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Mobile Testing

GUIDE FOR MODERN MARKETERS

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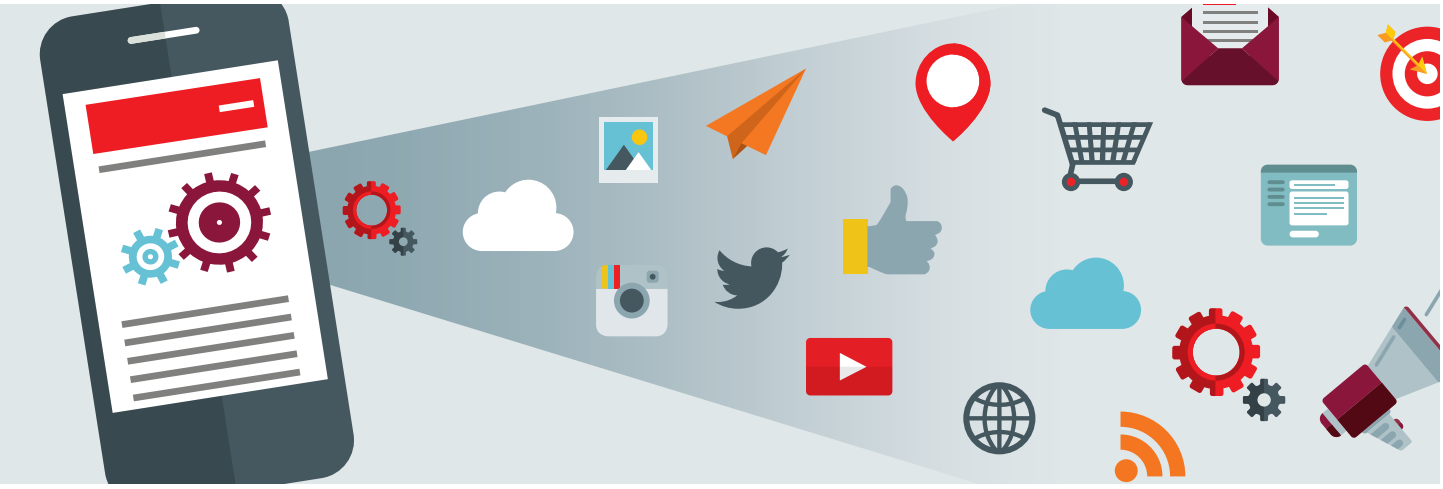

What Is Mobile Testing?

There's really no mystery about mobile testing. It's the art and science of building, running, and analyzing optimization tests for mobile customer experiences. But for companies looking to mobilize their websites and apps, the mystery often lies in how to do mobile testing really well. This guide assembles the best advice from analysts, engineers, and thought leaders to help mobile-minded businesses master the non-desktop landscape.

You'll learn how to optimize customer mobile experiences from strategy to execution. Along the way, you'll get answers to common questions about mobile testing, find out about optimization testing in general, learn key differences between customer experience optimization (CXO) on mobile and desktop, and see how you can use design expertise to create bold and effective mobile experiences. So start reading and boost your understanding of mobile testing and optimization.

What's the Difference Between CXO on Mobile, Web, and Apps?

Modern Marketers must optimize for three major platforms: mobile, web, and apps. One size does not fit all and you need to know the two main differences between these platforms before you strategize.

Similarities Between Platforms

Customer experience optimization is the same whether you are using it for web, mobile, or apps. Users and companies often gain the same benefits from optimization, no matter the platform. Companies optimize their sites and apps to increase revenue, boost traffic, and heighten brand awareness. Users benefit from optimization by finding what they want, making purchases, booking reservations, signing up for services, and searching for information more efficiently.

Optimization is even more similar across platforms when you consider the hallmarks of optimal customer experience are the same on mobile, web, and apps. Both laptop and tablet users want a site that's fast, secure, easy to navigate, and full of personalized offers. App users are not much different, desiring fast load times, data security, and a good interface.

While company and user optimization goals are almost identical for web, mobile, and apps, marketers should still make separate strategies for each platform. This is because each platform requires different tactics to optimize successfully. Here are the big differences.

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Big Difference #1: Apps Cut Cookies

Web and mobile experiences use cookies to help sites remember user preferences based on what pages and other sites they've visited, what they've done on those pages, what pop-ups and ads they've seen, and more. Apps—on the other hand—use in-app settings to personalize customer experiences. Apps can be coded to use cookies. Some apps use cookies to make HTTP requests. In general, apps optimize through settings that users can adjust on their own.

These preference settings influence an app regardless of how customers have used the app previously or even how they're using it now. By adjusting settings, customers can change features such as background colors, text size, zoom functionality, and privacy strength. These adjustments can improve their experience by making text easier to read or locking the app in case other people also use it.

