

COLUMNS

## Stay on top of mobile search habits to benefit from Google's "Micro-Moments"

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How can you improve mobile experiences for your customers? Lots of people are trying to answer that question. But there is a strong voice in the conversation that has a direct influence over the experiences that customers have online.

That voice belongs to Google.

That latest from the search engine giant is all about "micro-moments." The basic theory is that the "consumer journey [is] fragmented into hundreds of micro-moments."

Look at the math that provides the brunt of Google's argument.

Most people check their phones 150 times per day. Combine that with another common statistic, which says people spend 177 minutes on their phones every day, and a quick calculation shows that these mobile users average one minute and 10 seconds in each moment.

People are spending a lot of time on their phones, but only in short bursts of activity.

What does that mean for businesses? According to Google, businesses must adapt to changing mobile search habits in three ways: be there, be useful and be quick.

In the moment

People are using search in different ways than they have in the past thanks to the convenience and omnipresence of mobile connected devices.

Chances are the last thing you searched for on your phone related to something happening in that exact moment, such as:

A nearby coffee shop on your morning commute

Lyrics to a song playing on the radio

What time the store opens so you can run an errand

The price of a product on Amazon before you buy it in a store

Mobile devices change the way consumers use search because it gives you access to answers at your fingertips in seconds.

Which means that advertisers need to use search in different ways than they have in the past in order to adapt to these trends.

Changing decisions

When people search on a mobile device, they are usually focused only on what they need or want right now.

Google's guide to micro-moments suggests that "[p]eople are more loyal to their need in the moment than to any particular brand."

This is great news for your business. It means that if you show up with the answers they need when they need them, customers may be persuaded to buy from you.

But it also means that if you do not show up, your competition will be there to snatch the opportunity and poach your customer.

The key to successful marketing comes in knowing when to show up.

One way to show up is with an evolving strategy for search engine optimization, in which you could easily spend a small fortune trying to appear every time a customer is searching online.

This is where you might consider having a professional marketer, with proven skill and expertise in search and paid advertising, make recommendations on how to invest your time and money, and get a bigger return on investment.

By showing up consistently, you can change someone's mind in a moment of need. But you also have to be there for your own customers. Reaching them once is not good enough.

The moment you turn off your defenses by turning off your marketing is the moment you give your competition permission to steal your customers.

How do you do it?

Step one is showing up. Like Google suggests, you need to "Be There" in these moments.

Step two is building a relationship.

Despite the possibility of changing minds in the moment of need, having a genuine relationship will give your customers a reason to come back.

Which means it is not only about the sale.

Consumers use mobile search in the moment they want to make a purchase. But they also use it when they want to learn something, find something, or do something.

Showing up during these times, as well as when they are ready to buy, is what builds and strengthens your relationship.

Each time your business shows up builds your brand, creates top of mind awareness, and solidifies your position as a resource for your customer.

Step three is delivering.

Understand what your customers want so you can provide that, whether it is an informative article or a product or service you offer.

If you show up consistently and repeatedly with the quality information they are looking for, you become a valuable resource for that customer.

DELIVERING CONSISTENTLY requires an understanding of your customer, content marketing and search engine practices that can take years to develop.

By showing up, building a relationship and delivering the information they need, your business can build invaluable connections with your customers.

When it is time to buy, they may not be so easily swayed by a competitor. They may bypass search entirely and come straight to you for the answer.

Build a genuine relationship with your customer in every interaction and each "micro-moment."

As the relationship grows, your business will be the first place they turn when they have a want or need.

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