MOBILE MARKETING (SMS/MMS)
FOR SMALL AND MIDSIZE BUSINESSES

Introduction

Smartphones are ubiquitous. With eyeballs firmly fixed on smartphone screens, harnessing the power of mobile marketing has become instrumental for small and medium-sized businesses like yours. Done right, mobile marketing can help your company connect with a target audience, drive engagement and achieve remarkable results. In this chapter will examine mobile marketing and its varied opportunities.

So swipe right and pick up some practical insights, actionable strategies, and a whole lot of mobile marketing insight.

- Based on research conducted by Smart Insights, e-commerce websites experience an average conversion rate of 1.82% on mobile devices

- Mobile search ads exhibit an average click-through rate of 3.47%, while display ads demonstrate a click-through rate of 0.47% (Smart Insights, 2023)

- Additionally, the average retention rate for mobile apps stands at 32% after 90 days (Ibid).

Mobile Marketing Key Issues for Small Business

Mobile can have a transformative impact on your business. To help you get there, we've outlined some key issues to keep in mind:

1. Mobile-Friendly Website: Make sure your site is optimized for mobile devices. The goal is to provide seamless user experience ("UX"). Reduce load times whenever you're able, select responsive designs, and work to make the navigation as clear and simple as you can.

2. SMS Marketing: Explore SMS (Short Message Service) messaging to set up a direct text message relationship with your customer base. Set up opt-in tactics and give valuable content, like exclusive deals or urgent updates, to entice users to sign up for and interact with your
texting campaigns.

3. Mobile Payment Solutions: To offer a simple and seamless shopping experience, use safe and user-friendly mobile payment options like digital wallets or mobile payment apps.

4. Mobile-Optimized Email Marketing: Given that mobile devices now account for the majority of email opens, it is essential to develop mobile-responsive email campaigns with messaging that functions properly and renders correctly and on smaller screens. Be certain that your calls-to-action (CTAs) are clear and prominent. (And check out Chapter Six in this book, specifically devoted to email marketing.)

5. Mobile Analytics and Tracking: To increase your performance overall and to hone your mobile marketing strategy, you should understand how people interact with your mobile channels.

By considering these key issues, small and medium-sized firms can create successful mobile marketing strategies that take advantage of the expanding mobile user base, improve customer experiences, and promote growth in the mobile era. But how is mobile different from other marketing?

How Mobile Marketing Strategy is Different

How do strategies for mobile marketing for Companies differ from any other marketing, you ask? Several ways, actually:

1. Mobile-Focused Approach: Mobile marketing specifically tries to connect with consumers through their smartphones and tablets. Here are a couple of examples of how it makes use of unique characteristics and capabilities of mobile devices: push notifications, mobile apps, location-based services, and adaptive website design. Taken together, these factors make mobile marketing altogether unique.

2. On-the-Go Accessibility: Mobile marketing is aware of the necessity for mobile users to have immediate access to information and services while they are on the go. It attempts to deliver seamless experiences and speedy interactions that are in line with the behaviors and circumstances of mobile users.

3. Proximity and Location Targeting: As mentioned above, based on a user's physical location, mobile marketing enables accurate targeting. Small businesses can efficiently increase foot traffic to real stores by using geolocation technologies to deliver targeted discounts, promotions, and messaging to people in particular areas.

4. SMS: Clearly, a channel dedicated specifically to mobile devices and not easily available elsewhere, SMS presents short, quick messages directly to target users' devices.

5. Emphasis on User Experience (UX): Delivering outstanding user experiences that are suited to the mobile environment is a key focus of mobile marketing. This entails creating user-friendly interfaces, reducing load times, optimizing content for mobile devices, and providing simplified checkout procedures.

6. Evolving Technology and Trends: Mobile technologies and trends are always changing, which has an impact on mobile marketing. To stay competitive and relevant in the mobile environment, small businesses must keep up with new features, modifications in user behavior, and evolving mobile marketing methods.