These settings can also be safely saved as presets on a customer's mobile device—presets that will only activate when the app is opened. Desktop and mobile users rarely have the chance to directly tell websites their experience preferences, let alone save preferences between visits. Presets help users think of an app's interface in a more personal way as they shop, book, trade, and research.

Big Difference #2: Web Can Be Big

It's also important for marketers to remember that mobile and apps have something in common. Unlike web, they must deliver experiences that can be explored on small screens, with fingertips. That means mobile and apps must enlarge buttons and input fields, condense information and images, and move key elements to the top of the page.

It's easy to overwhelm users with content on small screens, so mobile and apps have to be more careful than web to help users avoid too much scrolling and hunting for the content they need.

When optimizing the customer experience, remember that web, mobile, and apps have a lot in common. Companies can use all three to increase conversions and profit, and users want their experiences on all three to be as personal, fast, and secure as possible. However, there are differences between the platforms that marketers must account for when strategizing. Web and mobile use cookies, while apps generally do not. Also, apps and mobile have to optimize for less screen space, while web isn't as visually restricted.

Web and mobile use cookies, while apps generally do not. Also, apps and mobile have to optimize for less screen space, while web isn't as visually restricted.

All in all, the similarities are big, but the differences can't be avoided. Optimize according to platform, and you're good to go.

How to Turn Desktop Smarts Into a Successful Mobile Campaign

Just because you've never run a mobile test before doesn't mean you're a complete novice. Your experience in running test campaigns on desktop sites will feed directly into your mobile optimization program.

Not sure if you should be using resources to bring your optimization program to the mobile platform? We get it. Many travel brands mistakenly believe that investment in mobile optimization is secondary because customers are less likely to book on a mobile channel. When revenue is a main focus, this is an understandable concern. And it's true that desktop booking still outpaces mobile transactions in the travel space.

However, if you start optimizing your mobile channel for ancillary sales, to inspire loyalty, and create a great post-booking customer experience, then you'll be prepared to offer a great booking experience.

Let's use that scenario as an example to figure out how to apply desktop knowledge to drive impactful mobile tests. Your path to mobile testing success starts with four steps.

1. Understand the Differences Between the Objectives of Desktop and Mobile Users

Desktop Users

Analytics tell us that visitors performing searches on desktop sites are looking for ways to easily compare properties, gather relevant information, and pick a room and rate combination that fits their needs.

Only after these steps have been taken will users will feel comfortable continuing through the funnel to complete their purchase or booking.

> If you're not using mobile marketing to attract new customers to your business, don't worry—your competitors are already using it and are getting those customers instead.
>
> *— Jamie Turner, 60 Second Communications*

Mobile Users

Visitors performing searches on mobile devices likely will not spend as much time comparing properties. Rather, they are far more likely to know where they would like to stay or have already booked a stay and are searching for further information.

Mobile users need to be properly guided through the site to relevant property/stay information, so that they do not get discouraged and leave the site when information is not readily available.

A mobile campaign should be scoped to guide visitors through the funnel, providing necessary information upfront so they waste less time searching.

2. Use Channel-Specific User Objectives to Scope Your Campaign

Based on the objectives stated above, a mobile campaign should be scoped to guide visitors through the funnel, providing necessary information upfront so they waste less time searching.

As you scope your mobile campaign, here are three quick things to keep in mind:

- Call-to-action (CTA) copy should definitively indicate what information it will provide the visitor upon engagement.
- Larger, finger size CTAs allow visitors to navigate between pages more effortlessly.
- Provide information in a clear and concise manner, remembering that sometimes less is more.

3. Analyze Your Data, Keeping Mobile Users in Mind

You will find these guiding questions useful when analyzing the data from your mobile campaign:

- Overall, based on the likely objectives of mobile users, how were they impacted by the changes made?
- Were your test elements able to help visitors navigate through the site to find relevant information?
- What are the drop-off points?
- Why do you think these identified drop-offs deterred visitors from continuing their time on the mobile site?

