Mobile Marketer™

THE NEWS LEADER IN MOBILE MARKETING, MEDIA AND COMMERCE

www.MobileMarketer.com
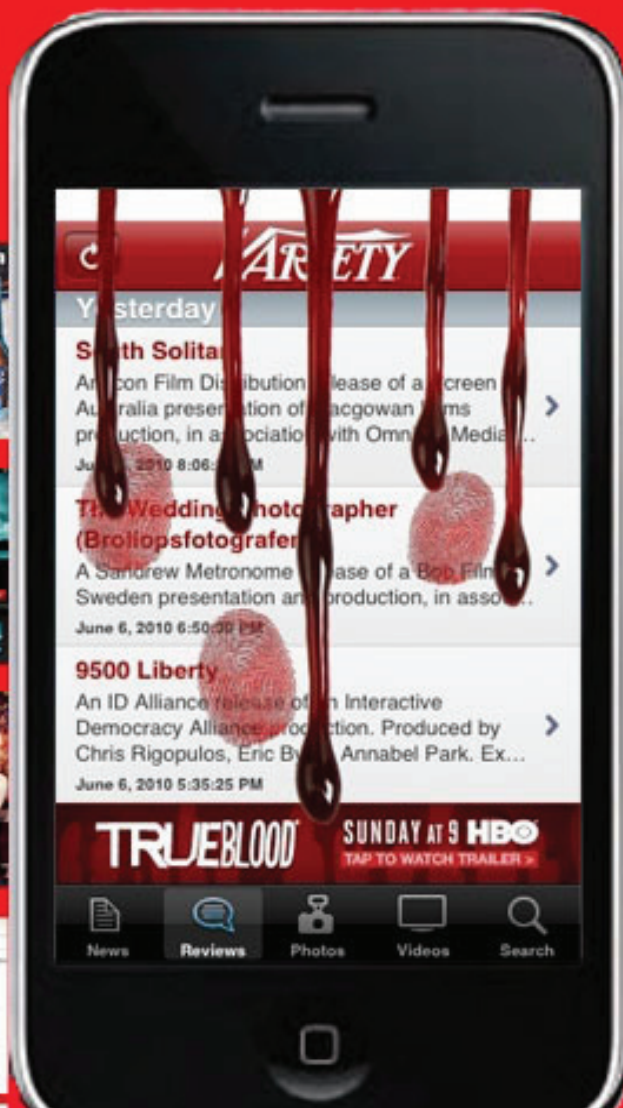
Classic Guide to

Mobile Advertising

Beyond the mobile ad: Creating content depth

By Rich Abronson

If mobile is not already an active portion of an advertiser's marketing budget then it is no doubt on the near-term roadmap.

With a steady stream of case studies demonstrating the efficacy of consumer engagement tactics such as short code calls-to-action, mobile SEO/SEM, mobile display advertising, sponsorships of useful iPhone applications and SMS coupons, the conversation needs to now include the deeper mobile consumer experience beyond the initial promotion and mobile CRM opportunities.

Mobile devices are improving at a rapid rate with better user-interfaces, faster speeds, larger screens and next-generation mobile operating systems.

With this, average consumers are quickly learning how to use these devices, their demand for mobile content is increasing and their expectations of a satisfying user-experience should be of concern to publishers and advertisers.

Rich Abronson

Demand for mobile content
Consumers-on-mobile have been actively trying to find advertiser content, but they are hampered by discoverability challenges and broadband sites that are difficult to load or navigate on mobile devices—even on the best of smartphones.

However, case studies demonstrate sizeable jumps in mobile traffic when advertisers launch engaging mobile-optimized sites and then leverage a variety of proven mobile engagement tactics to drive traffic.

The evidence also suggests that this increase in traffic is incremental and does not cannibalize existing online traffic.

Driving this demand for mobile content is an increasing percentage of consumers that purchase smartphones with higher 3G and 4G connection speeds.

Smartphones today account for around 30 percent of mobile phone ownership with solid predictions that half of U.S. mobile subscribers will own a smartphone by the end of 2011.

Quantifying consumer expectations regarding their mobile Internet experience is a bit more difficult.

In addition, search remains key as the top genre for mobile browsing, and this is especially true for local marketing.

Google noted that one-third of its mobile searches had local intent.

Creating content depth
To meet consumer demand for mobile content, advertisers need to have an optimized mobile Web site that loads quickly and is easy to navigate.

Advertisers should be conscientious of a mobile user's diminished dexterity when trying to type, click or gesture on a mobile screen.

For instance, advertisers might think about the following:

• *Up-to-date inventory information with user reviews.* Consumers have figured out how to do at least rudimentary comparison shopping on their mobile devices, especially when they are in an advertiser's bricks-and-mortar store location.

A Motorola study published in January 2010 found that

51 percent of consumers across 11 countries during the 2009 holiday season used their mobile phones for such in-store activities as comparison shopping, peer reviews, product information and coupons.

• *Updated coupons and offers that can be sorted by location.* For instance, a pizza chain should be thinking about the mobile consumer who is searching "pizza in 91367" and be able to get him to a mobile coupon within a click or two.

• *Store locators, maps and contact information.* This content should be up front on mobile. Creating separate mobile landing pages for each location will also add depth and mobile search visibility.

• *Simple forms and lead-generation tools.* While it might be a bit much to ask a consumer to fill out an even marginally lengthy form, it is perfectly reasonable to try to capture something when there is some real value such as securing an appointment time, ticket or a seat reservation.

Minimize the character entry.

If an advertiser is driving traffic from an SMS-embedded link then it should be no problem to pass a mobile number into a form field.

A second SMS bounce-back can request that the user reply with an email address that can also be passed into a mobile Web form field.

