

COLUMNS

3 ways to leverage consumers' affection for their smartphones

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There is no denying the fact that we are all a little obsessed with the various machines in our lives, and those laptops, smartphones, desktops, televisions and organizers that support our daily grind have a huge influence on our behavior.

Our growing dependency on digital devices is slowly programming us to interact in certain manners. Digital marketing depends on this, and for mobile marketers, it is essential to understand how consumers relate to their smartphones to execute effective mobile campaigns.

Mobile top

Consider your own relationship with your mobile device you probably carry it with you at all times and have a tendency to feel incomplete without it.

Given the fact that mobile surpassed desktop in global Internet usage last year, it should come as no surprise that consumers tend to keep their smartphones on them at all times. Because of this, I like to think of the smartphone as a blanket, or a lover that we take with us everywhere.

Gone are the days when a phone was just a phone today's consumer relies on his or her mobile device for far more than making calls and sending texts.

From keeping track of our schedules to monitoring our health to waking us up every morning, we depend on our smartphones to get us through the day.

The relationship that consumers form with their mobile device is vastly different from that which they form with their laptops and televisions, which is why an ad or promotion that performs well on desktop or through traditional broadcast can easily fall flat on the small screen.

Here are a few things to keep in mind when developing and executing a mobile campaign:

1. Relevancy and timing are key

Distributing ads that are not only unobtrusive, but also highly relevant, is critical when it comes to mobile.

Remember, consumers consider their smartphones to be like a lover that knows them very intimately, so they have far less tolerance for blatant, unconnected ads on mobile than they would on other devices.

As such, sending irrelevant messages at inopportune times is a quick way to lose the attention of a mobile audience, and once you lose that attention it can be nearly impossible to get it back.

To avoid this, it is imperative to leverage as much user data as possible when targeting.

Everything from the operating system that powers her device to the geographic location in which she lives tells you something about that consumer.

The more you know about your audience, the better you can tailor your messaging to ensure that it is not only appropriate for that particular person and in that particular mobile environment, but also distributed at an optimal time.

2. Be social

Nearly 80 percent of all social media time is now spent on mobile, so marketers should absolutely be thinking mobile-first when developing their social strategies.

The fact that so much time spent on social media is now done via mobile further demonstrates the intimate nature of consumers' relationships with their smartphones.

We flock to social media platforms to check in with friends and family and express ourselves both of which are personal activities so it makes sense that we would opt to engage with social media most frequently from the device we hold closest to us.

The personal nature of social media is why we consistently see fiery political posts and heartwarming human-interest stories go viral.

Because of this, marketers should use social media as an avenue for distributing messages designed to elicit an emotional response, knowing that most consumers will be engaging with social media through their smartphones, where they are most comfortable showing emotion.

3. Push the envelope

The screen of a consumer's mobile device is not exposed to the people around him or her the way the screen of a laptop or television typically is. This, combined with the intimate relationship we form with our smartphones makes mobile the perfect medium to experiment with bolder, more risqu marketing.

For example, a lingerie retailer promoting a Valentine's Day collection with a style quiz dubbed "V-Day: What kind of sexy are you?" will likely see higher engagement rates on mobile than on desktop especially if promotions are distributed during work hours.

This is because most shoppers would not want the people around them seeing them take a lingerie style quiz, which is far more likely to occur if they are using a laptop or desktop computer than it would be on mobile.

ENGAGING CONSUMERS via mobile is certainly a difficult task.

But if you remember that consumers have deeply personal relationships with their smartphones and keep the aforementioned points in mind, you will be off to a great start.

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