
Integrating social media with mobile, online and other marketing channels

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Abstract While the traditional model of blasting messages to customers and potential customers is fading, a new model has emerged. The same customers who are tuning out the formulaic advertising messages of yesterday are now tuning in to their own personal world of social media for product and marketing advice. Being ‘social’ means being available for real-time marketing, real-time customer service and real-time user analytics. The combination of mobile and social media marketing is powerful because it represents an interactive cross-media channel that allows consumers to move instantly from ad placement to point of sale, anytime, anywhere. Together, mobile and social technology are not only transforming how people communicate with each other but also how advertisers and marketers are communicating with them. By mining conversations across multiple social channels, sentiment analysis can help create strategies and engage new customers, while also revealing important insights into a company and its products. This new reality offers a great opportunity to any company willing to step into the world of mobile and social media marketing.

Keywords: mobile marketing, social media marketing, natural user interface (NUI) applications, consumer insights, social media analytics, mobile commerce, geofencing

When Guglielmo Marconi started conducting experiments to transmit radio-waves in the attic of his country villa over a hundred years ago, it is doubtful he ever envisioned the incredible innovations that his work would set in motion — innovations that today include mobile and social media technology.

By harnessing the power of the mobile platform, today’s mobile user can do a whole host of things, including making a phone call, sending a tweet, firing off a text,

instant messaging a friend, ‘liking’ a friend or a business, surfing the internet, hailing a cab, uploading a blog, downloading a video, listening to a song or recording a video. Mobile users can also make a cheque deposit, check into a retail establishment, check out of a hotel, play an online or mobile game, shop online, shop offline (with a mobile coupon), find a restaurant or even locate a lost phone. What is more, this list barely scratches the surface of mobile technology’s functionality.

This myriad of options can be a marketer's best opportunity to connect with a customer — or their most challenging task. To keep customers interested in buying their products, advertisers and marketers must continue to innovate and explore new marketing and messaging avenues — something that gets harder each passing day.

Today's audiences have become so sophisticated that it is hard for advertisers to get their messages through the clutter of content. Audiences know when they are being marketed to, and with the knowing self-referentialism in the current slate of television commercials, advertisers are recognising this. Such self-referentialism often represents the end of a cycle. Of course, cycles do repeat and, it is possible that, like the *Scream* movie franchise that reinvented the slasher/horror genre by self-referentially poking fun at itself and what had gone before, television advertising can reinvent itself and flourish in the 21st century. If and how that might be possible is beyond the scope of this paper, suffice to say that compared with the potential to use mobile and social media marketing to conduct one-on-one advertising, anytime, anywhere to any individual with a mobile device or an internet connection, television advertising pales in comparison.

Had a marketing executive been asked to dream up the perfect device to connect to, market to and sell a company's products to its existing and potential customers, they could hardly have come up with something better than the mobile platform. Much more than a wireless transmitter optimised for voice input and output, a mobile phone — or a mobile tablet — is an always-on, anytime, anywhere marketing and sales device that follows the mobile user throughout their digital day. It is also an entertainment, customer relationship management (CRM) and social networking tool, which

makes it, potentially, the most powerful device in the history of marketing and customer relations. The mobile phone is a marketing tool that can be — and usually is — personalised by its owner, and that is within the reach of that owner almost every hour of every single day; once again a marketer's dream.

Mobile devices have the unique ability to connect their users with many of today's most important marketing channels, including e-mail, social media, display advertising and search marketing. Even television and radio advertisements can be streamed onto a mobile device (provided the television and radio companies make it available). Receiving e-mails on a mobile phone means that the e-mails can be viewed and replied to just about anywhere a mobile or wireless connection is available.

In the USA, most smartphones come with Facebook, Twitter and YouTube built in, while in China, smartphones are usually preloaded with RenRen and QQ. These pre-programmed mobile phones make connecting to the most popular social media networks almost instantaneous, with additional networks usually a simple downloadable app away. Although the mobile phone's screen is considerably smaller than that of a PC, that of the mobile tablet is not, making it a potentially great place for display advertising and even purchasing.

