Mobile Marketer ™
THE NEWS LEADER IN MOBILE MARKETING, MEDIA AND COMMERCE
www.MobileMarketer.com

A Classic Guide
February 2011
$495

Classic Guide to
Mobile Creative

CONTENTS

PAGE

3 INTRODUCTION
Form matters as much as function in mobile
By Giselle Tsirulnik

4 ADVERTISING
Creative guidelines for mobile Web banner ads
By Brendon Kraham

6 ADVERTISING
5 steps to creating an HTML5 mobile ad campaign
By Tom Limongello

8 ADVERTISING
Key to success for a mobile rich media ad campaign
By Alex Linde

10 ADVERTISING
Designing engaging mobile rich media ads in-app
By Theo Skpe

12 APPLICATIONS
Mobile app development for retailers
By Dan Lowden

15 APPLICATIONS
How to build a branded mobile app
By Clint H. Parr

17 BAR CODES
How to create a mobile bar code program
By Laura Marriott

19 COUPONS
Keys to mobile coupon success
By Anthony Iacovone

21 COUPONS
How to create an effective mobile coupon program
By Meaghan Schaefer

23 MESSAGING
Evoking an emotional response with MMS
By James Citron

PAGE

25 MESSAGING
Top 10 attributes of a successful SMS campaign
By Tim Miller

27 MESSAGING
Steps for optimizing SMS campaigns
By Alexander Gregori

29 SEARCH
What every brand needs to know for mobile SEM
By Dennis Glavin

31 WEB SITE DEVELOPMENT
Basic rules of mobile Web development
By Steve Timpson

34 VIDEO
Use mobile video advertising for branding
By Ujjal Kohli

36 VIDEO
Harnessing the power of mobile video ads
By Chhavi Upadhyay

Form matters as much as function in mobile

We have reached the point where all brands and agencies know why they should implement mobile into the multichannel mix. Now it is time to cover the how-to aspect.

Google's Android and Apple's iPhone currently activate a total 450,000 phones a day, so the opportunity is there. But how do we target these consumers with, say, a mobile application? How do we create and design an experience that is sure to sell our product and our brand, while at the same time keeping in mind the user experience?

I think that brands such as Target, JCPenney, Ford Motor Co., Steve Madden and Starbucks demonstrated the opportunities that mobile provides as a marketing medium. Brands and agencies are finally convinced.

But there are so many different options: SMS, MMS, Web sites, applications, mobile video ads, banner ads, HTML5 and rich media. And the elements of design are as unique to each channel as the goals are to each marketer.

Mobile Marketer commissioned how-to articles from some of the smartest brains in mobile advertising and marketing. Their help on this how-to guide is meant to aid marketers in shaping and designing mobile creative that promises a mobile advertising and marketing effective program.

Whether it is SMS, MMS, video or HTML5 you are interested in, expect to learn a lot from the articles within this guide.

In 2010, mobile established itself as must-have and 2011 will be the year of mass implementation. This document is meant to serve as a guide to the design process.

The fact that all of the mobile channels are digital means marketers have a lot of flexibility with respect to the frequency and timing of campaigns and other types of communications.

Because of this, an alternative view of multichannel marketing will be emerging quickly in 2011 – cross-channel marketing. This guide can help with your cross-channel marketing. Most of the authors have not only talked about the specific design elements of a particular mobile channel, but also explained how to pair and complement one effort with another mobile initiative.

Thank you to all contributors of Mobile Marketer's first Classic Guide to Mobile Creative. Thank-you to editorial assistant Rimma Kats for her art and layout direction. Also, thank-you to editor in chief Mickey Alam Khan for thinking of this grand idea and having me implement it.

Please read this guide cover to cover and share it with colleagues and friends. Thank you for your continued support and good luck this year.

Giselle Tsirulnik
Senior Editor

Mickey Alam Khan
Editor in Chief
mickey@napean.com

Dan Butcher
Associate Editor
dan@mobilemarketer.com

Jodie Solomon
Director, Ad Sales
ads@mobilemarketer.com

401 Broadway, Suite 1408
New York, NY 10013
Tel: 212-334-6305
Fax: 212-334-6339
Email: news@mobilemarketer.com
Website: www.MobileMarketer.com

Giselle Tsirulnik
Senior Editor
giselle@mobilemarketer.com

Rimma Kats
Editorial Assistant
rimma@mobilemarketer.com

For newsletter subscriptions:
http://www.mobilemarketer.com/newsletter.php

For advertising:
http://www.mobilemarketer.com/cms/general/1.html

For reprints:
reprints@mobilemarketer.com

Mobile Marketer covers news and analysis of mobile marketing, media and commerce. The Napean franchise comprises Mobile Marketer, MobileMarketer.com, the Mobile Marketer Daily newsletter, MobileMarketingDaily.com, MobileCommerceDaily.com, MCommerceDaily.com, the Mobile Commerce Daily newsletter, MobileNewsLeader.com, Classic Guides, webinars, the Mobile Marketing Summit and the Mcommerce Summit and awards.

©2011 Napean LLC. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without permission.

Creative guidelines for mobile Web banner ads

By Brendon Kraham

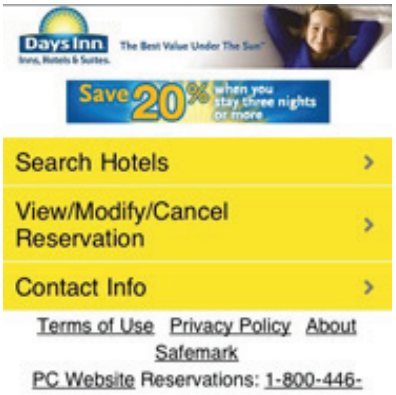
As consumer usage of the mobile Web continues to grow, the mobile Web banner ad unit has emerged as an effective tool for marketers to use to engage with their target customers.

While this ad unit is similar to the traditional Internet banner ad, there are key differences and unique-to-mobile opportunities that marketers need to keep in mind to ensure that their ad delivers the highest possible return.

Mobile first

Mobile devices have a wide variety of screen sizes and capabilities.

For example, a smartphone with a large, high-resolution screen can be served larger, visually rich ads while a feature phone is better served with a lightweight ad designed for small screens with limited resolution.



Marketers need to always serve the best-fitting ad for each phone to deliver the best possible user experience and even better performance.

A best practice to ensure wide reach across devices is to create a minimum of four of the different Mobile Marketing Association (MMA) standard mobile Web banner ad unit sizes.

The MMA standard size and format guidelines for mobile Web banner ad units are available on its site at mmaglobal.com.

Do not overdo the graphics

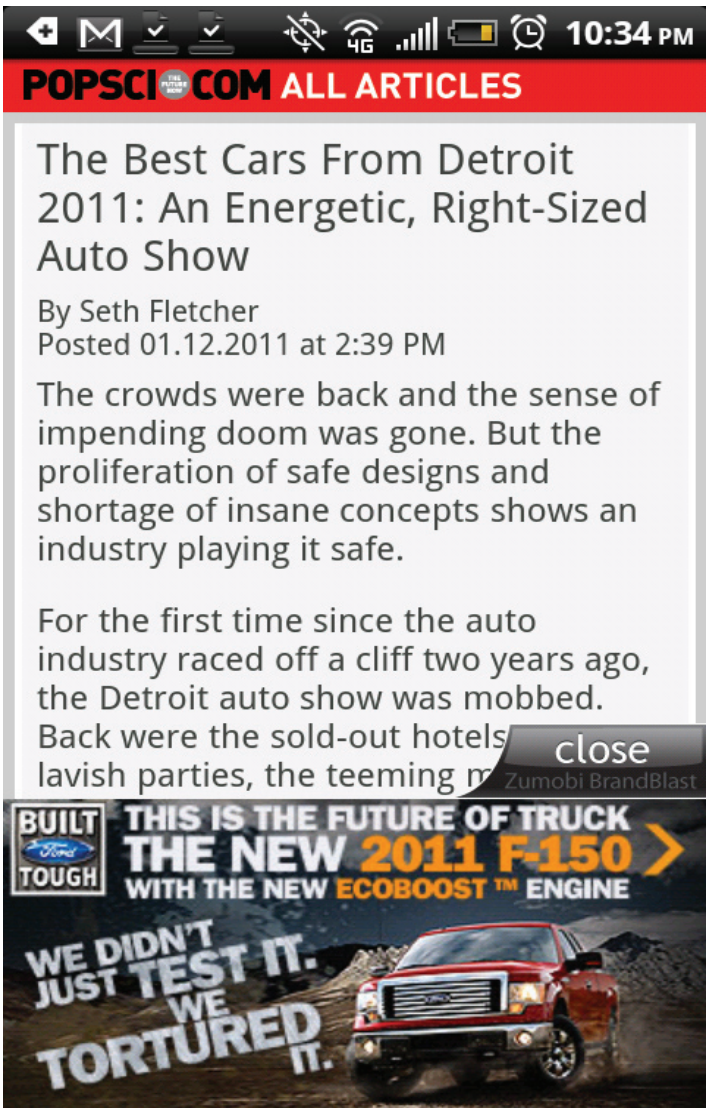
The majority of mobile Web sites only have one banner ad that displays at any given time, giving that ad unit a unique opportunity to capture users' attention.

Take advantage of this opportunity by creating a simple, yet compelling ad. Consider, above all, both the number and size of images.

Often, traditional Internet banner ad units are composed of multiple images. However, mobile banner ads should only use one to two graphics to make the ad work in the smaller space.

If the graphics are overdone, it will make it harder for a user to understand the offer.

Also consider that while other advertising mediums em-



phasize that hi-resolution images be used, on mobile it is best to keep graphic sizes smaller to ensure that they load quicker over potentially slower connections.

Write clear and concise copy

When creating your mobile banner ad unit, it is important to remember that the screen of the average mobile device is much smaller than a desktop computer.

This seems like an obvious point, but it is critical as you develop your copy.

Edit yourself. Ideally, copy in a mobile ad is clear and concise. If your mobile Web banner ad is an extension of a print or traditional Internet campaign, trim it down. Always make sure to use an easy-to-read font a half- or full-point size larger font than what you initially feel looks right.

Make the call to action obvious

Do not make users guess what will happen when they click on your banner ad.

Have a clear and prominent call to action such as click-to-download an application, click-to-call a business, or click-to-map the location of a business near you. The clear call to action below the graphic in a banner ad can complete the creative.

Also, make sure the landing page to which your banner links makes it simple for users to take a desired action.

For example, if the goal is to drive store lookups, drive the user to the store-locator page instead of the homepage of the mobile site. If your ad features a special offer, include the details for users on the site or landing page.

Keep Innovating

Do not take a gamble by trying to predict which single combination of graphic and copy will catch the eye of your target users.

Create and test multiple versions and track performance. Once you have determined which version of your banner ad performs best, update it every two weeks.

By changing images or just the word order of your text, you are more likely to see continuous engagement with your ads, because users are more likely to click on relevant ads they have never seen before.

Creating an ad that engages users and inspires them to click is the challenge. These simple tips can help marketers create a mobile Web banner ad unit that provides an engaging ad experience and that delivers on their goals. ■

Brendon Kraham is team manager of mobile display ads at Google, Mountain View, CA.

5 steps to creating an HTML5 mobile ad campaign

By Tom Limongello

Creating campaigns using HTML5 is about using the features available in the toolkit to invoke a response to your brand.

