

The Importance of Taking Your Business Mobile

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Introduction

It seems like it wasn't very long ago at all that businesses were just starting to realize how important it was to build an online presence. If your business didn't have a website, it was stuck in the Stone Age and competitors who were making use of the web would quickly win over the hearts of even loyal customers as they stopped using the Yellow Pages and started using Google and other favorite search engines. The new internet marketplace took a few years to catch on, but today every business from the largest name brands to mom and pop stores and restaurants have some sort of web based presence. Ecommerce, social media marketing, search engine optimization, blogging, videos and other types of content creation are all critical processes to continue to incorporate into your business for marketing, advertising and engaging current and possible new customers. Nowadays though, if you aren't taking your business mobile, you will once again quickly get left behind and potential customers will never realize your business exists because your competitors who have realized the value proposition of mobile services will be capitalizing on the waves of the new marketing, customer service and sales that mobile users are looking for.

A remarkable fact about mobile use is that it is taking off much faster than internet use did and getting your business in alignment now will not only help you gain an edge over your competitors, but will also help you increase your profit margins as those who prefer to make purchasing decisions or shop through their smartphones, tablets and other mobile devices will gravitate towards your company because it is available and convenient for them.

Getting started with mobile business isn't difficult to do because many of the same best practices for marketing and advertising that you do via the internet can work out perfectly translated over to an intuitive mobile platform. There are also many

great new tools to help businesses such as Mobile Web Pro and Mobile Device Detect that can help the translation process from traditional web based activities to mobile usability and appeal for mobile users. This blueprint will fill you in on everything you need to know to take your business mobile including how to get started, marketing, advertising, creating apps and everything else you need to know to make sure your business gains a competitive edge in the new mobile consumer environment.

Mobile Marketing Statistics

To fully appreciate the opportunities for your business to go mobile, here are some statistics that represent just how powerful a medium the new mobile marketplace is quickly turning out to be.

- Mobile penetration on a global level as of June 2012 per Ericsson Industry Analysis states is at about 87% of the population with 6.2 billion mobile subscriptions currently active. This puts the actual subscribers at around 4.2 billion users because some people have multiple subscriptions to cover smartphones, tablets and notepads. This number is expected to reach 9 billion by 2017.
- According to CTIA Wireless Association 105.8% of the American population have mobile subscriptions of some sort of another.

What these numbers more specifically mean for your business is:

- 42% of mobile users click on mobile ads
- 35% visit the advertiser's website and expect it to be usable and attractive through the mobile device they are using.
- 32% search for additional information such as testimonials or directions from their phone or notebook

- 49% make a purchase using their mobile device
- 27% contact the business directly via phone call or other messaging means
- 71% of mobile users will look up information about a business after they see an ad on television, in a magazine or other publication or even over traditional internet

This information comes from the US consumer Mobile Movement Survey conducted during the second quarter of 2011. These percentages are considered to be much higher after just one year and will continue to grow. There is simply no reason for your business to not capitalize on those numbers when creating new means of advertising, marketing, lead generation and keeping in front of customers and potential new customers.

Why Mobile is Important for Your Business

If the stats alone aren't enough to convince you to take the plunge and start getting your business ready for the mobile revolution, it may be because you think that this is just some new fad that will go away once the novelty wears off. Unfortunately that is what many businesses thought about the internet when it initially started to become a favorite place for businesses and consumers to shop through. This left them behind the times and many of them are still struggling to catch up because technology is not slowing down. If you don't get started, you will get left behind and your competitors will reap the rewards. Do not let that happen.

The whole world is beginning to rely more on smartphones and other mobile devices to the point that those born between 1980 and 2011 are said to be technology dependent and can't fully function without it. Generation X, or those born between 1965 and 1980 are also classified as technology dependent although they would not be as devastated as having to work around not having the internet at

their fingertips. Baby boomers are not considered to be technology dependent, but millions are learning technology to keep up with the times and a great deal of them enjoys shopping online.

Even in these beginning phases mobile marketing is proving to be more effective than any other marketing techniques ever used. It could be because 91% of mobile users have their devices with them twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. Or it could be how easy it is for them to quickly click on whatever catches their eye. Mobile coupon codes for example have a 10% higher redemption rate than any other coupon types while 90% of mobile users take some sort of action on marketing opportunities. 70% of those take action within the first hour.

Those are some staggering statistics and are some important reasons why your business needs to start to focus on how to gain benefit from the mobile market. The return on investment is much better due to specific types of geo-targeting and being able to create specific marketing strategies that will be exposed to the right demographic of potential new customers.

Creating a Mobile Presence

Now that you know in no uncertain terms how important it is to take your business mobile, you can start to plan on the best ways to do that. As with any other project, mobile campaigns will start at the drawing board and the first thing to figure out is what sort of services you will offer to mobile customers. The most common service that businesses offer to mobile users are directions that will take them from wherever they are to the companies address, such as with integrating through Google Maps. From that point, what type of business you have can help determine what sort of services you will offer past the initial information about your company. This is a great time to start to do some market research by checking out

your competitors to see what they are doing to engage with mobile users. Researching the big name brands that have gone mobile to see what they are doing will also help your business narrow in on what will be most beneficial to pursue.