As of July 2012, tablet ownership stood at just 12 per cent globally, suggesting a huge potential for growth, especially in places like China, where mobile devices are the preferred method to access the internet.¹ Studies are also showing that mobile and tablet platforms are complementing each other rather than infringing upon each other.¹ Tablets are 'increasingly playing a role in e-commerce. While smartphones tend to be used by consumers to locate physical stores and for mobile coupons, tablets are

Table 1: Forecast: US interactive marketing spend, 2011–2016

Type	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	CAGR
Social media	\$1,590	\$2,119	\$2,760	\$3,453	\$4,217	\$4,995	26%
Email marketing	\$1,510	\$1,694	\$1,875	\$2,066	\$2,262	\$2,468	10%
Mobile marketing	\$1,652	\$2,777	\$4,238	\$5,697	\$7,057	\$8,237	38%
Display advertising	\$10,949	\$12,860	\$16,085	\$19,783	\$23,919	\$27,600	20%
Search marketing	\$18,756	\$21,553	\$24,613	\$27,515	\$30,433	\$33,319	12%
Total	\$34,457	\$41,003	\$49,571	\$58,514	\$67,888	\$76,619	17%
Percentage of all ad spend	19%	21%	25%	29%	32%	35%	

CAGR, compound annual growth rate

Source: Forrester Research interactive marketing forecasts, 2011 to 2016 (US)

the preferred vehicle for doing research about products and making actual online purchases'.¹

When it comes to making purchases, most US tablet owners have already paid for downloaded music (62 per cent) and books (58 per cent), while about half of them have paid for movies (51 per cent). Some 41 per cent have purchased magazines, 41 per cent have bought television shows, 27 per cent have paid for streaming radio, 22 per cent for sports programming and 19 per cent for news. These are healthy numbers and, although each single purchase may have been minimal, the cumulative effect of all such purchases can really add up.

Connected via a natural user interface (NUI) like Apple's Siri, Android's Speaktot and Microsoft's Tellme services, a mobile device can become a talking personal assistant, a digital subordinate, if you will, that understands normal speech and connects to a vast world of data that can turn a mobile phone into a verbal business location finder, a weather reporter, an encyclopaedia, an appointment maker, an e-mail sender as well as much, much more. The NUI road has been a little bumpy, but it is way too early to call it a failure. Furthermore, NUIs promise to become much more user-friendly as the systems expand and the technology behind them gets more sophisticated.

Today's smartphones contain features

such as high-quality cameras, high-definition video capabilities, orientation and proximity sensors, accelerometers, talking personal assistants, GPS functionalities, Wi-Fi connectivity, contactless near-field communication and touchscreen capabilities — a whole host of tools and features that foster immediacy. These features allow for a new range of products and services to be delivered straight onto the mobile device.

According to Forrester (see also Table 1):

'Search and display will continue to be the biggest pieces of the interactive spending pie, comprising 44 per cent and 36 per cent, respectively, in 2016, though search will have lost share from 55 per cent in 2011. Mobile paid advertising and search will experience astronomic growth and are surpassing e-mail and social this year'.²

This Forrester report 'projects the overall compound annual growth rate of interactive marketing spending at 17 per cent, but the fastest-growing category is mobile at 38 per cent, set to reach \$8.2bn in 2016'.² The report claims that three things are responsible for the surge; 'a push toward creating more targeted, dynamic mobile ads instead of so much repurposing of online ads, the rise of mobile commerce; and the experimentation with new ad formats for tablets'.²

That good old standby, e-mail marketing, is projected to have a growth rate of 10 per cent, bringing it to \$2.5bn in 2016, but total spend is being kept down because of its low cost of reach per 1,000 consumers.² Finally, widespread adoption of social media will continue, reflected in a projected growth rate of 26 per cent. Social media spend will only reach \$5bn by 2016,² but that lowly figure belies the fact that social media marketing is probably some of the most wisely spent money around.

It is important for businesses to view mobile communication not as a separate entity that works in a vacuum, but rather as a large interconnecting web of solutions and services that complement each other. Mobile communication can be a gateway for success in social media and vice versa. Both technologies can certainly succeed alone; together, however, they complement each other in ways that will help both realise their full potential. Using a mobile device to add content to various social media channels simplifies the customer relationship and/or marketing process.

In a sense, it is ironic that engaging in social media can be incredibly anti-social: sitting alone in a room, typing away on a computer was once the realm of solitary computer geeks, but it has now become an activity in which almost one in five people worldwide engage almost every single day.³ Perhaps this is because human beings are, first and foremost, social beings, and we crave the connectedness that social media can provide. It should be no surprise that one of the greatest inventions of the 20th century — the internet — would become the watering hole of the 21st century; a place where human beings can gather to socialise and connect with friends, family members and acquaintances in a way that was almost unimaginable only a decade-and-a-half ago.