Let us talk about the five steps to follow to use HTML5 to create mobile rich media ad campaigns.

1. Ensure the ad server is supporting Web content
This is always the case on desktop sites, but mobile sites and especially mobile applications are not always set up to render ad content based on HTML, CSS and JavaScript.

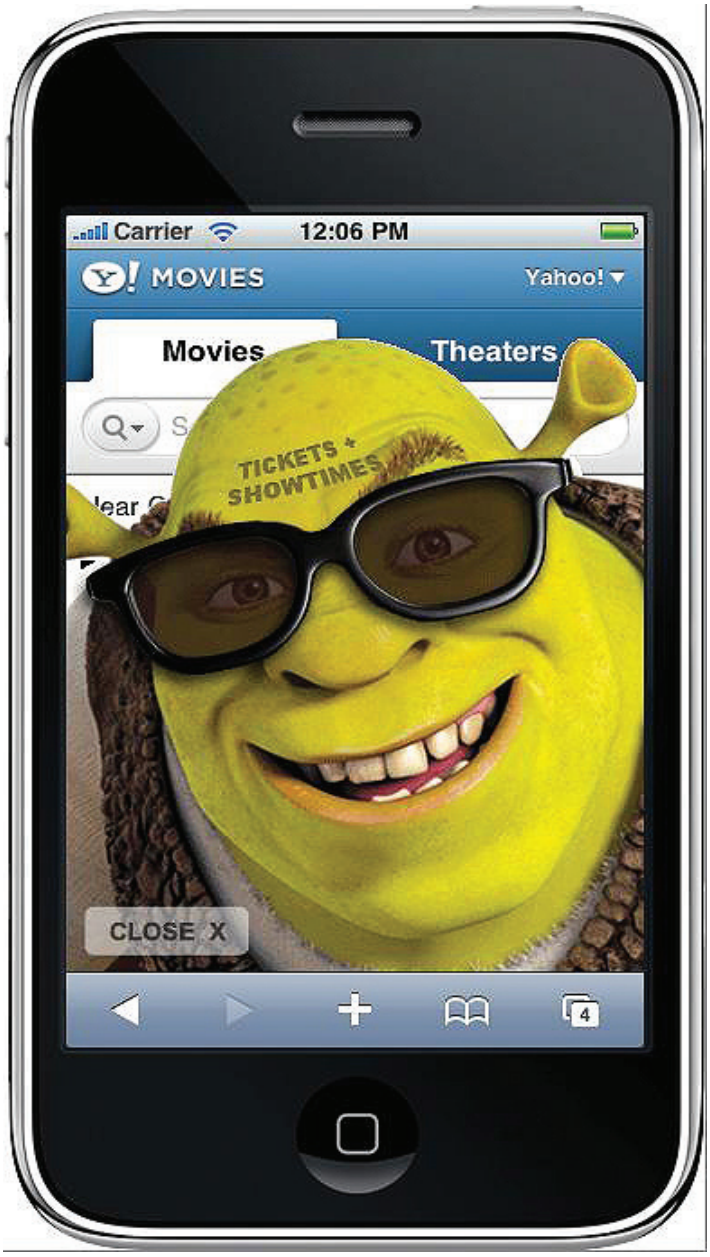
The Webview is a way of framing the content for an advertisement, while giving that campaign the flexibility to be easily flighted, targeted and served by a Web ad server.

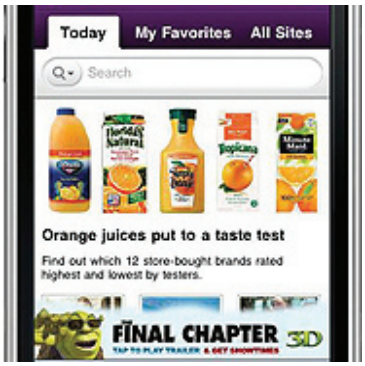
By placing ads in a Web container, you can serve the same units in a browser and a native application.

Images and videos can start at any size or shape—from a standard-looking banner to a shape as irregular as a Geico Gecko.

Banners can be expanded slightly or to full screen.

To request native functionality from the hardware of the device, such as access to the camera, GPS, address book or zoom, a JavaScript-based bridge to the native functionality is possible.





2. Take full advantage of the HTML5 toolkit

- *Use the canvas in conjunction with video*

Add buttons that appear while a video is playing and let users interact with the buttons or share the video on social networks. Change the size of the player itself while playing the video.

- *Use key frame animation*

Key frame animations are a lighter alternative to video by animating lighter .gif or .png files on a portion of the screen.

Where network connectivity is less of a concern, try etching an animation layer on top of the video.

- *Use gestures*

Let users swipe and tap to change colors and break apart shapes.

- *Use location to optimize creative*

Location can change the nature of your opt-in campaign. For instance if you have auto-intenders that generally lease versus buy in a particular location, offer them the appropriate location post opt-in.

3. Ensure you can track behavior

To ensure that all interactions with the ad – including all of those amazing features you just included from above – can be tracked and measured.

Measurement on mobile can be very inaccurate if not done right.

You need to choose a partner to manage and host the campaign creative and serve in a way that ensures Web-standard tracking capabilities.

4. Test, test, test

An HTML5 rich media campaign offers a lot of sizzle.

But you need to make sure you do not overload the device memory or network connection with an enormous ad payload.

You may need to set up your ad for polite loading.

To do this, you might have your initial load be the first few frames or teaser of the ad, followed by the main load with the full file.

The full ad is loaded only after the rest of the content of the page is available, making for a much more "polite" user experience.

5. Complete the interaction

You should do as much as possible within the ad unit itself, including calls-to-action such as data collection forms, email opt-ins, delivering PDFs or iBooks, or even making reservations.

If there is a landing page, the best practice is to offer post-click conversion tracking from the ad unit to the completed conversion on the landing page to ensure that you have at least one report with a complete view to the interaction rate and conversions.

HTML5 is available on desktop browsers, mobile browsers and, now, via the new Open Rich Media Mobile Advertising initiative, in native mobile applications.

Hopefully, as more HTML5 campaigns run across all digital platforms there will be more frequent and richer data to help marketers stratify digital behavior less by device than they will by time of day, and modes of user behavior. ■

Tom Limongello is vice president of marketing at Crisp Media, New York. Reach him at tom@crispmedia.com.

Key to success for a mobile rich media ad campaign

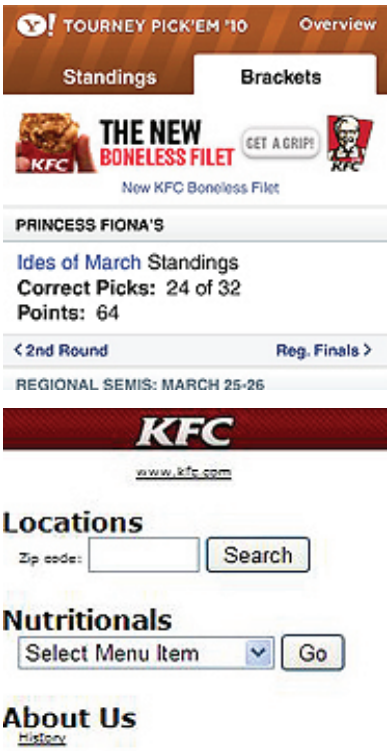
By Alex Linde

As mobile advertising continues to grow in 2011, it is important to understand the steps involved in creating engaging and relevant mobile rich media ad campaigns.

It is helpful to think of this process as a two-pronged one which begins with the creation of an ad that drives the rich media mobile ad campaign and then the fine-tuning of that ad by testing it and tweaking its attributes until it is best suited to drive user engagement before debuting it on mobile devices.

Designing the ad

When it comes to a mobile rich media ad campaign, the first and most significant step is designing the ad.

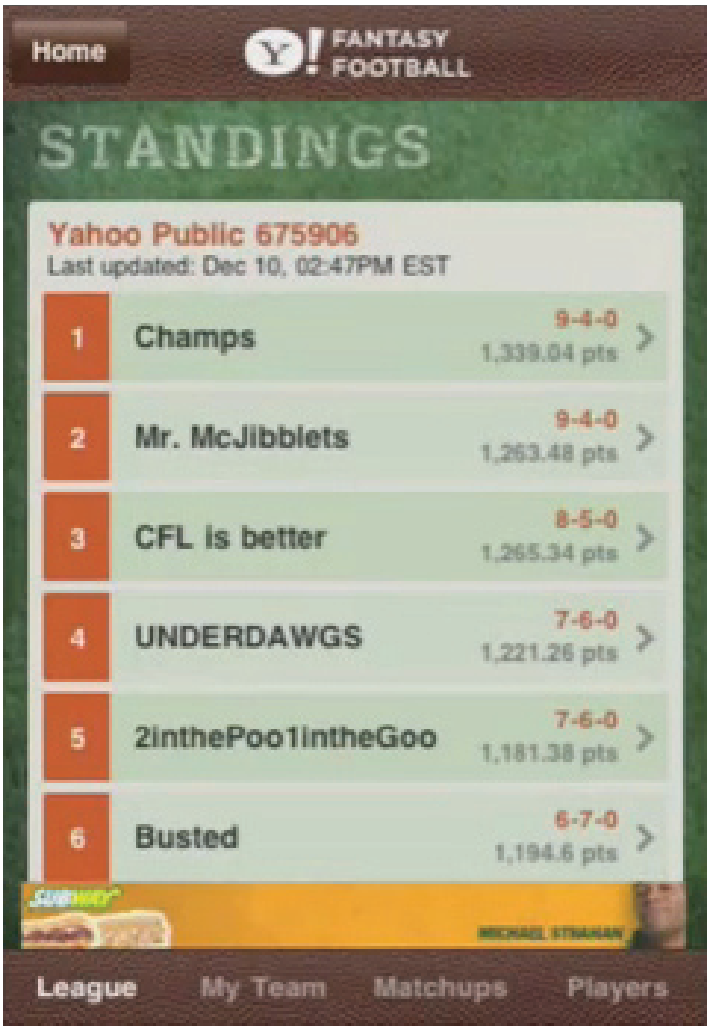


At first, this might seem obvious, but it is important to remember that there is no template for designing a successful rich-media ad unit.

Each is drawn based on the marketer's goals for the campaign.

