

MOBILE MARKETING: REACHING BUYERS WHEREVER THEY ARE

As I write this, it's late afternoon in a hotel lobby. I'm getting hungry but also a little tired. A few years ago, that meant a mediocre meal at the hotel restaurant. Or perhaps I'd ask the hotel concierge for a nearby recommendation, if I wanted some fresh air and a short walk. If I was feeling adventurous, I'd probably search online sites like Zagat's or Yelp and then use Google Maps to find something close by. But I don't do any of these things anymore. Now I pull out my iPhone, fire up a GPS-enabled mobile app like Foursquare, and gaze on a listing of nearby restaurants, complete with information about how far away each one is from me. I can see reviews from customers and tips that people have left about the different choices. I can even see if any of my friends are there right now.

The incredible growth of browser-equipped mobile devices like Androids, iPhones, and iPads means that people like me can now look for products and services while we are on the road. Indeed, in mobile-centric markets like Africa and Asia, mobile Internet connections are more widely used than standard computer connections to the web, since mobiles are what people can afford and since wireless infrastructure is more reliable than landlines. Even in Japan, a land connected by a last-mile optical fiber network that puts the United States to shame, mobile rules because online prime time is the two or more hours daily that people spend riding trains.

According to the International Telecommunications Union,¹ there were 6.9 billion mobile phone subscriptions worldwide in 2014; that's more than 95 percent of the world's population. It's not just creaky old technology, either; some 150 countries offer high-speed 3G service.

Join the Revolution

The global rise of mobile communications has profound implications for marketers. When we engage consumers today, they are much more likely to be viewing our content away from their home or office. And we have the potential to reach people at every corner of the globe.

The mobile computing revolution, which I first discussed in my 2014 book *The New Rules of Sales and Service*, is truly remarkable. People purchase a mobile phone subscription before almost any other product, because connectivity is that important in their lives. In fact, more people have access to mobile phones than have access to toothbrushes. More people have access to mobile phones than have access to working toilets. The first thing people want to buy after they've earned enough to feed

and shelter themselves is a mobile communications device.

When people can communicate with one another in real time, it has fundamental ramifications for all of humanity. A handful of people in Egypt can create a Facebook group that generates support from millions of ordinary citizens and bring down a government.

Anybody can do independent research on the web and choose what to believe about the products and services consumed. Those who relied on traditional marketing techniques in use for hundreds or even thousands of years suddenly have a global market at their fingertips.

I witnessed the impact of rural mobile connectivity firsthand when I was visiting the village of Cangandi in the Guna district of Panama while on an expedition organized by Earth Train.

What's remarkable about Cangandi is that its several hundred villagers chose to move their entire village more than a kilometer to the top of a hill in 2010. Why? Because that was the one place in the area that had good mobile phone reception. So they moved the entire village, huts and all—obviously a massive undertaking.

The village of Cangandi does not have running water. It does not have access to an electrical grid. But it does have cell phone reception, and solar power for recharging.

Having cell phone reception in Cangandi has already transformed the way the villagers do business. Before they could use mobile devices, they would load up their canoes with the cassava roots, maize, and plantains they sell for their livelihood. They then paddled downriver to the Pacific Ocean islands to see who wanted to buy their goods. But it was hit or miss. If another seller had been there recently, it was difficult to make a sale. So they frequently returned home after wasting several days.

Now the villagers can gather real-time market intelligence via mobile phones. Islanders frequently contact them to place orders, which the villagers deliver when they're needed and at fair prices. This arrangement is particularly relevant for cassava and other root markets, because the plants can be kept alive for a long time and harvested as needed or when the offered price and desired quantity make sense.

Without these spot market opportunity alerts via mobile devices, the villagers were frequently stuck out at sea with a canoe full of roots, skipping from island to island trying to sell them. Now they understand the actual demand and rarely have to sell their goods at a loss.