What your market research will tell you is that there are some standard best practices being used across the board, and you will see what your competitors are doing and how you can do it better or offer more appealing marketing or mobile services. For example, if you are a restaurant you might find out that your closest competitor offers directions, but doesn't offer their menu or quick order services which are both attractive offerings for hungry mobile users looking for a place to eat.

Using your market research to find out how your competitors are marketing and advertising is another exercise that will work out in your favor. You can also spend time surveying your current customers to find out what they would like the best in regard to keeping up to date with current sales, promotionals, contests or other news from your business they would find valuable. Many of them would appreciate an occasional text message, while others may prefer that you notify them through their favorite social media network.

Gathering your research about what your competitors are doing and what kind of suggestions your current customers have will help you outline a plan of how to begin marketing and advertising your business on the mobile platforms. While you are or your staff members are doing this research, you can start to optimize your current website to translate well for mobile users to access and take advantage of.

Optimizing Your Website for Mobile

Getting your website optimized for mobile should be a high priority. According to Google more than half of mobile users refuse to recommend a business that has a

poorly designed mobile website, about 40% of those users will then go to your competitors if they experienced poor service through your web based mobile presence. What this means is if a mobile user goes to your web address today, and the website you have doesn't look great in their smartphone or notebook screen, you will have just lost business.

While you might assume your website should show up how you designed it for the web, only smaller to fit into the smaller screens, that is not the case. You need to do some adjusting to pages to get them ready to show up nicely for mobile users. Before you do any of these kinds of adjustments, it is a good idea to go back and revisit your keywords to make sure you are using the best keyword and keyword phrases in order to point people in the direction of your website. This is where your analytics will come in handy because it will tell you how many people are landing on your web page and how many of them are coming from iPhones, iPads or android devices and what key words those visitors are using. The keywords you see actually coming up the most in searches are the ones that you will want to focus on when you are designing your website for the internet or for mobile users.

When you have your keywords you can start to organize the structure of what you would like mobile users to be able to do through your website. The specific elements you want to look at are ease of navigation, the most important information and calls to action you would like to have included and any other particulars that you feel are relevant and you will want to be able to translate those into their simplest form.

It's important to keep in mind when you are going through all the elements you would like to create a mobile user experience for that you think how to mobilize your site, not just minimize it. While other businesses simply make their internet site show up nicely in a smaller screen, that is not going to give you the best use because mobile users do not interact with mobile sites the same way that internet

users interact with traditional internet sites. For one thing, they want things to show up quickly, they want to read through information quickly, be able to complete actions just as quickly and get on with their day. Being able to offer this speedy experience while also smoothly directing users through a lead generation funnel or sales funnel is going to be a bit different to accomplish than how you might have it designed on the internet, especially if you have long sales letters and other cumbersome text to get through.

While you are taking a second look at how your content will be offered the best for mobile users, you can go through your images and make sure you have the highest quality possible that will also look great on smaller screens to create the highest level of visual appeal. Reducing the image files is helpful for this especially for mobile users that have to pay additional for the bandwidth it will eventually take to load your site. When you have updated your images, replace Flash, Java, Ajax and frames since they won't translate as well on mobile devices. XHTML (WAP 2.0), cHTML (iMode) or WML (WAP 1.2) work much better for this.

As you are going through the content that is all ready on your site and working to decide how you would like for mobile users to interact with it, keep in mind that many smartphone users and notebook users like to have the ability to organize events, shop, read news or blogs and keep up with their social networking. When your site includes those opportunities for them, by allowing them to sign in through their Facebook or Google+ IDs, or allowing them to click a button to add your event to their Facebook or Google event pages, then you will be able to create convenient and intuitive mobile based ways to stay engaged with current and future customers.

Getting your complete strategy in place will then allow you to begin implementing it into a workable mobile user experience. ePro Computer Solutions is then the ideal service to use in order to get your website ready for mobile use.

Mobile Web Pro

Please check out our Mobile Services: <http://www.eprocs.com/mobile.html>

Why a Proper Redirect Code is Important

Once your mobile website is complete, making sure mobile device users are directed to that site will assure you will be found by them and they will enjoy a great experience by having the ease of use that a specially designed mobile website will offer them. How to make sure they get to the mobile site can be a bit on the tricky side and there is a variety of ways that businesses are using to assist mobile device users to get to the correct website version.

Some websites create a clickable link on their regular website, this will look like a button or small banner ad that will say something such as, “Click here for our mobile version” but there have been issues with that method because mobile browsers might not fully load your site correctly and users will leave the page before they are able to notice the clickable link to find one that loads better. To avoid this, having a “Mobile Device Detect/Redirect” application that will automatically direct mobile users to the mobile version of your website will turn out to be the right way to go. These types of applications allow your website to notice how visitors are coming to your pages and will pull up the mobile version if the application notices the person visiting your site is using a mobile device.

Otherwise, it will default to your regular internet site for computer and laptop users.