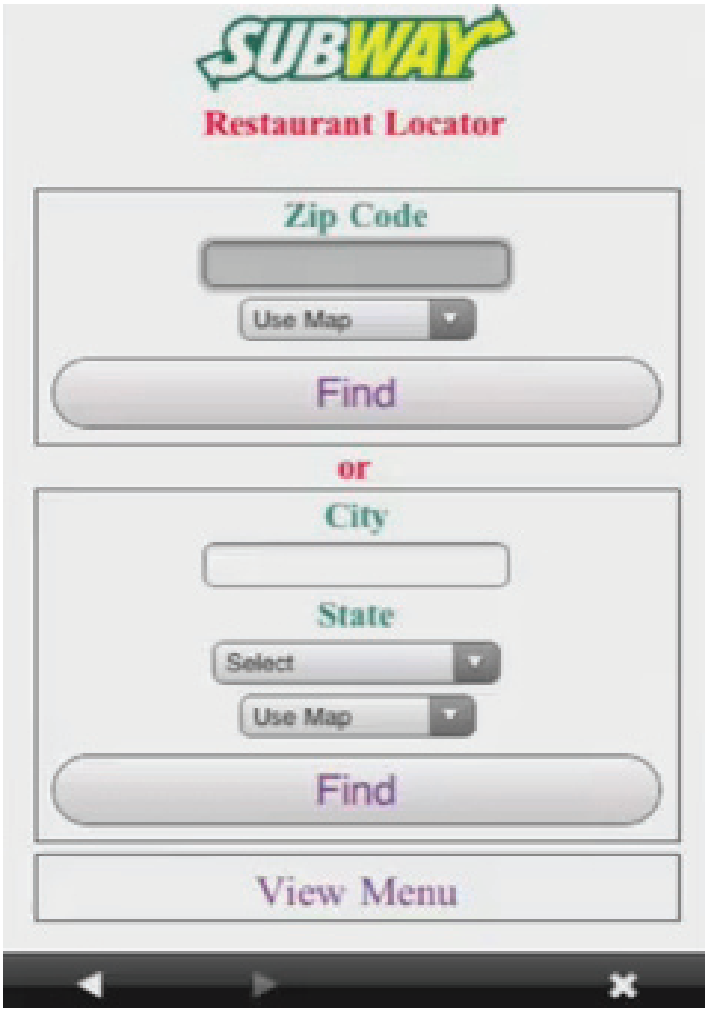
As such, here are the aspects of the design process which should be top-of-mind during this initial phase.

1. **Ad specs**: As you begin the design process, there are a number of factors to take into account, ranging from the ad's size (load time will vary on different mobile Web sites) to how quickly different components will load to where the call-to-action should be included (consumers, who are mostly right-handed, tend to click mostly on the right portion of an ad).



2. **User experience**: The consumer's use of the ad should always be a consideration. Ads should always be user-initiated. Consumers should be able to minimize the ad or remove it if it is hindering their access to a mobile site, and the number of clicks that users need to make to reach their final interaction should be kept to a minimum.

3. **Consumer engagement**: This is one of the primary objectives of brands, so the ad should be designed to connect with consumers consistently, evoking the cool "Ahh" factor, a loud and clear call to action, which transitions the consumer from user to buyer. Video should always be considered as an engagement tool given how consumers like to "snack" on their media these days.



4. **Device**: Make sure that what you are looking to accomplish is technically possible across the largest number of devices and on different-sized screens. How the consumer interacts with the ad across devices, either by touch or keyboard, should also play into the ad's design.

Test ad's performance

Once you have developed your ad to visually entice users, excite your target audience and work across different mobile devices, you need to refine it through testing to make sure that consumers' interactions with the ad are helping achieve marketer goals.

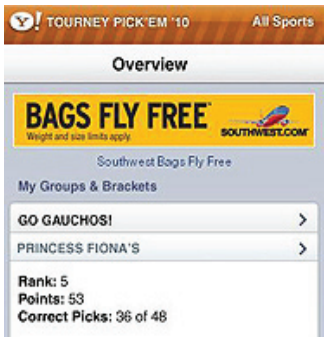
It is necessary, therefore, to keep in mind these four factors:

1. **Consumer motivation**: Review what about your ad is attracting user attention by cross-checking against "heat maps" (where users are tapping or typing on their screens), which represent consumer interaction with the ad.

2. **Form and scale**: Testing on different devices may lead you to realize that the ad might have to change based on technological compatibility issues to reach the maximum number of consumers.

3. **Placement**: Where the ad appears on the mobile screen can have a significant effect on its performance and it is necessary to test different placement locations.

4. **Timing**: When reviewing an ad's effectiveness, care should be taken to analyze how the timing plays a part in consumers' interactions with an ad. For example, you should review how the ad's performance is affected by the length of time it appears on a mobile device's screen.



Following these steps will enable marketers to develop rich-media ad campaigns with increased effectiveness throughout the year and ones which will make the best use of increasing smartphone penetration to reach the maximum number of consumers. ■

Alex Linde is director of mobile advertising at Yahoo, Sunnyvale, CA. Reach him at alinde@yahoo-inc.com.

Designing engaging mobile rich media ads in-app

By Theo Skye

In 2010 we saw massive growth in the overall number of smartphone users. There was a sharp increase in the availability and interest in mobile application ad inventory, and recent surveys show that 38 percent of respondents are comfortable with seeing ads on their mobile devices.

"Mobile" is a very hot word within the halls of ad agencies these days.

Agency executives and creatives no longer see mobile as a campaign side-dish now that they have a better understanding of how mobile fits into the larger advertising spectrum right along side with—and oftentimes ahead of—online, broadcast and print.

But education is still needed to exercise the full power and potential of mobile rich media for their clients.

Marketers, planners, buyers, publishers—really everyone in the advertising ecosystem—can drive greater value from their mobile campaigns by adhering to a few simple but important practices:

1. **Start with results**. Think about the goals, how you will achieve them, and how you will measure them.

In this way, mobile is not any different from campaigns across other mediums, but the creative path by which you attain the desired results can be even more explorative and exciting.

2. **Ask how mobile will complement the broader campaign**. While mobile rich media ads allow brands to engage consumers in ways and places not possible with other mediums, it is critical to understand how the mobile component meshes with the online, print or broadcast portions of a campaign.

Campaigns that apply consistent creative and messaging across all touch points are most successful.

3. **Consider the context**. It is important to remember

that since the ad will appear on a mobile device, rather than a desktop, television or road sign, the consumer could be anywhere and doing just about anything when the ad is presented.

Engage your audience with the most important aspects of an execution in ways that do not necessarily require copious amounts of time or effort to take in while on the go.

Also, consider using the unique capabilities that today's mobile devices make available, such as touchscreens, accelerometers and location-based services.

4. **Know your device**. IPhone, iPad and Android devices each have their own set of unique qualities that allow for various ways to approach technical

and creative executions.

Aspects of a device such as the dimensions and resolution of the screen, overall device performance and hardware feature set, even the ways in which a user typically holds a given device in her hands, should all help to determine how the advertising experience is designed and executed.

5. **Know your apps**. It is about more than just knowing what genre of applications a campaign will run on.

Investigate how the application itself uses device features such as video, audio and orientation changes. These user experience considerations may inform decisions about how to make an execution fit within or even play off of an application's unique characteristics.

6. **Determine how innovative your execution actually needs to be.** Rich media ads on mobile will generate much higher engagement rates than static.

But not every rich mobile execution needs to be a first-to-market opportunity or necessarily even use cutting-edge, mobile-specific features to be 100 percent successful.

Use device features with intention and only when they support and reinforce the underlying big idea of an execution.

Users and brands have historically responded well to rich mobile executions that involve unique, visceral interactions such as shaking, dragging and tilting.

But the upcoming generation of mobile ads should look to incorporate features that put even more focus on the overall results of an execution and its ability to meet the brand's goals.

Incorporating more practical interactions such as setting calendar reminders, enabling ecommerce, using mapping/location-based services, and integrating social communities will drive deeper engagement and, ultimately, prove to more effectively enhance a brand's relationship with the consumers. ■

Theo Skye is creative director of Medialets, New York. Reach him at theo.skye@medialets.com.

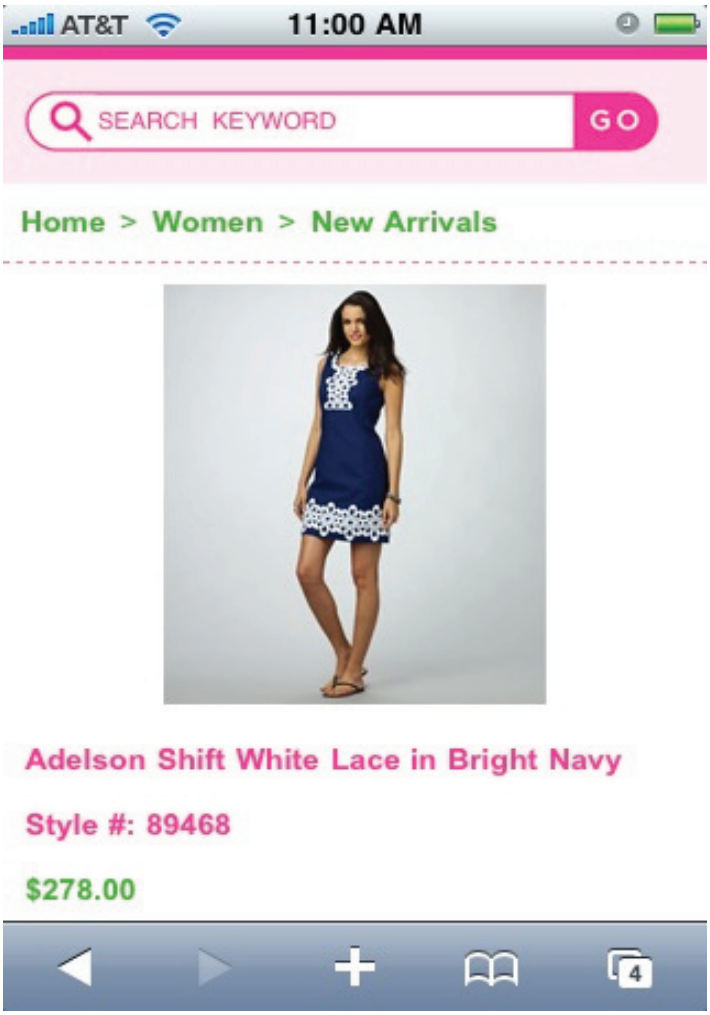
Mobile app development for retailers

By Dan Lowden

Retailers' question of whether or not to create a mobile-optimized user shopping experience was thoroughly answered and validated in 2010 as both smartphone users and mobile commerce transactions soared to unprecedented levels.

Nielsen predicts that 140 million Americans will own a smartphone by the end of 2011 and nearly 50 percent of smartphone owners already use or plan to use their phones for mobile shopping, according to ABI Research.

The big question of 2011 is how to create a retail mobile application that will enable cross-channel marketing and sales, increase customer conversion and drive brand awareness to ensure the mobile-optimized channel is a long-term strategic success.



In the development of mobile applications, it is imperative to determine your mobile retail strategy, learn your customers' mobile demographics and partner with an experienced mobile commerce provider.

App development

The downloadable rich applications should leverage the full capabilities of today's leading smartphones to deliver the ultimate mobile experience.

Retailers need to think strategically when creating a mobile application to build lasting relationships with their loyal customers through a brand-in-the-hand opportunity and a highly personalized, unique mobile commerce interaction.

Then, once the mobile application is live and available to customers, the real work begins as it is important to set goals, review and leverage business intelligence, tune the experience, revise product offerings, build awareness, increase conversion, engage in multichannel efforts and communicate ongoing changes.