These Internet access patterns have massive implications for all kinds of businesses worldwide. The ability to contact consumers at the precise moment they're near you and ready to buy exactly what you sell will transform how you market to them. And the use of mobile reaches all levels of society, not just those who choose mobile because phones are cheaper than computers. A *Forbes*-Google study called “The Untethered Executive: Business Information in the Age of Mobility”² reports that more

than half of senior executives say that their mobile device is now their primary communications tool. Executives are making purchases on their mobile devices, too. Nearly two-thirds indicated they're comfortable making a business purchase on their mobile, and more than half would rather make a business purchase on the mobile web than by phone.

All sorts of people purchase products while going about their day. Rather than having to make a trip across town, a busy mom might use her iPhone to shop while waiting to pick up the kids after soccer practice. "It is clear that we've come to a point of no return in the impact and uptake of mobile devices, and yet still most businesses struggle with the mobile-social decisions," says Kern Wyman. Wyman is co-founder of Min-i-Mags 4 Mini People (mm4mp), an iPhone application boutique children's retailers use for global advertising. "Real-time decisions, instant mobile commercial transactions, and anywhere-everywhere collaboration is happening all around us now."

Make Your Site Mobile Friendly

As people use mobile web browsers on their iPhones, Androids, or other devices, it is important that your site be mobile friendly—displaying content quickly and optimizing it for viewing on smaller screens. Many sites still don't have a mobile-friendly architecture, so those organizations miss out on opportunities to sell to the many people now accessing their sites from wireless devices. Your site should have different sets of HTML code that recognize what kind of device visitors are using (computer or mobile) and display the site in the best format.

"It is important to make sure the mobile content loads quickly," says Jim Stewart, CEO of Stew Art Media, a Melbourne-based web development and search engine optimization firm. "People accessing your site with mobile devices are doing so wirelessly, and it's costing them money in their data plans. You want the site to load quickly for them. And they've got a much smaller screen. We're almost back to the days of the early web, when smaller, 'lightweight' pages were better."

Stewart says that designing pages for mobile display requires rethinking the sort of content you offer. "You should display the most crucial information that you would think someone coming in through a mobile device would want," he says. "It might be the menu if you're a restaurant, or it might be the booking number. In Australia over 25 percent of PayPal users have made a purchase using a smartphone. If you use Google AdWords you can now target mobile users directly and place a clickable phone number in the ad so they simply call through to your business, bypassing your website entirely. We had a car dealership client that used this method and had an amazing result."

As you're developing content for mobile devices, remember that search engines have a separate ranking system for mobile. That means there are implications for the

search engine optimization strategies that will get your site ranked highly. “Google has Mobile Google, which is a different version from the normal or classic Google,” Stewart says. “It’s designed and marked up differently, and Google gives preference to sites that are mobile friendly. For example, make sure that Google understands where your mobile content is by setting up what they call a site map for mobile users. This map will be different from the site map for normal users. And if the site is about a local business, you need to use geographic descriptors. For instance, many buyers just type ‘flowers’ into Mobile Google, and quite often they will get Google Places information in the results. That’s because Google has made an assessment that people want that information locally or close to them, or they want a business that services their particular area.”

Here are three things you can do right now:

1. Make sure your site is mobile compliant. You need the pages to load properly in mobile devices.
2. Create a mobile site map so the search engines can index your pages for mobile browsers.
3. Use few words and small graphics. People don’t read much on mobiles and they want the data to come quickly.

The challenge is to understand this new landscape so you can get your business into the mix at that precise moment of decision. I chose to work with experts and it was the right decision for me. Don’t miss out on opportunities to sell to the many people now accessing sites and searching for products and services like yours from wireless devices.

Build Your Audience via Mobile

Because buyers use their mobile devices to search for products and services in the time of need (like I do when I’m hungry on the road), you’ve got an opportunity to move them from being a one-time looker to a long-term fan. The challenge is to create a compelling reason for somebody to want further contact with your company into the future—beyond the initial moment they find you on their mobile.

