

7 steps to mobile your way out of recession

Originally Posted April 13, 2009

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We marketers should all be looking to the future, not just the flavor of the day or jumping on the social media bandwagon just because everyone else is.

The mobile channel has, over the past 18 months, made such incredible leaps and bounds in the U.S. advertising scene that chief marketing officers across all verticals are no longer casting it aside with a big, fat question mark.

Mobile is also becoming an essential tool for nonprofits to advance their cause and raise vital funds, just as mobile has become an importance device for healthcare providers to disseminate medical alerts and information and play a role in emergency services.

And finally, marketers have realized the constantly evolving potential of mobile as a multichannel player and revenue generator.

Frugal, sensible and fast

It is immediate and fast. And with only 160 characters, SMS mobile marketing is the epitome of frugality and sensibility. There is simply no space or time for anything else.

Mobile literally puts your brand into your customer's pocket and in doing so, puts them in yours.

So how to tap into what I see as becoming one of the most important customer retention and marketing tools for our post-recession era?

Here's how to mobile your way through the rest of this recession in these seven easy steps.

7. Read between the lines. There's an opportunity here

Out of sight is out of mind. So if you disappear off the radar by cutting back on

your marketing budget while your competitor is ramping up theirs - you are out of luck.

Viewed from the other side of that table, here is an opportunity to kick your competition's butt.

Historically, ROI on advertising spending increases during a recession. So why not turn your dollars toward mobile? You will get more bang for your buck.

SMS, WAP mobile sites, mobile banner ad campaigns - you can get these up and running from the low thousands.

6. Think beyond the discount

Although consumers are being lured by discounts and sales to dish out their hard earned money, there are other ways to sell your product.

Discounts may make the initial sale but it won't necessarily keep your customers around for the long haul - and we all know that it costs less to make a sale to an existing customer than find a new one.

Creating an emotional connection between your brand and consumers will ensure that they come back begging for more. And a great way to create an emotional connection is via mobile. Tada!

When consumers grant their permission to reach them on that oh-so-personal device, they are doing so because they want your stuff, and in the knowledge they will be receiving something worthwhile from you, their brand of choice. So don't mess it up.

5. What? Huh? Damnit, I can't hear you!

Just because mobile doesn't involve high-tech graphics or television spots (yet) mobile campaigns aren't just about texting consumers with a discount code and sitting back, waiting for the dollars to roll in. Creativity is important. Make your brand stand out by offering content beyond just discounts.

But while creativity is important, clarity is even more important. When you only

have 140 characters to make your point, it is important that you do make your point heard loud and clear.

4. Rinse and repeat, or in this case, just repeat

Here's a spot quiz for you - how many marketing messages does it take to get a response from a consumer? Studies say that it takes five. So five TV ads? Five radio spots? Five glossy magazine ads? Expensive!

Not so with mobile. And when mobile is combined with other marketing channels, it is a recipe for marketing success - ensuring that your consumers are being engaged and involved in a conversation with your brand, and at a price point that is much more effective and bottom-line friendly.

3. It's cliché, but yes ... location, location, location

Imagine this ... you are walking by your favorite store and a text message arrives on your mobile offering a discount from any purchase made today - at that very same store. Too good to pass up? I bet not.

That's one aspect of the future of mobile. Location-based mobile marketing offers businesses the ability to hyper-target those customers that are the closest geographically (and therefore, most likely to buy).

What does this mean for you? It means that your ROI for each marketing dollar spent on location-based mobile marketing is much higher than when your audience isn't physically close enough to your location to take advantage of your services.

2. What's the 411?

When consumers are on the go and there is no computer to be found, most will turn to their mobile phone to find out what they need to know about your company, products or services.

So developing a mobile version of your company's Web site makes very good business sense.

Even better? Allow your customers to buy on the go by integrating an mobile commerce system into your site.

1. Metrics matter

Last but definitely not least, don't ignore the bottom line. Always keep in mind that your mobile marketing initiatives are the same as any other marketing campaign -the message is important but if it doesn't result in sales, then it isn't successful.

Evaluate completely and often to make sure that your messaging is clear, that it is working and that it is reaching the people that you need to reach most. It is not an experiment.

You see, if we stop blaming the economy, and get back to thinking creatively while focusing our business energies towards the future, we can invent new and efficient advertising models that will be both memorable and capable of driving transactions. We have the opportunity to position our industry for many years of growth.

It is time for straight talk, meaningful communication and focusing on rebuilding the diminished trust consumers have lost, one mobile phone at a time.