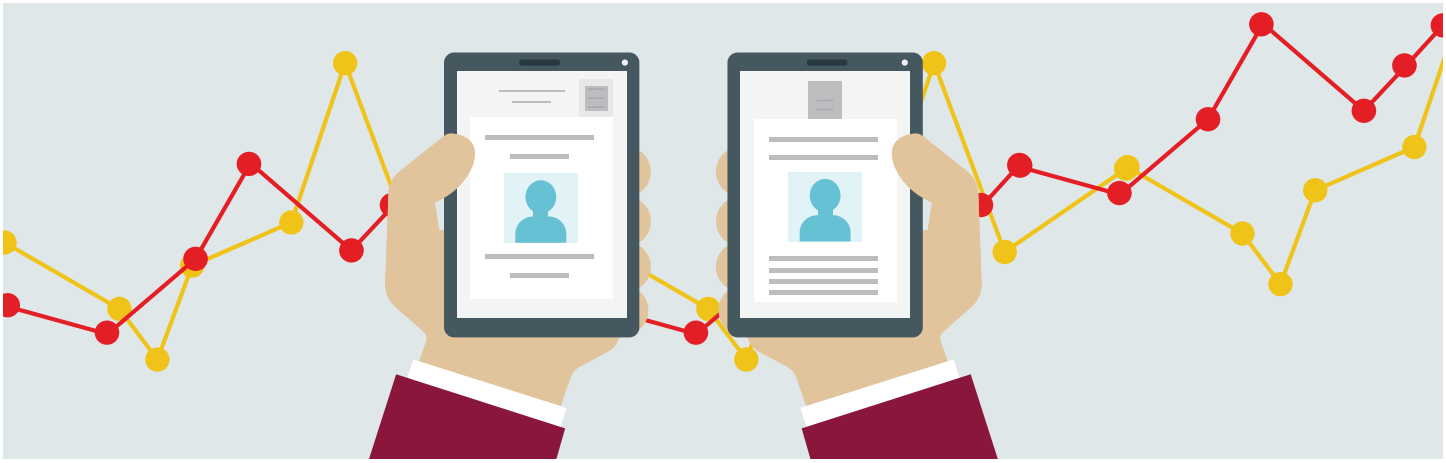
When you apply optimization expertise to your mobile channels, you'll be prepared for mobile booking.

4. Combine Mobile and Desktop Test Results to Gain a Better Understanding of All Visitors

You likely run similar campaigns on desktop and mobile. Does the data for both lead to similar results? Or are you seeing differing results?

- Depending on the tested elements, visitors are likely impacted differently.
- Compare the results to the known site objectives to increase your learning, allowing you to scope more educated campaigns moving forward.

You're more prepared to tackle your first mobile test than you think. Take our advice and combine it with your already fine-tuned desktop testing knowledge. When you apply optimization expertise to your mobile channels, you'll be prepared for mobile booking and the increasing migration of online traffic from desktop to mobile.



When Does Multivariate Testing Become an Absolute Necessity?

There's a zoo of testing methodologies out there, and it can be hard to understand what each methodology does and its intended purpose. Let's focus on two basic methodologies—A/B (or split) testing and multivariate testing (MVT)—and clarify what each one does. Sometimes A/B testing is not enough and you absolutely need to use MVT to optimize your site.

What Are A/B and Multivariate Testing?

To begin, we need some terminology. Every page is composed of several elements. For instance, let's use a typical landing page to highlight different elements. The page includes a top navigation menu, a free-shipping message right under that menu, and a large rotating banner above the fold.

With a visual campaign builder tool, you can select the area that you want to consider as a distinct element on the page. Once you have identified this element, you then provide alternative variants against the default variant that is already being served on that page. The entirety of content that's being served to a visitor is referred to as an experience.

Any page or set of pages—as in a conversion funnel—is an experience. Every experience can be broken down into elements. And for each element we can have several variants that we want to compare against default.

- A/B testing compares different experiences against the default and doesn't report on the underlying elements.
- MVT compares different elements as well as different experiences against the default and reports on both.

How to Choose A/B or Multivariate Testing

Now let's see how you decide which one to use. Here are five questions to guide your thinking.

Question #1: Do you want to give the page a complete facelift or are you looking to make incremental improvements?

Depending on the situation you may want to make radical changes to the page, perhaps as part of a broader revamp. In this case, your goal is to find the best direction to follow. You are looking for big bold changes, and you want to understand the impact that the sum total of those changes will make on the bottom line. The granularity of elements isn't your primary concern. Instead, you want to get to the overall best performing experience—as well as the worst performing one, which is also important—as quickly as possible.

In this case, the simplest choice of tool is an A/B test.

On the other hand, you may want to make incremental changes. There are many situations where you need to understand the performance of each element, in addition to the overall performance of each experience. Perhaps you want to find out whether the top navigation bar should be more prominent. Should it be on the left-hand side? Should the offers below the fold be bigger and should there be fewer of them? Perhaps a different set of hero banners would work better that the current ones?

One could argue that each of these questions can be answered with a separate A/B test. You can run a test on the top navigation menu's style and position, a test on the offers below the fold, and yet another test on the hero banner. But you immediately run into a problem. Will you run these tests simultaneously or one after the other? Doing tests one after another is a risky technique known as wave testing.

And if you choose to run them simultaneously, so as to avoid spurious seasonality effects from testing things at different times, then you must ensure that a visitor who participates in one test doesn't also participate in another. If a visitor participates in two or more tests at the same time, the attribution of that visitor's actions to the particular experience seen in each test becomes very problematic. And of course, more tests to run means more resources committed to the lifecycle of these tests.