“You want to use mobile to capture and build your audience as quickly as possible, because people have the ability to do data input on the fly and the ability to act,” says Christopher S. Penn, vice president of marketing technology at SHIFT Communications, a digital PR agency. “The faster you can get someone to act on their initial curiosity by using a mobile application that’s related to your marketing, the more likely it is that you’re going to be able to kick off a relationship with a customer.”

One way that companies can engage consumers quickly is by deploying short message service (SMS) codes. In the United States, SMS was first popularized by television shows like *American Idol*, which let viewers vote for their favorite singing

contestant during live broadcasts by sending a text message. This same strategy is used by marketers to develop point-of-sale sign-up systems. “If you go to any retail store, there's a good chance that some of the major brands offer a way for shoppers to text their email addresses to a short code [special telephone numbers that are significantly shorter than full telephone numbers for use on mobiles] and get exclusive coupons or subscribe to the insider's newsletter,” Penn says. “You want to capture people when they're in the moment, especially if it's a retail or service experience, where you can help satisfy a customer. You want to take advantage of that warm feeling right then and there to capture them. Many outlets have the person at the register say something like ‘Hey, text your email address to us and you'll get 20 percent off your next purchase.’ Well, you're in the moment, you've got your purchase, and you say, ‘Okay, I'm going to do it, because I want 20 percent off next time.’”

Penn says that companies are beginning to experiment with capturing sign-ups using mobile applications in addition to SMS. Marketers like this approach because it can be free, whereas SMS services require them to pay a fee to the telecom provider. “Imagine being at a restaurant, and there's a tent card on the table,” Penn says. “It says, ‘Get 5 percent off your check if you visit our Facebook fan page and become a fan.’ Well, right there on the fan page is a button to enroll in the restaurant's mailing list, and all it requires is one click to sign up. You tap your mobile phone once, and it says ‘Congratulations, you're on the mailing list.’ There's no data entered and nothing to miskey, which is especially important when dealing with tiny mobile keyboards. Within two taps, you're on the company's mailing list, and it's all done using the social data you've already entered into Facebook. The restaurant can get extremely rapid intake of data and build a customer list just by using the features that are already present in many of the platforms.”

Geolocation: When Your Buyer Is Nearby

Adding global positioning system (GPS) capability to a mobile transforms the device into a targeted lens focused on its proximate surroundings. With onboard GPS capability, a mobile gains awareness of nearby people, companies, and locations, even in unfamiliar territory (like when I'm in an unfamiliar city and looking for a restaurant). Mobile applications that make use of GPS technology include Facebook Places, Foursquare, and others, but the concept is the same for all. When someone is using a mobile with geolocation capability, the location of that person is pinpointed for marketers to use.

Applications like Foursquare, a way for people to find places to visit based on their location at any given time, open up all sorts of interesting marketing opportunities. Many bars and restaurants now offer specials for people who find those locations via Foursquare. For instance, you might earn free dessert for your table if you alert your friends about where you're dining. This works best for location-based businesses

such as schools, churches, restaurants, hotels, theaters, hair salons, and the like. Some companies that hold events use Foursquare techniques to increase engagement at conference or meeting sessions.

People and organizations of all kinds are getting active on Foursquare and the similar location-based services. The U.S. National Archives, including the Presidential Libraries and Museums, joined Foursquare to encourage visitors at locations across the country to share tips and other information.

QR Codes to Drive People to Your Content

In many countries, people now use mobile-phone cameras as bar code scanners to link from a QR code (“quick response” code) to a website. It is a great way to get people to link to it from your offline marketing. For example, many display ads on Tokyo subway trains (where most of the riders seem to be using mobile Internet) feature QR codes. As passengers scan images of these codes, they're taken to mobile websites that provide more information—and sometimes even discount coupons.