In general, mobile marketing takes into account the unique advantages and potential mobile devices provide. It customizes marketing initiatives to people where most of them spend the majority of their time. Tapping into the potential of mobile for business growth and consumer interaction demands a thorough awareness of the ecosystem and a planned strategy.

Text messaging (SMS / MMS)

Companies of all sizes can find real success with text messaging. But before we get to the main discussion, let's first cover some basics:

Despite being similar, text messaging and SMS (Short Message Service) are actually different things. "Text messaging" most often is thought of as brief messages sent between mobile devices. The phrase refers to chat services like WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger and iMessage. It also covers other messaging systems like SMS and MMS (Multimedia Messaging Service).

The message service offered by cellular networks is commonly referred to as SMS. It is the accepted protocol for text messages to be sent between mobile devices. SMS messages normally have a character count cap of 160 and cannot contain multimedia.

For the purposes of this section's discussion, we'll be talking about the messaging service provided by cellular networks: SMS and MMS.

SMS v. MMS
SMS allows the exchange of short text messages, typically limited to 160 characters per message. Mobile devices generally support SMS, which doesn't need an internet connection. It frequently serves as a means of communication for tasks including sending warnings, notifications, and promotional messages.

MMS (Multimedia Messaging Service), which lets users send multimedia like photographs, videos, audio and extended text messages, enhances SMS's functionality. MMS messages can be sent and received on devices that support multimedia messaging.

- High click-through rates: With an average click-through rate of 80%, SMS marketing outperforms many other channels, driving more user engagement and actions (according to slicktext - https://www.slicktext.com/blog/2018/11/44-mind-blowing-sms-marketing-and-texting-statistics/).

- SMS marketing receives a remarkable response rate of 45%, enabling businesses to generate more customer interactions (according to marketerhire - https://marketerhire.com/blog/sms-marketing-statistics)

- SMS hyperlinks achieve a 6.16% click rate, surpassing email (2.8%) and search advertising (1.98%) digitalexaminer – https://www.digitalexaminer.com/mobile-marketing-statistics/)

- Postscript finds that compared to telemarketing, email marketing and Facebook messaging, SMS texts get 200% more responses.

- While 39% of businesses use SMS marketing, smaller firms have been slower to adopt it than bigger ones, (see slicktext - https://www.slicktext.com/blog/2018/11/44-mind-blowing-sms-marketing-and-texting-statistics/).

How can we use text messaging for digital marketing?

Marketers like us, who really want to create an impact for their small business, may find that SMS and MMS offer some great options for digital marketing. There are a variety of tactics we can use, such as:

1. Promotional campaigns: send personalized SMS/MMS messages to your customers letting them know about new items, discounts, exclusive deals or upcoming events. Modify these for specific client segments to boost engagement and conversion rates.

2. Appointment reminders: If you're in in service-based sectors, such as healthcare, hairdressers, or fitness facilities, use SMS/MMS to remind your clients about upcoming appointments. This reduces no-shows and increases client satisfaction.

3. Customer engagement: use SMS/MMS to engage customers by conducting polls, surveys or competitions. This enhances customer participation, promotes brand loyalty and provides insightful data.

4. Order updates and delivery notifications: Sending these out to customers is a good business practice if your business provides goods or services. Notifications of this sort improve the overall customer experience by keeping customers informed about their transactions.

5. Loyalty programs: communicate with customers enrolled in loyalty programs by giving them updates on rewards, sending exclusive offers or special discounts and letting them know you appreciate their business. This bolsters customer loyalty and repeat business.

6. Feedback and reviews: You can gather customers' comments and reviews using SMS/MMS. This may help give you valuable insight which can help you enhance your goods or services. Just a brief note asking for feedback or a link to review sites can do the trick!

It's essential to follow local laws governing permission and privacy when using SMS and MMS for digital marketing. Make sure you obtain the appropriate consent and provide recipients with the option to stop receiving messages. This will help you remain compliant -- and promote a positive brand image!

