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As you've probably noticed, more and more people are using smartphones and tablets to do everything they used to do on their computers – such as shopping, paying bills, checking email, and engaging in social media.

Due to this, mobile marketing has given businesses around the world a new way to connect with local consumers; right on their mobile devices.

Smartphones and tablets are the two primary types of devices used for mobile marketing, and each offer unique advantages and challenges. At their core, however, both devices utilize the same types of marketing.

Advertising is a field that has grown alongside technology. Marketing was primarily done on the radio in the early to mid-1900s, mainly on television in the mid-1900s to the present, and so on. As technological advancements have led to the evolution and creation of new mediums, marketing methods and requirements evolved.

Mobile marketing is extremely similar to Internet marketing, but with all the focus being on reaching consumers via their mobile devices. Instead of trying to air commercials during times when their target demographic is active, such as with television and radio marketing, mobile advertisers must have a different approach.

For instance, they have to look at a myriad of aspects including network coverage, the types of smartphones or tablets being used by their target market, audience segmentation, and much more.

In addition to the added complexity, however, mobile marketing also provides increasingly accessible and effective advertising possibilities.

Are you still wondering if mobile marketing is right for your company?

Taking the plunge into mobile marketing is somewhat scary for a lot of businesses, which is understandable. However, you can no longer afford to ignore this massive opportunity to truly get in front of your target market.

Mobile marketing is a very broad term and can be somewhat confusing. Here are some of the top questions most businesses have about mobile marketing; this should help clarify some things that you may have been wondering about yourself:

## **1. What is a Mobile Website?**

In a nutshell, a mobile website is a website that is easily viewable from mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets. Traditional websites were made for viewing on desktop computers. However, these pages are not easily accessible from mobile devices.

Mobile phones and tablets do not have the processing power, large viewing screens and fast speeds of desktop computers. So when mobile users access the web via their mobile devices, they usually experience slow loading speeds as well as the inability to find the information they need due to the amount of excessive scrolling that is required.

Therefore, businesses should have a mobile-friendly version of their websites, which still consists of browser-based HTML pages. However, these pages are built to comfortably fit and view on mobile devices that access the using WiFi, 3G or 4G networks.

Mobile websites also allow users to access mobile-specific features such as click-to-call, click-to-email, or location-based mapping.

Businesses that want to capture their mobile audience must consider adaptability so their websites are compatible with all mobile operating systems; this includes being navigable through multiple browsers and visible at all mobile resolutions.

## **2. What is a Mobile App?**

The mobile app industry is exploding and expected to be a key player in the marketing world. Mobile applications, also called "mobile apps," are software applications that have been created for small handheld devices, such as smartphones and tablets.

Most mobile devices today come pre-loaded with multiple apps and consumers can download many more via the internet; these apps can be found through various application distribution platforms.

Mobile apps range in size and complexity to fit the overall goals of the business. These apps are created to allow instant, real-time interaction with

your customers; this includes making special offers and promotions directly to them via their mobile devices.

Some common app features businesses use today are social media and blog integration, mobile coupons, push notifications, ordering and reservations, list-building features, and much more.

### **3. What Is The Difference Between a Mobile Website And a Mobile App?**

Mobile websites and apps can seem very similar at first-glance, but they are totally different. Determining which is best suited to fit your needs depends upon a number of factors, including the make-up of your target audience, your available budget, how you plan to use them, and required features.

If possible, it's not a bad idea to get both if they fit your goals and budget; the more mobile exposure you have, the better.

Generally speaking, mobile websites are regular sites that have been streamlined and optimized for mobile use. The display and functionality on mobile devices and mobile apps are often used in a complimentary role.

For instance, a delivery restaurant, which offers online ordering from their main website might offer the same functionality in a stripped down fashion for mobile users.

They will likely eliminate most bandwidth-intensive images and only include a basic menu instead of one with in-depth descriptions of each dish. The goal for mobile websites is to give the user the basic functionality of your main website while compensating for mobile limitations.

If that same restaurant had a mobile app, as well, users might expect to find deeper descriptions of the types of food they sell, or other information relating to the food, region, or restaurant itself.

Mobile apps are not intended or suited to be a replacement for a mobile website due to the fact that the end goal is different for both.

#### **4. What is Text Message Marketing?**

This marketing method is relatively simple and consists of exactly what it sounds like: marketing to individuals via direct text messages. Since it is illegal to indiscriminately harvest thousands of phone numbers and send unsolicited messages, those wishing to engage in this type of marketing require interested consumers to sign up for it voluntarily.

Once signed up, consumers receive periodic text messages informing them about special offers or sales, for instance. Text messages are effective tools to send directed messages to interested people; the only potentially hard part is getting those people to take the steps to sign up. Once they do, most of them become loyal customers who look forward to receiving messages about your offers; which equates to more repeats sales and higher profits for your business.