Know your consumer base

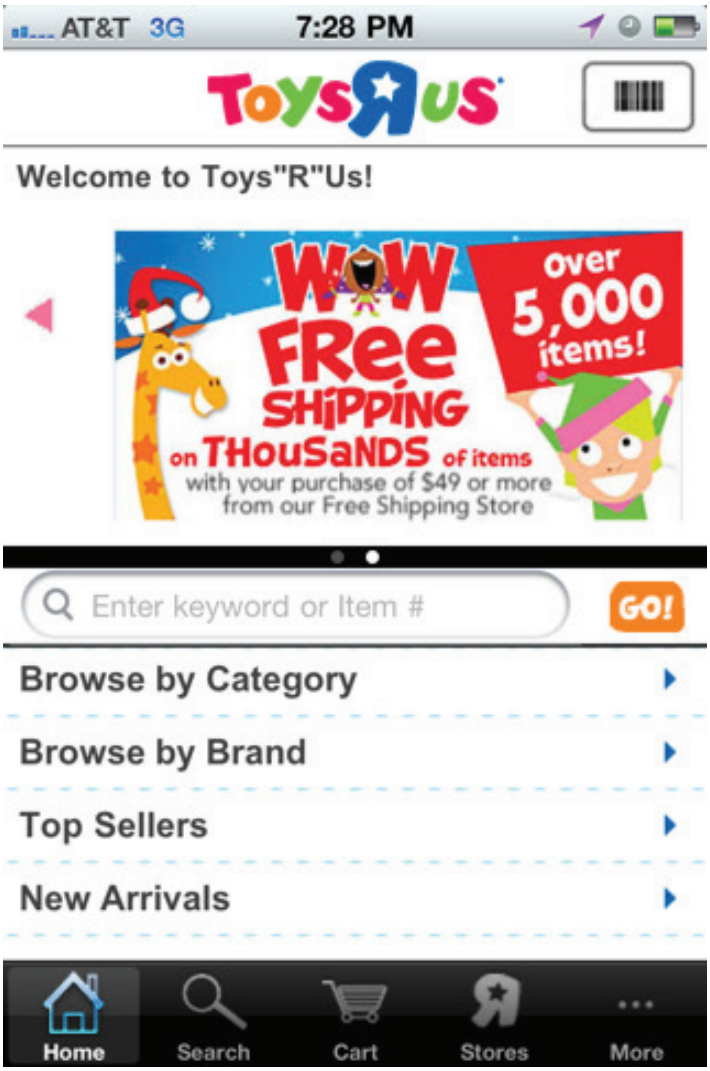
Retailers should review which mobile device types customers are using to connect with your their site to determine which rich mobile applications are appropriate for your customer base.

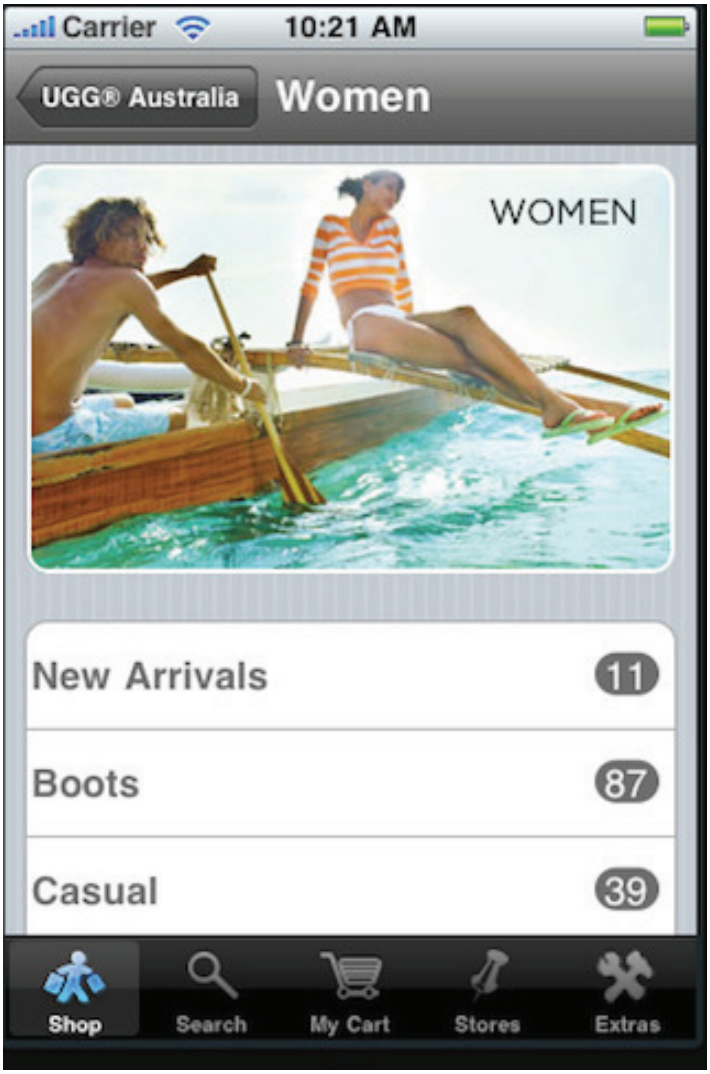
If your customers are business-oriented, lead with a BlackBerry application. If your customer base is more consumer-focused, an iPhone or Android application would be more appropriate.

In matching the application to your demographic, it creates entirely new and deep ways for customers to interact with your brand and drive incremental revenue.

Innate app features

A mobile application lets users access their phone's native device capabilities whether they are at home, on the go or when in-store.





Examples include GPS to simplify the "find a store" feature and store check-in, the camera functionality to enable bar code product look-up and mobile coupons, and an address book and wallet implementation to auto-populate checkout fields.

The development of a mobile application creates a space for loyal customers to access a retailer's products seamlessly, quickly, conveniently and more frequently.

True understanding

For many retailers, mobile is a completely new medium to them.

Business intelligence is also critical, so retailers should do monthly reviews with their mobile commerce provider to measure key metrics and ROI.

Mobile app goals

It is imperative for a retailer to recognize its goals in enabling a mobile application.

Whether the primary goals include acquisition, conversation, transactions, revenue, cart size, purchase frequency, branding, time on application, time to transact, return shoppers, SMS promotion signups, application downloads or promo code usage, the overall objectives need to be continually tracked so that adjustments and improvements can be made if and when necessary.

Equally important is to determine what sells best in a mobile environment, consolidating categories and highlighting best-sellers and promotional items so that customers can search, browse and buy in as little as sixty seconds.

Mobile medium awareness

Driving awareness of the mobile application is a critical step to drive purchases and increased usage. This can be done in a variety of ways and should be incorporated into all current marketing and advertising elements.

Awareness building can be done through press announcements targeting consumers, business media and industry analysts, media interviews, speaking engagements and case studies.

Additionally, a callout to the new mobile application on the ecommerce site and catalog channels as well as through email campaigns, Facebook, Twitter and SMS have proven effective in driving application downloads, adoption and purchases.

There is an investment of time and resources required to make the mobile commerce retail application a long-term success, but the rewards are significantly higher in revenue, branding and customer loyalty as mobile will be a significant way in which consumers interact with retailers on a regular basis, anytime and anywhere.

Many of the industry's top retailers have already successfully enabled a mobile application including Golfsmith, 1800Flowers, Toys "R" Us, UGG Australia, ShopBlackBerry, Avenue, Babies "R" Us, Ghirardelli, Golf Warehouse, Godiva, Sportmans' Guide and Woman Within.

Last year validated mobile, and those with strategic mobile applications in 2011 are likely to lead the market. ■

Dan Lowden is vice president of marketing at Digby, Austin, TX. Reach him at dlowden@digby.com.

How to build a branded mobile app

By Clint H. Parr

I had a nightmare. I pulled into work and realized I left my mobile phone at home. I panicked as I contemplated what to do.

If I go back home, I will be late for work. If I try to do without it, how could I be reached in an emergency? How will I check my email between customer visits? I felt isolated from the world. Waking up, I realized it was just a dream.

Some of you are thinking, "It's just a phone." But I expect the majority of you understand that a mobile device, whether an iPhone, Droid or BlackBerry is more than just a phone.

Mobile devices help us manage our time, keep up with family and stay in touch with customers while out of the office.

Also, mobile devices are increasingly relied on to provide advice on places to eat, find a great deal on shoes or generally connect with the products and services on which we depend.

This attachment with our "mobiles" provides an opportunity for marketers and brand managers to reach out and engage with customers through a medium we are rarely without.

Easy-to-use branded mobile applications, which deliver valuable and engaging content to your customer when they need it most, can be a well-positioned vehicle to leverage this opportunity.

The key here is to deliver true value. Branded applications containing nothing more than a game or infomercial tend to quickly get deleted.

Are you ready to build a branded application? Here are a few issues to consider:

What are your customers looking for?
First, understand the type of content and level of engagement your customers want.

Think through the process of a customer finding, downloading and using your application. What can you provide them that is beyond your Web site or marketing one-sheet? Do they only need quick access to updated information, or do they desire an interactive and engaging application experience?

Before building your application, take the time to really understand what your customer wants and how they are going to use it. Additionally, make sure it is content you can easily keep fresh and updated with the latest information.

Native app versus Web app
Once you have decided to build the application, you will need to decide if you want to build a native application or a Web application.

By definition, a native application is developed for a specific mobile device.

Much like software running on your computer, a native application can process and store content and other information on the device itself.

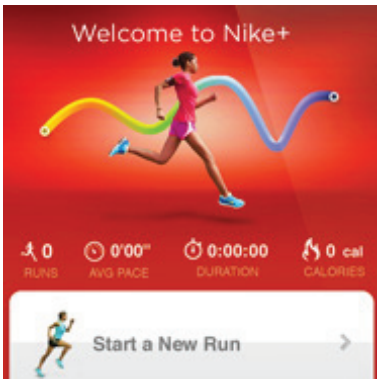
High-value native applications typically interact with an online application server to transfer and synchronize information when a network is available.

A Web application obtains its content from an online Web site. More sophisticated devices such as the iPhone, iPad and Android can store a local copy of the content while offline, but usability in that mode is limited.

How to choose
When deciding which type of application to choose, you will need to weigh several options.

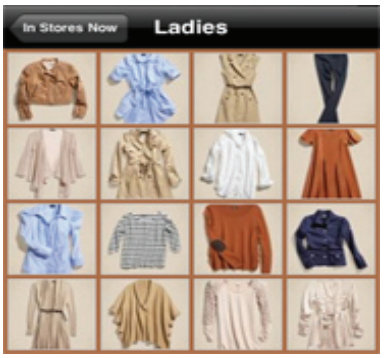
1. Do you want your application available in the Apple App Store? If so, then you will need a native application.

Even if your application is only accessing online Web content, native applications have the ability to process and store the content on the device.



2. Do you want your customers to have round-the-clock access to your content?
In airplane mode or areas with poor signal strength, your customers may not have access to online content. Will customers care if your application provides value only when it is connected? If so, how can you engage them while offline?

3. How are you going to update your application and content?
Much like an out-of-date Web site, if your application's content is stale you can expect customers will not use it.



Since Web applications pull content from online, keeping it fresh means updating your Web site. Native applications typically require a more robust online application server to stay updated.

We are always looking for new ways to reach our customers.

Having a branded mobile application can increase brand awareness and loyalty. Take the time to choose the right type of content delivered with the right kind of application to ensure that you do not end up with disappointed customers. ■

Clint H. Parr is president/CEO of MacroSolve Inc., Tulsa, OK. Reach him at clint.parr@macrosolve.com.

Webinars.

Lead-generating broadcasts on hot topics, issues and trends of the day, presented by industry thought-leaders and the editorial staffs of Mobile Marketer and Mobile Commerce Daily.

Please contact ads@mobilemarketer.com for sponsorship details

Mobile Marketer

THE NEWS LEADER IN MOBILE MARKETING MEDIA AND COMMERCE

Mobile Commerce Daily

THE NEWS LEADER IN MOBILE COMMERCE AND RETAIL

How to create a mobile bar code program

By Laura Marriott

The integration of a mobile bar code into a marketing initiative is an ideal way for a brand to activate a campaign, making it engaging, immersive and interactive for consumers.

