

COLUMNS

## Connecting the 5 pillars of mobile marketing in 2014

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By A LUXURY DAILY COLUMNIST

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Pundits, reporters, analysts and industry experts are busy laying claim to 2013. The industry is in agreement that 2013 has been a banner year for mobile. This sentiment is not very different from 2012. That too was a banner year for mobile. Come to think of it, every year has been a banner year for mobile.

In a recent Forbes article, Cheryl Conner erected what she believes are the five pillars of success for 2014:

1. A unique, branded mobile application
2. Redeemable deals
3. Event notification
4. Loyalty
5. Customer referrals

These five priorities should serve as a call to action for all companies interested in joining the mobile conversation and transforming their brand into something that today's

savvy consumers will engage with, on-the-go, and at their leisure.

#### Apt points

It is no secret that mobile apps are the best entry point into the mobile space.

Mobile Web sites are passive, as Ms. Conner points out, but more importantly, mobile apps are distillations of the core value and functionality that users expect and rely on.

What is most interesting about this list is not the astute set of priorities that every company should strive to achieve. It is the missing ingredient: the tools for optimizing and enabling a successful mobile strategy in 2014, namely, mobile analytics.

Creating a mobile app is the easy part. The task is only limited by your imagination and your pocket book.

Pillars 2-5 are more complicated and require you to do a bit of soul searching and engage in a fair bit of research.

Once apps are live and users have downloaded the app, the task of marketing to mobile app users can become a bit nebulous.

The uninitiated start with bullhorn style, broadcast messaging where one-size-fits-all. It is not unusual to find abysmal conversion rates given that less than half of all individuals do not opt in for push notifications, and even fewer actually enable geo-location.

Many marketers will become despondent that their investment into a mobile app was for naught. But the key is not to stop here.

You have to redouble your efforts and connect the dots by applying the rigor and careful analytic processes that have been leveraged with great success in email and direct marketing for years.

Offers are no good unless you know something about your customers.

A/B split testing to anonymous audiences helps distill who is most likely to click on an offer, and what that offer should look like. First-level split testing gives you a big population. The key is to retarget users based on activity, recency and response.

Even if you do not know who these users are because they are not logging into an app, you can still determine when they logged in and which messages were the most successful in driving engagement.

Build on an initial split test and test smaller segments with refined messages.

Event notification is fantastic. Our mobile phones exist to connect us with the staccato pace of today's world. Notifications have to be tempered with a carefully constructed cadence that respects the user's time zone, their preferred language and a careful frequency. Mobile alert fatigue must be avoided at all costs.

The fundamental flaw that every company makes is assuming that they are the only notification that matters, or that they have to send more notifications to stay relevant.

Once again we can look to A/B split testing to determine the best windows for engaging notifications and then tuning them down to the hour. Start with morning versus evening and refine your efforts from there.

Loyalty grows when you have enabled a communication strategy that respects your customer's preferences by gauging their responsiveness and not over-messaging them.

Loyalty programs, both formal in the sense of rewards and informal in the sense of engagement, are achievable if you do not assume that one-size-fits-all. Analytics enable you to understand the habits of an audience that is mostly anonymous.

Once you have a loyal user base, you will naturally engender customer referrals.

We are social creatures and the words social and mobile have a natural affinity: they go together like Peanut Butter and Jelly.

THE FIVE PILLARS of success are great ideas and achievable goals in 2014, but only through the careful rigor and application of analytic-based marketing approaches.

You are already doing it for your other digital channels – use the tools that will let you do it in the mobile world.

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