

Q&A

Contextualized and individualized shopper experience key to mobile campaigns

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Josh Todd is chief marketing officer of Localytics

By STAFF REPORTS

We are not breaking the news here when we say that smartphones have officially moved beyond being just "phones."

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Smartphones have changed the way we shop, learn, locate, watch, connect and produce. Heck, they even offer the promise of finding your future soul mate with a simple swipe to the right.

We have officially crossed the line into living in a mobile world.

Tap dance

Last November, Google made a statement that it will start ranking its search listings based on mobile content.

EMarketer also recently reported that mobile Internet usage has surpassed desktop and tablet by nearly 72 percent.

While this mobile-centric world has, and is, creating an endless amount of new opportunity for brands and retailers alike, it also brings significant challenges.

How do you make your application stand out amongst the nearly 6 million apps now available for download?

What kind of experiences must be provided to the consumer to engage them and keep them coming back?

How can you turn an app into a platform that brands and retailers will pay to be on because they are confident that they will see the return on ad spend they can measure in real dollars?

A couple of executives from tech companies can help answer these questions: ShopAdvisor a contextualized intelligence data platform that enables brands, retailers and agencies to power drive-to-store marketing campaigns; and Localytics a mobile engagement platform that gives companies the insights and tools they need to improve their mobile app acquisition, engagement and retention efforts.

The respective heads of marketing for each organization teamed up to answer some questions that will help marketers re-think their current marketing campaign strategy and ultimately, find their ace in the mobile hole.

*Josh Todd, chief marketing officer, **Localytics**:*

1. What is the biggest challenge for retailers when it comes to mobile?

Many retailers are struggling to keep up with their customers as they become increasingly mobile. They have yet to differentiate the mobile shopping experience from its desktop predecessor and properly exploit the unique features and functionalities of the mobile channel, like location marketing and push messaging.

One reason for this struggle is that retailers are not fundamentally well organized to attack mobile.

Mobile enables a bidirectional, interactive, dynamic experience with users, unlike the one-way, one-directional, static delivery of content on the Web.

Too many retailers still view mobile as an extension of the Web and create unimpressive apps that are more likely to push users away than keep them.

We do know that mobile can be a powerful catalyst for their business if they focus on where it fits into their customer's buying cycle. It has to be integrated and should not be siloed or seen as a disconnected experience.

Often times it is the same customer, so they need to be sure that they are listening to behavior signals their customers are sending and then focus in on how their apps can add value. That may be through reducing friction, alerting them to special deals, or keeping them up to date on the latest product lines and trends.

2. How can retailers improve?

Retailers must make an effort to go deeper in their understanding of their users.

Retailers need to use everything they know about the user. If you're a pharmacy, for example, you should be able to tell your customer when their prescription is ready and when to pick it up.

If you're a fashion retailer, let them know the things they are interested in and keep their customers ahead of the trends. Maybe it's also a sale in proximity to where they already are.

Retailers must also make sure they are sharing data between channels consistently.

If a retailer is sending push messages to try to get a customer to convert, but they don't know whether the person has gotten an email in the past day, or worse yet, if that person has already purchased the item in store, the retailer is going to double up on marketing outreach and potentially turn the customer off.

Success for retailers means going beyond what's already been done and thinking beyond the device.

If you're a large or successful brand, you likely have piles of customer data just waiting to be harnessed. With that, retailers can become more insightful, driving improved mobile engagement and more individualized experiences that target to the right user at the right time with the right content.

3. What are individualized experiences and how are they different than personalized ones?

Individualized messages, which are messages that take into account a user's actions within the app as well as if the user fits into a particular audience based on their profile attributes, are very effective at creating a more user-specific experience.

Individualization takes messages into new territory beyond personalization, which was more focused on using basic user information like their first name or language preference.

By individualizing the mobile experience, marketers are breaking down the technological barrier and making a strong connection with their users. The competition is only getting tougher and the retailers that thrive will be the ones who effectively drive engagement on their users terms.

Bill McLaughlin, senior vice president of sales and marketing, ShopAdvisor:

1. What do marketers tend to overlook before the launch of mobile-focused campaigns, such as proximity marketing campaigns?

We hear it a million times preparation is the key to success.

Ben Franklin said it best, "Failing to plan is planning to fail." Unfortunately, so much focus is put on how campaigns will execute in flight, that we often fail to do sufficient pre-campaign analysis to ensure that a campaign has the foundation in place to be successful.

The New England Patriots' phenomenal success [in the Super Bowl] can be largely attributed to their incredible planning and attention to every detail. They leave nothing to chance in examining their competitor's tendencies in

specific situations. The players always talk about how much their coaching staff prepares them for every possibility and what they can expect. The same holds true for rolling out a campaign.



Bill McLaughlin is senior vice president of sales and marketing at ShopAdvisor

A great looking, well-designed campaign is no guarantee for success.

Great pre-campaign planning and analysis can tell a marketer a lot, from where their products are in-stock to which platforms for example, desktop search product finder, mobile app, social their consumers are coming from, to where to buy and run ads, so they can have a game-plan for a successful outcome.

All of the strategy in the world can fail if you direct shoppers from their smartphones into stores that do not have your product. Not only do you waste advertising dollars, but you potentially lose a sale and, worse yet, a customer's trust.

2. Speaking of ad dollars, digital advertising campaigns can cost an arm and a leg. How can marketers save or make their ad dollars go far?

In the end, we all want the best return on investment possible, right? Sadly, what we often see though, is thousands of dollars wasted on mobile banner ads, custom messaging and promo offers that are sending consumers to retail locations that either have the wrong product in-stock, or worse, no product in-stock at all.

Where the products are available, how much they cost and how they specifically relate to the consumer are just a few necessary components to a cost-effective, successful campaign.

A pre-campaign analysis to target where your products are at the onset of your campaign is crucial, but being able to track the inventory of your products and redirect your ads in accordance to throughout the duration of your campaign is key.

By knowing where your products are, you will have a clearer return on ad spend and an even better shot at retaining long-term customers.

3. What is one of the most critical components in a drive-to-store marketing campaign?

With the endless amount of avenues to target consumers today, contextualization has become increasingly vital, especially on mobile.

Thanks to mobile app technology, we are now able to pinpoint movements of shoppers through specific data points, which enable us to customize messaging and analyze the best times to push that messaging.

However, as technology and data get smarter, so will your perpetually connected consumer. They will expect better messaging, more relevant notifications and shopping experiences that are convenient for them.

A shopper's habits, brand preferences, location and even price sensitivity can be very fluid.

External factors such as weather, time of day, seasonality, commuting timeframes and much more affect shopper attitudes.

Your goal as a marketer is to pay attention to their behavior and be at the forefront of their shopping pursuits.

Having the tools to analyze shopper data, craft a perfectly tailored message, and then deliver it at a time that matters the most, will ultimately set you apart from your competitors and put you in front of the shoppers who actually have a need and desire for your product.

*Josh Todd is chief marketing officer of **Localytics**, Boston. Reach him at jtodd@localytics.com.*

Bill McLaughlin is senior vice president of sales and marketing at [ShopAdvisor](#), Boston. Reach him at bill@shopadvisor.com.

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