

MOBILE APP ENGAGEMENT

The Power Is Now In Marketing's Hands



The act of engaging with a customer or buyer is hardly a new concept. Nor is the inherent need to do so in order to achieve success. Companies initially had control of the relationship because they controlled the information. When consumers received the advantage of online access, they took the lead. But the terms of engagement have changed again. Because of the mobile app, the power has shifted back to the marketing department.

John Russell, former VP of Harley-Davidson put it so succinctly when he said: "The more you engage with customers the clearer things become and the easier it is to determine what you should be doing."

Given the fact there are now [more mobile devices on the planet](#) than there are human beings, it's pretty obvious that engaging with customers via mobile should be a priority. As for apps, consider this staggering statistic: [90% of a consumer's time](#) while on a mobile device is done so via an app.

And according to [Gartner](#): "Consumers see mobile apps as their main digital interaction with their favorite brands."

Marketers Have the Power

Before getting to the part where marketers have the power, a brief history lesson.

For the most part, mobile apps were built and managed by an app developer. Brands or businesses would contract directly with the developer or through an agency to build an app, with the marketer serving only in an advisory role at best.

Once the app was created, the marketer then relied on the app developer to make any changes—oftentimes waiting to see those changes come to fruition. Furthermore, those delays led directly to a loss of valuable marketing opportunities and in turn had a negative effect on the customer experience.

Marketers required greater control of the customer experience, especially as it related to mobile apps. The reason why was simple: customer experience is—as [Forbes](#) put it—the future of marketing. In order to gain this control, marketers needed a tool that would allow them to be more nimble with mobile app personalization and optimization, without the constant cycles with developers.

Welcome to today. Now the marketer has the power. The power to use a platform that allows marketers to deliver personalized mobile experiences in a controlled environment with easy-to-use tools that don't require help from an app developer—running on a platform that the IT team can trust.

It's a marketing controlled environment where you are able to:

- Optimize experiences delivered in mobile web and apps as a continuation of cross-channel optimization.
- Move with speed and agility with technology that adapts as quickly as you do.
- View a holistic customer profile that incorporates preferences, behaviors and personalization across devices and channels.
- Easily design campaigns that treat customers as a single individual regardless of device/point of interaction.

The bottom line is that providing the best possible customer experience is paramount for success. Consumers have stated that [they will spend more](#) money based on the experience they receive from a given brand. Conversely they will bail on a transaction or not make an intended purchase because of a poor experience.

A New Engagement Model

According to [Forrester](#), with mobile in play, consumers now move from discovering a brand to doing research, making a purchase, and using a product within minutes if not seconds. And they expect this experience to be not only possible, but positive.

“Today's customers demand a seamless, integrated brand experience delivered to them with ultimate simplicity and relevancy in real time. To deliver, mobile demands a new engagement model.”

And mobile apps, while powerful, shouldn't be managed and operated in a silo. Instead, mobile apps should be orchestrated as part of a cross-channel marketing program to create highly curated experiences for the customer.

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Customers who shop on more than one channel have a [30% higher lifetime value](#) than those who shop on only one while [72% of consumers](#) are more likely to purchase additional products if they receive a cross-channel experience.

Mobile has forever changed the way we live, and it's forever changed what we expect of marketers and brands. It's fragmented the consumer journey into hundreds of real-time micro-moments. Every day there are [30 billion of these moments](#) happening in the US alone—each one a critical opportunity for brands to shape consumer decisions and preferences.

When consumers act on needs in the moment, expectations are high and patience is low. This makes the quality, relevance, and usefulness of marketing more important than ever. In fact it is reported that nearly 35% of consumers that receive mobile marketing messages from brands say that messages are irrelevant, thus creating an impersonal experience.

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“I think the problem is we're creating content for content's sake,” says [Carlos Hidalgo](#), CEO and Principal of Annuitas. “What we need to think about is, we don't need to create more content—and I keep seeing stats that our budgets are increasing, we're creating more content, we're doing this, we're doing that... I just want to say: everybody stop. And let's start creating relevant content.”

No matter the device, they want to pick up where they left off. The consumer now expects to be able to complete any action from their phone/tablet. Mobile consumer experiences cannot be truncated any longer. That experience simply doesn't align with expectations.

This new engagement model means marketers need to allow consumers to make appointments, check real-time inventory and availability, and purchase—from any device. No “Come back on your computer to finalize your purchase”—no gaping holes in your user experience.