The real-time aspect of QR codes is important. At precisely the moment a buyer is interested, you can give him or her more information. I adapted this technique myself for my live presentations. When I want to share the free download link for my book *World Wide Rave: Creating Triggers That Get Millions of People to Spread Your Ideas and Share Your Stories* (the full-length book is free as a PDF as well as on the iPad, Kindle, Nook, and Kobo readers), I just bring up the QR code image on the screen. Then people in the audience who want to download *World Wide Rave* simply use their mobile's code reader to scan the image and get the book.



QR code for downloading *World Wide Rave* for free

QR codes are a great way for anybody to send people from offline marketing (advertisements, Yellow Page telephone listings, trade show booth graphics, etc.) to a site where they can learn more. When I was touring Space Center Houston, I noticed many of the exhibits had QR codes to help visitors learn more about the artifacts that interested them. A QR code can be a great way to deliver information to

people via mobile wherever they are and at the exact moment of their interest—on the beach, at a sporting event, or in a theater.

To use QR codes, you need two applications: a QR code generator and a QR code reader. While there are many available, here are two free services that I use. To generate my codes, I use the Kaywa QR Code Generator.³ This web application allows you to simply paste a URL that points to the content you want to generate a code for. The application then provides the code image for publication.

The other application you'll need (or, more accurately, that your customers will need) is a QR reader for your mobile phone. I have an iPhone, and the reader I use is by TapMedia.⁴ The app uses the phone's camera to scan the code and then links to the associated content. Many readers will store a history of the codes you've scanned, so you can use the reader as a reminder of information you want to review in the future. There are readers available for Android, BlackBerry, and other types of mobile phones.

While not every buyer will scan QR codes, these days enough people will to make it worthwhile for you to consider adding them to your offline marketing. The average person might not know what a QR code is (my mother certainly doesn't). But I recall that in 1995, when website URLs started to appear in offline advertising, and again in 2008, when Twitter IDs started popping up, people didn't know what they were, either. Now, I'm not saying QR codes will have the same uptake as websites or Twitter. But I do think that, to reach the geeky among your buyers, it is probably worth adding a QR code to your materials when possible.

To get you thinking about how you might make use of QR codes, here are a few ideas:

- A B2B company can hand out postcards at the trade show with its logo on one side and a QR code on the other, along with some minimal text such as contact information and a short company description. The QR code is for follow-up content delivery and replaces the expensive printed information packs that are lovingly handed out by so many companies only to be discarded by booth visitors at the next trash can.
- Speakers at conferences can pop up a QR code on a slide to point audience members to supplemental information to be downloaded, like I do with my free book download. This makes dissemination of the slide deck or handouts very simple.
- Consumer marketers can add a QR code to offline advertising in magazines, newspapers, subway and bus placards, and the like.
- Restaurants can use a QR code to take people from their yellow pages telephone listing to a menu.
- Doctors, dentists, and veterinarians can hand out a QR code on cards

corresponding to commonly diagnosed conditions, so patients can learn independently about their illnesses.

- Physical therapists, personal trainers, and chiropractors can create QR-code-distributed videos on how to properly do exercises at home.
- Museums and art galleries can include QR codes to point to additional information about artifacts.
- Rock bands can offer free music downloads to fans at gigs. Mickey Hart, former drummer for the Grateful Dead, does exactly this. At a Rhythm Devils show I attended, he passed out music download cards (a bit larger than a business card) with a QR code for free tunes.
- Businesspeople can have a QR code on their business card that links to their blog.
- If you're a single person who wants to meet geeky people at bars, you could wear a QR code T-shirt that sends prospective dates to some interesting web-based information about you. I know I'm pushing it here, but I want to get you thinking!

One of the most interesting uses of QR codes I've found is for a fishy business! My hometown newspaper, the *Boston Globe*, ran a fantastic series of investigative articles titled: "From Sea to Sushi Bar, a System Open to Abuse." It turns out that DNA testing organized by the *Globe* revealed that nearly half of 183 fish samples collected at restaurants and supermarkets in the Boston area were not the species ordered. Fish misidentification is especially common at sushi restaurants, the *Globe* found, partly because various names are used for the same fish. Testing showed that 32 area sushi restaurants sold misnamed fish. In some cases, it was probably an honest mistake. But clearly many restaurants sell inferior species of fish at the high prices commanded by the delicious but expensive varieties.