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But let's assume for a moment that you have the resources to run these tests, and let's assume you design and run them correctly, you could still be missing out on a key piece of information. Depending on whether this piece of information is important to you, a multivariate test could be the only way forward.

Question #2: Do you want to know the impact of each incremental change on its own or the total impact of all changes?

So you're now beyond the point of making big bold changes and you need to make incremental changes to your site. For instance, you're running a test on the hero banner and the top navigation menu (Test 1). In addition to this test, you may also want to find the best size and style for the social media buttons at the top of the page. So you run an A/B test on these buttons (Test 2). The key point here is that you don't expect any changes you make on the social media buttons (Test 2) to influence changes you'll make as a result of the banner test (Test 1). Therefore you primarily want to know the impact of this change on its own, independently of any other changes.

In statistical language, we say that we ignore any correlations that may exist between different elements on the page. We assume that the result of Test 1 does not depend on the result of Test 2. Whether or not we change the style of the social media buttons, the winner of the other test is going to be the same. We assume that the different elements on the page are not correlated with each other.

Here's the crux of the issue. With A/B testing you can't possibly know if this holds true. You can't be sure that the winner from one test plays nicely with the winner from the other test. The end result is that Winner + Winner doesn't always make a Winner.

- When the statistical correlations between different elements are very small, then Winner + Winner = Winner.
- When the statistical correlations become significant, then Winner + Winner does not give the overall Winner.

Here are two crucial points. First, statistical correlations are common. Don't think they are something you can generally ignore. In our R&D work, we get to look back at the data that's available to us, and we have found that as many as 82 percent of multivariate tests reveal the presence of correlations between elements. Second, statistical correlations really matter. Ignore them and you may be declaring a winner that actually isn't the best performing experience.

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So if you're interested in understanding the overall, combined impact of multiple incremental changes on conversions or revenue, you have to use MVT.

Here's one last example on this point. Let's assume you're doing a funnel test. By its very nature, such a test spans multiple pages and elements. Now, you clearly want to know the overall winner of the test. You want to answer the question: What's the best-performing funnel? Nevertheless, you probably also need to analyze the impact of changes on every page in the funnel. The only way you can have your cake and eat it too is with MVT.

8 Ways to Accelerate Development Time for Your Tests

The test lifecycle involves several steps including ideation, development, and quality assurance. But one thing is certain, everyone benefits when a new test flies through the coding phase. This might feel outside the marketer's control—as they must rely on IT support—but there are a number of ways to reduce development time and overall efficiency of the test creation lifecycle. Organized developers and savvy marketers can work together to speed up the development time of a test.

Here are eight ways to streamline your test development process from the outset. Print these out, pin them up, and watch the timeframe of your test lifecycle shrink down a size or two.

1. Keep Your Workspace Organized

This is one of the most important and easiest ways to boost campaign development efficiency. When your workspace is organized, all objects (pages, actions, campaigns, scripts, and variants) are easier to find and navigate, existing functionality is easier to understand, and reusing existing objects and code becomes effortless. Come up with a consistent naming convention for all objects in your workspace, write clear descriptions when creating new objects, and regularly audit your workspace to remove old and unused objects.

2. Be Aware of How Your Code Will Function in Earlier Browser Versions

When adding any new code to your testing workspace, keep in mind that what you are writing will be running on all included browsers. Make sure you are writing code that is compatible with all relevant browsers and their respective versions. It is not uncommon to code up a large variant only to discover that an essential piece of the code does not function properly on Microsoft Windows Internet Explorer 8 and now has to be revamped. Save time by discussing coding efforts in older browsers before development begins and then code for all browsers up front.

If you have multiple developers sharing code in the same workspace, following coding best practices will allow each developer to interpret other code more easily, further reducing the time it takes to understand existing functionality.

3. Follow General Coding Best Practices

Many developers do not follow coding best practices in their testing workspaces and end up spending too much time trying to understand their old code or another developer's code. If you have multiple developers sharing code in the same workspace, following coding best practices will allow each developer to interpret the other's code more easily, further reducing the time it takes to understand existing functionality.

You can save a lot of time by adhering to some very easy guidelines. Descriptive commenting, consistent indentation, limiting line length, and useful variable names go a long way in saving time now and for future tests.

Be on the lookout for reusable code. Writing duplicate code can be another hidden time sink. Store duplicate code in functions defined in global scripts instead, and then call those functions where needed.

Group similar code together in the same script. For example, keep all code related to calculating and collecting custom user attributes (such as gender or favorite product type) in one function in a global script. Then call that function anytime you need to update the user's attribute values and send them to a test.

