

EXPERTS' FORUM | Article Subject

SURF'S UP! WHERE'S YOUR BOARD?

Get your surfboard, the tsunami is building speed! We are - once again - sitting at the crossroads of technological history where the way we interact with our best customers is about to radically change. What is this new "tsunami" and why should it matter to you and your business? In its simplest explanation:

Your phone is your computer

Think about it. You probably have a Smartphone or are planning to get the latest iPhone or new GooglePhone. Did you realize that 3" x 5" device may be what mission control looks like in most small countries in the free world? You know the weather, time and directions to the most remote places on earth. The DOW jumped 187 points today and you knew it immediately. That new Coldplay song you heard 5 minutes ago on your favorite radio station is now downloaded on your iPhone.....Viva La Vida! Your contacts and calendar are in the palm of your hand. "It" knows more about you than you do.

And, most importantly.....you, and whomever you grant access to, can communicate any time, any place and almost any way. Never in the history of mankind have we had the opportunity that is literally in our hands to marketing nirvana.... personal one to one marketing.

Last year:

- 600B text messages were sent vs. 300B cell phone calls made!

- The Internet was accessed more times from a cell phone than from a PC by nearly 2 to 1.

You don't need many more data points than the above to come to a few potentially game-changing conclusions:

- Email is fading....Generation D thinks email is the "old" way. They don't do it.

- The PC will take a secondary role in access to the Internet and general communications.

- As long as spam doesn't enter the SMS text arena or is substantially mitigated, texting and the deliv-

er of offers, access, rewards and data is currently the "cleanest" medium.

This is why you need your surf board waxed and ready as the tsunami is coming and we haven't seen a wave like this since Internet 1.0. Yes, there are a myriad of issues and challenges that will need to be addressed:

1. How do I get permission to communicate via text with my customers?
2. What is the best technology that will both allow me to deliver coupons, awards, and other offers and know that they will be easily processed at point of sale or online?
3. What are the security, fraud and Big Brother issues of having so much information on an individual's mobile device?
4. How can I make my customers' experience with me better (maps, saved itineraries and confirmation codes, bar code readable coupons at point of sale, product info by simply texting to a unique short code and keyword)? The list is endless.
5. How do I integrate a mobile strategy into my overall marketing and communications plan?

While the list of questions is long, the wonderful reality is that mobile strategies can be tested, tweaked, relaunched and refreshed quickly and inexpensively. The issue is not whether you have a comprehensive plan right now, but whether you are moving in a direction such that when the tsunami hits, your feet are, literally and figuratively, wet. This is not a time to stand on the sidelines and watch this wave hit you and carry your competitors



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