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THE NEXT STEP IN MOBILE MARKETING …
MEANINGFUL INTEGRATION

By Michael J. McDermott

M obile marketing is hot, with U.S. businesses projected to spend in excess of $1 billion on the medium this year and $2.55 billion by 2014, according to eMarketer. A separate study by the Interactive Advertising Bureau found that nearly 75 percent of the top-level brand marketing executives polled said they plan to boost their mobile spend over the next two years, with 35 percent projecting increases of 50 percent or more.

While that's certainly great news, many brands continue to drag their heels when it comes to letting mobile play with the big boys in

their marketing arsenals, choosing instead to silo the medium or deploy it on an ad-hoc basis. Research from *Chief Marketer* found that just a third of marketers had integrated mobile into a cross-platform strategy as of last year.

There seems to be broad consensus among marketers that greater integration of mobile in the path-to-purchase cycle is a desirable outcome. To wit, nearly six in 10 of those surveyed by *Chief Marketer* said integration was on their "to do" list going forward. But why is there still some hesitancy when it comes to integrating mobile into cross-platform strategies? For one, the digital ecosystem is complex, says Geoffrey Handley, cofounder of The Hyperfactory, a Meredith Integrated Marketing Agency based in New York. Too often, digital-savvy marketers within an enterprise lack other marketing skills, and vice versa. That leads many brands to outsource mobile to self-proclaimed cross-platform experts, a path that often strangles the potential for innovation, Handley notes.

Metrics are another problem. "A one-size-fits-all approach doesn't work with any channel or medium, and we are increasingly faced with this in mobile," Handley argues. "The current metrics, whether for assessing the business in the first place or from a performance perspective, are not suitable for mobile. Rather than solving the issue of metrics, marketers simply shunt mobile off to the side. The trial-and-test mentality that is pervasive in marketing also contributes to mobile being siloed."

Mark Kaplan, founder and CEO of the New York–based software company GEM, also has strong feelings on this topic. "The primary reason mobile is so often treated on an ad-hoc basis is that the marketing channel still views it as a technical capability instead of a consumer behavior," he insists. "After all, a mobile phone is just a handheld device for accessing the Internet."

Kaplan believes a major obstacle to meaningful integration of mobile into marketing strategies at large companies is the lack of exposure at the brand unit level. Most decisions on mobile spending and capabilities appear to be made at the corporate level or in a silo. Moreover, there is the potential for conflict between agencies and

corporate marketing departments. Agencies are trying to "preserve their relevance as they build technical tools that are generally inferior and overpriced compared to those sourced internally," Kaplan says.

Other roadblocks include the proliferation of mobile technologies (SMS/MMS, email, web, apps, games, video, social networking, etc.), fragmentation among mobile marketing services providers, and diffusion of decision-making responsibility within marketing organizations.

Content Is King

One reason marketers must overcome those integration issues is that consumers increasingly obtain input from various sources to make purchase decisions, says Barbara Williams, mobile marketing global practice leader at Microsoft. "Our research shows that more than half of smartphone users go to their mobile device for more information on a product after experiencing advertising on any channel, be it traditional or digital," she says.

Scott Berg, director of digital marketing and ecosystems at HP, concurs. In fact, HP was so convinced of the validity of this hypothesis that it went "all in" with its new Mobile at Retail program earlier this year, a campaign that put quick response (QR) codes, an effective mechanism to spur consumer requests for content, on all HP printers sold through its retail stores along the U.S. East Coast and in Canada. The QR codes link to special mobile sites, but the content those sites contain comes from the same source system HP uses for its other online sites.

"Prior to the rollout (on June 1) we were doing about 200 scans a day, and by the end of July we were doing 1,400 a day," Berg says. "Our predicted monthly page views for this particular area is about 50,000, and time spent on the [mobile] site has increased from about two-and-a-quarter minutes to about four minutes. This was not a test. It was go big or go home."

Kaplan stresses that the quality and relevancy of the content a QR code links to is especially important. "We need to deliver valuable content and clearly communicate this value using calls to action that compel consumers to engage," he says. "We need to hook consumers at their first 'moment of truth' and hold their attention through to purchase."

"In today's fragmented media world, every bit of content has to work harder than ever," adds

Q&A

TIME TO ANSWER THE CALL

ANA Magazine reached out to Fareena Sultan, a professor of marketing at Northeastern University and a member of the editorial review board for the *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, for her insights on mobile marketing.

Q. What is driving the increase in ad spending on mobile marketing?
A. The sheer number of mobile phone users, the ever-increasing number of smartphones, and the development of more and more apps that allow brands to engage in marketing to consumers through the mobile platform all play a role. We call it "brand in the hand" marketing in our research at Northeastern.

Q. Why has the integration of mobile into cross-platform strategies not progressed faster?
A. Some companies may not understand the uniqueness of the medium and the emotional attachment of consumers to the mobile device. Oftentimes, marketing departments may not be that familiar with the nuances of mobile campaigns, and metrics for the mobile platform are still evolving.

Q. What needs to change to accelerate that integration?
A. In some situations, there may be a mindset issue; in others, brands may not have done enough research on how their target customer is using mobile devices in the buying process. Are they soliciting advice from Facebook friends, which they now increasingly access via mobile devices? Are they seeking out nearby offers to where they are presently located? Brands need to know more about consumers' mobile habits, and they need to have the expertise to build mobile campaigns that address those habits. If such expertise does not exist in-house, it may be better to seek the expertise of mobile marketing companies in order to deliver a meaningful campaign on the mobile platform.