With mobile 2D bar codes, consumers can connect with the brand and participate in interactive communication at the moment of impulse when they scan the code.

So how do you design and create effective mobile bar code campaigns to take advantage of this exciting mobile media element?

Planning the campaign
Mobile bar codes should be planned as part of the overall marketing initiative.

For example, ensure they are incorporated into digital and traditional media as an integral campaign element.

Also, establish a plan for longer-term consumer engagement as part of the overall objectives. After all, there is no point in establishing an interaction and then not maintaining the dialogue.

Define your requirements
Before selecting your vendor, make a list of your needs so that you can better understand what elements you want to evaluate in your partner.

Requirements may include type of code, desired interaction, reader, geography and reporting requirements.

Selecting the right vendor partner
Although putting a mobile bar code campaign together is relatively straightforward, selecting the right vendor to help guide you, share their expertise and supply the appropriate technology is an important step to successful implementation.

The partner may provide mobile bar code reader applications, bar code creation, resolution, management and data reporting, while ensuring appropriate geographic coverage and high-quality user experiences. Take the time to select the partner that is right for you.

Symbol and methodology selection
An important consideration for brands wanting to achieve maximum effect from a bar code campaign is to consider the use of global open standard symbologies, such as quick response, or QR, which can be scanned by all universal readers.

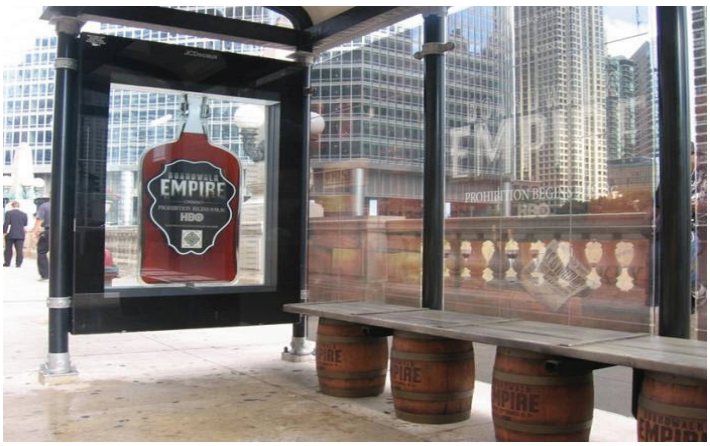
The number of users who can read a mobile bar code is determined by the number of handsets running reader applications. This establishes the campaign's reach.

Design to ensure effective communication
Consumers will opt-in to receive communications when they perceive that they will be of value to them – whether that be in financial terms by means of giveaways, discounts or in less tangible services based on information, entertainment and utility.

Thus, it is important to ensure that you deliver value to the consumer, whether through relevant content, coupons or exclusive information.

The design of the campaign is paramount to ensure strong consumer response. Ensure the mobile bar code is positioned in a way that makes it easy to identify and scan.

Make sure it is placed in an area of prominence within the ad and on a flat surface rather than, for example, be-



tween folds in the magazine, which will hamper scanning.

There should be white space around the code, which makes it easy for the reader application to scan. And if possible, the code should be printed in black and white to ensure ease of scanning with the majority of mobile devices and bar code readers.

Given the relative newness of bar codes to the mass-market, you should also consider placing descriptive copy next to the bar code, explaining what the code is, how it is used and how to download a reader to scan it.

If you follow these simple design steps, it will help facilitate positive consumer participation.

Test, test, test

Consumers will be deterred from using bar codes if their initial experience is unsatisfactory.

To ensure ongoing consumer participation, bar codes should be tested using a variety of reader/scanning applications and mobile devices. Also, the content which the code is directing towards should be optimized for mobile.

The ability to measure the data generated from your campaign helps determine the success and ROI, helping to shape future campaigns and ensure the initiative is optimized for consumer engagement. It is therefore vital to select a vendor that provides analytics, such as usage times based on location and demographic information, allowing brands to make informed decisions to continue to leverage 2D codes in their initiatives.

Indeed, 2D mobile bar codes are set to become one of the dominant mobile media elements, so follow these simple steps and try it today. ■

Laura Marriott is CEO of NeoMedia Technologies Inc., Atlanta. Reach her at lmarriott@neom.com.

Keys to mobile coupon success

By Anthony Iacovone

In theory, getting consumers to put away paper coupons and use their mobile phones seems realistic enough: after all, there are an estimated 293 million wireless subscribers in the United States – or roughly 95 percent of our country's population.

There are technologies to make mobile couponing more practical than it was just months ago.

Key to constructing a mobile couponing strategy is working with a partner that understands the "how-to" of implementing it. But that is not the only element necessary.

Difference between mobile coupon and mobile offer

As with traditional retail, there are two ways to pull customers into stores: with coupons and with offers. And it is best if you determine upfront on which your mobile strategy will most depend.

A mobile offer generally means a discount or percentage off a product used by a single retailer, such as a department store, to entice consumers.

Mobile coupons, meanwhile, entitle the bearer to brand-specific discounts. Why distinguish between the two? It is simple: redemption.

To redeem mobile offers, consumers can receive a numeric discount code to their phone via SMS or – more recently – an image of a bar code that is scanned at the point of sale.

Redeeming mobile coupons presents even more of a challenge, since the majority of scanners are laser – unable to read bar codes – and other key factors, such as customer line speed, are crucial.

Know – and choose – the right technology

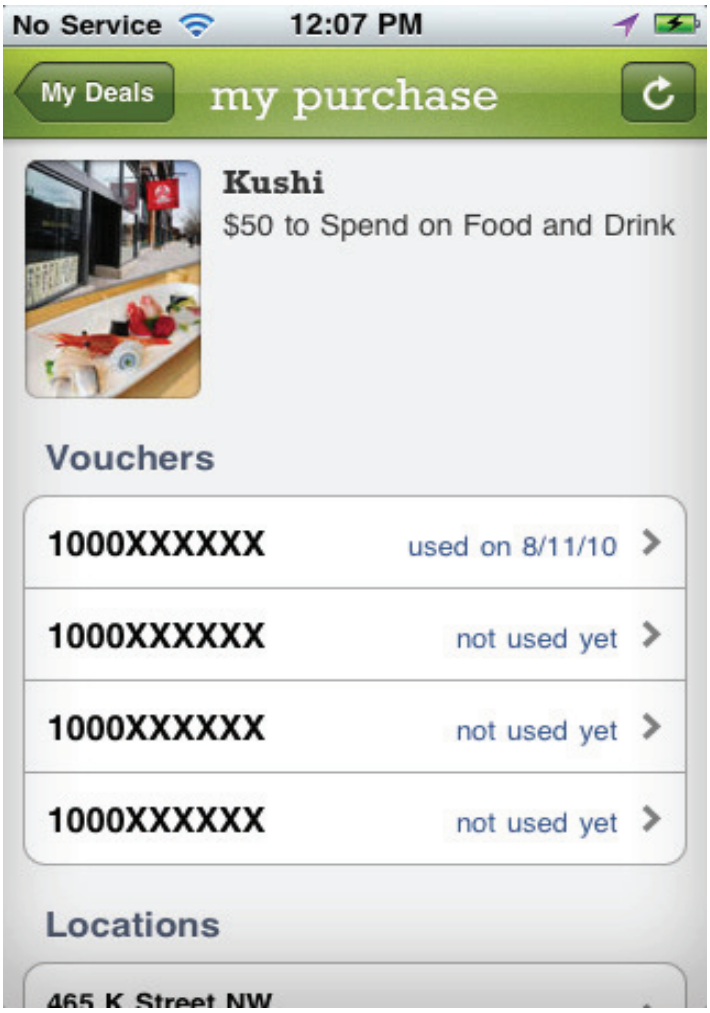
With all of the barriers that exist at point of sale, retailers and brands must use a multimodal approach to make sure the broadest base of consumers can redeem

their offers and coupons. For example, direct-to-loyalty card aggregators can help reach multiple grocery banners with a single offer. Email-to-print functions will ensure everyone can participate – even those with feature phones.

Also, within months instead of years, we will see the first widespread use of a relatively new technology called Near Field Communication, or NFC, which will enable consumers to use their mobile devices for both coupon redemptions and payments at POS merchant terminals.

Test and hone in on what works

Run offer tests that trial different values and implement unique calls–to-action and focus on what works and



enhance offers that do not.

It is also important to consider what media to use: does a freestanding insert with a mobile call to action make sense?

Probably not, as the demographic and behavioral change will factor against such use. And think about other traditional media outlets on the path to purchase: television, radio, print, out-of-home and shelf.

Remember this above all: your customer is walking into a store not with a TV or radio ad, a print ad or a billboard – but she is most likely walking in with a mobile phone.

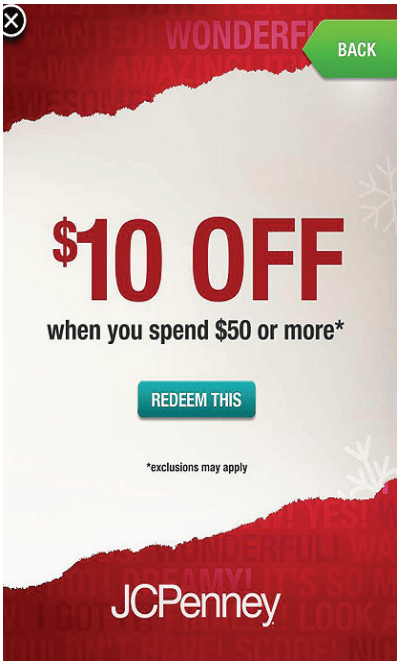
Choose the right partner for your mobile strategy

Mobile coupons offer brands a direct digital dialogue with their customers and vastly deeper analytics than traditional paper and digital: demographics, geographics and behavioral data is readily available for consumers who engage with their mobile device.

More importantly, after a first engagement, creating consumer brand and store loyalty is as easy as sending consumers an SMS for other offers. Paper coupons cannot do that.

When implementing a mobile couponing campaign, it is critically important to work with companies that have addressed early-stage mobile couponing issues, as well as those that are simultaneously versed in more traditional offerings such as direct-to-print and direct-to-card.

Such a partnership ensures that consumers can opt-in at numerous touch points in the pathway to purchase via mobile – whether smartphones or feature phones – and execute coupons either direct-to-loyalty card or via emails. This allows coupon redemption over a wide array of retail networks.



Get it straight

Define your couponing strategy, know the technology, hone in on what works and – most importantly – work with the right partner. It is important not to lose sight of these guidelines in a highly-fragmented mobile marketing landscape. Hundreds of millions of potential customers are waiting, mobile phones in hand. ■

Anthony Iacovone is chief innovation officer of Augme Technologies, New York. Reach him at anthony.iacovone@augme.com.

How to create an effective mobile coupon program

By Meaghan Schaefer

Are die-hard paper coupon clippers finally ready to embrace technology and change their ways? According to a study by Yankee Group, the answer is "Yes."

The study found that the number of mobile coupon users in North America was set to increase more than tenfold in 2010, followed by triple-digit increases in both 2011 and 2012.

Some $2.37 billion-worth of mobile coupon transactions will take place in North America in 2013, up from just $5 million this year.

Many marketers have experienced great success with targeted and measurable online discounts and affiliate programs, and have started using mobile coupons to extend the capabilities of their online marketing to reach in-store customers.