4. Watch Out for Environment Differences

If you have to do your development work in a pre-production environment (such as uat.domain.com or staging.domain.com), familiarize yourself with all of the differences between the pre-production environment and the live environment before beginning development so that you avoid spending development time fixing bugs. The most optimal way to code a test is to use your testing platform's staging/sandbox environment if it has one. This will allow you to code against your live site's production code.

5. Don't Allow the Default Production Site to Change

Changes to the default site are a problem whether they happen during development or while the test is already live. Always know what changes are being pushed to the production site and when they're arriving to avoid the possibility of needing to go back and change test code that has already been written.

> The future of mobile is incremental innovation with a transformational impact.
> *— Reijo Pold, Telefónica UK*

6. Make Good Use of Third Party Integrations

Some campaign metrics are best tracked using your existing analytics platform. Most major analytics packages can be integrated by sending aggregated data about which population of users saw which experiences of a test, allowing you to analyze and compare these populations in that analytics package.

Most metrics are best coded in your testing platform itself, but spare yourself hours of development work coding trivial metrics that will yield the same information as your analytics package. In addition, because of the nature of the metrics, some such as bounce rate are best monitored in an analytics platform.

7. Account for All Possible Campaign Use Cases

When developing a test, all possible page experiences and scenarios should be accounted for to avoid bugs and to collect clean data. You don't want to code three quarters of a test only to realize that everything needs to be rewritten to account for a special experience on the search results page that only applies to certain search terms. Before development, get all relevant departments in your organization briefed on the campaign's experiences and metrics so they can point out any use cases you may not know about or may have forgotten to consider.

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What Are One-Tailed and Two-Tailed Tests?

At eTail West, one wise retailer once told this audience, "80 percent of what you think you know about your site is wrong." His message was simple. Test—and test often.

The problem is that marketers often assume testing is enough to negate the impact of personal bias, even as many brazenly ignore the statistics behind running a valid test. The results are several surprisingly common misconceptions that can turn even the most well-intentioned tester into a mindless, hypothesis confirming drone.

One of the biggest mistakes a marketer can make is failing to understand the difference between one-tailed and two-tailed tests. And we don't blame them. Testing vendors don't necessarily provide the option to calculate statistical significance in more than one way, and if they don't, they probably aren't going to bother explaining the difference. We're not here to say a one-tailed test is inherently useless, but rather it is a risky point of confusion when understanding the validity of your testing campaigns and making decisions about the user experience on your site or mobile app.

Now let's get into some detail.

What is a One-Tailed Test?

A one-tailed test enables you to determine if one mean is greater or less than another mean, but not both. You must choose a direction prior to testing.

In other words, a one-tailed test tells you the effect of a change in one direction and not the other. Think of it this way. If you are trying to decide if you should buy a brand name product or a generic product at your local drugstore, a one-tailed test of the effectiveness of the product would only tell you if the generic product worked better than the brand name. You would have no insight into whether the product was equivalent or worse.

Since the generic product is cheaper, you could see what looks like a minimal impact. In fact, it is a negative impact—meaning it doesn't work very well at all—but you go ahead and purchase the generic product because it is cheaper.

If this is the case, you're probably wondering when a one-tailed test should be used? One-tailed tests should be used only when you are not worried about missing an effect in the untested direction.

But how does this impact optimization? If you're running a test and only using a one-tailed test, you will only see significance if your new variant outperforms the default. There are two possible outcomes: the new variant wins or we cannot distinguish it from the default.

A one-tailed test allows you to determine if one mean is greater or less than another mean, but not both. You must choose a direction prior to testing.

What is a Two-Tailed Test?

A two-tailed test allows you to determine if two means are different from one another. You do not have to specify a direction prior to testing. In other words, a two-tailed test will take into account the possibility of both a positive and a negative effect.

Let's head back to the drug store. If you were doing a two-tailed test of the generic against the brand name product, you would have insight into whether the effectiveness of the product was equivalent or worse than the brand name product. In this instance you can make a more educated decision, because if the generic product is equivalent, you would purchase it because it is cheaper. But if it is far less effective than the brand name product, you'd probably pay the extra money for the brand name product. You wouldn't want to waste your money on an ineffective product, would you?

So when should a two-tailed test be used? Two-tailed tests should be used when you are willing to accept any of the following: one mean being greater, lower, or similar to the other.

And how does this impact optimization? When running a test, if you are using a two-tailed test you will see significance if your new variant's mean is different from that of the default. There are three possible outcomes: the new variant wins, loses, or is similar to the default.

A two-tailed test allows you to determine if two means are different from one another. You do not have to specify a direction prior to testing.

Which Testing Approach Should You Be Using?

Winner: Two-Tailed!