But there is hope in the form of QR codes! A network of fishermen, distributors, processors, and restaurants called Trace and Trust⁵ has organized a system that uses QR codes to track individual fish from the ocean to your plate. Trace and Trust tells customers exactly who caught their seafood, as well as when, where, and how it was caught. Trace and Trust believes this level of transparency results in the highest-quality and freshest possible seafood you have ever seen. I agree.

The system delivers complete transparency and is fun, too. Do you know who caught your seafood? If you were sitting at the 606 Congress restaurant in Boston, you'd be able to scan the code on your Summer Flounder and learn the exact date that Chris Brown landed it, and where. You'd learn that Captain Brown's vessel, the *F/V Proud Mary*, is currently docked in the harbor at Point Judith, Rhode Island. And you'd see exactly when your fish was delivered by Wild Rhody Seafood wholesalers to the restaurant you're seated in. Heck, there's even a photo of Chris with the fish that you're about to take a nice bite out of. How lovely! This use of QR codes proves that your fish is what it is supposed to be and serves as excellent marketing for the

restaurant and its suppliers.

The Mobile Media Room

Because the iPhone and other mobile devices use public software platforms, anybody can create an application to use for marketing and public relations purposes. I've got my own free David Meerman Scott iPhone and iPad applications⁶ that were developed for me by Newstex, a real-time content technology company. My application includes my blog posts, Twitter feed, and videos, and they link to my online bookstore on Amazon.

Because more and more reporters are active on mobiles, I'm convinced that the public relations, analyst relations, and investor relations departments of companies need to create applications like mine to reach their editorial, analyst, investor, and other constituents. What we're seeing is the natural evolution of the online newsroom, which I discuss in [Chapter 20](#). Companies need a content-rich online media room filled with blog posts, videos, podcasts, e-books, press releases, and background information, and I think those same companies need to think about mobile content delivery to journalists.

In my travels around the world, I've noticed more and more reporters and analysts using mobile devices, especially iPads, to take notes during meetings. I've also seen them with iPhones, BlackBerrys, and the like in constant use while on the go. When a reporter or analyst has an application for the company, or music artist, or nonprofit she covers on her mobile, then she can easily check what's going on, as well as generate alerts for things like press releases—all on her device of choice. An added benefit is that these applications can double as tools to reach employees and partners, as well as existing and potential customers.

An App for Anything

There really is an application for anything. For example, the SitOrSquat bathroom finder application for iPhone and other devices indexes, as of this writing, nearly 100,000 public restrooms, all geolocated and rated for cleanliness. Clean bathrooms receive a Sit rating; dirty ones, a Squat. While the application supports adding locations anywhere in the world, at this point most of the potties are located in the United States. If you've got to pee and you are in New York City, you're in luck! However, if you're feeling the urge to tinkle in Helsinki, well, you've got to hold it a bit longer; there are only four loos listed in that city.

The SitOrSquat bathroom finder is sponsored by Charmin, America's most popular toilet paper for more than 25 years. Gotta love that sponsorship! The press release announcing the sponsorship must have been a blast to write: “For nearly a decade, Charmin has been dedicated to giving consumers a great public bathroom experience.

This commitment started in 2000 with 'Charminizing' public restrooms at State Fairs, then the mobile unit 'Potty Palooza' from 2003–2005 and finally, with the next evolution, The Charmin Restrooms in Times Square.”

Another interesting application is the Live Scoring iPhone and Android applications from the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP—men's professional tennis) and Women's Tennis Association (WTA—women's professional tennis). The ATP Live Scoring app delivers real-time point-by-point updates from matches being played on the WTA and ATP World Tour. The official Live Scoring mobile applications are free and allow fans to follow in real time their favorite professional tennis players, such as Rafael Nadal, Roger Federer, Maria Sharapova, and Serena Williams, as they compete around the globe across 115 events in 43 countries.