Apps: Preferred and Personal

In addition to the aforementioned stat that 90% of a consumer's time while on a mobile device is done so via an app, here are even more reasons why you need a mobile app strategy and the right platform or model to support it.

According to a [global study](#) of smartphone/tablet users who also use an app, 85% of respondents preferred mobile apps to mobile websites with the top reasons being that apps are:

- Perceived as more convenient: 55%
- Seen as faster: 48%
- Easier to browse: 40%

Incorporating personalization into mobile messaging via an app has a significant effect on engagement with one [study](#) noting a 200% increase in conversions over the use of general messaging. Now that's power.

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Problems and Solutions

But despite the potential, mobile app engagement isn’t always so simple. There are a lot of moving parts—mobile moving parts that marketers need to address. And these mobile moving parts can very often carry problems or challenges.

Here’s a list of some key problems marketers face when it comes to utilizing mobile app messaging along with the solution—AKA the mobile platform—a marketer uses to achieve success.

PROBLEM: Marketers Lack Control to Drive Ongoing Engagement

Once an app user is engaged in an app, marketers rely on app developers to orchestrate the app experience. Marketers lack the control on a mobile app to create an end-to-end customer experience.

SOLUTION: A platform that puts the marketer in control

Today’s marketer should be able to control the entire app experience. This includes mobile app messages like push messages and in-app messages which help drive app engagement—to the ability to personalize the app experience by testing and optimizing the app based on the customer’s behaviors and preferences.

PROBLEM: Marketers Have Difficulty Building Highly Curated Experiences

When consumers get on mobile devices, they become very task oriented. They want to get into an app, get something done, and get back out. They expect to have an absolutely curated content flow and expect you to use context to simplify steps in their process.

SOLUTION: A platform that can deliver a richer experience.

It’s a platform that continuously optimizes based on actions. For example, while using a mobile app, the marketer should be able to set up real-time triggers based on actions the consumer takes—such as putting something in their shopping cart or browsing an item that is on sale.

PROBLEM: Marketers Lack Insight to Analyze Results and Optimize Outcomes

A smart and proactive mobile app experience depends on insights developed from analytics and testing. And with the pace at which today’s consumer moves, the marketer’s number one task is to figure out what keeps an individual customer engaged long enough to make a purchase. This involves analyzing a wide variety of cross-channel data that can be burdensome.

SOLUTION: App testing and optimization shouldn’t be difficult.

In fact, if a marketer is not testing, they’re just guessing. Marketers require a platform that allows a customer’s Digital Body Language to dictate their next experience, without requiring intervention from the marketers.

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PROBLEM: Mobile Isn't Orchestrated With Other Marketing Channels

A lot of organizations are not properly set up from a people perspective to be successful at mobile. Innovation has paused because marketing and technology are not aligned. Thus, mobile often runs standalone, not contextually aware of where customers are at in their journey. Mobile communications are delivered in silos, creating fragmented experiences that frustrate customers.

SOLUTION: The mobile app experience must be orchestrated.

It needs to be an essential part of the cross-channel marketing program, and marketers need a platform that breaks down the channel silos to deliver a consistent and personalized experience across email, web, and mobile apps.

Illusion vs. Reality

Let's talk theatre. When you watch a play, you are drawn into a world where the director creates an illusion that feels like reality. As Hunter S. Thompson once said, "Buy the ticket, take the ride." You suspend disbelief. You react within the context of the experience.

The same is true for the digital marketing experience. So think of the mobile app experience as moving from a simple webpage to a controlled, almost virtual reality, where marketers have the opportunity to deliver the best of their brand on their own stage.

There are many quotes and thoughts on the topic of control and whether it is an illusion. And in many instances control is pure magic: an illusion to have power over something is a very strong statement and belief.

And while this is not meant to sound hyperbolic or philosophical, with the right technology platform the control marketers can have is not an illusion—it's reality. With the right platform, marketers can have the power in their hands and not rely on the IT or app developers behind the curtain.

About Oracle Marketing Cloud

Modern Marketers choose Oracle Marketing Cloud's digital marketing solutions to create engagement, orchestrate experiences, connect data, and optimize interactions that attract and retain ideal customers. These solutions connect cross-channel, content, and social marketing with data management and activation on a proven system that marketers love and IT trusts.

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