Mobilizing inventory, data or content feeds
A retailer which can publish real-time product availability to a mobile site meets a real consumer need.

Retailers and advertisers can add this to their mobile sites by repurposing the same inventory and content feeds that dynamically populate their broadband Web sites or their in-store inventory databases.

Automotive dealers started doing this years ago by syndicating their vehicle inventory feeds to their mobile sites and using stock numbers as text-able keywords.

Best Buy used a similar method by turning inventory SKUs into short code calls-to-action and then advertising them in pre-print circulars and on in-store shelf tags.

As a result, mobile access to live product information was within easy reach, and advertisers could then use SMS, mobile display advertising, traditional advertising and other tactics to drive consumers to product information.

Editorial content providers have been using some of these same principles as well, especially the newspapers and pure-play publishers who are syndicating their content and news feeds into mobile-optimized versions of their online properties.

Even if advertisers are not planning mobile commerce until later, consumers can still benefit by being able to research pricing, reviews, and product specifications to make decisions.

Mobile commerce will be the logical next step in due time.

In the meantime, advertisers gain increased traffic, time-on-site, branding and loyalty.

Driving traffic to mobilized inventory
In-store signage displaying a mobile-optimized Web address or short code call-to-action will allow a business to anticipate inevitable in-store mobile activity before that consumer visits a competitor or a third-party comparison shopping tool.

A mobile-optimized site linked from these mobile shopping tools will present a distinct advantage over competitor sites that are not mobile-friendly.

Including up-to-date inventory will give the consumers the information to make the purchase decision.

Mobile landing pages
Unfortunately, many mobile landing pages we see today are thin and do not provide much value to the consumer.
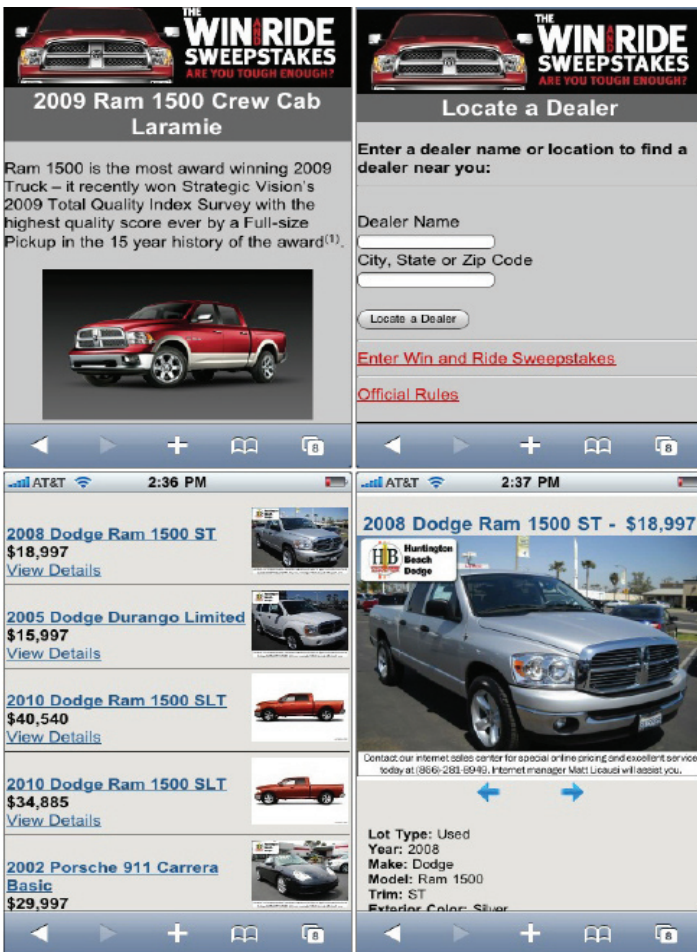
They do not have much of a mobile site backing them up.

Adding content depth with inventory, forms, coupons and store finders means that mobile display advertising can achieve better results and consumer action.

It also means that mobile display advertising can get more targeted by allowing advertising to drive mobile traffic to different sections of a mobile Web site, test various offers or generate greater time-on-site following a click.

Mobile search

The starting point for online marketing is a Web address, and advertisers have gone to great lengths to build equity in them.

Expecting consumers to figure out the URL for your mobile Web site is not going to work. The better solution is what might be called device detection and redirection,

which allows an advertiser to continue using its existing Web address.

Essentially, it is a bit of code used to determine whether incoming traffic to a URL is from a PC or from a mobile device and then displaying the appropriate version of the page.

In fact, it can even be used to detect specific devices.

There are two flavors: Client-side and server-side.

Client-side usually involves a bit of JavaScript in the header of an advertiser's Web page. The problem with this is that only certain smartphones can read it—great for iPhones, not so great for BlackBerry or feature phones.

The better solution is server-side whereby traffic is first sent to the host server, the device is detected, and the user is directed to either the mobile site or the broadband site. It is a little more complicated but immeasurably more beneficial for advertisers and consumers.

Server-side works

The beauty of server-side detection and redirection is that it leverages an advertiser's existing search marketing efforts to begin working in the mobile space.

From here, marketers can begin tweaking their search strategies by monitoring traffic logs or by using Google Analytic's mobile tracking tools.

Mobile redirects combined with greater content depth create higher mobile search relevance, especially in cases where mobile search engines will prioritize results with mobile-optimized content.

By setting up server-side switching that detects for mobile devices and automatically redirects consumers to deep and relevant mobile content, businesses can capitalize on mobile search traffic and well-position themselves for the day when mobile traffic exceeds that of the desktop.

Rich Abronson is vice president of marketing at Gumiyo Inc., Calabasas, CA. Reach him at rich@gumiyo.com. ■