With these types of applications, mobile visitors won't notice anything different or unusual, the mobile version of your website will just open for them in their browser so they can easily navigate or make use of the information and features you've added to your mobile website version. Then, you can include a simple link for them to click through to the traditional version if they prefer such as in the case they have a bigger screen that is often included with some notebooks or other mobile devices. Some "Mobile Device Detects" will have a function that automatically allows for that to give mobile users full control of what website they want to make use of.

Mobile Device Detects Methods

There are a couple of ways that Mobile Device Detects operate to determine if a user is checking into your website via traditional internet or through a mobile device and as soon as they are able to detect this, they will automatically direct the user to the appropriate site. These methods each have their own types of applications that are necessary to add to your website and there are considerations with each different type. To date, only one application is going to work the best for your website in a way that will allow a hands-off approach that will continue working through all the different types of mobile device updates.

Screen Width Detection

One method that mobile device detects use is "screen width detection" and the way that works is the application will make a determination based on the screen-width of the device connecting to the website, If that particular size is less than a specific set value, typically around 800 pixels the application will assume the user is

connecting through a mobile device and will bring up the mobile version of the website.

Most traditional monitors for computers and laptops are at least 1024 pixels in width and those are the ones that would see the traditional version of the website using the screen width detection application. If the screen shows that it is 799 pixels or less, it will revert to the mobile version. There is one flaw in this system though because mobile devices have larger screens these days and some of them have between 800 to 1024 pixels, so the traditional site will be pulled up and won't be as easy to navigate or as nice to look at. If that happened to your site, you can expect your visitor would quickly click away to find a better looking website.

User Agent Detection

The other system that is used to detect what sort of device a website visitor is using when they pull up your website is a "User Agent Detection" method and this is the preferred choice, if you use the right user agent detection technology because not all of them work as well as they should. A high quality user detection technology application works at the level of a user clicking through to a website from their favorite browser whether it be Internet Explorer, Chrome, Firefox, Safari, Opera or another browser. The browser will then be part of the acting agent that retrieves the user agent details from the device to know what type of device it is. This method will detect down to the brand name and version of the smartphone or other mobile device being used. That will determine whether a traditional or mobile version of a website is displayed, but the website needs to have User Agent detection/redirection technology installed on it in order for this type of method to work.

As with any new technology there are of course concerns even with the better User Agent detection and the main issue for this type of technology is the frequency that

mobile devices are continually being updated. Each new mobile device has new user agent information and the user agent detection application cannot direct properly if it doesn't recognize a new agent as being a new mobile device that should ideally see the website's mobile version.

Many user agent detection applications are set up to where each new mobile device that comes out has to be added to the coding so it can be recognized as a mobile device. This would require a webmaster or someone else on staff to keep a close watch on every new user agent created for each new mobile device, and then they would also need to know how to enter it into the code that is stored on the regular website and keep up with those tasks on a timely enough basis so that website visitors aren't lost along the way. That could be an exhaustive situation to be in as there are so many different types of devices coming out new all the time.

MDD-Mobile Device Detection

Luckily for businesses, webmasters and any other involved staff members there is a fix for both the screen width detection and the user agent detection methods, is a more robust user agent detection method that has an auto-updating user agent database. To date, MDD - Mobile Device Detect is the only application that offers that as well as creating the most seamless connections for pulling up a traditional or mobile website version based on the parameters involved.

How this would work on your website is that MDD will detect and make sure the correct website is displayed based on the user agent details it collects when a visitor connects to your website. Your website then auto-connects to the MDD's database to receive ongoing updates at a rate of twice a month. This adds any new user agents to your websites database so the proper site shows up at the proper time without you, your webmaster or other staff member having to do anything at all. In

other words, MDD is a set up and forget about it application that does the job right without further time or effort on your business's dime. It also adds a "View Regular Website" link on the mobile version of your website to allow users to have the full control that they expect to have. This customizable link allows users to have the choice of viewing the traditional or mobile version of your website.

Another benefit that MDD has over other user agent detection applications is how fast it works in the background to pull up the right site. Loading speed is as important if not more so to mobile device users as it is for traditional internet users, so knowing the load time of your websites will not be affected by the user agent detection application is just one more way to make sure site visitors are kept happy and encouraged to continue to visit your website.

With a mobile website set up and ready to go, and having a top of the line tool such as MDD to make sure mobile device users are directed properly, you can continue to strategize how to optimize your business's potential in the mobile marketplace. One way to do that is to add shopping functions such as mobile commerce.

Mobile Commerce

Mobile commerce is referred to as "mcommerce" and is just the same as ecommerce is for traditional internet shopping, only it's created for mobile devices. If your business all ready has ecommerce solutions you may all ready be familiar with how successful online sales can be for your business. Integrating mcommerce as another avenue to gaining sales not only makes sense as the next best step, it will eventually become an integral part of any business. In other words, if you don't use mcommerce, you risk falling behind. Not only is mcommerce growing in

leaps and bounds, it is expected to increase at an annual rate of 65% per year, which equates to around \$24 billion in sales for the 2015 sales year.