Since the very beginning of the technology era, computer users have been

looking for ways to interact socially with one another. 'The earliest academic computer networks had bulletin board systems that allowed researchers to post information to be shared and to comment on each other's content'.³ When the internet became widely accessible, some of the first commercial services were those that hosted interest groups. 'The web's growth in reach and capability, and as a medium for interaction, set the stage for the explosive growth of social technologies'.³ Indeed, its growth has been faster than any other technology in history. Whereas it took 'commercial television 13 years to reach 50 million households and the internet services providers three years to sign their 50 millionth subscriber, it took Facebook just a year to hit 50 million users'.³ Twitter trumped them all, taking only nine months to reach that vaunted subscriber number.³

'Today, more than 1.5 billion people around the globe have an account on a social networking site, and almost one in five online hours is spent on social networks — increasingly via mobile devices'.³ In little more than a decade, social technology has become a cultural, social, political and economic phenomenon. Most importantly for businesses, 'hundreds of millions of people have adopted new behaviours using social media — conducting social activities on the internet, creating and joining virtual communities, organising political activities',³ even toppling corrupt governments.

The secret to social media's growth is right there in its name — 'social' — as in the fundamental human behaviour of seeking 'identity and "connectedness" through affiliations with other individuals and groups that share their characteristics, interests, or beliefs'.³ Social technologies allow individuals to interact with large groups of people in almost any location in

the world, at any time of the day, at marginal, if not at no cost at all. With advantages like these, it is not surprising that social media tools have become so widespread that almost one in five people worldwide use them.³ As the tools are basically free and the desire to communicate so inherently human, it is arguably surprising that the figure is as low as it is.

Using social media is about more than just connecting with friends on Facebook, uploading videos to YouTube or photographs to Flickr, or 'pinning' an item of interest to a Pinterest board. It is more than just making comments on a blog or firing off a tweet on Twitter. The social media realm is a vast and not quite fully understood web of sites, where interested parties can start or join a conversation about things that interest them as well as connect with strangers from across the globe.

What makes social media so exciting is that those interests can be about almost anything imaginable. The various forms of social media include blogs, micro-blogs, social networks, geofencing applications, bookmarking sites, RSS feeds, discussion boards and forums, online video, podcasting, mobile apps, videocasting, as well as virtual gaming worlds and virtual social worlds as well as much, much more. Just about all of these things can be accessed on a mobile device. The experience of a virtual or social world on the mobile phone is very limiting, if available at all, but with just about every other of those platforms, mobile communication could be considered the ideal conduit.

Businesses are quickly recognising the power of social media. 'Thousands of companies have found that social technologies can generate rich new forms of consumer insights — at lower cost and faster than conventional methods'.³ In addition to this, businesses can watch what

'consumers do and say to one another on social platforms, which provides unfiltered feedback and behavioural data (eg do people who "like" this movie also "like" this brand of vodka?)'.³ This kind of analytics can help push marketing campaigns into overdrive because of the power of virality and exponentiality.

Because of the unique nature of the mobile user, marketers now have much more powerful — and effective — ways to measure the success of their advertising campaigns. By assigning a digital fingerprint to a particular mobile user, a business can know in real time exactly what this user is clicking on. Writing for the *New York Times*, Stuart Elliot argues that:

'If the 20th century was known in marketing circles as the advertising century, the 21st century may be the advertising measurement century. Marketers are increasingly focused on the effectiveness of their pitches, trying to figure out the return on investment for ad spending ... The ability of newer digital media to provide more precise data has led traditional media like television, radio, magazines and newspapers to try upgrading the ways they count consumers'.⁴

In Marketing Communications: Integrating Offline and Online with Social Media, Smith and Zook compare the reach of three different types of marketing platform (the broadcast network, the telephone/e-mail network and social media) to show just how powerful social media marketing can be:

- *The broadcast network*, known as a Sarnoff network (named after David Sarnoff, the broadcasting legend) is based on a 'one-to-many' model. The network score is simply the number of nodes (ie audience members). Thus, a hypothetical Sarnoff network (eg old television advertising) with 20 viewers

- has a score of 20 (ie 20 potential contacts).
- *The telephone/e-mail network* is based on the Metcalf model (named after Bob Metcalf, one of the inventors of the internet) and is a 'many-to-many' model. Because any node (ie any member of the group) can contact any other node (ie anyone else in the group), the network score (ie the total number of potential contacts) is 20 squared (ie 400), making the telephone/e-mail network a much more powerful communication medium than the Sarnoff model.
 - *The social network model* holds that people tend to belong to multiple social networks, and is known as a Reed network (named after David Reed, who first asserted this law). A Reed network generates a network score of 2 to the power of the number of nodes on the network. Thus, taking the same group of 20 people in a social situation generates a network score of 2^{20} (ie over 1 million people) — a figure exponentially higher than the number of people reached by the Sarnoff and Metcalf models.