A recent study from Harris Interactive shows that only 4 percent of Internet users have redeemed mobile coupons, compared with 86 percent who clipped paper coupons and 65 percent who used online or email coupons.

But digital coupon incentives are catching on quickly and marketers have an opportunity to leverage this new technology to enhance their consumer targeting and advertising efforts.

Targeting the perfect customer

Mobile coupons are highly measurable. Marketers can see how many coupons were redeemed and which type of customers or segments responded to which offer.

Marketers are mastering the creation and delivery of these personalized digital coupons, either by sending an actual coupon to a mobile phone, with a bar code or coupon code embedded in it, or by alerting a customer to a personalized digital coupon promotion via email or text message.

Some platforms take into account an individual's past purchases based on recent credit card transactions, using behavioral targeting to deliver relevant discounts. Consumers find out about the current incentives loaded onto their cards via emails, text messages or an online portal.

For example, a sporting goods retailer could target all people who have bought sports equipment in the past 60 days from other retailers with a 20 percent-off incentive on their next purchase. A shopper receives a text message that the coupon is on her card and heads back to the store to make a purchase.

Execution is key

Getting started with mobile coupons can be tricky, but the following are tips to get marketers on their way:

1. Define your goals. Do you want to connect with a hard-to-reach target audience? Do you need to increase average order value or transaction amounts?

Maybe you want to focus on new customer acquisition, build loyalty with existing customers, or get them to return sooner and buy more frequently.

All of these goals are valid, and the type of incentives you offer will vary depending on which goal is most important to your brand today.

2. Select the right marketing technology partner. The mobile marketing platform you choose to communicate and reconcile the incentives is key.

3. Gather data and optimize campaigns. Another added benefit of mobile coupon programs are the data you can collect on individual shopping patterns and preferences as people redeem the incentives in-store.

By mining and analyzing this cross-channel data, you will get a clear picture of which promotions are working and how different segments and demographics react to specific offers.

You can then create more effective incentives, targeting key customer segments based on demographics, preferences, geography and purchase data.

Redemption methods

Redemption is imperative, and at this point in the industry's evolution, the best options for redeeming digital coupons are systems that require the least amount of change for both the consumer and the marketer.

It is critical to understand how the system you choose will work on the backend to reconcile an offer.

Five most common redemption methods

1. Consumer presents a phone displaying a discount offer and the cashier rings up the purchase with a discount.

2. Cashier manually enters a code displayed in the mobile coupon to generate a discount.

3. Cashier scans a bar code embedded in the mobile coupon.

4. Consumer downloads coupons to a store's loyalty card through a Web site or smartphone application, and the discount is applied when both loyalty card and payment card are swiped at the checkout.

5. SMS and smartphone applications alert consumers that discounts have been loaded directly to a consumer's credit or debit card, and discount is automatically applied when the consumer uses a card to pay.

Challenges and looking ahead

The challenge for many of these redemption methods is getting both consumers and retailers to alter their behavior.

Many consumers are not yet comfortable with handing over their phones at the checkout to receive a discount. Even more problematic is the training required for store clerks to accept mobile coupons.

A customer waving a mobile phone in front of them saying, "I have a coupon on here," is still a rare occurrence that most cashiers are ill-equipped to handle. That is why coupon alert services tied to payment or loyalty cards are quickly gaining popularity.

Mobile coupons hold the promise of both direct marketing and one-to-one marketing.

By delivering highly personalized incentives to a person's mobile phone, marketers are promoting their brand right into the pocket of their target audiences at key influence points.

The mobile commerce and coupon ecosystem will be one to watch as brand advertisers capitalize on this innovation. ■

Meaghan Schaefer is chief marketing officer of edo Interactive, San Francisco. Reach her at meaghan.schaefer@edointeractive.com.

Evoking an emotional response with MMS

By James Citron

MMS is one of the world's most widely deployed wireless data technologies and currently used by more consumers globally than watch television, browse the Web and read newspapers.

To maximize the channel's effectiveness, marketers should consider several factors when creating an MMS campaign.

Defining your core objective
Akin to all mobile marketing programs, a good campaign starts out with a clear definition of what your core objectives are.

Engagement: If you are a consumer brand marketer and looking to create deeper engagement with your customers, it is easy to see how multimedia such as mobile video, slideshows, how-to videos and other digital assets can better increase engagement with your audience using MMS.

Would it not it be nice to get a how-to MMS video teaching you how to assemble that new desk from IKEA?

Tune-In: If you opted in to get information about the hit television show "Pretty Little Liars," why would I send you a text message with the airing time when you can deliver a 30-second, exclusive sneak peek of the content with the airing times? Or a sneak peek of Tron with a link to buy tickets at the nearest theater?

Content is king.
The mobile phone is arguably the most personal device that we have with us at all times. It is not like watching TV.

Consumers expect authenticity and a personal connection through mobile.

As a rule of thumb, the more creative and authentic the content is, the better it performs.

Flip-cam style content works well delivered to handsets.

Think authentic, original, unique and never seen before.

Capture behind-the-scenes content that will not be used elsewhere, so recipients start to perceive the brand's MMS outreach as something they should always pay attention to — the inside scoop.

MMS supports a wide variety of rich-media content, including video clips, pictures, slide shows, sound and music. This flexibility means that an advertiser probably already has content that can be easily repurposed for MMS, or that new content can be created quickly

and inexpensively.

Brands should use MMS to tell a story that pulls at the heartstrings of its consumers, evokes an emotional response, and creates a personal connection with the brand.

For example, real estate agencies typically take dozens of photos of each listing, and some also videotape a property's interior to create virtual tours.

The agency could repurpose that content so that a passer-by could receive an MMS message that has a slideshow or video of the property.

Mobile CRM: Gaining permission

A consumer's mobile number has become arguably the most important piece of CRM data that every brand should try to acquire, and MMS sets up the opportunity to ask them to opt into a campaign, thus establishing a relationship and building loyalty.

It is critical that marketers link MMS, or any mobile campaign, into the broader CRM system, to create a true multichannel CRM strategy which delivers relevant, contextual and personalized information to customers based on their demographics, preferences, behavior and location.

This will enable marketers to develop closer, personal relationships with customers, and create long-term brand loyalty.

Already, brands such as ChaCha, Steve Madden, CBS Atlanta and Jamie Foxx use MMS to reach consumers. We are no longer living in a black-and-white, 160-character world where most phones text and some have applications.

Instead, we are living in a world where consumers expect to be engaged by marketers with sight, sound and motion and MMS can do this with every one of your customers. ■

James Citron is the CEO and cofounder of Mogreet, Los Angeles. Reach him at james@mogreet.com.

Top 10 attributes of a successful SMS campaign

By Tim Miller

The growth and popularity of SMS can be partly explained by the immediate, concise and unobtrusive nature of a 160-character text message.

But its rise to prominence is equally explained by its ubiquity - i.e. SMS is on every mobile phone and most Americans carry their mobile phones at all times.

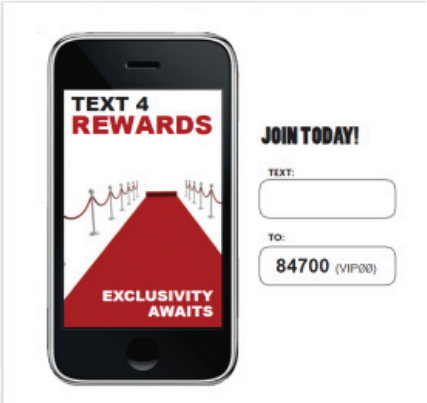
For marketers and organizational leaders, these characteristics make SMS the ideal connective tissue to link and enhance all other marketing channels.

Role of SMS

The ability to reach the right person, at the right time, with the right message, has been the goal of every marketer.

However, traditional strategies designed to leverage traditional customer relationship marketing databases are becoming less effective.

Consumers moving, changing their email address and dropping their home phone lines have all been natural disruptive forces.



But changes in consumer behavior and the proliferation of social media has further complicated the databases and the strategy.

As traditional mass marketing channels continue to give ground to targeted, interactive channels, the mobile phone has become the only common lynchpin capable of tethering multimedia, social networking and commerce.

SMS is enhancement channel

Before we dive into the list, let us establish some context and introduce some caveats.

We like to refer to SMS as the enhancement channel. In other words, we like to think that no matter the strategy du jour, SMS can likely enhance it.

If you are into email marketing, then SMS is the absolute best way to capture an email address. If you are into social media, then SMS is the best way to link followers to your page at the latest social destination. If you are into mobile applications, then SMS can provide a one-click link that will detect and install the appropriate application.

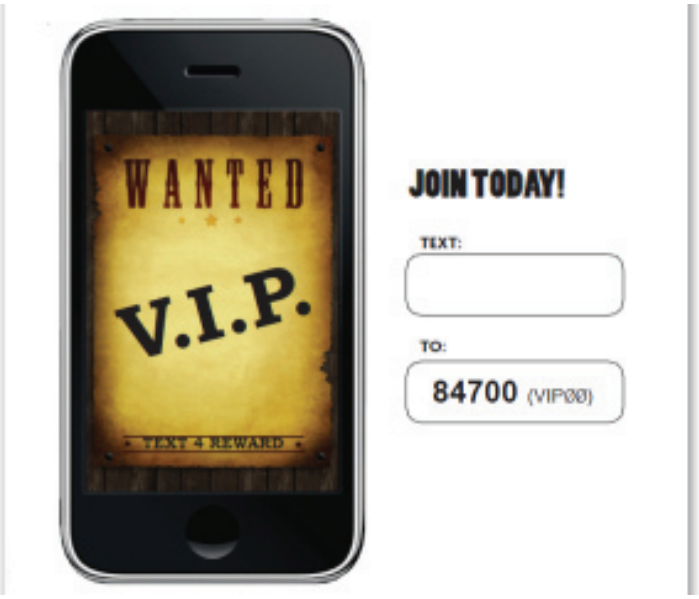
In summary, SMS is really good at increasing response rates, collecting data and providing fun, self-service utilities to customers.

That being said, we constantly remind ourselves and our clients to ask the question, "What are we really trying to accomplish? What is the real end goal?"

Only then can we honestly evaluate whether SMS can or should be used to enhance the objective.

Sadly, most objectives tend to be been short-term, cyclical and campaign-driven when they should be long-term, strategic and tied to a core business unit's profit and loss.

After all, SMS is simply a mobile transaction protocol - a method to conduct a transaction on a mobile device.



Until organizations embrace that definition and create loftier ambitions tied to revenue or cost-savings, SMS will remain relegated to the trivial contests and treasure hunts born by agencies and interactive marketing departments.

The good news is that sometimes the simplest SMS transactions can have a huge effect on an organization's financials.

Mobile payment reminders, password resets, subscription renewals, receipts and confirmations, upgrade offers and links to persuasive, conversion-oriented multimedia are all common, first-step offerings that can dramatically increase revenue and reduce costs - not to mention collect opt-ins and customer profiles for future communications.

Design elements

1. *Call to action* - The audio, print or banner that invites someone to text a keyword to a short code.

2. *Text-to-join versus text-for-info* - Are you collecting an opt-in or just returning information to the user's query?

3. *Message flows* - What happens after the consumer responds - e.g. coupon, poll, contest, survey?

4. *Compliance* - Carriers have specific rules for short codes and SMS.

The list

When planning your creative, try to incorporate as many of these attributes as possible:

1. *Simple* - The call to action must be easy for the customer to understand and execute.

