

COLUMNS

5 lessons to apply when launching a mobile site or campaign

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During the two years I spent in mobile and having launched and marketed a successful mobile service at a former company, I have learned the hard way what I should have done and what I should have avoided.

I realize that there were some things I could have done that would have improved the market acceptance of the mobile Web site and mobile application service I helped my former company launch.

I have summarized what I have learned into five lessons which can be applied to any mobile marketer:

Lesson #1: Users have high expectations: At minimum, you should aim to meet these lofty expectations.

A recent Harris survey revealed that 80 percent of adults who conducted a mobile transaction in the past year said that they expect the experience to be better than or equal to in-store.

What is more, 85 percent expect the mobile experience to be better than or equal to the experience provided through the desktop Web.

Lesson #2: Know your user base: Before you launch a campaign or promotion, it helps to understand more than just your users' device types, browser versions and operating systems. You can get this information from any mobile analytics package.

However, your mobile campaign will be much more successful if you are able to also assess if users were able to respond to the campaign from their mobile devices. If they were not, what issues did they run into and, most important of all, why?

Lesson #3: Users are not forgiving, nor do they forget: Despite the time, energy and resources that most companies dedicate to their mobile site or apps, errors still occur. And users are not forgiving.

Harris survey data shows that 63 percent of users are unlikely to buy from the same company via other purchase channels – online, in-store – if they encounter a mobile transaction problem. And 78 percent of users who encounter problems when completing mobile transactions share those experiences with others.

Do you really want to receive user feedback by reading negative reviews about your mobile app or site?

Lesson #4: Monitor your mobile commerce site and all campaigns: Launching your mobile site or app is certainly worth celebrating, but it is also when the real work begins.

Now that your site is in the hands of real users, it is critical to identify key performance indicators and constantly monitor your mobile site or app to see how it is performing against them.

The same goes for any mobile campaign, be it via SMS, MMS, mobile site or mobile app.

You want to be able to measure the campaign regardless of whether it originated on your mobile Web site or through a text message and ultimately resulted in a purchase through your desktop Web site or physical store.

Thus, it is critical that you have an integrated view across all of your channels or you may be making future decisions based on partial information.

Lesson #5: The cycle to make changes to mobile apps is long – and painful: Those running a marketing campaign know that reducing the amount of time to fix an issue so that the campaign can be re-run is critical to its success.

Know that most analytical packages, mobile or not, require you to tag each and every thing you want to test.

If you guess wrong or do not tag something and you find an issue, you have to tag it, beg the engineering department to include it with the next release, hope it does not break other functionality, submit it to the mobile app store, wait for approval, and then measure the results.

Hopefully, you guessed right because if you did not, be prepared to wait a few more weeks or months to repeat the process again.

THE MOBILE MARKET continues to grow and anyone involved in it can testify as to what an exciting place it can be.

However, both the risks and rewards are high, so it is best to be aware of potentials pitfalls so that your mobile marketing efforts can be even more successful.

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