

Engage at every stage: New marketing mandate

The desire to engage at every stage of the customer lifecycle has reportedly been the unrealistic goal of many marketers, but this may no longer be the case. Marketers are putting mobile interaction in the hands of consumers and finding clever, gratifying ways to add value to every aspect of the brand experience, reports the chief marketing officer (CMO) council in a new study recently released.



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With some 6.5 billion global mobile phone subscribers predicted by the end of 2012, brands see mobile relationship marketing as a critical area to gain competency and competitive advantage. Big drivers include the high level of lifestyle and business dependence on mobile devices, the proliferation of mobile apps, growing mobile social media engagement, and ever-faster wireless networks that can deliver rich media content.

However, they have challenges ahead. Just 14% of 250 global marketers surveyed by the CMO Council are satisfied with the progress they are making in accessing and leveraging the mobile channel, compared to 43% who say they are not and another 37% who are still evaluating their performance.

Personal attachment to mobile phones

The "Engage at Every Stage" audit was conducted by the CMO Council in mid 2012 and includes both quantitative and qualitative insights from brand marketing leaders. The survey was fielded in cooperation with the Mobile Marketing Association and was sponsored by Pandora and FUN Mobility. Some 42% of respondents represented companies with more than \$1 billion in annual sales.

The immediacy, convenience, pervasiveness, and personal attachment to mobile phones make these devices an ideal means of expanding marketing messages and enhancing engagement with a global customer base, notes the CMO Council. Mobile social networking has not only become a better way to touch and understand customers, but it has also given consumers the ability to gain affirmation about brands, products, prices, and merchant experiences from trusted friends, family, and peers.

"More targeted, timely, and helpful messaging and info sourcing through mobile communications channels are helping consumers get trusted advice, find the right products, and source the best deals in any place, any time," notes Donovan Neale-May, executive director of the CMO Council.

"In addition, customers are now empowered to transact and interact on-demand without any limitations or restrictions on where and how they buy."

Shifting to mobisites

While only 16% of marketers surveyed have a formal strategy for using mobile as a significant channel of customer engagement, 46% are reviewing and evaluating the role of mobile, and 32% are allocating more budget to mobile app development and channels of engagement. Another 40% say they are making sure their websites and content are mobilised for device use and access.

The CMO Council expects marketers will employ new mobile apps, location-based messaging, proximity marketing, and smart merchandising systems in-store to attract and engage consumers in any place where they are willing to interact, transact, or stay in contact with brands. This includes retail, sports, entertainment destination, education, mass transit, and travel environments.

Among the contributors to the CMO Council study were Anheuser-Busch InBev, Beam Global, Caesars Entertainment, Coca-Cola Company, Earthbound Farm, Eastman Kodak, Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts, JP Morgan Chase, NASCAR, Royal Caribbean Cruises, SEGA of America, Sony Entertainment Television, Turner Entertainment Networks Asia, Unilever, Virgin America, and Wyndham Hotel Group.

Based on these conversations, some noteworthy successes with mobile commerce, content consumption and service convenience came to light.

Among them:

- More than 60% of guests checking into the Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts now do so using an iPad compared to none three years ago.
- Caesars Entertainment Total Rewards program members can quickly and conveniently view all aspects of their highly valued loyalty program on-demand through a mobile app.
- Consumers are using a mobile app to locate the nearest Coca-Cola Freestyle drink machine, find out what flavors are being dispensed, and provide feedback on the personalised drink they're consuming
- Japanese train commuters have become major consumers of Turner Broadcasting content during commute times, and advertisers are seeing the value of this additional mobile device "screen."

Mobile Relationship Marketing

Pandora's chief revenue officer, John Trimble said, "We are constantly looking to foster the growing significance of Mobile Relationship Marketing to help advertisers connect with our listeners in personal and engaging ways. With more than 75% of Pandora's total listening occurring on mobile and connected devices, we place great importance on integrating strategically-driven mobile insights into all of our campaigns and, at the same time, play a strong role in advancing the mobile marketing industry."

While interest is high, skepticism still exists as many marketers feel that today's mobile channel is filled with false claims, unmet expectations, lack of visibility, and few best practice leaders. Not surprisingly, 77% of marketers would like to see more case studies of best practices or success stories; 48% would like to see less complexity and carrier control of the mobile ecosystem; and 30% complain of false claims by providers and vendors.

[Download the report](#) (Size: 3.82MB). This includes detailed responses to the 23-point audit, which covered

- Perceived value, benefits, and attributes of the mobile channel

- Organisational knowledge and understanding of mobile marketing innovations
- Areas of focus and interest for mobile application deployment and use
- Where and how mobile could be used to more effectively interact with customers
- Mobile's fit and function in the marketing mix; plans and intentions to leverage the channel
- Mobile marketing adoption, effectiveness, and success, as well as issues, obstacles, and speed bumps
- Internal and external resource utilization; need for training and talent acquisition
- Performance metrics, as well as trusted resources and experts marketers rely on

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