Specs for SMS and MMS

When it comes to standard messaging specifications for digital marketing using SMS and MMS, here are some important considerations:

1. SMS character limit: SMS messages typically have a character limit of 160 characters. However, some messaging platforms support concatenation, allowing you to send longer messages that are automatically reassembled on the recipient's device. It's important to keep

your SMS messages concise and impactful due to this character limit.

2. MMS file size and formats: MMS allows the inclusion of multimedia content such as images, videos, audio, or longer text messages. The file size and supported formats may vary depending on the carrier and device capabilities. It is advisable to optimize your multimedia content to ensure compatibility and faster loading times. While you may need to compress or transform common video formats like MP4, platforms frequently accept common image formats like JPEG and PNG.

3. Image and video resolution: When using images or videos in MMS, consider the resolution and dimensions to ensure optimal viewing experience on different devices. Because high-resolution photos might mean longer load-times, try to strike the right balance between image quality and file size.

4. Call-to-action (CTA) and shortcodes: Including a clear call-to-action in your SMS or MMS message is important for driving desired customer actions. You can use text-based CTAs or incorporate shortcodes, which are specific numeric codes that customers can respond to for a particular offer or campaign. Shortcodes simplify the response process for customers and make it easier to track campaign success.

5. Compliance with regulations: Ensure compliance with relevant regulations, such as obtaining proper consent from recipients, including opt-out instructions, and adhering to anti-spam laws. Respect local regulations regarding message frequency, content, and privacy.

6. Personalization and segmentation: To enhance the effectiveness of your SMS and MMS marketing campaigns, consider personalizing messages based on customer preferences, behaviors, or demographics. Use customer segmentation to target specific groups with tailored content, ensuring relevance and higher engagement.

7. Delivery timing and frequency: Timing plays a crucial role in SMS and MMS marketing. Consider your target audience's time zones, preferences, and the nature of your message when determining the optimal delivery time. Additionally, manage the frequency of your messages to avoid overwhelming or annoying your recipients.

Remember that the platform or service provider you use for delivering SMS and MMS messages may have different messaging requirements. It's important to familiarize yourself with their policies, supporting documents, and any unique requirements they might have. Investigate the specifics and arm yourself with information to make sure your messaging is on point.

GLOSSARY OF COMMON TERMS

Most business owners we meet would rather spend their time working on their businesses than on marketing themselves—especially in the esoteric world of digital marketing. However, as more and more customers interact with small businesses online, a fundamental knowledge of digital marketing becomes vital to small business success.

In an effort to save you time and help you gain a quick and easy understanding of common digital marketing terms, we've compiled this short list that anyone who markets small businesses should know.

By no means is the list of terms outlined below meant to be exhaustive. It is only provided here to help readers navigate some of the trickier language or jargon bandied about by professionals in the industry.

Call to Action ("CTA") – A Call to Action (CTA) is the magic phrase that galvanizes customers to make moves—purchase, enroll, subscribe, score discounts, and more. No matter how amazing your online presence and blog posts are, clarity is key. Communicate with crystal-clear precision, guiding potential customers step-by-step to engage with your offerings. Successful CTAs use action verbs, enthusiasm, and attractive offers to fire up participation, compelling readers to act.

For SMS / MMS specifically, a short sentence telling potential customers the right keyword and short code combination required in order to subscribe to a text marketing campaign.
   • For example, take this call to action: "Text ENTERNOW to 555888 to join our text message list." In this example, ENTERNOW is the keyword, while 555888 is the short code.

Conversion - Conversion is the pivotal process of transforming a prospective customer into an actual customer, representing the crucial step where an interested consumer is driven to take action as a result of your marketing endeavors.

