

COLUMNS

How Verizon's new data pricing scheme affects mobile marketers

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Luxury Daily

Starting June 28, new Verizon customers and those upgrading their phones will be introduced to Verizon Wireless' new "Share Everything" pricing structure.

For new accounts with at least one smartphone, users can select different tiers of "Shared Data" capacities. This news has many Verizon customers, especially those who signed up for unlimited data plans, worried about how these new plans will affect their previous contract.

Sharing something

There are three main services that users pay to use when they sign up for mobile phone plans – the ability to make and receive phone calls, the ability to send and receive text messages and the ability to access the Internet, also known as the data plan.

The new pricing plans from Verizon do not affect the ability to make and receive phone calls or text messages. The new plans are centralized around accessing data. The more times you access the Web through your phone, the more data you use.

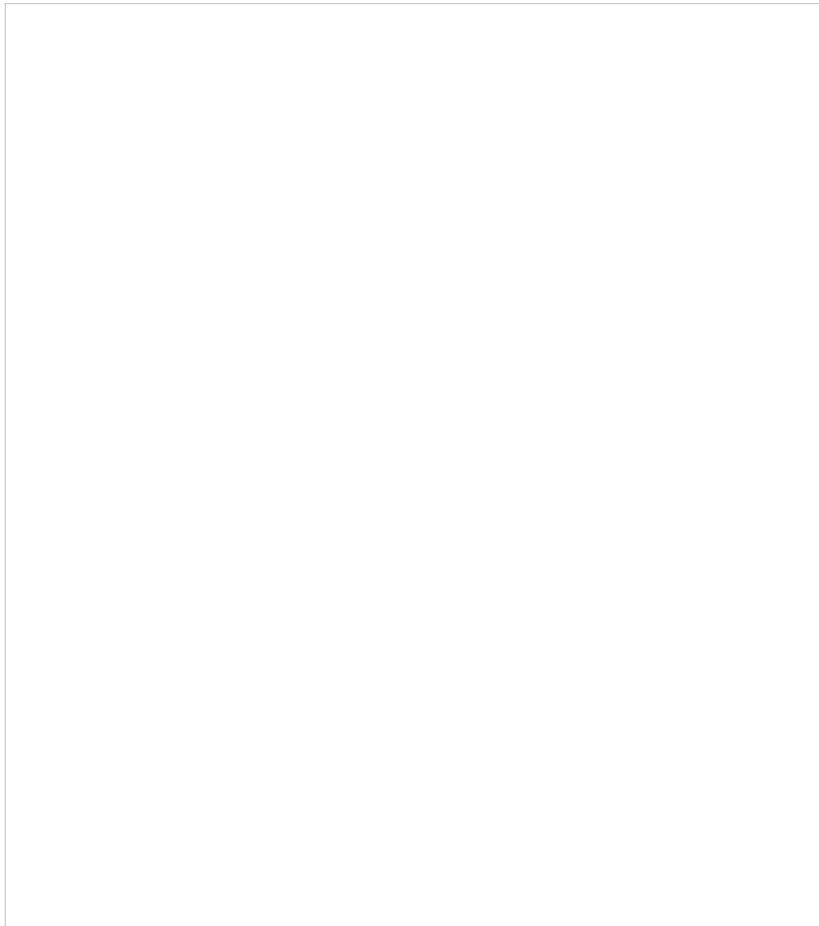
So how will the new data plans – Verizon may have been the first, but it will not be the last – affect mobile marketers?

To start, mobile marketers need to take a look at their existing mobile marketing programs and determine how many of them depend on data to thrive.

In this article, we break down the leading mobile marketing channels to determine which ones are affected by the new data rates and which ones continue to drive success even as carrier pricing plans change.

Mobile marketing commonly comprises the following channels:

- Applications
- QR/2D scanned codes
- Mobile Web (mobile Web sites, mobile landing pages)
- SMS (mobile messaging with text-only and links to streaming media)
- MMS (mobile messaging featuring fully-branded, rich media content and links)



As you can see from the above chart, every mobile marketing program will be affected somehow by the new data plan.

This means that the consumer will be paying, through data usage, to participate in the brand's marketing experience. And all mobile marketers must now take data usage into consideration when building marketing programs that deliver the best customer experience possible.

Of course, while the below overview reflects the effect of data plans for the average user, it is crucial to remember that many consumers will simply opt to pay for higher data

access, allowing them to participate in strong mobile marketing programs with no financial effect.

Apps? Negatively affected

While apps offer a plethora of ways for brands to engage and re-engage with a customer through an interactive experience, access to download and install an app requires data usage and often times interfacing with the app itself requires data usage or Wi-Fi connectivity.

New data plans and overage fees means consumers will be more conscious of their data usage and more conservative in their use of data heavy apps such as streaming media apps for movies, television shows and music.

QR/2D scanned codes? Negatively affected

Similar to apps, QR and 2D bar codes contain content that can only be accessed when connected to a network, either Wi-Fi or data.