While 65% annual growth is the expected rate per Coda Research, TBI Research found that mcommerce grew about 150% to 200% just last year. This is an explosion which exceeds the growth that ecommerce has ever experienced and makes mcommerce even more of a good idea, perhaps more so than ecommerce. In fact Huffington Post projects mobile sales will eclipse traditional online sales in less than five years time to reach \$630 billion in value by the end of 2014. While that is a projection, the facts according to ATG, Inc. have recorded that 20% of all consumers, and 32% of those in the eighteen to thirty four year old group are researching purchases via mobile on at least a monthly basis. Knowing those types of figures, you will most certainly want to make sure your business is able to cash in on a percentage of that amount.

Mcommerce and Ecommerce

There some important differences between mcommerce and ecommerce to keep in mind, but for the most part they don't compete, rather, mcommerce adds value because it delivers additional convenience because mobile is consistently available where people aren't always sitting at their computers. Also, ecommerce does not translate as well to mobile devices, just like a traditional website will not translate as well, so having mcommerce for your mobile website makes the most sense. This should not replace your ecommerce strategies, but be included into your overall sales strategies to offer more options for customers and potential customers.

In some ways mcommerce will be much better than ecommerce because of options that are not possible to integrate into an ecommerce platform. For one thing, mcommerce offers augmented reality that uses the mobile devices camera and GPS

features. This allows businesses to offer additional services that aren't possible through traditional computers by allowing people to scan QR codes or bar code scanning allows for a variety of options including virtually trying items on, comparison shopping or to send details to friends or coworkers. A person no longer has to wait to make a purchase until they are close to their computer or travelling to an actual brick and mortar business which will certainly increase impulse buying opportunities.

Integrating mcommerce into your mobile website is a fairly easy process and many shopping cart platforms are all ready offering mobile versions of their services. Checking with your current shopping cart provider to see what they offer is one way to get started integrating shopping capability into your mobile website.

When you have the mobile version of your website ready to go and have your mcommerce strategy worked out, then you are on your way to taking full advantage of the benefits your business will have by going mobile. Keeping up to date on popular mcommerce trends will help you capitalize on the new marketplace.

Top Mcommerce Trends

One of the biggest mobile commerce trends is the Near Field communication (NFC) that works with mobile devices. This is a new technology but expected to be an entirely new way for shoppers to make purchases. How it works is by turning user's smartphone into a virtual wallet that includes their banking information, debit and credit card numbers. This makes fumbling around for a piece of plastic obsolete as the virtual wallet can be used at brick and mortar stores if they are

equipped with near field communication devices, and also creates a better shopping experience for mobile shopping.

Of course the biggest trends for mcommerce include the marketing and advertising opportunities that are available through mobile devices such as location based marketing. Allowing mobile users to have immediate directions to your business creates a significant increase in foot traffic. The use of SMS and texting options for mobile users to make use of coupons, QR codes and even business specific apps are all coming into play to help businesses find innovative ways to make use of the new technology options.

Mobile Marketing

Mobile device users search for products and services by the thousands, every few seconds. A recent Google report states that there is a continual 130% annual growth on the amount of people utilizing their mobile devices and as you've seen from all the other figures so far, this growth volume is going to be increasing exponentially within just the next few years. Starting with your marketing campaigns now will make sure you have an edge on the competition that will keep you at the top of your industry.

The first most important thing to keep in mind about mobile marketing is that search engine optimization for your site and mobile site should remain a priority throughout all other efforts you make. This includes making sure your business is ranked highly in Google and Bing and that you are making full use of Google Places especially if you cater to local customers. This is a free service through Google that allows you to list your business including all the pertinent contact

information, photos, and business hours and will allow you the option of promoting your business with Ads. People can also find, share, rate and recommend your business to their friends with a click of a button and because mobile device users are looking for that type of information, it is a great idea to make sure your company shows up with the best information possible. In fact, even if you cater to a worldwide market, having a presence on Google Places can still help you show up better in the search engines. As you concentrate on keeping your business ranked highly in the most popular search engines, you can turn your focus to marketing ideas for your mobile target market.

Social Media Marketing

If your business has been making use of social media marketing via traditional internet, then getting started with social media marketing to build your mobile presence should be easy. Obviously, continuously building your presence on the top social media sites is a priority and you can do this by having social media sharing and liking buttons on your mobile site along with your traditional site. The rules for great social media marketing apply across the board for traditional internet and mobile followers as well.

Social Media Marketing Rules

- Instead of going for sheer number of followers, go for quality followers who will be happy to engage with your business, such as happy customers and interested potential customers
- Keep your communication open as a two way discussion by asking questions, responding to those who post at your site and otherwise engaging
- Do not advertise and only promote about 15% of the time, use the rest of the time to network

- Post consistently, if followers don't see you posting every day, they will quickly lose interest
- Share posts from other non-competitive, yet relevant sources to help satisfy follower's appreciation of relevant and valuable information
- Include calls to action often such as "Like" or "Share" your comments and make sure they are likable or sharable
- Share your business story, followers don't only want news about your products and services they want to feel a personal connection
- Remember, social media is about networking and having fun, followers want to be entertained, not "sold"
- Make it more personal by recognizing followers individually when possible
- Keep posts short and sweet and include images or other media when possible, save longer posts for blog articles

These unspoken rules will work well with whatever social media network your business pursues building a presence on. Here are a few of the most popular ones for mobile users for you to consider.