“There is a demand for real-time tournament scoring from our hard-core tennis fans,” says Philippe Dore, senior director of digital marketing for the ATP World Tour. “If you are not lucky enough to see a match being played in Zagreb or Beijing on TV, this will be the best way to follow it, whether it is on your computer or your iPhone or your Android or on our mobile website. Journalists are using it too, when they are getting ready to write and are on deadline.”

I found it interesting that mobile devices are used to gather the data that power the application. “The point-by-point scoring data comes directly from the umpire's chair,” Dore says. “So it is the exact official data from the umpire. As the umpire taps a score on his PDA, we get the live scoring to our website and mobile applications. It's being used by both the men's ATP Tour and the women's tour...and now we are rolling it out to the lower tournaments, called the challenger circuits.” The dedicated fans using the app are also those who buy tickets to see events in person, so the app is driving revenue to the players and tournament sponsors.

Cyber Graffiti with WiFi Network Names as Advertising

I'd like to finish this chapter on mobile marketing with an idea that is admittedly rather far outside the mainstream.

You're on the road, perhaps at a coffee emporium, and you want to find a free WiFi network. You look at the network names, and there's the usual assortment: People who default to use a WiFi name associated with their technology provider like Linksys, some who use their family name like Jones_Network, some random nonsense like FJ8673UHNN4, and the credit-card-required paid networks like Boingo_Hotspot.

But then you see a network called Hipster Doofus. Ha, ha, ha, ha! What fun! Someone has a sense of humor!

But wait.

Imagine how many people are seeing that network name. If it's in a crowded city, it

could be thousands a day.

How about using the 32-character service set identifier (SSID) space to broadcast a marketing message? Here are some ideas:

- An auto dealer: Free test drives
- A pub: Try Joes Martini
- A bookstore: Stop hacking and read a book

The idea of WiFi names as a marketing tool came to me courtesy of Alexandra Janelli. When Janelli was at a bar on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, she noticed that the network her iPhone brought up was called Alcoholics Shut In. The experience prompted the creation of a blog-turned-website at WTFwifi.com to chronicle interesting WiFi names. “Wireless router names are breaking through the walls of homes, carrying with them virtual messages, airwave graffiti, or warnings only to be decrypted by our smartphones and computers,” she says. “They are monocles into the cryptic world around us.”

During Janelli's *warwalking* (searching for WiFi wireless networks by walking around), she learned that people use their WiFi names to send messages. “In many cases, the messages relate to staying off their connections,” she says. “However, you do get the users who will send very direct messages such as ‘We Won Too,’ which plays off another WiFi network's name, ‘We Won,’ or even ‘Hipster Doofus’ and ‘Son of Hipster Doofus.’ While this is not a conventional form of social media, it's certainly an easily changeable medium where people are becoming more and more aware of its uses.” Some of Janelli's favorite WiFi names are Stuck in the City, Squirrel Power, I Eat Children, Cheese Has Protein, Cupcake Bomb Squad, and Dirty Diapers for Lunch.

My guess is that it's just a matter of time before businesses use WiFi names as a marketing tool. The point in all this silliness is that mobile marketing is still in its infancy. There are no hard-and-fast right ways to reach people via the mobile devices they carry all day, every day. The new rules apply here: You don't want to spam people's mobiles with unwanted messages, so be kind to people whose contact information you've been given. The best content wins. But we're all making up best practices as we go because this is all so new—so try something! Create an application, or get clever with the GPS geolocation capabilities on mobiles. You'll reach buyers directly, no matter where they are.

Notes

1. itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/default.aspx
2. forbes.com/forbesinsights/untethered_executive/index.html
3. qrcode.kaywa.com

4. itunes.apple.com/us/app/qr-reader-for-iphone/id368494609

5. traceandtrust.com

6. itunes.apple.com/us/app/david-meerman-scott/id399226943?mt=8