#### **5. What is a QR Code?**

QR codes (Quick Response), are the little black barcodes you may have seen on printed advertisements and products, such as magazines, flyers, and even websites. Users with capable smartphones can install barcode apps and then scan and read those codes.

QR codes can direct users anywhere on the web, from your main business website, to a sale page, to mobile-exclusive coupons, to online videos and more. While only a small percentage of the total mobile market has scanned QR codes to date, that number is growing quickly.

Businesses all over the globe are starting to use these codes to build excitement around their company by providing instant gratification to mobile users.

#### **6. What is In-App Advertising?**

Many non-business related apps, such as text message apps, maps, games, and others, offer advertising space within their apps. If a business's target audience plays a particular game more often than others, that business can potentially pay for a banner ad to display to app users.

This method requires much of the same research as actual website advertising with the added consideration of whether the app in question actually offers ad space.

## **7. What Do I Need To Know About Smartphones and Tablets?**

Since smartphones have effectively become miniature, portable computers that have vastly more functionality than older style cell phones, it helps to know which type your target demographic uses more because your marketing strategy will vary greatly depending on the answer. Different types and brands of smartphones and tablets are more popular among different demographics.

For example, Apple products are generally highly popular among younger people who live in urban environments, and Android-powered devices are rising in popularity within that and other demographics at an ever-increasing rate. Blackberries are generally more popular amongst the older, business crowd. Each type presents its own challenges that must be addressed:

- **Coverage Area** – Have a marketing strategy that depends upon a high transfer of data, such as with images or video? You want to pay special attention to the availability and speed of coverage in the areas you plan to market in. It would be a waste to create a video advertising your business, for example, only to release it an area where nobody will be able to watch it.
- **Where To Market Your Mobile Presence** – For those wishing to advertise with the least amount of stress and effort, major websites like Google, YouTube, Facebook, and others are popular options. They provide cheap marketing solutions for those who don't have the time or budget to thoroughly research the habits of their target demographic. For those who do decide to research into all the specifics of their target audience, the options for where you end up marketing are as varied as the demographics themselves.

## **8. What Demographic For Age Tends To Be The Best Target For Mobile Marketing?**

As with any marketing platform, researching prime demographics is an important element of preparing for a successful campaign. At the end of the day, target demographics will depend on your business.

For instance, a local video game store will do better targeting the 18-29 age group while a local kitchen designer may have more luck in a higher age bracket.

For those who are not interested in serious demographic targeting, the 18-29 age bracket takes first place as far as the percentage that own smartphones.

Regardless of these percentages, again, it pays to do your research to find the best age group specific to your business type.

## **9. What is the Social, Local, Mobile Movement?**

SoLoMo, or Social, Local, Mobile, is one of the fastest growing and most prominent trends in mobile marketing today. National marketing options are wasted by local businesses that operate within a small, specific area.

Companies that provide advertising services have begun to take steps to address that problem by offering local marketing packages catered specifically for small, local businesses with limited budgets.

Companies looking into entering the mobile marketing arena are in the unique position of being able to utilize a relatively new tool that is constantly evolving and changing to meet the increasing demands of life on the go.

Most consumers engage in social media from their mobile devices, which is great for businesses that are revving up their mobile marketing efforts. By going mobile, you're essentially boosting your social presence as well.

## **10. What Are Some Things That I Should Research Before Starting?**

Like advertising in any medium, from billboards to television to mobile, certain things need to be reviewed to ensure your marketing efforts are right for your intended targets. The primary difference between mobile marketing and other forms of marketing is that it requires a closer look at consumer behavior; and in this case, their mobile behavior.

If you are getting a mobile website, you should first figure out what type of information your audience would be looking for when accessing your site from their mobile devices. Is it directions? Is it a menu? Is it your hours of operation? It could be all of these. However, keep it simple and only provide important information they would want quick access to on your mobile website.

If you are going to start a Text Message Marketing campaign, it is important to research who your target audience is, decide on the best way to get them to opt-in to your list, and finally, decide what types of content and special offers you will be sending to them. You should also decide how often you will send messages to your list, as well as how you will track the results.

These are just a couple of examples of things you should research, but a professional mobile marketing specialist will be able to help you research and plan the right strategies for you.

While it may seem like a daunting amount of information in the beginning, internet marketing was just as complicated and involved at its inception. However, it has taken the marketing world to new places that were unimaginable just a few years ago. Mobile advances promise to revolutionize marketing just as much as the internet itself did.

If you are ready to take your business to a new level by leveraging the power of mobile usage, contact me today for a free, no-obligation consultation about how to get started.

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