2. *Time-sensitive* - Both the call to action and the SMS content should answer the question, "Why now?"

3. *Utility* - What is the service or efficiency we are providing through this program?

4. *Value* - What's in it for us? What's in it for the customer?

5. *Broad appeal* - The larger the potential audience, the better. Also, MMS and WAP should not be required.

6. *Personal relevance* - the consumer should be able to understand "Why me? Why my phone?"

7. *Personal context* - Use a personal writing style that builds a sense of community - e.g. "We," "You" and "Us."

8. *Scalable* - Design programs that are easy to deploy, execute and leverage across the whole organization.

9. *Economical* - Incorporate economy into the original call to action - e.g. "Text your email address to 54321"

10. *Anonymous* - Understand and embrace the notion that consumers like to remain anonymous. ■

Timothy Miller is president of Sumotext Inc., Little Rock, AR. Reach him at tim@sumotext.com.

Steps for optimizing SMS campaigns

By Alexander Gregori

We all know by now that the easiest, quickest and most effective mobile marketing tool is text messaging.

SMS also has the widest reach because every one of the more than 5 billion mobile phones on this planet has the capacity to send and receive them.

But SMS-keyword-to-short-code campaigns are limiting because they often result in the mere collection of mobile phone numbers.

When you spend hundreds, thousands or even millions of dollars in above-the-line campaigns to, say, drive your target market to text a keyword to a short code to enter a competition and you end up with a great response, you still do not know anything about the people who entered.

In terms of best practice and in some countries the law, you are not even allowed to follow up by sending bulk SMS messages with other offerings to the people who participated in your campaign, i.e. your leads.

You could spend your dollars much more effectively if you add a hyperlink to your response SMS that lands users on a mobile site where you can ask them to double-opt-in to receive further updates from you about your products, services and special offers via SMS.

So it all ends up with SMS again, right?

Character sketch

Yes, because:

1. Ninety-eight percent of SMS are opened and responded to within 60 minutes versus only 5 percent of emails that are opened.

2. Only 10 percent of SMS are unsolicited versus over 90 percent of emails.

3. More than 7 trillion SMS messages are expected to be sent globally in 2011, according to ABI Research.

If you set up your system correctly, you can continue to legally engage your prospective customers via SMS after they entered your competition.

You are also able to tailor your offerings much better because you have collected valuable information about what your target market wants to hear from you.

This lowers your advertising costs because you not only speak exclusively to people who asked to hear from you but you also can give them the specific information that they are interested in.

To do this in an easy and cost-effective manner you simply send out bulk SMS messages to your database.

If you have more to say than the 160 characters SMS allows you, you can always include a hyperlink to the relevant page on your mobile site.

There are a large number of service providers in the market that do this for you or let you do it yourself, which is not only cheaper but also very easy and does not require you to have any special skills.

Tool road

However, these services are only a bulk SMS tool and this poses two challenges:

1. You still have to know how to use the tool. Just as with a screw driver, which you can use as a screwdriver or as a chisel, but it is much more effective as a screw driver.

2. You still have to know how to integrate the tool into an overall marketing strategy, most probably together with other tools, to get the full effect.

Most of the providers of this bulk SMS tool do not supply this additional support. They simply argue that you can use bulk SMS to reach your database cost effectively. This is, of course, true.

But how do you build your database? How do you design compelling, dynamic campaigns? How do you integrate this tool into your overall marketing strategy?

You can have the best marketing tools in the world, but to get the most out of your marketing investment you need to have a comprehensive strategy.

You can easily ship around this challenge by either speaking to a marketing strategist when you plan your campaign – more expensive – or by looking for an off-the-shelf service that includes both bulk SMS credits and a comprehensive strategy on how to use them in an integrated way with a mobile site and your other existing marketing tools, which is more affordable. ■

Alexander Gregori is owner of Dawn Anna Investments (Pty) Ltd.'s myMobWorld, RichMobile, MobileMarketingWinner$ and ThinkingMobile in Gaborone, Botswana. Reach him atalex@mymobworld.com.

What every brand needs to know for mobile SEM

By Dennis Glavin

Mobile search engine marketing has come a long way in the past year. Consumers have embraced enhanced smartphones on platforms such as Windows Phone 7, Apple's iPhone, Research In Motion's BlackBerry and Google's Android, and are also searching more than ever on devices.

Advanced smartphone use in the United States grew annually by 57 percent according to comScore MobiLens (November 2010).

Smartphones versus feature phones

As HTML devices continue to grow in popularity, each of the major search engines has the opportunity to extend its PC search ads to this new device class.

These devices not only have better computing power than feature phones, but they can also render a standard HTML page designed for the PC Web and, in some cases, support mobile commerce-related transactions.

While ecommerce is on the rise, data suggests that transactions in the offline world are increasingly being influenced by mobile searches.

According to Microsoft's internal data, query chain analysis suggests mobile consumers tend to take immediate action based on their mobile search experience, more so than online consumers.

Percentage of Search Intent ("chains") that Include "Act Local" Queries

Percentage of Search Intent ("chains") that Include "Commerce" Queries

Source: Keystone Microsoft Internal, 2010

Mobile query chains complete in minutes or hours, compared to PC query chains which can take weeks or months to complete.

In fact, the study not only confirmed that most searches were local but mobile consumers were nearly twice as likely as PC searchers to be looking to take action locally, and with commercial intent.

Consumers ready for mobile

Research suggests that consumers are ready to make mobile part of their daily lives.

For instance, according to Microsoft's internal research, 50 percent of U.S. adults are interested in receiving and redeeming coupons on their mobile phones and 39 percent of U.S. merchants plan on deploying mobile coupons or special offers in the next year.

And when you overlay location data, more than 61 percent express interest in receiving location-based coupons and offers. The consumer demand is there.

Keys to success

Agencies and marketers can take advantage of this growing trend and extend their existing online search or contextual ad campaigns to mobile.

In fact, there are a number of search campaigns that may already be reaching mobile consumers and driving volume.

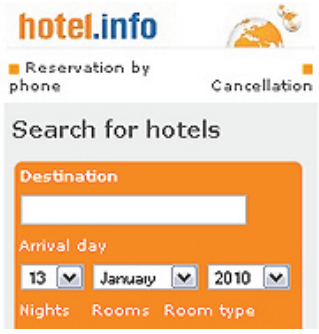
To take things to the next level, Microsoft believes now is the time to segment and optimize smartphone SEM efforts separately from PC campaigns.

Because consumers search differently on their mobile device than on their PC, their search terms and their intent are different, which calls for mobile-specific keyword and bid strategies, creative copy and landing pages customized for mobile audiences.

The mobile search experience is vastly different from the PC Web experience - from different inputs such as location, voice and camera to different contexts such as out of home, in car and in store to different states of mind.

Because of this, advertisers need to take a different approach to mobile than they did for the PC. Keyword lists should begin with broader, more generic root terms.

Copy and creative should speak directly to the mobile context (e.g. "from your phone," "on the go," "with your mobile") and landing pages should be simple in design and navigation without any Flash elements or other heavy page objects. Landing pages should be ideally formatted for smartphones.

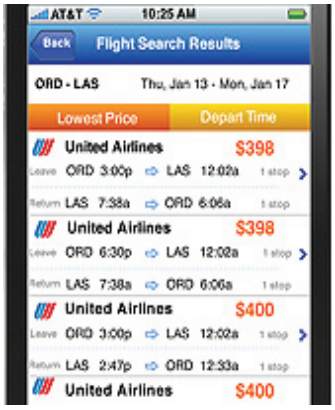


It is important to remember that mobile search behavior is also different on a mobile device than on a PC.

Consumers often use shorter query chains along with different and fewer search terms.

As a result, the use of root terms is very important.

Advertisers may be selling a known brand of women's high-fashion shoes, but on a mobile device, "cute shoes in Georgetown" might drive more volume than a name brand.



Take it to the next level

There are more than 61 million U.S. consumers carrying smartphones today, with the number of consumers increasing daily, according to comScore MobiLens (November 2010).

When one of those consumers searches, he or she is very close to making a purchase and can be influenced with a discount, special offer or a convenient, nearby location.

The opportunity in mobile for search marketers is real and is growing.

It is time to get serious about mobile search advertising by taking a unique approach. This should yield promising results. ■

Dennis Glavin is group product manager of mobile search and local at Microsoft Advertising, Redmond, WA. Reach him at dennis.glavin@microsoft.com.

Basic rules of mobile Web development

By Steve Timpson

Designing the user experience for Web sites has always been a bit like the alchemist explaining the art of transmuting metals to the uninitiated.

Compound the mystery with the adaptation of desktop sites to the mobile appliance and it may seem positively a philosophical and spiritual discipline only understood to those of ancient Mesopotamian descent grounded in the time before cattle were domesticated.

The reality is that the conversion of desktop Web sites to the mobile Web is not that mysterious.

Hopefully we can simplify this into seven considerations.

Follow basic rules of design

These are not unique to Web site design, but design in general. Most of these are already established to some degree through your brand marketing.

Never forget, the mobile Web experience is an extension of your brand experience to your customers and, frankly, threads through all your marketing verticals.

Basic design rules of thumb:

Audience – The application of your current site knowledge and insight into designing the mobile experience for your audience and what their needs are.

Image – The way images are added and used to support your message.

Layout – The use of elements within your page layouts for easier readability and navigation. Consistency in the use of functional button conventions should be considered from page to page.

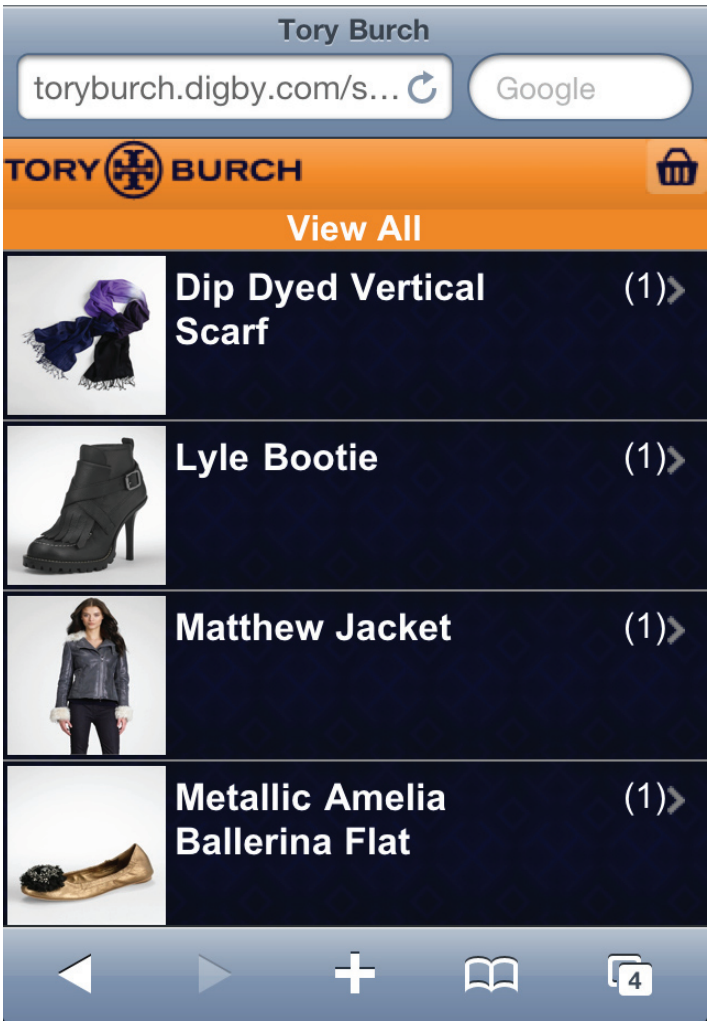
Typography – General rules about optimum arrangement and appearance of printed content. The various mobile devices capabilities and browser specifications should be understood. Thoughtful consideration for consistency in font size, font style and type usage.

