

COLUMNS

## How mobile helps cut costs

March 14, 2014



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Where do time management, reduced stress levels and sustainability all come together in one place? I say on your mobile device.

Is there anything more precious to us than our time? Would we not all love a simple solution to reduce our daily stress levels? How about an effortless way to feel good about doing more good for our environment? Turning to mobile can do all that.

### Laboring to save time

Take deliveries, for example. Does it not make sense to use mobile as a tool to save gas, manage time, promote efficiency and keep customers happy?

Why I ask in this day and age with all this technology is because most deliveries still require a significant block of customers' time as a "window of wait."

A 2011 survey conducted by TOA Technologies revealed that 58 percent of adults used a sick day or vacation day to wait at home for a service or a delivery.

Among the survey participants, more than 25 percent reported to have lost wages while waiting.

TOA Technologies estimated that the cost of waiting for each individual was nearly \$250 annually in the United States, costing Americans \$37.7 billion in lost productivity.

Why not leverage mobile technology to reduce miles traveled, driver idle wait time and save fuel? All while improving customer satisfaction by demonstrating care for customers' personal time and a concern for our environment.

Companies today are investing in software that helps determine the most efficient routes, taking into account factors such as speed limits and stop times. How about sharing the positive effects of that software on the customer's mobile device?

Proper communication with customers via mobile outreach would not only reduce their stress from the uncertainty, but also decrease the cost of lost productivity.

For businesses, mobile can reduce the hours on the road, save fuel, minimize labor charges and limit the poison darts of a negative social media onslaught.

Fifty-five percent of respondents from the TOA Technologies study stated that they would complain, either to friends or on social networks, if their deliveries or service technicians were late.

On the other hand, 70 percent said that they would recommend a company solely based on punctuality. A simple notification via text message to customers to help them plan their day accordingly goes a long way in improving customer satisfaction and earning more business.

### What's brewing

Going mobile also lets companies move towards sustainable solutions while keeping costs low.

When the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) in Orange County, CA, drastically reduced the quantity of printed schedules for bus riders, customer calls to the customer information center (CIC) increased to approximately 18,000 per week. At \$2 per call, this cost the OCTA nearly \$144,000 per month.

To reduce the amount of calls, the OCTA implemented a texting program in which a text message to the agency only cost 10 cents.

Within one year, the program reduced incoming calls to the CIC by 40 percent and saved the OCTA more than \$350,000.

Converting to SMS outreach reduced the OCTA's cost of reducing printed schedules and allowed the agency to better allocate its budget. This was not only an eco-friendly solution, but also an efficiency play.

In healthcare, we know that mobile saves on restocking charges or getting expensive pharmacist and registered nurses off the phones.

Mobile also cuts patient communication costs.

At Kaiser Permanente, patient no-show cost is \$150 per appointment. By using SMS appointment reminders,

Kaiser saw text appointment reminders yield cost savings of over \$275,000 at just a single

clinic.

If all healthcare providers used mobile as a tool to communicate with patients, hospitals and clinics could significantly decrease their costs and spend the money on improving their technology or hiring better doctors, nurses and pharmacists instead.

Taking advantage of mobile could help improve the quality of hospitals and clinics, and generate positive externalities to society.

For many of us, everyday starts with the aroma of fresh brewed coffee. For me personally, the thought of starting the day without it scares me into wanting to pull the covers back over my head and stay in bed.

COMPANIES NEED to wake up and smell mobile the same way.

Mobile needs to be front of mind as part of a low-cost sustainable solution to increase customer satisfaction, improve marketers' operational efficiencies and care for our environment.

Some of the brands to which I am most loyal are those that demonstrate to me that they respect and value my time as much I do myself.

Companies need to put using mobile as an efficiency play and a sustainable solution in the forefront of their corporate social responsibility.

Disregard my time, stress me out and pay no mind to our environment, and you disrespect me.

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