Facebook

Facebook's mobile phone app is the most popular of any of the other social media networks and should definitely be one of the choices for your business to develop a strong presence on in order to build social proof for search engine optimization and for creating the trust required for new customers to make purchases. The mobile version of Facebook allows users to see posts, send messages, post photos, play games, search and chat.

Twitter

Twitter is close to having the same popularity as Facebook and the mobile app allows all the same features as the traditional online Twitter site offers. Twitter is

the social media site for cutting news and having a solid presence with Twitter users can be advantageous to your company in a variety of ways.

Google+

Even with the huge popularity of Google, Google+ is still not as popular for social media fans as Facebook or Twitter, unless your market is in the technology or arts fields and then it is the network of choice. Of course Google is making consistent updates and this social media site is expected grow in popularity for computer and mobile users alike.

Instagram

Instagram is a mobile social networking app that is immensely popular and capitalizes on images which mobile device users can quickly shoot and share. Many businesses have jumped on board the Instagram train and have found it has great value for marketing purposes, not for advertising although occasionally taking a great picture of something that is on sale is acceptable if it's only an occasional part of your overall activity.

Posting interesting and high quality images is pretty much the entire focus of what you want to do with Instagram and while that sounds as if it wouldn't help convert customers, it can be powerful if you share images that become viral. You can also share the images on through to your Facebook account as well which will give you some more interesting content. Whatever images you take, make them somewhat relevant to your brand. For example, if you are a restaurant, taking pictures of parties in your restaurant, famous clients dining or other interesting shots could go over very well. You can make images more engaging by including hashtags and @replies. Having a theme helps, especially when you are working hard to establish your brand name, an example would be if you post pictures of local events, or

beautiful nature scenes or other shots that you think your target market would appreciate.

Pinterest

Pinterest is another image driven social media network and is known for being the fastest growing out of any other social media network. It also has the highest percentage of active shoppers that are said to spend about 20% more per sale than other social media shoppers. To set up a Pinterest presence and take it mobile, create an account and create boards that you can pin images to. These images can be ones that you take and share through Instagram, or pinned from Pinterest images uploaded by other pinners. Sharing, repinning and commenting on images is what most of the engagement is about, along with shopping.

As far as Pinterest Boards go, having as many that are relevant to your products and services is ideal and even if you sell a service that doesn't have actual products, you can still think of relevant boards. For example if you are a business consulting company, showing images of businesses you consult with could be one board, infographics that businesses would find interesting could be another board and so on. The pins can be directed back to your website, which of course would show up as your mobile site for mobile device users.

YouTube

Not only is YouTube a favorite for mobile users, it is owned by Google and will help your business rank higher in the search engines when you also have a business YouTube account with relevant and valuable videos to share with your market. To create better popularity, post videos that are less than four minutes in length, entertaining and offer valuable information. "How to" videos are one of the most popular to for mobile users to look up for any variety of things.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the best social media network to become involved with if you are a business to business company. The mobile version allows for updates, access to contacts and more. While there are only about 23% of users that access LinkedIn through their mobile device, that is out of 175 million members.

Short Message Service (SMS) and Text Marketing

SMS and texting is basically one in the same, but you will see it show up as SMS messaging or text messaging depending on where you look. This is a powerful way to use mobile marketing to your advantage and mobile users seem to respond to this form of communicating better than any other. For instance, mobile coupons that are texted get a 10% higher redemption rate over print coupons and half of mobile device users have said that getting a text from a company had a direct impact on their buying decision.

The current amount of marketers that are using text marketing for current and potential customers is around 43% of those polled, 25% have plans to begin text marketing campaigns within the next twelve months and only 15% of them had no plans to begin using this medium. On one hand, this is a pretty high number all ready utilizing a new technology with other businesses working out plans to do so, but on the other hand you will see that the opportunity to market in ways that your competitors aren't will give your business a definite edge on being able to capitalize on the exposure and sales that text marketing offers.

Some additional statistics about text marketing to portray the value:

- 33% of mobile device users prefer text messaging over mobile web, apps and voicemail

- Mobile text ads outperform online ads in key metrics five times over in regard to purchase intent, favorability and awareness
- 90% of mobile device users read text messages within three minutes of receiving them

There are best practices to use for text message marketing and the most important one is to make sure you only send occasional texts. Once a month or just for special events is the preferred amount for most mobile device users to hear from their favorite businesses.