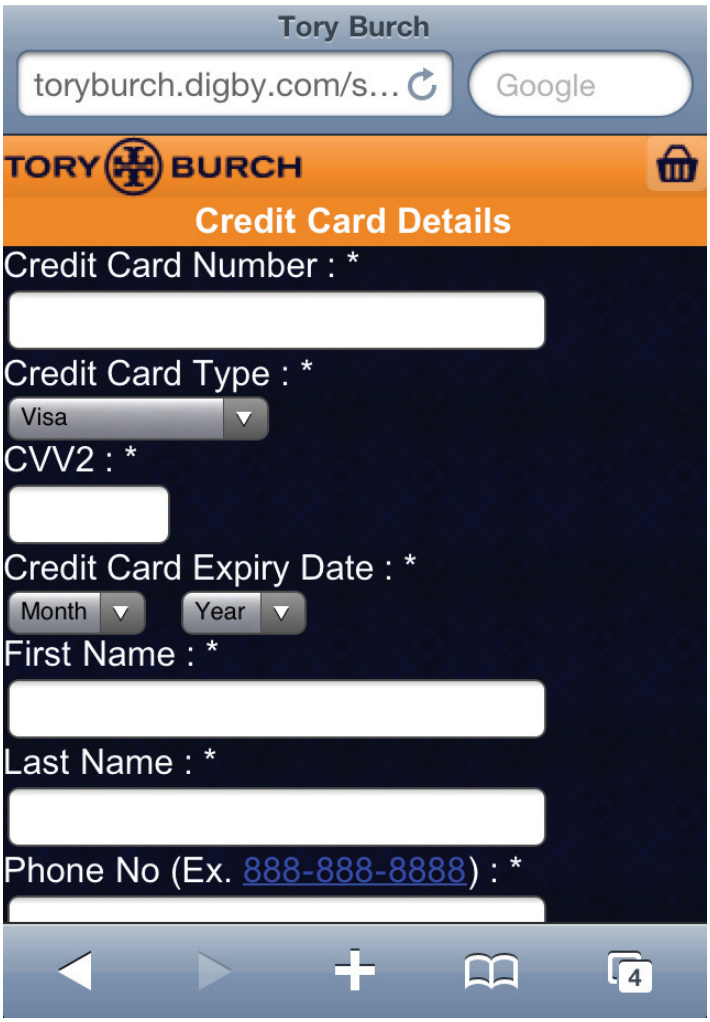
Color – The use of color, as well as compositional effects of color, uses and psychological effects, or simply consistency in the use of your current company color scheme.

Balance – Equilibrium in the various elements on the page is important.

Contrast – The use of variations in patterns, edges, value, intensity, temperature, texture, size and shape to show visual relationships and separation, creating definition and depth.

Emphasis – Effective use of the mobile screen area. Where the consumer will first cast her eyes on the site and move around the screen.





Use color, space, visual movement, proportion, unity and shape to provide the viewer with context and content.

Understand your audience

Get to the needs of your customers, as fast as possible. This is about understanding your audience, how you intend to relate the brand to the audience and how you want to deliver on the needs of that audience in the mobile space.

Mobile users are accessing the Web on mobile for immediate needs. Think in terms of optimizing the user experience through layout, imagery and essential activities.

What do you intend for the user to be able to do on your mobile Web site? It is important to keep in mind that your mobile site represents your brand.

Screen size

Ensure that main navigation header and footers are relevant and repeated.

Screen size is valuable space and pushing content below the fold must be thoughtfully done.

Basic controls should always be available (e.g. back button or homepage) as well as critical information points (i.e. locators, shopping carts, terms of use, privacy, about link to PC site).

Provide only essential information

Site dwell time is critical in the mobile space. There is less browsing and more searching. Information is of high importance to the mobile Web site user.

Readership time is different on mobile versus desktop. Thin down large bodies of information.

Load times and data feeds can affect users' decisions to wait on a mobile Web site.

If large bodies of information are necessary, think of how to break this out into more navigation points or pages.

Break up the content so that consumers can click to the portion of the data that are important to them at that moment.

Action function
Clearly indicate what action function or button has been selected.

Highlight buttons in a way that is easy to see by use of a different color or a clear box outline of the button. Make sure the consumer knows where she is on the page as she views and scrolls.

User inputs
Make user inputs easy or simple to execute.

For example, once you have a customer moving through the transaction process it is key to conversion that you make the activities required as frictionless as possible.

Think about how to make the pay portal a one-click experience or easily managed through cloud-based user stored information, or as simple as click-to-call versus copying and pasting into the phone.

Text entry on mobile devices is harder than on a desktop and must be thoughtfully laid out for mobile. Account edit function changes should be easy to change with only the click of a few buttons such as how to receive notifications, or the selection of pay options.

User comfort
Do not forget user comfort factors. Things such as the layout and scroll are obvious, but additionally think about the use of color and contrast of the background and buttons.

Can the user see the site easily in all lighting conditions? Does the color selection allow for easy identification of button selection?

Follow these basic design conventions and add some analytics to tweak performance as well as an ongoing user feedback option for site improvement and your customers will have a user experience that is sublime. ■

Steve Timpson is president of Siteminis, Atlanta. Reach him at steve@siteminis.com.

Use mobile video advertising for branding

By Ujjal Kohli

In the digital age, many marketers make the assumption that television remains the ultimate medium for branding.

While it is true that the story-driven experience of sight, sound, motion and emotion on a large screen will continue to engage consumers, there is a new way of consuming media that is already complementing TV in the branding department: mobile.

Advancement of mobile

With the advent of smartphones and now tablet computers, video is being literally taken into new locations and dimensions.

Mobile phone penetration is now second only to TV, or 89 percent, according to CTIA, and with 45 percent of consumers having 3G connections (comScore, June 2010), video on wireless devices is a reality.

Nielsen, the stalwart of TV measurement, is now in the business of measuring video wherever it is consumed in what it calls the "Three-Screen Report," which is issued each quarter.

Those who consume video on mobile devices spend more time with it than they do video on the wired Web: 3:37 versus 3:10 hours per month.

ComScore estimates that 10 million people in the United States are now mobile video consumers and that smartphones are driving the usage.

The iPad – and the flurry of tablet competitors that will follow – are making video ads and content as beautiful as on HDTV.

Video consumption

The amount of video consumed on mobile devices is still very small compared to that of TV where usage is, after all, still growing, albeit mostly among older demographics.

For marketers, a mobile video buy can complement TV and increase reach of consumers ages 18–34.

This is the post-MTV video generation: one that consumes more media wherever possible and demands more control over the experience.

Mobile is personal

Mobile devices are personal: they offer a powerful connection to the consumer – fulfilling on American Express' long-ago brand promise of "Don't leave home without it" – and they are a more immersive experience than the Web, where the consumer is often overwhelmed with dozens of elements competing for attention.

Consumers tend to seek out major brands in terms of video content – there is much less search activity than on the wired Web – and often view the video in a mode where they are truly focusing.

According to data from Rhythm NewMedia, mobile video is consumed throughout the day: on the way to work, at work, while waiting in lines – and even in living rooms at night.

Video advertising

Mobile video even has its own version of primetime: usage peaks from 8 – 11 p.m. Even in a time period when people are most likely to be watching their 42-inch plasmas, some are choosing this other device over others to meet their entertainment needs.

Another great benefit of mobile video for brand marketers is that nothing extraordinarily complicated needs to be created for mobile.

The standard ad unit is a 15-second pre-roll and since there are no "pods," the connection between content and sponsor is more pronounced.

According to Rhythm's data, 87 percent of pre-rolls are completed.

Video ad networks work with brands to aggregate reach and can ensure that the ads will play properly on any video-capable mobile device.

Mobile video also offers advertisers control over various aspects of advertising: the ads can be frequency-capped, which solves inefficiency issues and allows for greater dispersion and reach of the impressions.

Targeting ads

Ads can be targeted via user-supplied information, behavioral data or by context.

Depending on the unit – in addition to pre-rolls you can also develop rich media units as in online – advertisers can also choose how to measure: whether through a passive exposure basis such as TV, or go a step further and assess video completion rates, engagement within ad units, click-to-retailer locator or Web site and even buy through a preferred merchant partner.

If marketers choose to use a direct response type metric, the click-through rates for pre-roll video average 1.7 percent, more than ten times the DoubleClick stated average of online banners.

Mobile is changing how brand marketers think about establishing relationships with their customers. ■

Ujjal Kohli is CEO of Rhythm NewMedia, Mountain View, CA. Reach him at ujjal@rhythmnewmedia.com.

Harnessing the power of mobile video ads

By Chhavi Upadhyay

More brand advertisers today are turning to the likes of the mobile click-to-video ad unit because of its proven effectiveness.

In-application advertising is growing in proportion to the explosion in the mobile applications field: there are more than 100,000 Android applications and the iPhone App Store has more than 300,000.

In June 2010, comScore identified social networking as the fastest-growing content category across mobile applications and browsers.

Social mobile ads

With advertisers doubling their reach through users accessing mobile applications, the addition of social-media-sharing options on rich media ads increases the viral reach of their brand across increasingly popular social networking sites.

In a recent campaign for the film "Repo Men" by Universal Pictures, iVdopia aimed to engage moviegoers and raise awareness, interest and intent to watch the movie by aligning its mobile strategy with the movie's marketing campaign.

The result was pre-application videos ads, which ran while the application loaded, and banner ad units, which featured various social-media-sharing functions.

These ads created an integrated opportunity for users to engage and share trailers, video clips and photos from "Repo Men."

Here is how it worked: By clicking "Learn more" on the video, the ad unit allowed the user to watch and share the "Repo Men" trailer via Facebook and Twitter; download wallpapers; view multiple video clips and photos; visit the movie's Web site; and buy movie tickets.

Results

The performance of the pre-application video – at 568 percent greater than online in-stream video advertising benchmarks – and banner ad units – at 400 percent greater than industry benchmarks – outperformed the online medium.

From the multiple user-engagement options on the banner ad unit, more than 30 percent of the users who viewed the trailer shared the clip with friends on Facebook and Twitter.

The "Repo Men" campaign illustrated the power of video ads as well: More than 50 percent of the users watched the entire trailer of the film. On average, they watched 10.8 seconds, or more than two-thirds of the clip.

Context-aware

The emergence of mobile video advertising dovetails with the idea that context-aware marketing is taking off.

As users become drawn and engaged by rich media and video ads, they are more inclined to take the next step by making a purchase.

When users are more likely to click the video ad, watch the entire clip and share it with a friend, they in turn are more likely to seek out a nearby theatre and attend a screening.

Expectations have shifted to where the so-called wow factor, available through one-click sharing, is an integral component in helping advertisers effectively target a greater proportion of mobile users. ■

Chhavi Upadhyay is co-founder and chief operating officer of iVdopia, San Jose, CA. Reach her at chhavi@vdopia.com.