Simply put, the reach of social media is immense, and coupled with mobile communication, it can be lightning fast too.

A company is only as strong as its weakest customer relationship, and mobile communication allows a consumer's voice to become part of a highly sophisticated, two-way dialogue between a corporation and its customers. This dialogue can help shape both a company's products and, more importantly, bolster its bottom line. This connectivity does come with risks, however, but companies should not fear ceding control of the message to the consumer. Instead, they should want them to become a fully vested participant in the conversation. As the influential Cluetrain

Manifesto — the set of 95 theses put forth to explain the internet revolution's newly connected marketplace — states, markets are conversations that 'consist of human beings, not demographic sectors'.⁶ Mobile and social media technologies represent the best way to exploit this conversation.

Mobile devices can help a business not only find a potential customer, but also market to that customer with some of the most compelling marketing tools available. A mobile device can be both the conduit for a product sale as well as the payment processor itself. It can help a user find a bricks-and-mortar business through mobile search, even, sometimes, with simple and natural voice commands.

In some cases, such as with a mobile app or a mobile game and/or digital music, the product itself can actually be delivered onto the mobile device. Indeed, the marketing, product discovery, product testing, purchasing and actual delivery of the mobile product can all be handled on the mobile device. Above all else, the mobile device has the power to create an ongoing, one-to-one, two-way relationship with the customer. It is also a relationship that can evolve: as the marketer learns more and more about the wants, desires and needs of their customer, the potential to make future sales around those wants, desires and needs increases dramatically.

Mobile commerce has the potential to revolutionise business. After a rocky start, mobile commerce is now coming into its own. The functionality problems of the past — inaccurate location mapping and limited data download speeds — are being overcome. As mobile users move to unlimited data plans, the growth of mobile commerce should accelerate considerably over the next few years. The addition of mobile wallets or payment services like Square will only help further this growth.

Mobile marketing, mobile advertising and social media have the potential to transform the way marketers connect with

their customers and potential customers. In this new world, consumers will be seen as participants rather than as 'target audiences'. With blogs, social networks, message boards and viral messaging, advertisers are now faced with a radically different marketing landscape versus that of just a few short years ago. This new landscape is one in which marketers can no longer completely control the message — but that fact should be embraced. Customers can — and should — become part of the message and conversation.

Businesses should develop a multi-screen, always-on strategy that follows a customer throughout their digital day. Mobile should not be viewed as a standalone channel, but rather as an extension of a company (or product) that exploits additional channels; for example, QR codes can be used in print or television advertising; common short codes can be disseminated in radio or print ads; and mobile apps can be marketed almost anywhere, then downloaded from the internet or directly onto a mobile device via SMS text messages or QR code. The technology's inherent ability to create a highly personal, instant two-way connection between purchaser — or potential purchaser — and seller is something that has never been seen before in the history of commerce. Mobile ad campaigns must be concise, informative, and, most of all, they must respect the privacy of the consumer. If advertisers honour these strict edicts, the potential for mobile marketing is almost endless.

Push technology even puts the power of communication into the hands of the marketer, allowing businesses both to initiate contact with an opted-in customer and then send them a wide array of products and content. As long as a customer is opted in to a CRM system, a business can foster proper dialogue with that customer. Furthermore, this dialogue can grow more sophisticated over time as

more is learned about the customer's wants, desires, habits and needs. Social media sites can also be mined for more information on these wants, desires and needs. Armed with this information, a business can even influence the customer's behaviour by making purchases hard to refuse.

In the casino industry, gaming companies are recognising the importance of mobile technology as part of an integrated CRM system. On gaming floors throughout the world, hosts use mobile devices to sign up players right where they are gambling, quickly capturing their data along with photographic identification via the mobile device's camera. The process is so quick and efficient that the gambler hardly has to turn away from the action. Once the gambler's information is entered into the casino's CRM system, however, every dollar they spend on the casino floor can be tracked. Models can be developed that follow and predict a patron's play and, when they are close to reaching their typical gambling loss threshold, an alert can be sent to the host's mobile device, informing them that it might be a good time to approach the patron to offer them a free meal or a room upgrade or some other incentive. This can help turn the player's negative experience into a positive one.

Social media enterprise collaboration tools can also allow such functionality as predictive prompting, predictive publishing, attitude analytics and social analytics such as ultimate drill-through, which can let an insurance agent drill down into a customer's record, double-tap on a mobile or video-call number associated with that record and then actually connect with the individual who being analysed. This is telemarketing on steroids. Not only would the insurance agent know the customer's purchasing habits but also his or her wants, desires and

needs; such information could then be used to help make the sale too enticing for the customer to pass on.