Best Practices in Text Marketing

The Mobile Marketing Association developed best practice recommendations in order to assure satisfactory mobile user experience and to also protect consumer's rights. While not all marketers will research their guidelines, nor are they currently enforced, following them as closely as possible will assure your business conducts text marketing campaigns that customers and potential customers will be happy with. Most of them are common sense guidelines, such as not bombarding your list with messages and of course others relate to protecting the privacy of your subscribers. These privacy guidelines are pretty standard in regard to being very similar to the privacy policies you offer anyone that gives you their phone numbers, email addresses or other sensitive information. Creating an additional privacy policy that is available to mobile device users through the mobile version of your website is a good idea so they know you value their privacy, their information is secure with your business and that it will not be rented out, sold or otherwise shared in anyway.

Mobile Marketing Code of Conduct

The Mobile Marketing Code of Conduct suggested by the Mobile Marketing Association has five categories:

1. **Notice** This category recommends businesses provide information about their products and services offered and the terms and conditions of any programs convenient to mobile users that are asked to join text marketing lists. This is easy to create by listing out what kinds of messages you will send, how often and anything else you think your potential subscribers would appreciate knowing. For example, if you intend to send text messages notifying your list about special promotions or to remind them of an appointment or for the occasional contest, write it out in an engaging way that will further encourage them to join your list, and then make sure and follow through on the information you gave them. Making a promise that you won't text them very often is a welcome message for those who still aren't sure if they want to subscribe or not. Knowing the texts will only show up occasionally is an easy commitment.
2. **Choice and Consent** This category encourages marketers to set up an easy opt-in and opt-out process for mobile users to join or unsubscribe from their lists. This can be set up through the text messaging environment or on your mobile website and is the same as how subscribers would opt-in and out of an email list. It can be helpful to offer that information on the Notice page to assure potential list members that they have complete control of their membership.
3. **Customization and Constraint** This category suggests that businesses provide relevant and responsible messages; the more customized the better and should avoid sending unwanted messages that could be construed as spam.

4. **Security** This was mentioned above in regard to keeping subscriber's information safe, but goes a step further by recommending marketers pursue administrative, physical and technical policies to safe guard data to make sure it is not unscrupulously used for unauthorized purposes. It is based around the same principles as keeping email addresses, credit card information and other personal information safeguarded.
5. **Enforcement and Accountability** This enforcement policy is strictly for Mobile Marketing Association members and requires them to comply with the Code. Along with this Code of Conduct developed by the Mobile Marketing Association, there are also state and federal laws. Some of these laws are:
 - The statement "Message and Data Rates may apply" must be clearly added on all promotions and advertising and should also be included in your Notice.
 - If there are premium costs or other fees associated with your text marketing they need to be clearly noted.
 - Any form of advertising must state that participation is only eligible for those who are 18 years or older or have parent or guardian permission
 - "STOP" and "HELP" keywords should be included in advertising and any other marketing texts to allow subscribers to easily cancel their subscription or get additional information.
 - Selling mobile opt-in lists is expressly prohibited

There may be other laws dependent on which state you are doing business in. Your local Better Business Bureau should have those guidelines available or be able to direct you to where you can find them. You might even be able to find them online by going to your state's .gov website and doing a search.

Text Marketing Ideas

Being able to use text marketing is a great way to help attract new customers, generate leads, and help you keep current customers engaged. While you want your text marketing to have great conversion rates, you also want to use this type of marketing in ways that will create value for the subscribers. When the texts are created in a way that subscribers look forward to them they will remain subscribed and will also hopefully share the information they receive from your business with their friends and colleagues. Knowing how to accomplish all of that can be tricky if you are new to text marketing. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Texting product updates to subscribers are helpful if you have products that update often such as technology products. A quick text that they can click on to quickly get to your product update page on your mobile website is one of the best ways to do this.
- If your business sets appointments or does any sort of regular service for customers, texting reminders to them is a value added service that many mobile users prefer this over a phone call.
- Invitations to special events such as webinars or other occasions such as customer appreciation soirees are always a nice way to let customer's know when you have something going on that they would be interested in attending.
- Quick polls and surveys are great and can be as easy as "Text back "Y" for yes and "N" for No", for yes and no type questions that are relevant to your products and services. A way to get immediate sales is to text "Text back BOGO if you want a "Buy One Get One Free" Coupon, or some other sort of discount or promotional offer. Do not overdo these though. Every six months to a year is enough or your business will risk coming across as wasting their time just to get attention.

- Contests and games are a fun way to engage customers, but again, do not do this more than once or twice a year. Some businesses have found success with trivia text games or text message Bingo. Prizes can include gift cards or discounts.
- Creating an exclusive feeling for your subscribers is always nice and sending “members only” type of texts with special discounts or some other benefit could keep them active with the texts you send.

Due to the immediacy of text messages, limited time offers are also a great idea and taking advantage of this idea when you know people are ordinarily shopping such as right before a holiday or during prime shopping times is ideal. You can find out when most of your customers shop online for your products through your website analytics to be sure you are catching them at times they are more susceptible to special offers.

These ideas should get you started and you might come up with more depending on the nature of your business and what important communications your customers would be most likely to find relevant and valuable. Also, the more you can customize your messages for your subscribers, the better they will be received and this can be done by creating separate lists according to whatever parameters you set. For example if you own a pet store, you might send some messages to cat owners and other messages to dog owners.

