MOBILE PERSUASION

How Retailers Can Use Real-Time Incentives to Attract Crowds

With a massive mobile penetration rate of 148.9 percent[1], Singapore has more mobile phones than people and one of the world's highest mobile penetration rates.

Inspiring your customers to step in, purchase one extra item, make pricier selections, or impulsively fill their shopping cart with another item at checkout time could come down to a business's mobile app.

Take Breadtalk as an example. Breadtalk is a popular locally listed bakery chain founded in July 2000, with retail outlets across 15 countries and more than 500 boutique bakeries. Launched in 2012, the Breadtalk app allows customers to receive live updates on its latest promotions and product launches as they shop within their store. It also has a coupon system that allows customers to redeem exciting discounts by showing their coupon from their iPhone as they cash out, immediately boosting sales volume.

Reebonz , a popular online portal for purchasing luxury / branded goods also has its own mobile app. This app allows customers to quickly shop and purchase their favourite branded goods on their mobile devices. The app also enables Reebonz to make use of IPhone "Push Notifications" tò craft product specific sales promotions and offers to alert their customers in real-time – resulting in a larger pool of shoppers. This is important as Real-Time Offers equals Real Time Potential.

Even retail storage companies like Lock + Store are also beginning to embrace mobile app adoption.

"We are constantly on the lookout for ways to streamline our payment processes and enhance our customers' experience. In the past, our customers had to travel all the way to our three facilities to pay their storage fees. Now they can pay via AXS machines and at 7-Eleven outlets. Conversion Hub's mobile app is most timely as it gives our customers access to a Paypal tab using their smartphones so they can make payment wherever they are and even when they are on the go." said Helen Ng, CEO of Lock+Store

The underlying message? Technology can go a long way in powering purchases. Purchase persuasion often comes down to the speed of customer engagement, and the timing in which it is being pulsed to a consumer. Mobile Apps provides the best medium for this.

If advertising offers can be redeemed via tapping a mobile screen rather than cutting out a physical coupon or waiting in line to complete a form, retailers are sure to see an increase in foot traffic and revenue.

As the definition of mobile continues to evolve with new features and functions, marketers will have an exciting opportunity to stake out new turf. There are really no limits to your ideas because of the open-ended nature of mobile technology.

Globally there have been some exciting examples of how marketers have been different in their mobile marketing campaigns and showcasing them can provide a spark of inspiration onto what is possible.

Diesel's Facebook-Enabled QR Codes

Leading apparel brand Diesel has found an interesting way of barter trading discount coupons in exchange for Facebook shares and likes. Instead of simply offering in-app coupons, Diesel allowed offline consumers to use QR Codes to access online coupons in which you have to "Liked & Share" the product item on Facebook before you can download it. This seems like a great way to exchange discount coupons for free advertising by your shoppers to all of their Facebook friends.

Macy's Backstage Pass

The Macy's brand operates about 800 Macy's department stores in the United States. The Macy's Backstage Pass provides customers with exclusive content from many famous and popular stars. Each retail section has unique QR signboards where you can scan the code and get tips from P Diddy, Jessica Simpson, Martha Stewart, and even Tommy Hilfiger. This provides an excellent way to soft sell products by engaging the target audience while they are shopping through a leading industry opinion leader and it builds a strong level of loyalty and trust with their customers.

Creating your own App

Of course creating a custom app with rich interactive content does not come cheap and there is also long term IT maintenance consideration. A typical custom app can take as long as 12 months to develop and may cost up to $30,000 just for an IPhone version. But it is not just the IPhone that you have to consider.

According to Blackbox Research, the IPhone and Android are both equally dominant with 45 percent and 37 percent market share respectively in Singapore. This means that your app has to be compatible across both Android and the iPhone to be effective.

What happens if you have a great idea right now to promote your business and you would like to deploy your app within the week at a lower cost and compatible across IPhone, Android and HTML5?

In such a case you can consider Conversion Hub's Mobile App Creator which allows you to create your own iPhone or Android app within a few days without the need for any technical knowledge. You can follow an easy-to-use, step-by-step template to create your personalised mobile app with exciting proprietary features including unlimited push notifications, ecommerce integrations, mobile coupons and GPS based incentives.

Conversion Hub is also expected to be the first in the region to launch geo-location push notifications this August. This feature allows retailers to push promotions to app users within a certain radius of their physical address. It incentivizes passing customers to step in and make that purchase and also bypasses the need for flyer distributors.

Making Apps work

Building an app is easy, getting downloads and active usage is the challenge. Some tips and best practices to bear in mind are:

Build an easy to use app

The user experience of an app determines if a user who has downloaded it will keep on using it. Do not be overly creative. Users do not want a complicated app design; they want immediate value and gratifications whether it is in the form of content, discounts or freebies. Keep the interface clear, concise and simple to use. The worst mistake would be developing an app that has all the features in the world or the most creative design, but carries with it a confusing interface that puts users off.

Engage Users

Do not treat a mobile app like a mobile website. It is important that it has features that have recurring value to users. For example, the sgCarMart App focuses on carpark rates around Singapore instead of mere static car news and articles.

In addition, many Singaporeans are making use of their mobile phones and their location services to check-in at places they visit. This presents another exciting mobile opportunity for brands to run location-based engagements and digital campaigns. A brand can track where the user is and reward them with a voucher or coupon for instant redemption via the app.

Providing consumer digital stamps as an incentive for repeated visits and being physically at certain locations is a great way to run digital mobile campaigns.

Cross Channel Distribution

"Mobile marketing" is not just limited to mobile phones. These days, you can easily link Facebook campaigns offline with a QR Code that allows consumers to connect via their mobile app.

This type of mobile marketing, like the mobile marketing solutions Conversion hub offers, also means more real-time data to work with, allowing operators to better tailor the customer experience – while still respecting user privacy. Retailers can merge advertising, distribution channels and transactions, to seamlessly augment the physical store, increase outreach, repeat purchases and ultimately customer sales. ◼

Note: This is a reprinted article.

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