

Wireless Marketing

Opportunities and Implications

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By Inez Blackburn - Author of "Pride Passion Profit - 7 Steps to Category Development"

Words are the most powerful force on earth, as the greatest moments in history and advertising have been captured by words. Words can be electric if chosen correctly, so when you use them to advertise your products, services and brands make them come to life by igniting people's hearts in order to light up their minds. Let the war of ads with text messaging begin!

Marketers today face unprecedented challenges with respect to gaining the consumer's attention due to the emergence and convergence of technology. Consumers today are constantly bombarded with messages from companies trying to gain share of their hearts through effective advertising. One of the biggest questions that I have is why marketers insist on answering questions in their ads that none of their customers are asking. Consumers today are struggling with the current economy and as a result are constantly looking for escape. Too often marketing messages are focused on a product feature or attribute with little relevance to the consumer.

There is a sea of change brewing in the advertising industry triggered by an explosion in digital media. These changes have resulted in tremendous upheavals in traditional advertising and marketing. Historically, television commercials were the medium of choice and a favored way of promoting products and services. Companies spent staggering amounts of their marketing budget on commercials hoping to get the attention of that all illusive consumer.

Today, however, companies are not warming up so readily to traditional advertising. Not only is television viewing down, but consumers prefer downloading commercial-free shows from the Internet, fast-forwarding through commercials on PVR's and dealing commercial-free television on DVDs.

The daily newspaper has also fallen out of favor with advertisers as circulation numbers plummet everywhere. Readership is especially low with young people who prefer getting their news online or through their mobile devices. You don't have to look far to find the proliferation of infomercials, product placements and sponsored television. Companies are looking to new forms of advertising and often look to gaming to promote products of particular

interest through digital storytelling. This type of advertising is fondly referred to as "Advergaming", a form of casual gaming that integrates a product into a popular game. Some of the strongest brands today look to Youtube to advertise their products with customer testimonials leading the charge. Electronic mail, Facebook and Twitter are not far behind as companies compete with each other to create awareness for their brands.

Marketing communications are by definition the means by which companies attempt to inform, persuade and remind consumers directly or indirectly about the products and services and brands that they offer. In many ways, marketing communications can be defined as the true voice of the brand and a major mechanism used by companies to establish a dialogue and build relationships with the targeted consumers.

Effective marketing communications are designed to perform several functions for consumers. Consumers can be told or shown how, when and why to use the product; they can gain insight as to what kind of person is best suited to the product; they can learn who makes the product; gain insight in what the product stands for and the company behind it; and today they have access to the products' Sustainability Index. Marketing communications allow companies to effectively communicate and relate their brands to people, places and events by creating different experiences and feelings to the brand in question as well as other brands. Effective marketing communications will result in a positive impact on brand equity by committing the brands to memory, resulting in a stronger brand image.

Marketing tactics will range from traditional advertising, sales promotion, events public relations and direct marketing to Blogging, Webinars and Videocasts and let's not forget Twitter and Facebook. Independently and collectively, each one of these tactics will form the basis for the marketing mix. But in an arena of emerging technologies with wireless technologies at the forefront what is the best way to get your message across?

The starting point for any effective marketing communication strategy is a complete audit of all interactions your target customer has with your brand and your company. At the recent NRF tech conference, mobile messaging

emerged center stage as the hottest thing for marketing communications. While I see tremendous potential in mobile messaging, I think it is very important to take a step back and truly understand how the customer will react and how mobile marketing is integrated with your entire marketing communication strategy.

The theory of ubiquitous mobility with the convergence of data voice, video, internet and T.V is close at hand as mobile devices are the primary mode of communication. Nirvana for marketers occurs with the ability to engage a consumer through relevant messaging at the right time at the right place and in the right format that will simultaneously deliver the desired result – a positive response from your customer.

Sending a message regarding a promotion, advertising event or product information to a customer's personal cell phone is very different than posting that same message on a billboard, print ads, or direct mail offering. If the customer in question is in the retail store and is looking for information about current promotions and features then receiving an email with a coupon attached or a special code in a text message would work well. But what if the email is received outside the shopping experience and is sitting in the consumer's inbox with 50-100 other marketing messages... how will the message stand out?

Numerous studies in retail and consumer buying behavior substantiate the fact that most purchasing decisions are made in the store and there is a belief that effective targeted mobile messaging will significantly and positively influence consumer buying behavior. As an avid shopper and consumer, I spent a lot of time thinking about how I would react to receiving multiple text messages on my cell phone in the store. As I pondered the thought, I also wondered if my data plan with my current cell phone provider would actually cover the geometric explosion in text messages and I also wondered how the constant messaging would impact my shopping experience. If mobile messaging is the future then technologies such as Bluetooth that do not incur incremental costs for the consumer must be part of the mix.