Making conversion the central objective of your marketing strategy is paramount, but the specific definition of conversion may vary depending on your business. For some business owners, conversion may involve acquiring email sign-ups, obtaining phone numbers, enrolling customers in a trial period, or, more commonly, generating sales. It is essential to identify and prioritize the specific conversion goals that align with your business objectives to drive success and maximize the impact of your marketing efforts.

Clicks / Click-Through-Rate (CTR) / Unique Clicks - a metric outlining the number of individuals who used a hyperlink contained in the body of an email message.
Keyword - a word or phrase a user texts in order to interact with a text marketing campaign. Most of the time, the keyword is used to join a campaign, but keywords can have other uses, as we'll see in this section.

MMS - short for "Multimedia Messaging Service." MMS marketing is similar to SMS marketing, but MMS messages have a longer character limit, and you can enhance them with photos, gifs, audio files, and video files as well.

Open Rate / "Opens" / "Unique Opens" - a metric describing the number of individuals that opened an email message

Push / "Push Notifications" – a push notification is when your application contacts a user to alert them to a new messages or event, even when the user is not actively using your application.

Short code - a 5 or 6 digit phone number that a user sends messages to in order to join or interact with a text marketing campaign. One short code can serve many different purposes, but it's also possible to reserve a dedicated short code.

Short URL - a web link containing relatively few characters that redirects to a longer web link. These links are useful for fitting long URLs into SMS messages. Platforms such as SimpleTexting.com allow you to shorten your long URLs at send time.

SMS - short for "Short Message Service." SMS is the global protocol for sending and receiving text messages. An "SMS message" is just another way of saying a "text."

SPAM – unsolicited messages sent to large numbers of recipients with content that is irrelevant or inappropriate to them. According to Spamhaus, an internet watchdog group, an email message is not considered "spam" unless it is both unsolicited and sent in bulk. Spam is a hot topic in digital marketing overall and email marketing in particular. Ultimately, the issue is not about content, but about consent. It doesn't matter what the message says – asking you to visit a website for a sale or to view porn is immaterial. What matters is if the recipient agreed to receive emails from the sender (solicited v unsolicited), and if the message was sent out to a lot of addresses in bulk.

Splash Page – A splash page is an entry-point into a website, a page that appears before the visitor moves onto the main site. Typical uses are new campaign promotions, to highlight specific products or services or to relay technical information, such as software that is needed to view content (like a Flash player for video).

Unique Clicks – see "clicks / Click Through Rate"

Unique Records - each individual contained in the database.

In Conclusion

In an ever-changing digital landscape, mobile marketing offers enormous possibilities for small businesses to connect with and engage their target audiences. Companies like you can compete successfully with larger rivals by taking advantage of the special features mobile devices offer and by putting personalized and localized strategies into practice, small businesses can successfully compete with larger rivals. Keep up to date on new developments in the technology and adjust to new trends. This way you can strengthen relationships with your clients and spur growth.

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By becoming familiar with these key concepts, you and the business you're marketing can navigate the ever-changing waters of SMS/MMS, develop better marketing strategy, enhance your on-going optimization, and ultimately bring in a larger haul (also known as ROI). We've hope you found this discussion and these rules valuable and will help your small business become unique in your specific marketing seascape.

If you need assistance or deeper discussion on any of this, Unik Advertising's team of seasoned professionals is here to help. We can assist you is set up a best-performing mass SMS/MMS deployment that can help turn our database of prospects into your dedicated customers.

THANK YOU FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF YOUR TIME AND GOOD LUCK!

Please contact us with any questions.
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About the Author

Andrew Marino is President of Unik Advertising, a digital marketing agency specializing in mass email deployments utilizing its database of over 200 million email and postal records with more than150 selects available. In his role he provides strategic insight, account management and oversees a team of professionals providing digital media services to a variety of clients across a broad spectrum of categories.

Andrew is the author of dozens of business articles, white papers and guest blog posts on email- and digital marketing. He's also spoken at a number of marketing industry conferences.

His new book, 101 Rules for Digital Marketing Your Small Business, will be released later this year.