Two-tailed tests mitigate the risk involved with predicting how future visitors will be impacted by the tested content. By accounting for all possible outcomes, this approach provides more valuable and unbiased insights that you can report with confidence. Testing is also supposed to make it easier for marketers to understand the impact of a certain change without the need for IT intervention. Unfortunately, when the difference between one-tailed and two-tailed tests goes ignored, both the marketer's time and the IT resources are at risk of being wasted. Don't fall victim to personal bias or winning results that lack real meaning. This testing approach does require more traffic and time. But that is a small price to pay for reliable results. Now get testing!

Be Mobile-First: 4 Pointers for Great Customer Experience Optimization on Phones and Tablets

Whether your mobile product is new or established in the market, it is a best practice to adopt a mobile-first design to give users an optimal experience on their phones and tablets. A product with a mobile-first design can fulfill all of its core functionalities on a mobile device, guiding mobile users on a journey optimized for their devices.

It's never too late or too early to start thinking mobile-first. It's best to be early, as this reduces the number of users who may be discouraged from exploring your site and converting after a suboptimal experience. But even late in the product life cycle, adopting a mobile-first mentality can strengthen your offering by exposing it to new potential customers and setting it up for future success.

Want to be mobile-first? Here are four tips for optimizing customer experience away from the desktop.

1. Evaluate Drop-Off

One common issue with mobile products is users can sometimes be unwilling to go through the whole sales funnel. This usually happens when products deliver a bad mobile experience, which frustrates people so much they either restart the checkout process on a desktop or abandon the process altogether, not even bothering to switch platforms.

If and when users abandon the funnel, companies have to discover the cause. A good starting point is site or application analytics, which can reveal drop-off points. When the most common drop-off points come before the confirmation page, you should consider building a more mobile-friendly design to improve customer experience from start to finish.

Retail is an interesting sector when it comes to analyzing drop-off in a mobile sales funnel. While all industries are impacted by the rise of mobile marketing, retail is one of the few in which two oppositional segments are driving innovation: millennials and baby boomers. Millennials have lots of technical savvy but little spending power. Baby boomers lack technical knowhow but have much more disposable income. Retailers have the unique challenge of optimizing mobile for two very different customer groups at the same time.

Not every desktop feature will translate well to mobile. Some won't translate at all. Since phones and tablets have smaller screens than desktops, you'll have to determine the core functionalities of your website or application and focus most on bringing those over to mobile.

2. Focus on Core Functionalities

Just because the desktop version of a website or application delivers x, y, and z doesn't mean the mobile version has to deliver x, y, and z in a mobile-friendly form. Desktop customer experiences are by nature more expansive. There are natural differences between desktop and mobile that companies and developers must simply accept and take into account. Not every desktop feature will translate well to mobile. Some won't translate at all. Since phones and tablets have smaller screens than desktops, you'll have to determine the core functionalities of your website or application and focus on bringing those over to mobile.

Say, for example, a developer built a hotel application. The primary function is to help users find and book rooms. To achieve this primary function, some data is vital for the app to convey, such as price, location, and user reviews. But other features, such as digital hotel tours or travel tips, are extraneous—nice to include, but not essential to building a functional mobile product. The developer should consider leaving these features out to reduce clutter and help users engage more with the mobile offering.

How can marketers minimize the clutter in their mobile products? The key is to give core functionalities top priority—and this is true whether companies are building a mobile-first product from scratch or translating it over from a desktop version. Other features can be added later if optimization testing proves they have value.

> "The biggest change, and one that we're already starting to see take shape, is that globally the majority of Internet usage will be done via a mobile device, and for most people the mobile web will be their primary—if not their only—way of experiencing the Internet."
>
> *—Peter Rojas, Gizmodo*

3. Test Your Elements: Desktop Versus Mobile

To better understand what desktop elements will work well on mobile, we recommend running an A/B test. Version A, the control, can have only primary features, and Version B, the challenger, can have a new feature translated from desktop to mobile. If this new feature tests well enough against your goals and doesn't detract from user engagement, feel free to include it in your mobile product.

Also, watch out for core functionalities that get higher engagement on desktop than mobile. This may indicate the functionalities need to be retooled to be mobile-first.

4. Determine What to Consider Mobile

Are tablets mobile devices? Ever since the tablets were released, businesses, analysts, and even consumers have been unsure how to categorize them. Though most people consider tablets mobile, their screen size is often large enough to optimally show the desktop version of a customer experience. On the other hand, tablets don't come with mice or trackpads, and desktop navigation can include elements only mice and trackpads can interact with, such as flyout menus and button hover events.

To optimize for tablet users, split traffic between your desktop and mobile versions to see what functionalities work best on each.

To optimize for tablet users, split traffic between your desktop and mobile versions to see what functionalities work best on each. Since tablet screen size can be similar to desktop, you may not have to adjust site layout too much to be mobile-first on tablets. Just be sure to avoid elements that only work for desktop users.