I then thought about a situation in the store of the future, what if I was in the Metro Store in Germany where shopping carts and shelves were also conveying messages about upcoming promotions and in-store events. I really wondered how the confluence of all these advertising mediums would impact my shopping experience. Would I be more influenced by text message about a promotion or would I stick to the tried-and-true circulars and in-store shelf talkers and direct mail offers or would I be disciplined enough to remember to print coupons of relevance?

I then thought that I should revisit the primary protocols of marketing and felt that you would benefit from a review of traditional communication process models and objectives. Did you know that current research emphasizes the fact that the average consumer is bombarded by a minimum of 2000 commercial messages a day? This explains why numerous advertisers attempt to grab the attention through fear, music, sex appeal or newsworthy headlines -such as how to make \$1 million. The corresponding clutter from ads also represents a major obstacle to this new medium, as non-editorial or program content ranges from 25% to 33% for TV and radio and over 50% for magazines and newspapers. Effective messaging is about relevance and creates a delicate balance between traditional advertising and permission marketing.

Numerous marketing studies also confirm the reality of selective distortion when it comes to advertising, where the receiver will only hear what closely aligns with their belief system. This is an interesting implication and can create further challenges as the receiver will often add information to the message that was originally not there and often overlook other parts of the message that are there. This phenomenon is called amplification and leveling which independently and collectively put increased pressure on the marketer to strive for simplicity, clarity and interest in order to get the key points across.

Over time people will retain only a very small portion of all messages that they receive as a function of relevance and interest. Interestingly if the receiver's attitude towards the initial advertisement is positive, the message will be accepted and internalized and will have high recall. If the initial response is a negative one, the message will most likely be rejected but will remain in the receiver's long-term memory. This is a really important point because what happens if you send a text message to a targeted consumer about a promotion in a store, and the consumer seeks out that promotion and finds that it is no longer available. This experience will have high emotional value for the consumer and will be retained in his/her long-term memory.

I do believe that there is a place for wireless marketing with Apple leading the charge with its invasion of killer APS (Applications). However, I do want to caution you before you leap by reminding you first of some things to consider with mobile messaging as well as remind you of the success factors of traditional marketing and advertising.

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Things to consider when deploying mobile messaging – Opportunities and Limitation*

Activity	Description	Advantages	Limitation
SMS	Consumers are asked to enter an SMS code as they go in a retail location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple to implement • Most consumers know how to send an SMS • Standard functionality on all phones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires the consumer to act • Limited to text only • May be a cost to the consumers without an SMS plan
GPS	Consumers' movements and location are tracked via GPS; Consumers can receive a special offer when entering an area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real time location tracking • Consumers must opt-in to receive messages – opportunity for data collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not work indoors • Limited to area, accuracy may vary
Wi-Fi	Consumers receive marketing message when they enter a Wi-Fi zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can use existing Wi-Fi infrastructure • No cost to consumer for any messages • Experience can be interactive allowing for rich media and data collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wi-Fi capability on limited (but growing) number of phones • Complex (but possible) to pinpoint consumers location
Bluetooth - Traditional	Consumers receive offers on their phone via Bluetooth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vast majority of phones are Bluetooth capable • Allows for rich interactive content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current systems require consumer to have their Bluetooth set to discoverable (less than 7%¹ of consumers have their phone set this way) • Consumers must pair up their phones before every interaction

The critical success factors for any successful marketing campaign are as follows;

1. Target the right consumer with the right message in the right place at the right time
2. Make the message relevant to force the consumer to pay attention, but not be distracted from the current focus
3. The message correctly reflects the target consumer's level of understanding about the product brand or promotion
4. The message correctly positions the brand in terms of points of parity and points of difference
5. The message causes an emotional reaction that will motivate the consumer to consider a purchase
6. The message has a strong association with other brands that the consumer has prior experience with

Final thought: Does your message or advertisements speak to their mind or heart? Will you win by logic or emotion? Before you choose the medium, be sure about the message.

*Overview provided by Bluejaw Media Inc.

¹ Nicole, Tom and Kenn, Holgar: "About the relationship between people and discoverable Bluetooth devices in urban environments" in Proceedings of the 4th international conference on mobile technology, applications, and systems and the 1st international symposium on Computer human interaction in mobile technology, Singapore, Mobility 2007. Study found highest discoverable rate in tested urban environments at 7%.

*"Words are the most powerful drug used by mankind".
- Rudyard Kipling*

*"A man convinced against his will is unconvinced still".
- Pastor Phil Johnson*

Inez Blackburn is a globally recognized speaker, industry leader, innovator and pioneer in launching global brands. She has worked with many Fortune 500 companies and led numerous executives through her "Positioned for Profit" seminars and "Marketing to the Max" workshops. She is currently the President of Market Techniques & Innovations Inc., and an Adjunct Professor at the University of Toronto and SP Jain University. Inez is co-author of "Pride Passion Profit - 7 Steps to Category Development". The book is well positioned to help companies poised for growth to capitalize on global trends through customer intimacy.