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How to succeed in a world gone mobile

Business strategies and tactics from mobility expert Chuck Martin's webinar "Succeeding in a World Gone Mobile"

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The last two decades have seen an impressive evolution of consumer electronics, from the one-size-fits-all structure to the consumer-centric model. We used to be tied to our devices, but now they are tied to us. They are a part of our everyday lives, and in 97 percent of countries, including the U.S., Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia and many more, there are more cell phones than people.

So how do you make sense of this always-on, totally mobile, digital world? Here Chuck Martin, CEO of The Mobile Future Institute, offers business strategies and marketing tactics for a totally mobile world.

How we got here

Eighty-seven percent of the world population has a mobile phone. The number of mobile phone users has doubled in the last five years. Clearly, our world has gone mobile.

Just look at the evolution of how we consume content. At the time of its invention, the TV was a one-to-many device offering static content. The message was broadcast, and you could consume the content if you were around during airtime. But then the VCR came along and allowed a time-shift in watching video content. VCRs gave us the ability to record and watch content when we wanted to. With TiVO, automatic content selection was born. Not only were we given control to decide when we watched content, but we were also able to fast-forward through commercials, changing the TV advertising space.

Next the Internet gave us ubiquitous access to information and content online, but companies like Google and Yahoo! were the ones that made it easy to find the information for which we looked. This important development changed the screen we consumed the content through. Suddenly we were watching videos and listening to news on our computers. And then mobile came along and took all the content that we had started consuming on our PCs and made them available on mobile devices.

And that brings us to the age of the untethered consumer. Our devices are always on us and we consume more content than we ever have.

Chuck Martin is the CEO of The Mobile Future Institute and the author of many books, including New York Times business bestseller, *The Digital Estate*. Read Chuck's blog.

Missed the webinar? Watch it on demand.

How mobile impacts your business: the UPT model versus the USPT model

The best parts about this mobile, digital world for businesses are many things: Mobile communication is personal; it's multi-faceted with text, pictures and sound; it links time and location with supply and demand. People use mobile devices while standing up. It's a pull medium versus a push medium.

All of this adds up to a lot of business opportunity for companies that make mobile business strategies a priority, and when you decide to start engaging in the mobile world, your first decision is whether to use a Using Phone Technology (UPT) marketing model or a Using Smart Phone Technology (USPT) marketing model to engage with your prospects and customers. Essentially, you're choosing between using marketing and business tactics for phones without applications (UPT) or with them (USPT).

In a UPT model, text messaging is a great way to reach people. Consumers must opt-in to receive your content via text message. The limitation around using texting for marketing is that you are limited to 160 characters for your message, but considering that the majority of people in the world have mobile phones but not smartphones, this marketing tactic has a far-reaching range.

In the USPT model, you can use things like Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS) bump technology, in which people can get content by bumping their phone to a billboard or other media, and QR codes, in which people use the camera on their phone to automatically navigate to a webpage. Custom applications are another great way companies are encouraging engagement with their brand. For example, Tiffany's has a smartphone application where, after creating an account (i.e. sharing their information with Tiffany's), users can set a location on the application's map marking where they met their partner and write a blurb of how they met. The map is interactive, so you can share content and read other users' stories.

Businesses build apps that encourage location sharing (or "checking-in"), gaming and photo sharing, too. The goal is to get your prospects and customers to engage in your brand — and, in our consumer-centric world, it has to be fun to do so, or consumers won't do it.

In summary

To compete in our mobile world, mobile business is essential to your business strategy. The majority of people in the world have a cell phone — not a computer, but a cell phone. If people can't engage with your brand and buy or use your product from their mobile device, you're missing out on business opportunity.

The first text message was sent in 1992.

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