As you become a mobile-first marketer, remember the four main tips above: know your drop-off points, include the most important features, test potential new features, and account for tablets. For years to come, your product will be ready for anything.

Maximize Your Mobile Layout with 5 Design Tips

With mobile emerging as a major way to view web content, businesses everywhere must invest resources in creating optimal mobile sites. They may choose to make a single responsive site or to build a separate mobile version—but either way—mobile affects the bottom line.

To build a good mobile experience, you must have a deep understanding of the users who visit or might visit your site on their mobile device. Desktop users have different goals from mobile users. You have to keep these differences in mind as you create and improve your mobile optimization strategy.

Trending in Many Sectors

Mobile internet traffic is skyrocketing. There are 4.2 exabytes of global mobile data traffic per month, and that number is projected to reach 24.3 exabytes per month by 2019 (Statista). New SEO algorithms also consider site responsiveness and mobile-readiness when ranking search results.

Will you make your one company website responsive, or will you make a whole new version of the site for mobile users?

Companies are using mobile web for both customer retention and acquisition. Consumers are using mobile web in many sectors. In banking, users are now turning to mobile for essential tasks such as paying bills, making deposits, and checking balances. At brokerages, people are using mobile to monitor the market, make trades, and manage their portfolios. In insurance, customers depend on mobile to file claims, obtain quotes, and even request roadside assistance.

It's clear now is the time to ensure your customers have the best mobile experience they can. Let's walk through the two main choices you'll have to make before you dive into mobile optimization with five tips for designing an attractive mobile site.

> Mobile is not the future—it is the now. Meet your customers in the environment of their choice, not where it's convenient for you.
>
> —*Cyndie Shaffstall, Spider Trainers*

Two Decisions: Approach and Content

When thinking about your mobile site, you have a couple choices when it comes to optimization. The first is this: Will you make your one company website responsive, or will you make a whole new version of the site for mobile users? A responsive site uses web design and code that changes the site experience for visitors depending on factors such as device browser and screen resolution.

Your second decision involves the content of your site. Should users who access your site from their mobile device have access to the same features as desktop users? You'll have to audit the elements of your desktop site to determine if and how they should be included on your mobile site.

Elevating, Removing, and Optimizing

No matter how you settle those two choices, optimizing experiences for mobile users depends on simplicity and functionality. Focus on making a mobile experience that is as simple and functional as possible. The best way to bring these two descriptors to life is to identify mobile user goals and follow best visual practices for mobile web.

Put yourself in a mobile user's shoes by asking the right questions. Why do mobile users come to your site? Is it to learn enough information about your business to come back later on the desktop? Why do desktop users visit? Is it because they're returning customers looking to complete certain actions? Persona work may help you distinguish mobile users from desktop users in terms of their requirements, goals, and interests.

Next, consider the steps you can take to boost the visual appeal of your site for mobile users. Here are five tips to help as you plan your mobile site's experience.

1. **Primary Text.** Elevate the prominence of primary texts—key information, images, and calls to action (CTAs)—by moving them to the top of the page.
2. **Secondary Content.** Either remove or demote secondary content that isn't important to the majority of your mobile user goals. Non-essential content can be put in hidden menus or placed further down the page if you don't want to remove it entirely.
3. **CTAs.** Make your CTAs large and easy to read.
4. **Text Blocks.** Cut down on blocks of text. Paragraphs may not seem like blocks when they're viewed on a desktop, but they overwhelm mobile users with smaller screens. You may have to rewrite content so it can be presented in a more straightforward way.
5. **Load Time.** Optimize your assets to keep load time to a minimum. According to Kissmetrics, most users abandon a mobile site if it doesn't load in between 6 and 10 seconds. Improve load speed by cutting down on your code size and embedded media.

Put yourself in a mobile user's shoes by asking the right questions. Why do mobile users come to your site?

> "Mobile will soon dominate the way consumers secure coupons and deliver payments. Our phones will become our wallets."
> *—Anthony Lacovone, Augme*

Think about what users are trying to accomplish on your mobile site and optimize for those tasks. If you choose to build a responsive site, remember that future optimization testing must account for every device, browser, and related segment. If you build an optimized mobile-friendly site, focus on removing secondary content, emphasizing CTAs, and optimizing load speed.

At the end of the day, as long as you factor the rise of mobile web into your optimization efforts, your website is on the right track.

Non-essential content can be put in hidden menus or placed farther down the page if you don't want to remove it entirely.

How to Avoid the 5 Biggest Mobile Conversion Mistakes

Mobile conversions can be tricky, but many of the general website conversion rules still apply. Never stop testing, focus on macro and micro, always segment, and do the math. Device challenges such as the lack of a physical keyboard are great to solve, but only if you have a fundamental understanding of what you're trying to do.

