

COLUMNS

## Where mobile fits in the marketing funnel sandwich

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Believe it or not, even with all the news on the rise of mobile, it is still struggling to fit into the already overcrowded marketing landscape.

The two bookends on each side of mobile remain the huge multi-billion-dollar television industry and paid search that targets the impulse buyer.

All the channels used to create a dialogue with customers have their own place in the marketing funnel. Companies need to convince their Web people to dedicate some real estate to promote the mobile marketing channel. This is a tall task, since many are very protective of their real estate.

For an increasing number of companies, marketing teams are making headway in taking advantage of the immediacy that mobile brings to the marketing big picture.

With the shift to mobile where the majority of search traffic is happening, companies are migrating their efforts to building the mobile medium.

Mobile driving sales

The core of mobile's power is in its ability to drive sales in the context of the marketing funnel.

One of the key strategies to reach customers when they are within the marketing funnel is via the power of text messaging and push notifications.

The higher the engagement with your audience, the more likely those messages will be read and acted upon, ultimately leading to a conversion.

As more businesses are moving to mobile and refining the mobile user experience, the more customers are embracing it. Its immediacy and simplicity are key reasons for this embrace.

The marketing funnel is where the magic happens. It is within the confines of this funnel that consumers flow from one step to another, hopefully strolling along seamlessly between the different levels of your app and reaching your call to action. This could be your orange download button, blue registration form, or your perfectly placed and colored buy now button.

Conversion optimization for the desktop was huge in 2013 and this area is sort of new in mobile. We will only see this practice pick up steam this year on mobile as more businesses with a mobile presence will be seeking to optimize the mobile user experience.

As mobile becomes more of a factor in the marketing funnel, we will see a rise in the use of visual mobile analytics to refine and optimize the user experience via the use of touch heatmapping, user recordings and other features.

### Marketing funnel puzzle

Your users may be individuals with their own needs and desires, but for the most part are just like many other users. They navigate between mobile and desktop constantly, sometimes using both at the same time in second-screen scenarios.

Marketers need to present users with messages that are relevant on alternate devices at different times to encourage them to move closer to the end of the funnel and, ultimately, to conversion.

However, the real question remains: Where does mobile fit in your marketing funnel?

The place for mobile in the marketing funnel has been toyed with by many, and not many have succeeded.

From what we have seen, the marketing shift with mobile as opposed to the desktop has to be through engaging with the consumer at every step, rather than just barraging them with messages.

Remember, as a mobile marketer, you are faced with mobile UX and UI constraints and have only a few seconds to create a captive and engaged user. It is for these reasons that much emphasis has to be put on measuring and refining the mobile user experience and

gaining a solid understanding of why users are dropping out of your funnel.

Consumers can no longer be looked at as just numbers, but rather as people. Yes. People.

These folks have a list of products they prefer and individual needs and intent. These needs and their intent change from hour to hour. Day to day. Timing and context here is paramount in communicating with them. You must understand them using such information as their location and perhaps by reaching out to them based on that, using another medium.

Information collected on mobile such as email addresses would allow you to send contextual messages via email for one. If you collect a phone number on your Web site, you can use that to send text messages to users, provided they opt-in.

On the dot

Marketers need to connect the dots between all the marketing channels out there. They need to leverage the data that is available to them on social media, blogs and other channels. Messages must remain consistent across all these channels and tailored to any specific audiences you may have.

The most success that retailers have had is by targeting the customer in the middle of the funnel.

The auto dealer's lot is a perfect example. Most people in a lot are interested in buying. However, they have a number of models in mind.

If they are in a lot looking at Toyota Camrys, they might be interested in a Honda or Kia as well. Finding out where these people go and what their needs and intent are is crucial to perhaps pulling them your way using a specific medium and selling them what you have to offer.

By targeting users in the middle of the funnel, you are taking advantage of where they are in the decision process. It is a lot more progressed than at the funnel's opening.

Mobile is perfect for this as it is much more an impulsive channel. The closer the user is to making a decision, the greater the chances that your mobile message will have them act upon impulse.

MOBILE IS OF great importance to your brand and if you do it the right way, you will not risk losing the customers who are using your application and are typically dropping out mid-funnel.

The only way to do this is by analyzing, refining and smoothing out the friction points in the process. This is a constant task that will be well worth your while.

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