, how can they optimize the experience to increase conversions in whatever channel customers choose?

Mobile piles on complexity

As customer behavior has changed, a mobile functionality arms race has emerged, leading many companies to deploy numerous point solutions often managed by completely different teams to try and keep up.

The race has compounded the complexity in marketing and IT departments and made it ever more difficult to get the single customer view that is essential in delivering the best experiences.

Inherent in the race to keep abreast of change is the need to understand where and when to place your bets on new technologies. Today's sure thing could quickly become tomorrow's also-ran.

Secret to context marketing: What is needed to crack the code

The challenges inherent in developing, delivering and optimizing context-driven campaigns are clear, but how can marketers surmount those challenges? How can they make meaningful connections with consumers and drive mobile engagement?

The next two articles in this series will provide insights into how to make the transition from mobile laggard to mobile leader, and will outline specific steps needed to develop and deliver highly effective context marketing campaigns, including how to:

Put customers at the heart of the strategy

Apply a smart approach to data

Understand the mobile context

Measure and optimize campaigns

Strategically use responsive and adaptive mobile design

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