Best Way to Send Text Messages

Now that you are aware of the suggested best practices and have some ideas of what type of text marketing campaigns you can create for your business, knowing the best way to send those text messages will assure the highest levels of success.

- With the minimal amount of characters you have available via text parameters, keeping your message short and clear is important, but avoid hype, slang and abbreviations unless your target market is young, as in older teens or young adults. Many of the older mobile users don't keep up on the slang and won't be able to understand your message, instead they may think it sounds like spam and unsubscribe from your list.
- Create marketing text messages that offer something of immediate value and real time benefits that give them the option to respond right away is a great way to assure that your subscribers will stay engaged. That means, if you are having a sale, let them know as the sale is happening, not a week ahead of time.
- Identify your business name to make sure your subscribers know who the text is coming from. If they aren't sure, you guessed it, they will probably immediately unsubscribe and you will lose your opportunity to generate sales.

At this point you should be ready to go with text marketing. There are text marketing services you can use that are similar to Constant Contact for email marketing, in fact Constant Contact also offer text marketing services, these are pretty much the same as email list services, but designed for text marketing instead. These will allow you to schedule posts in advance to send them during times your target market is most likely to appreciate them, along with other great features to help organize, create and send text marketing messages.

Collecting subscribers for your list can be as easy as asking customers to sign up in order to get coupons, hosting a contest and marketing the list the same as you would market for others to join your email list. Making sure you offer value and let them know that you only send an occasional text will help encourage people to

sign up for them by giving you their cell phone number or sending a text to your business.

Checkins for Mobile Marketing

Checkins allow mobile users to utilize GPS tracking on their mobile device and use an app to “checkin” to where they are at. For example, if mobile users enter a restaurant, they can use their app of choice in order to post their location to their friends and followers. They can add places to their lists, “Like them”, post reviews and interact with them in a variety of ways. A recent report by Pew Internet and American Life Project states that about one in ten adults are currently using checkin apps and more people will continue to use these types of services as they learn the benefits. This can create a variety of marketing activities for your business if you cater to a local customer base.

To get started with checkins marketing the first thing you want to do is make sure your business has a presence on the most popular checkin apps. Currently Foursquare, Facebook Places and Gowalla are some of the most popular, but it’s also important to make sure you have a presence on Google Places and Zagat. Use your best branding efforts including the most important keywords when you set these profiles up at each website.

When you have profiles for your business at the top checkins apps you can create marketing strategies including promotions, rewards, specials and coupons. Because of the nature of this type of mobile activity, you can become very creative in giving incentives for customers to checkin to your business, especially when you fully understand how people enjoy checking in and the nature of your business.

Top Checkin Promotionals

There is a number of ways you can use checkins to help promote your business. Creating signs that you post at the front and throughout your building to let others

know about the checkin promotionals, and posting about them online or via text message marketing can kick off each campaign.

- A highly popular promotional is called the “Buddy Checkin”. If your business caters to social groups, offering discounts or promotionals for those who checkin with friends can be useful in encouraging groups to patronize your business. These could be “Buy One Get One Free” or some other sort of fun incentive. Many checkin users like the added attention that is given for checking in, so it is easy to get them engaged.
- Personal Checkin promotions for individuals checking in to your establishment can be discounts, coupons or other free items. Offering even 5% off their purchase is a great incentive for them to checkin and the social proof when they do and their friends and followers see where they are is worth the cost. Some companies will invest in a free promotional product that is cost effective and can be given out to customers who checkin to further the branding exposure.
- Reward Checkins are similar to other types of customer reward systems and encourages users to visit your business more often. One way to use this type of checkin is to offer something of value after a customer’s tenth checkin whether it is a discount or freebie. This replaces the old fashioned punch cards that are used at many companies.
- Happy Hour Checkins can be for any day that you choose and could be along the lines of “15%” off for checking in at Foursquare every Tuesday. This could stimulate more business on your slow days.

If offering too many discounts and freebies isn’t a sound investment for your business, you can get creative and offer other promotionals that would provide premium customer service options, such as someone will carry user’s bags to their car, a staff member will personally greet them and checkin their coat, or the DJ

will announce them and play a song of their choice. It really doesn't matter so much what you do, just giving checkin users the additional attention is something they value for using their checkin app to let others know they are visiting your company.

Integrating Mobile and Non-Mobile

If you have spent any time with online business, or business in general you are well aware the “If you build it, the will come” mentality will end up getting your business nowhere fast, but will give your competition more room to rule the industry. The same holds true for building a successful mobile presence. Helping people know that your business has gone mobile and the benefits this offers for users to engage by joining your text marketing list, using checkins and other mobile activities requires that your mobile efforts become fully integrated with your overall marketing plan, including non-mobile strategies and there are quite a few ways you can do this in order to let customers and potential customers become aware of the fact that you are taking your business mobile.

