

ARTICLE

The Mobile Imperative!

How mobile is critical to delivering a true omni-channel approach to customer engagement

By: Ron Gerace & Jeff Knechtel, Exchange Solutions

In today's ever-connected world, you can hardly argue that mobile is quickly becoming the most important of all retail channels. After all, the vast majority of consumers carry their mobile device with them all day, every day – what better way to engage with your customers where and when they want, than when they are already engaged on their mobile device.

Most of your customers likely still choose to engage with your brand through multiple channels; they may look up a product while on their mobile phone, research it further from a home computer or tablet, visit your brick & mortar store to evaluate the product in person and then make the purchase online.

Omni-channel shoppers spend between 50 and 300 percent more than single channel shoppers¹ - if this isn't reason enough to invest in building a seamless omni-channel experience, consider that it also effectively allows a company to collect customer interaction data across multiple touchpoints in order to build a 360 degree view of each customer. This deeper understanding can allow for highly personalized customer experiences and offers. These offers and experiences can then be delivered across all customer touchpoints with the same holistic view. When you layer in the competitive edge of advanced customer engagement offered seamlessly across all channels, you can deepen the

customer relationship, build the engagement ecosystem and drive ROI.

But we need to reiterate here that the mobile device specifically presents an opportunity to reach customers at a critical moment with relevant, personalized offers that may give them that extra push to buy. In fact, surveyed marketing leaders ranked “exclusive deals” as the #1 most effective mobile campaign type.²

It's clear that utilizing in-store mobile capabilities is critical to your success. Whether you're an apparel retailer trying to drive higher conversions, a mass merchant wanting to improve cross-category penetration or a grocer looking to increase average basket size, the use of relevant, individualized offers is a proven method that can drive all these KPIs and ultimately increase your profitability. »



¹ IBM 2017 Customer Experience Index Study
² 2016 State of Marketing Report, Salesforce Research



Delivering individualized offers via mobile to known customers

With 98% growth in mobile app usage from 2015 to 2016³, it's clear that the mobile channel is the standard for interacting with users and is an essential component of a program

that has an in-store component. And for retailers with an existing loyalty program, you have a built in advantage... you know your customer! To engage with users via the mobile channel you have three key options: a mobile web app, a native mobile app (which converts 200-300% higher than mobile sites⁴), and/or a wallet component. All three of these approaches allow users to identify themselves, engage with you and view their uniquely targeted offers online.

These technologies don't necessarily compete with each other, but provide alternative methods of accessing the same functionality. Different users will have developed different smartphone habits, so it's a good idea to provide more than one method. With any of these technologies, selecting an offer can initiate a mobile ecommerce experience or also render an image of a one or two dimensional barcode which can then be scanned by a point-of-sale system, allowing online offers to be used in-store.



Delivering individualized offers via mobile to unknown customers

But how can you form an accurate 360 degree view of your customer (and thus create relevant, personalized offers) if the customer is unknown? The challenge many retail analytics

professionals face is that many customers prefer to shop and browse products through multiple channels, without explicitly identifying themselves (i.e. they don't log in). The use of cookies is commonly used to at least identify a unique user (even if their identity remains unknown), but today, as we discussed above, a user often will use more than one device to engage with your brand, which increases the challenge.

“Stitching up all the data from the different touchpoints with the consumer is the biggest single challenge a multichannel retailer faces today.”

Digital Director, Topman
Source: www.retailgazette.co.uk July 2017

The state-of-the-art solution in marketing technology attempts to ascribe each device to a single user when the opportunity presents itself, effectively “binding” a single customer’s multiple online IDs to form a single view of that customer.

For example, if a user clicks a marketing email launching a browser session, the device that the browser session started can be ascribed to the user’s “keychain of devices”. Likewise, if a user logs into the store even once with a separate device (perhaps to make a final purchase) that device can be associated with the user as well.

Over time, as more devices are ascribed to the correct user, a full view of the customer’s actions can be developed, and offer relevancy can be increased, which leads to good things for both the consumer and the marketer. »



³ 2016 State of Marketing Report, Salesforce Research
⁴ “Why Mobile Is the Solution to an Omni-Channel World,” Nitin Mangtani, Forbes Contributor, www.forbes.com

When evaluating new customer engagement and personalization technologies, Retail Marketers need to look for a provider that has omni-channel capabilities and can track & amalgamate an individual user's devices and "bind" their IDs together to form a single view of that customer.

In this way, **personalized offers can be presented to anonymous customers like they would be to known customers**, either by presenting them and having the customer select their offer, or by pushing the offers on mobile.

The number of mobile phone users worldwide is projected to reach 5 billion by 2019. It is imperative that retailers are able to provide an exceptional mobile experience, not only to complement other channels, but to enhance their ability to engage with their customers in what is quickly becoming the first touchpoint their customers use to engage with their brand.

In this day and age, when online shopping seems to dominate the retail landscape, it is the mobile device that can enhance the in-store experience and drive more and more consumers away from their desks and back to the store. What better way to provide a relevant, personalized experience than through the device that each of your customers is holding in the palm of their hands. ■

For More Information

To find out how Exchange Solutions can help you improve your conversion rates, maximize customer lifetime value and reduce churn, all while increasing profitability, please contact:

Boston
781.693.0300

Toronto
416.646.7000

www.exchangesolutions.com



Email
info@exchangesolutions.com



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