Mistake 1: Failing to Understand User Intent

One of the most common ways businesses try to optimize the website for mobile phones is responsive web design (RWD). That solution is great—for certain use cases. For instance, if the top pages consumed on desktops are the same ones used on mobile phones, RWD is a great option to cater to all screen sizes.

But what about if the most accessed pages are different because of user intent? RWD isn't going to solve anything—the tasks visitors do on mobile phones will still not be front and center.

Solution: Understand the context. A host of traffic monitoring solutions can show the difference between desktop behavior and mobile behavior. From there, you can review the most common tasks for mobile. Optimize for those tasks, give the elements required for those tasks visual priority, and make them simple to find.

Mistake 2: Not Segmenting Enough

Even when you understand that mobile tasks are different, there's quite a bit of work left to do.

Visitors using tablets behave radically differently than those using smart phones. Some studies show that up to 70 percent of mobile sales come from iPads. You need to check if this is also true on your side of the fence—and act accordingly.

Solution: Segment by operating system, segment by device type (phones versus tablets), look for common behavior patterns, and work on the areas that visitors use most frequently. Transactions may be difficult to conduct on the Sony Xperia, but if only four people will benefit from that monthly, that problem can wait. If hundreds are failing on iPads, that problem needs to be solved sooner.

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Mistake 3: Focusing on Sales

Here's the thing about sales: it's a great metric. It's so great that a lot of businesses obsess about it—to the detriment of measuring other things. But if you look at the mobile landscape—with some studies pegging sales conversions at 1 percent for the industry—you can't think of the other 99 percent as failures. Some people are comparing prices, others are at an earlier stage in the buying cycle, and more still will eventually convert on another device if they are at their current task. If you don't optimize the micro-conversions prior to the sale, you are limiting your pool of potential future customers.

Solution: Figure out the multiple conversions that happen for mobile visitors prior to the sale. Then optimize the experience for those areas.

Mistake 4: Having the Same Funnel on Mobile

This may seem obvious, but a lot of businesses fail to act on, or completely ignore, the relative weaknesses of mobile devices: input mechanisms. Entering information on a touchscreen is tolerable at best, and painful at worst, so having the same funnel on mobile devices that you do on desktops can amount to a massive failure.

Solution: Test using simpler forms to drastically streamline the funnel.

Mistake 5: Ignoring Multiple Device Tracking and Attribution

Some people use smart phones to check price lists, and then convert on a desktop. Some visitors will use mobile devices to compare options, and then convert on a brick and mortar store. Still others will use a phone for a quick glance at options, and eventually convert on a tablet. The point is that no single device is responsible for the sale at the end, but a lot of businesses only measure the last touch point before the sale. That approach leaves many important steps not optimized.

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Solution: There are a number of viable approaches for multiple device tracking, although none of them are perfect. Figure out what works for you and start connecting the dots.

The good news is that your competitors are also struggling with the very same issues. Mobile experience is a tough nut to crack. The bad news is that while you're figuring this stuff out, your brand is already hurting. If you start testing for the right things on mobile devices, it makes it that much more likely that your potential visitors do not hurt for long.

Going Mobile

With mobile devices more important than ever in the daily lives and purchasing habits of customers everywhere, digital marketers must learn to optimize not only for desktop but also for smartphones and tablets.

> Nearly two-thirds of Americans are now smartphone owners, and for many, these devices are a key entry point to the online world.
>
> *—Pew Research*

While there are many similarities between CXO for desktop and mobile, there are also critical differences. Savvy companies must build experiences that both avoid the pitfalls of these differences and capitalize on them as the factors that make mobile optimization unique. This is the key to delivering mobile content that maximizes customer engagement, conversions, and revenue.

A mobile-first mentality may seem challenging to adopt at first, but the first step is as simple as considering previous desktop CXO experience and determining how this can be translated to mobile development. Next, the goal is to launch the most effective test possible, which necessitates a deep understanding of the power and possibilities of A/B and multivariate testing, which have best (and worst) situational uses. Finally, a simple step back is a good idea. Take in your mobile offering and ask yourself: "Does it adequately account for a non-desktop environment? Do the elements adhere to best mobile practices?"

Good mobile experiences are often not easy to achieve. They require specific thought and care to the goals, needs, and interests not just of online shoppers but also non-desktop customers. Between content, design, and delivery that must all be customized for an off-desktop experience.

Going mobile is not impossible. It just requires strategy and testing.

> The mobile device has become our communications hub, our diary, our entertainment portal, our primary source of media consumption, our wallet, and our gateway to real-time information. The revolution is now.
>
> *—Nihal Mehta, Eniac Ventures*

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