

Become a Mobile Marketing Master

Three ways to reach customers when they are on the move

The smartphone is changing how consumers make buying decisions. With just a few taps, you can find a contractor, schedule an appointment, or make a purchase and have it shipped to your house. Mobile commerce is so quick and easy that more than half of all U.S. online shoppers will use a smartphone or tablet to buy at least one item in 2013, and eMarketer™ predicts that number will jump to 77 percent by 2017.¹

This dramatic growth presents a big opportunity for small businesses that can use this sales and marketing channel to their advantage. Many have already realized the potential: Nearly three-quarters of the businesses surveyed in the 2013 AT&T Small Business Technology Poll are increasing their mobile marketing budgets this year.² Mobile is not just for retail shops and restaurants. Professional services firms, medical practices, and other businesses also need to master how to use it.

Align mobile with your goals

Mobile offers several compelling opportunities to increase your company's visibility and boost sales. But it's important to consider how mobile can help achieve your goals:

- A mobile-friendly site could reach customers who continue to spend more time on their smartphones.
- A text messaging campaign promoting a sale may be a great way to bring in more store traffic.
- A mobile app can provide customers with vast amounts of information at their fingertips.

To help develop your mobile strategy, consider the following three questions and review the examples of how businesses like yours could use mobile.

1. Do you have a mobile-friendly website?

Many businesses have websites that look great on desktop PCs and laptops but are difficult to use on mobile devices. Traditional websites tend to look very small on mobile devices or don't render properly because of compatibility challenges between web and mobile technology formats. Also remember that many smartphone users are looking to take specific actions quickly, but information like a store's location may be hard to find because general business information and other content is usually displayed more prominently.

To address the needs of handheld users, mobile websites are designed for smartphone and tablet environments. You can customize your mobile site to highlight the information most important to consumers who may be searching for you while they're on the move.

For example, a restaurant may promote its new menu on its traditional website. But a mobile user already out and about may be more interested in the restaurant's address, hours, or a telephone number to place an order or reserve a table.

Business examples

- An engineering firm could have its traditional website continue to provide in-depth information about its multiple vertical industries. Dividing its mobile website into three main sections (Company, Services, and Contact Us) could help users locate information quickly.
- A food and beverage company's mobile site could help consumers find the closest store carrying its products, feature recipes, and include online ordering capabilities.

2. Can text messaging help you reach consumers on the move?

If you instinctively check your mobile device every time you receive a new text message, you're not alone. About 90 percent of all text messages are read within three minutes of delivery, according to research by mobile^{SQUARED}.³

This makes text messaging—also known as Short Message Service (SMS)—an effective way to reach consumers. In addition to traditional text, adding video links to your SMS messages can help make an impression with consumers. A number of services can provide you with the technology to create and manage your SMS campaigns. Many let you add photos and videos to your messages.

When writing promotional text messages, keep them short, to the point, and interesting. When tracking results, determine which messages get the highest response. Are texts sent in the morning more effective than ones sent later in the day? Consider testing differently worded versions of your offers to see how they compare.

Business examples

- A deli could receive lunch orders via text, which would make ordering easier for customers and enable the deli to prepare many of the orders before customers walk through the door. The deli could also text coupons and other discounts with photos of the sale items to help draw more patrons.
- A doctor's office could offer patients the option to receive text messages instead of phone reminders for scheduled appointments and other news such as flu shot availability. The service would help reduce missed appointments and the administrative time spent on manually calling patients.

3. Is a mobile app right for you?

Mobile apps let you provide more content, capabilities, and customization than mobile sites. Because the apps are installed on mobile devices, they typically run faster than mobile websites and may even work without an Internet connection. They also tend to perform better because they are built for specific operating systems.

Businesses often create mobile apps because they have an area that requires too much bandwidth to work effectively as part of a mobile site, or they want to highlight their industry expertise by offering additional information. Some mobile apps let users "bookmark" information such as health tips or data for current projects, while also providing more resources such as interactive maps.

Many pre-made apps are available that you can buy off the shelf and customize to your business. This is typically cheaper than building an app from scratch.

Business examples

- A building materials supplier could strengthen relationships with area contractors by providing an app that lets contractors calculate job estimates faster. Contractors could determine the cost of most materials by selecting products and then entering the size of the job.
- A financial services firm could develop an app that covers a variety of client needs. One part could let parents of high school students review college financial aid information, costs, and tools, while other users could track stock updates or scan investment topics and tools.

¹eMarketer, [Smartphones, Tablets Drive Faster Growth in Ecommerce Sales](#)

²AT&T 2013 [Small Business Technology Poll](#)

³mobile^{SQUARED}, [Conversational Advertising](#)

Visit AT&T for more tools and information on how mobile can help grow your small business.

AT&T offers several resources to help you learn more about how to attract new customers and to build relationships through mobile marketing, including how to:

- Create a mobile website.
- Send text messages.
- Use mobile apps.
- Reach customers using location-based services.

Learn more and sign up to receive helpful tips and information at:
http://networkingexchangeblog.att.com/topics/small_business.