There are many barriers to using a QR code, but in regards to Verizon's newest pricing structure, subscribers will have to think twice before scanning QR code since there is no way to know what type of high bandwidth media might be loaded on their phone.

QR codes typically provide the user quick links to a mobile Web site, engaging video, images or provide the option to download contact information.

All of these actions consume data and the most often used type of content – streaming mobile Web video – consumes the largest amounts of data of all.

Mobile Web? Negatively affected

Mobile Web is often the target destination behind many mobile campaigns using direct mobile Web links, SMS/MMS with a link or QR codes.

Since mobile Web can only be accessed through data usage and Wi-Fi, this is definitely a marketing strategy that all marketers need to restructure to feature less data-heavy elements while effectively presenting a completely branded, easy-to-use, customer experience.

SMS messaging? Positively affected

The new plans on Verizon offer unlimited messaging, no matter which plan you choose, along with unlimited voice minutes.

This is good news for SMS message marketers since their customers will not have to worry about incurring fees when opting-in to text marketing programs.

However, since many marketers round out text-limited SMS messaging with links to mobile Web sites and streaming content such as videos and audio, they will have to adjust their SMS marketing programs to provide an effective customer-first marketing program for their customers without gobbling up their data usage.

MMS messaging? Positively affected

The data plan changes represented good news for those marketers using media rich MMS messaging to engage and activate their customers.

Like SMS, data plan users can receive MMS messages for free thanks to unlimited messaging plans.

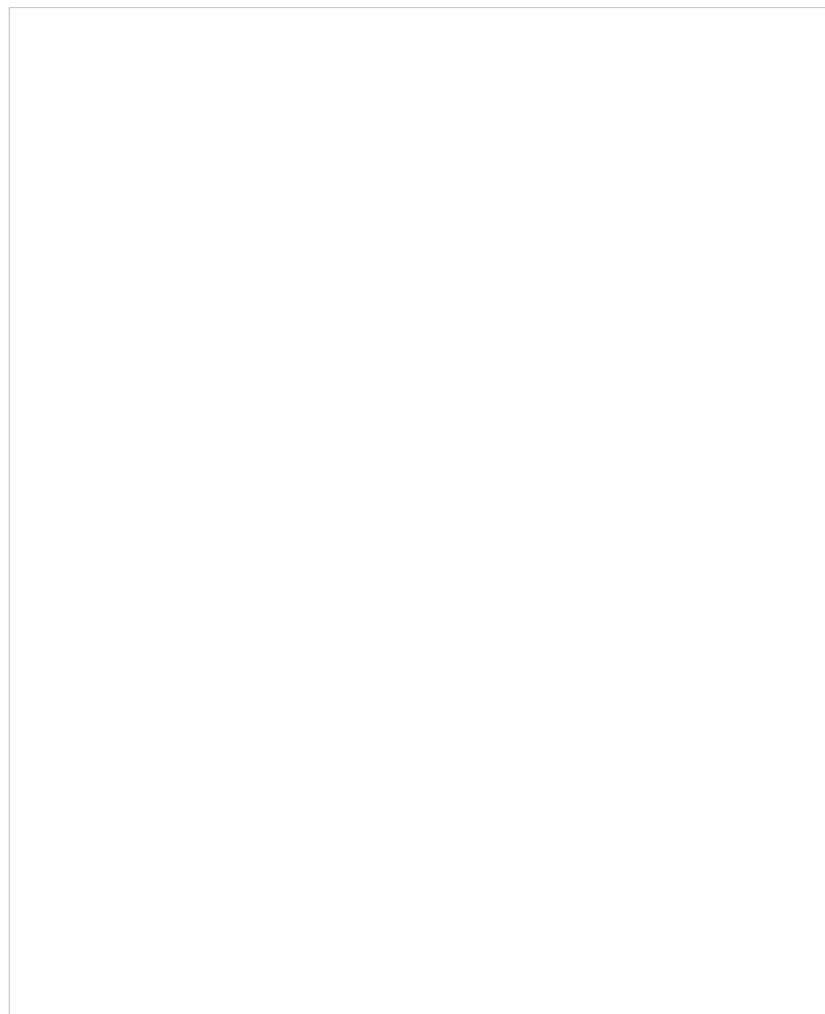
MMS allows mobile marketers to round out their marketing messages with rich media content such as high-quality video, pictures including flipbooks, audio and thousands of characters of text all via messaging.

None of the rich media attached in an MMS message counts against their data usage.

This means marketers can still provide a fully branded customer experience without ever affecting their customer's data usage charges. Of course, if a link is included in the message itself, data usage does occur.

Today's mobile marketers are already customer-centric, creating customized marketing experiences designed to be accessed on a phone or tablet device that is much more personal to their customer than a computer.

As carriers change the access to data, marketers must understand the effect each carrier's new data plans has on their customer base so they can continue to design experiences that are no less creative, using less data.



Please [click here](#) to access the Verizon Share Everything plan details.

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