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Mobile for nonprofits: Ten tips to compete in a corporate world

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By **R.J. Talyor**

As mobile now accounts for one out of every three digital media consumption minutes, the challenge for nonprofits is not just to “go mobile,” but to connect with people in new ways on mobile devices.

While the kneejerk reaction to the mobile revolution may be simply to create a mobile application and begin sending marketing text messages, a mobile-first strategy goes much further.

Whether your short-term goals are app downloads, QR code scans or mobile pledges, the following ten tips will help you build long term engagement that will cement an important spot on your subscriber’s mobile device:

- Create a bond. Building your brand starts with creating an emotional bond with your subscribers. Share stories that illustrate how each subscriber’s support is making a difference.
- Be present. Make sure your organization can be easily found on a mobile device and that the opt-in for your mobile program is as simplified as possible. Responsive Web sites,

search engine optimization, mobile apps and mobile messages such as SMS and push each boost mobile presence.

- Maintain consumer attention. Provide consumers with helpful, useful content that applies to their daily lives and speaks to their philanthropic nature.
- Align your call to action (CTA). Your CTA should align with your mission, no matter the channel or message type. Based on your goals or campaigns, encourage consumers to donate, take action and get involved.
- Do not overwhelm. Take notification, alerts and messages into account to plan all consumer communications to avoid overwhelming your subscriber.
- Pay attention to data. Analyze and leverage consumer data – either observed or explicitly stated – to provide subscribers with the most relevant, tailored, 1:1 experience possible.
- Promote mobile on other channels. Use communications across all channels to promote your mobile program. For example:
 - o *In the inbox.* Create a targeted email campaign to supporters viewing on a mobile device. Offer an incentive to download your app or sign up for your SMS program.
 - o *On your Web site.* Add a pop-up to your Web site when viewed on a mobile device that promotes your app. Ask supporters to text in to get an SMS message with an easy link to your app.
 - o *On social networks.* Make sure your social pages are optimized for mobile viewing, and use them to promote your mobile program.
 - o *On a smartphone.* If you already have SMS permission, send an outbound message with an incentive and a direct link to the download page in the app store.
 - o *In the mail.* Take advantage of traditional communication methods by including mobile calls-to-action on a donation receipt, event notice, newsletter or direct mail piece.
- Context is key. Be smart about when you send messages, so your communications are relevant. For instance, if you send an email about an upcoming event and it goes unopened, follow up via SMS a week later.
- Take a cue from engagement. Look at the programs that customers are engaging with be it SMS, mobile apps or otherwise to see areas of improvement. Modify your mobile program accordingly.
- Mind their Zzzs. SMS and push notifications are typically accompanied by a sound, so make sure you are not interrupting a consumer's sleep. Consider allowing customers to set quiet times, or simply avoid sending after 9 p.m. or before 11 a.m., adjusting for time zones.

YOUR MOBILE PROGRAM is the perfect solution for supporters, donors and volunteers to receive on-the-go information about your services, events and needs.

The goal is to understand each individual, their needs and interests and how they relate to your mission.

Once you have an understanding of each individual customer, you can build a meaningful relationship that is relevant and will ensure that you earn a spot in their coveted mobile device.

Make sure you are always reminding subscribers of your message and why your cause is import.

Creating an emotional bond and showing a need for your organization will help build captivated, motivated audiences.

*R.J. Talyor is vice president of mobile products at **ExactTarget**, Indianapolis, IN. Reach him at rtalyor@exacttarget.com.*

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