The history of social networking is littered with the remnants of such failed mobile experiments as Nokia's Sensor — a Bluetooth application that allowed nearby users to connect with one another, and Google's Dodgeball — a service that allowed registered mobile phone users to notify a list of friends whenever they were nearby. Bluetooth advertising has also had a difficult road — partly because of its failure to be user-friendly, as the user had to open up their phone to the Bluetooth signal. As is so often the case with technology, asking the user to work their way through a checklist of technical steps can kill even the best of ideas. 'Keep it simple stupid' is still the best mantra when it comes to consumer acceptance. The addition of geofencing (or geolocation) capabilities to mobile applications has taken this concept to heart and made things nice and simple.

Geofencing, which defines geographical boundaries via the GPS or radio-frequency ID functionalities built into most modern smartphones, has been hailed by marketing and advertising agency JWT as one of the 100 trends to watch in 2013.⁷ Even though geofencing has been around for a few years, JWT suggests that more retailers will adopt it in 2013 in an effort to combat show-rooming and survive today's hyper-competitive environment. JWT gives the example of Best Buy, which uses the eBay price comparison app RedLaser to show shoppers its in-store specials as well as provide other pertinent information. It also describes how the US cosmetics brand Kiehl's uses geofencing at its retail outlets and 'is investigating its use within department stores where Kiehl's has customers'.⁷

Geofencing software allows an administrator to set up alerts — usually

SMS, push notifications or e-mail alerts — so that the user is notified when a device crosses a geofence and enters (or exits) set boundaries. Geofencing can be used in many areas, including mobile device management, fleet management, human resources management, compliance management, asset management and law enforcement, among others.

Such geofencing mobile apps as Foursquare, MyTown, Jiebang and Qieke are straddling the mobile/social line, allowing users to 'check in' to a location via a smartphone app or an SMS. The user can then share their location with friends, while collecting points and virtual badges from the places they visit. With over 30 million users worldwide, Foursquare has become a potent marketing platform for local businesses to connect with their customers, while also enticing new ones with mobile coupons or other non-commercial incentives. Businesses in such wide-ranging fields as television programming, transit authorities, high-end retail and higher education use Foursquare to do everything from sharing historically significant facts (The History Channel) to awarding promotional train tickets (San Francisco's BART service) to giving away free cologne (the Coach Men Store) to offering students the ability to rate campus locations (Harvard).⁸

The combination of mobile and social media marketing is uniquely powerful because it represents an interactive, always-on, cross-media channel that allows consumers to move instantly from an ad placement to a point-of-sale site, whether that be an online store, a casino floor, or a restaurant or bar. Mobile marketing is here to stay and will probably change mobile consumer shopping habits the way the internet changed retail consumer shopping habits. It will simply become one element in the interactive marketer's portfolio.

Social media have become an anytime, anywhere phenomenon, available not just

on standalone desktop computers, but also on a full range of mobile devices. Being 'social' now includes being available for real-time marketing, real-time customer service and real-time user analytics, which can produce be a treasure trove of priceless information for businesses trying to understand their customers better.

While the traditional model of blasting messages to customers and potential customers is fading because trust in corporations has sunk to an all-time low, a new model is emerging. The same customers who are tuning out the formulaic advertising messages of yesterday are now tuning in to their own personal world of social media for product and marketing advice. This new reality offers a great opportunity to any company willing to step into the social media world. Typical social media activities, such as building fanbases, brand and anti-brand management, brand loyalty enhancement, crowdsourcing, existing and potential customer engagement, customer feedback and real-time customer service, can all be handled more efficiently through mobile and social media platforms.

By mining conversations across multiple social channels for deeper insights, sentiment analysis can help create strategies, engage new customers, while revealing important insights into a company and its products. It can also pinpoint the blog influencers — those individuals to whom other bloggers turn for insight or direction. It can help companies track and measure what people are saying about them and their products, all in real time.

Mobile and social technology are not only transforming how people communicate with each other but also how advertisers and marketers are

communicating with them. The revolution has just begun and it will be mobilised, localised, socialised and personalised.

Companies that recognise this and embrace mobile and social's multi-screen, always-on strategy of following customers throughout their digital day will be richly rewarded. For companies that do not, however, the consequences could be dire. As the Cluetrain Manifesto warns, 'Companies can now communicate with their markets directly. If they blow it, it could be their last chance'.⁶

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