Q. What are the keys to successful integration?
A. Understand consumer behavior related to mobile. Many consumers today watch a TV ad and then look at their laptop — which they may have open while watching TV — for more information, and they may follow up with a text message to their friends on mobile. If your target customer is engaging in media multitasking, then you need to be there too, with integrated and engaging campaigns.
— M.J.M.

Jeff Weidauer, vice president of marketing and strategy for Vestcom International, an integrated shopper marketing solutions provider based in Little Rock, Ark. "Each piece, regardless of where it's viewed by the target audience, must support and interact with every other piece in order to be effective."

Digging for Data

Some of the changes required to smooth the path to meaningful integration of mobile into cross-platform marketing strategies are cultural. Many organizations have assigned ownership of different parts of the path-to-purchase cycle to different people within the organization, a tactic that not only does nothing to further the cause of integration, it can be a serious impediment, says Dave

Many brands have made significant strides toward integrating mobile into their cross-platform strategies, with surveys showing increased marketer commitment to this goal.

Lawson, director of mobile engagement at Knotice, an Akron, Ohio–based provider of software that helps companies maximize digital marketing ROI. "Integrating these parts happens a certain way today, and mobile shifts everything on its ear a bit. Does a web programmer own the mobile website? Does the e-commerce person own any conversion opportunity? The customer doesn't care about these things, but they can ignite an internal war for ownership of that customer," he says.

Microsoft's Williams agrees that the "outdated" organizational structure within many marketing organizations is a prime candidate for change. But before organizations can navigate the complex planning process for a truly integrated approach, marketers must improve their skills and agencies, their capabilities.

The lack of access to meaningful information about their customers' mobile habits and content activities was cited by about a third of respondents in the *Chief Marketer* survey, but many in the mobile field see this as a fast-fading challenge. Actionable data on mobile users exists and is being augmented every day, Williams points out, although she admits much of it is still fragmented, making it tougher to form actionable insights. "The key is to develop comprehensive hypotheses and learning plans, gather insights from behavioral and attitudinal data sources, continuously

monitor the results, and challenge the findings to make sure they hold up as innovations impact consumer perceptions and behaviors and the ecosystem evolves and adapts," she says.

Meeting a Brand's Needs

To be sure, many brands have made significant strides toward integrating mobile into their cross-platform strategies, with surveys showing increased marketer commitment to this goal. Adapting the strategy to the brand's specific needs is one key to success, says Mike Fischer, chief marketing officer at Coldwell Banker. Since home buying is not an immediate decision or purchase, Coldwell Banker views its mobile process as a way to introduce the brand and, most important, present its agents with an opportunity to be in front of consumers on their terms, he says.

"We were the first national brand with an iPad app, and we subsequently worked with Apple on how to generate more leads for the app," Fischer relates. "We were one of the initial core group of advertisers to take advantage of Apple's iAd for the iPad. It worked. Our touch rates are five times greater than standard click-through rates on banner ads. More important, we learned that this investment has already spawned ideas that impact even our more traditional web presence."

Yahoo! had great success connecting Toyota and Subway with football fans in cross-platform campaigns involving its Fantasy Football application and mobile website, says Paul Cushman, senior director of mobile sales strategy at Yahoo! "Their branding and advertising was front and center as users continually monitored their teams' progress and regularly conducted their trades," he says. "But, more important, we preserved the user experience, focusing on rich media pop-ups in the mobile app that didn't detract from the content."

Larry DeGaris, director of the Academic Sports Marketing Program at the University of Indianapolis, and Mark Dodds, an associate professor at SUNY Cortland who specializes in event marketing, recently published research demonstrating that integration of mobile marketing into NASCAR sponsorship campaigns returns measurable positive results — including heightened enjoyment of the event for fans visiting sponsors' exhibits, enhanced brand image, and increased purchase intent. "Further, the effects tend to be additive to other sponsorship-linked marketing efforts, such as advertising and sales promotions," DeGaris says.

Tips for Success

Marketers who are successfully integrating mobile into cross-platform campaigns offer a number of suggestions to increase the likelihood of success:

Involve qualified technologists from the start. "To conceive a campaign and finish the desktop and creative before the mobile devices and users are considered is a mistake," says Xavier Facon, chief technology officer at Crisp Media, a New York–based rich media agency focused on mobile and cross-platform solutions.

Focus on customer behavior. Learn what your customers are doing or not doing and identify ways the unique capabilities of mobile might effect a more desirable behavior.

Do your homework. Pick partners carefully, and don't lock into a point solution unless it is the absolute correct fit for a brand's business needs over the coming 12–18 months.

Define what will constitute success for the campaign. Create specific objectives for the mobile channel that tie to the campaign's overarching goals.

Launch, test, analyze, and optimize — quickly. Map targets and determine criteria for measurement. Integrate mobile measurement with other channels via tracking codes, where possible.

Take a holistic agency approach, with all partners involved from day one. By getting everyone aligned with your mobile strategy, you'll ensure consistent messaging.

Understand the target user journey, where each touch point is, and what each medium's role is. "This is a very easy method to show how mobile acts as the glue and enables the wider team to take action on this," Handley says.

Perhaps most important, says HP's Berg, is to stay focused on integrating mobile into cross-platform strategies — and to do it quickly. "This is not about catching up with your competitors," he stresses, "it's about catching up with your customers — and they are already there." ∎