

COLUMNS

## Combining affinity with proximity is key to location-based marketing

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*Upside to location*

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Location-based marketing has long been called mobile's great promise. Indeed, there is a unique opportunity to reach individual mobile users in context and the so-called moment, leading to transformative brand-customer relationships that produce sales and additional positive business outcomes.

But getting someone's attention at the right time and in the right place hinges on the ability to accurately identify an exact location, and to send relevant messages that will be seen as valuable. Slip up and you literally will miss the target and the opportunity.

The challenge sounds manageable given how far we have come with technology. And we as marketers certainly do not need to worry about scale, given the fact that nearly everyone owns and religiously carries a mobile phone.

Long and short of it

Arguably, every business' customers and prospects are but an easy communication away.

However, multiple technologies and sources offer various data about location, including lat/long, IP address, user-stated location and device-level information, among others. This, in fact, is not a good thing since many are riddled with inaccuracy, even fraud.

Plus, while location plays a role in providing context for behavior, it is only one piece of the puzzle.

Proximity without affinity produces a flood of false positives. Just because someone is near you does not mean that she wants what you are selling.

Location data is frequently not correlated with a user's psychographic profile. So software hidden in applications and triggered by this data drives inappropriate ads to mobile devices.

Unsuspecting consumers who load these apps become confused and angered when invasive ads hijack their phones without permission. It is frustrating and creepy.

We have to get it right. There is just too much value that comes to the mobile device owner in the way of information

and offers, and for the marketer from the mobile device owner in the way of a more monetizable exchange.

We saw that this summer.

On the go

The phenomenon that is Pokemon Go has location as one of its core elements.

The free-to-play, location-based augmented reality game, which was initially released in selected countries in July, uses a mobile device's GPS capability to locate, capture, battle and train virtual creatures called Pokmon who appear on the screen as if they were in the same real-world location as the player.

At its peak in just the first month, it had a reported 45 million daily users. And while game play diminished significantly by the end of August, Pokemon Go provided more proof that mobile owners in big numbers would be willing to share their location in exchange for what tens of millions perceived as real value.

It certainly will not be easy for others to replicate the success Pokemon Go could feed on a beloved brand that has been around for two decades. But other elements serve as teaching tools clearly there are lessons learned here.

Specifically, those behind the app were wise to encourage social media sharing and referrals, offer up rewards, and include the ability to use the camera, GPS and mapping features.

What can and should be duplicated is the building of an app that can be both personalized and flexible, enabling users to play on their own terms.

Precisely

Traditional media still has its place, but we have clearly entered a time when permission, personalization, affinity and more individualized communications are the means to reach our audiences.

Marketing objectives have remained consistent driving awareness, engagement, sales and loyalty.

In the mobile era, there is an unprecedented opportunity to reach customers and prospects wherever they are and virtually during whatever they are doing.

According to Forrester Research, \$1 trillion of total offline retail sales are influenced by mobile.

Location-based marketing is a key element of the new paradigm since 84 percent of consumers use mobile to help shop while in a store, per Google.

But the scenario only works if it is precise and delivers relevance.

Errors are common like the sending of an offer to someone who is allergic to your product. The result is a consumer who is bothered, confused and likely to seek out a better partner.

DO NOT figuratively pick through someone's trash. Instead, ask what they want and how they want it delivered.

Combining affinity with proximity is the key to presenting the right message at the appropriate time in the proper way.

Now is exactly when we as marketers need to get it right. Our mobile consumers expect, and even demand, nothing less.



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