

Sold on mobile

 By [Mike Laws](#)

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Here's something for brand champions to think about as they consult their placement schedules this week: if one considers that 91% of mobile phone owners keep their phone within a one metre radius, 24 hours out of every day, why then do marketers bother with any other type of media?...

With South African mobile penetration hovering around the 130% mark - and the country at number six in the world for use of the mobile web - it just doesn't make sense to adopt the 'spray and pray' approach that is very often mass media television advertising. The fact that there are almost one third more mobile phones than people in this country means brand owners can go direct to the source of their future good fortunes: the end mobile phone consumer who probably spends more time looking at that lovely little screen than anything else. Just think about that for a second - the consumer's spouse, job, and dog, easily get less attention than that SIM card-loaded dream marketing device.



When I started out, the often-quoted statistic of 2% was usually trotted out as an example of a good response to a direct mail campaign. Two percent was the holy grail for the direct marketer - if you got two out of every hundred people to respond to your offer, you uncorked the sparkling wine and made an excited call to your client on your Motorola StarTac at R2.75 a minute.

The irony is that the device you were making the client call on, would in under two decades be responsible for unheard of consumer recall and response rates of 13%. The cellphone was originally designed to connect people, wherever they may be. The mobile phone was never intended to market things to people, but it does so really well. And in a way that people seem to prefer compared to reams of brightly-coloured paper stuffed in their postboxes.

Mobile phone users are able to respond to marketers so rapidly, and in such impressive numbers, because of the SIM card

that is an integral part of every cellphone. And because about half of all mobile phone users in the world are on prepaid plans, that SIM card is usually loaded with airtime that can be easily converted into spend on products and services. To put it plainly, the mobile phone user is a motivated, engaged, and cash-flush consumer. Now what could be better than that?

Let's deliver the *coup de grace* to ancient forms of consumer engagement by highlighting seven features that are unique to mobile phones, as identified by one Tomi Ahonen:

1. The mobile phone is personal.
2. The mobile phone is always carried.
3. The mobile phone is always on.
4. The mobile phone has a built-in payment system.
5. The mobile phone is available at the point of creative inspiration.
6. The mobile phone can provide accurate audience measurement.

7. The mobile phone captures the social context of media consumption.

I'm sold!

ABOUT MIKE LAWS

Michael is the CEO of Imaginatrix.mobi. He has over 23 years' experience in the ICT industry, has worked in multiple mobile network operators across Africa. These include Econet Wireless and Vodacom South Africa where he was instrumental in establishing the mobile advertising division. Michael was responsible for commercialising the successful Please Call Me service, as well as the tagged-on advertising messaging propositions.

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