

Smartphones and smarter marketing



Ian Doescher

Ian Doescher is the director of nonprofit marketing at Pivot Group, a marketing agency in Portland, Oregon. He can be reached at ian@askpivot.com.

IF YOU WERE MISSING half of your potential audience, you'd want to know. Right?

It will not surprise you when I say people use their mobile phones more than ever, but it may surprise you when you learn how true that statement is. According to Smart Insights,¹ as of 2014 more people own mobile phones than desktop computers, and 51 percent of adults' time on digital media is spent on a mobile phone.

For anyone in marketing, this means if you don't have a mobile strategy, you are missing out.

The good news is that reaching people on their phones isn't as difficult as it may sound. Here are five ways to make sure you're putting your best foot forward into the mobile market:

1. Make your website responsive.

This is a point I cannot emphasize strongly enough. A responsive website is a website that has elements — images, text, menus, buttons and so on — that resize based on a user's screen width. As the screen size gets smaller or larger, the website adjusts appropriately. The effect of a responsive website is that the site looks great whether it is viewed on a giant monitor, a laptop monitor, a tablet or a mobile phone.

You have probably visited websites on your mobile phone that look terrible, because they are just miniature versions of a full website, with text too small to read and buttons that are impossible for fingers to press with accuracy.

Having a responsive website ensures that when potential customers visit your website on their mobile phone it will be a pleasant experience.

2. Make your emails responsive.

If you are sending marketing emails to your customers (and if you're not, you should be), those too can be made respon-

sive so they look great whether customers check email on a desktop computer or a mobile phone.

Making emails responsive is challenging, because there are unique sizes for different kinds of phones — iPhones, Galaxies, Droids and so on. That said, a smart programmer should have no problem making your emails shine on every device.

3. Build a text list.

Did you know there is an email address associated with every mobile phone? If you have customers willing to receive texts from you, have them send a text message to an email address like signup@yourdomain.com.



You'll receive an email that looks like 5035551212@vzwpx.com. (That is the email address of a Verizon phone with the number 503-555-1212.) Once you have their phone's email address, add it to your email list.

Most email marketing providers (like MailChimp) automatically create a text-only version of each email you send. When sent to a mobile phone, your message will show up as a text message. The benefit? Not only have your customers given you permission to market to them, but when you send your message they receive a notification on their phone, so the odds they will read the email are higher.

4. Encourage the use of mobile-ready coupons.

Via text or email, or downloadable

from your website, give customers a coupon they can use on their mobile phone. They can pull up the coupon when they come in, and you can verify it or scan it.

Mobile coupons are a good benefit for mobile customers. In other words, they are a way to reward a particular group of customers.

5. Extra credit: develop an app.

Are you among the mobile marketing elite? Do you have the budget for app development? While custom app development is expensive, there are services that make the process of developing apps easier and easier.

Apps are perfect for customers who order from you regularly and want to track their shipments. An app people rely on and keep on their phone for regular use is an ideal tool for mobile marketing.

The list above is offered in priority order: if you can only do one thing, make your website responsive. If you can do all five, go for it!

The trend toward mobile marketing will only grow as cellular networks improve and mobile phones become more like minicomputers. Creating a mobile marketing plan now is one of the smartest steps you can take for your future business. ©

¹Chaffey, D. (2016, October 16). Mobile Marketing Statistics compilation. Smart Insights. Retrieved from <http://www.smartinsights.com/>.