

COLUMNS

What is wrong with your mobile loyalty program and how to fix it?

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Congratulations. You have entered the modern age by moving your loyalty program from a keychain tag to a mobile application. But let me guess, app adoption is not taking off the way you had hoped?

Why? Because somewhere in that moment of truth between what the customer expects and what your app offers, the ball gets dropped. The experience breaks down and fails to deliver. How can this be fixed?

There are two essential ways to elevate the customer experience. First, by creating frictionless experiences, making it easier and more satisfying for the consumer to do business with you. Next, by creating immersive experiences that make the consumer feel special, appreciated and cared for.

The problem is that most brands think of mobile as separate channel, and not a new complete way to interact with consumers. It represents an entirely different experience, a reimagined way to reach your customer, and it needs to be properly designed and optimized. And therein lies the challenge

Mobile loyalty cannot be siloed from your other channels

A recent Forrester Research report made clear that "too many marketers still have a narrow view of mobile as a sub-digital' medium and channel." And "as a result, too few brands are going the extra mile to transform the entire mobile customer experience."

Absolutely. Mobile is way more than another channel. Mobile is becoming the entire enriched customer experience where they receive and deliver emails, enact social engagement, browse and shop, write reviews, take advantage of in-the-moment offers and complete entire transactions.

Your mobile app must be integrated with other customer outreach including email, Web, social and in-store interactions, for example. If it is not, you will start to lose opportunities and customers because your offers are not in sync and the brand experience breaks down.

For example, you start to send offers via email that do not reflect customer preferences captured by the mobile app and vice versa. That can be annoying to a customer who is inundated with irrelevant offers from hosts of different brands.

Mobile apps present an entirely new way to interact in context. Do not waste your data

Speaking of customer preferences, how can you hope to keep pace with your customer if you do not know them or cannot anticipate new ways to interact based on them?

The data you have about the customer and their location or their current situation is extremely valuable. Let us say they are at a sports event and your app could signal which entrance or food line is less congested? How cool would that be?

You should also be using your data to send location-based recommendations when a shopper is in-store.

For example, if they are buying a hammer at your home improvement store, you might want to recommend those nails that are on sale.

These are not intrusive or annoying ways to interact with your customers they are valuable messages that can move the sales needle either that same day, or eventually, through earned customer loyalty.

The mobile loyalty experience cannot be taxing or confusing

A major problem for many mobile app loyalty programs revolves around design and usability.

Not only does it need to be visually appealing to the target audience, but it needs to be simple to use, with clear navigation, readability and easily digestible content. Its function and benefits must be obvious the customer needs to know what is in it for them to engage.

Loyalty is earned and every interaction with the customer has an impact.

Speed and agility matter

Speed and agility form the underpinning of the mobile mindset. You need to do better than chase and hope to keep pace with your customers.

Your speed to incorporate new ideas, offerings and delightful experiences for your customers via your mobile loyalty app are as important as your ability to quickly adapt to market dynamics, customer behavior and technology innovation.

If you are prepared to adapt with speed and scalability from design and development to content creation, engagement and real-time analytics then you are equipped for your empowered consumers and each customer moment of truth.

OVERALL, YOU WANT to reimagine relationships, innovate both the transaction and engagement experiences, and demonstrate your loyalty to your customers in every interaction that you have with them.

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