One of the most obvious places to integrate your mobile marketing is into your traditional internet presence. Announcing your mobile promotions directly from your website and social media profiles is one way to get the mobile marketing efforts kicked off quickly by encouraging people to text to receive coupons or discounts in order to start building your text marketing mailing list. Checkin promotionals and any other mobile based marketing efforts can also be announced through all of your regular online mediums. Adding the “We've Gone Mobile” message along with a call to action that will ask consumers to join your text list, visit your mobile website or some other engagement activity can be put anywhere

you do any sort of online activity quickly and easily, including adding it to email signatures of all staff members.

Consider hosting special Launch events to celebrate going mobile and build entire campaigns around how your business is now ready to become part of the mobile movement. These types of launch events can include a special checkin kickoff day at your business or any other type of party or occasion. It could be as simple as offering people the opportunity to text a secret code found on your mobile site to get a valuable coupon or some other promotional. You can also put in more effort by marketing press releases and anything else you can think of that would go into a typical launch campaign to help build upward momentum and popularity of your mobile presence, grow your list and gain exposure for your brand.

If you have a local presence, creating signs to place around your establishment and having flyers available for representatives to hand out that ask mobile users to checkin and how to subscribe to your text mailing list is one way that can help your mobile presence take off quickly. Taking that a step further by adding the information to your branded merchandise, including shopping bags, business cards or receipts is another way to encourage users to become engaged. Of course requesting staff members to make sure to ask customers and potential customers for their cell phone information to sign them up for special offers and discounts can go a long way because most consumers will not turn down a direct request to do this.

Many businesses are adding information on their paper mailings such as on reminder postcards. Asking people to join the text mailing list to opt for this type of information instead will eventually save a significant amount in postage and

other mailing costs for your company as you revert to text messaging over actual mailings, and customers will have a value added service without having to deal with yet more pieces of paper to have to file or clutter up the environment with. While more people begin using smartphones and other mobile devices, the need for paper is going to drastically decrease and marketing how your business is committed to helping the environment in this way will have consumers quickly agreeing to sign up for your text mailing list and otherwise supporting your efforts. A hugely popular technique for integrating mobile devices into non-mobile marketing is the use of Quick Response (QR) codes. These unintelligible squares that are printed on everything from utility bill notices to sales circulars have embedded information that can accomplish a variety of tasks depending on how your business chooses to use them.

QR Codes for Mobile Marketing

QR codes look similar to a bar code and you probably have seen them all ready but may not have realized what they are. They look like strange designs and squares inside of squares, some say they look like crossword puzzles that got all jumbled up into an unrecognizable form. In those designs is information that can be scanned by smartphone and other mobile device cameras and translated into a variety of different types of messages depending on what information was input into the specific code's creation. They were originally created by Toyota in order to track automotive parts during the manufacturing process, and after about a decade of successful use within the auto industry, they began to become used for tracking or uploading any number of other information, including contact information, white paper type of information, links, videos, discounts, promotional information or just about anything else you can dream up to use these unusual looking images for. These types of quick response codes are showing up

everywhere from packaging to print media, sales flyers, and just about anything else that will give mobile users the opportunity to scan information into their mobile devices.

There are a number of websites you can use to create free QR codes for your business and other paid services that create “enhanced” QR codes that are designed with specific branding information or just more eye catching than the plain black and white style codes. QuickQR, GoQR and QRCode are a couple of those sites and Google URL Shortener also has options to generate a QR code. Once you have this code, you can place it anywhere including your website and mobile website, social media sites, email signatures, flyers, brochures, mailing envelopes, product packaging or anywhere else you think customers and potential customers will find and make use of them. Some brands even put QR codes on promotional products, employee uniforms and delivery trucks.

Getting creative about how to QR codes for your business can skyrocket the amount of engagement your business gets, including conversion rates, and making sure you do more with them besides just showing the link to your mobile website can open doors for all types of marketing events. Offering QR codes that will direct people to your text mailing list sign up or add them to your social media followers will allow you to continue to market to them, but users also want to know there is value in taking the time to scan the codes, so making sure to offer something of value will prompt them to go ahead and scan the QR Code into their mobile device.

Creating fun events with QR Codes can be an excellent way to keep the public interested in your business. You can do this by setting up different QR Codes

throughout your establishment, or include them in separate pages of your website. When all of them are found and collected, the first ten participants to find them all can be eligible for a prize. Your marketing, advertising or PR departments might be able to come up with other innovative ways to use QR Codes to use for marketing purposes.

The more marketing effort you put into directing people to your mobile site and signing up for your text list will give you new and innovative ways to continue marketing that can help your mobile site increase overall conversion rates and after all, that is really what it's all about isn't it? To help your efforts, mobile advertising is an excellent return on investment.

Mobile Advertising

To help create a robust mobile presence, nothing beats mobile advertising. This form of advertising is expected to create better returns on investment and be easier to encourage customers and potential customers to engage with your business than any other form of advertising. Especially when you can hone in on the right time for the ads to show to the right group of mobile users, with the right calls to action that mobile device users are looking for.

The first most important rule of thumb to design these types of ads is immediacy because when mobile users are searching for products and services it is because they are ready to take action whereas many times traditional internet users aren't ready to purchase, but are only ready to think about purchasing. For example, if a traditional internet user is interested in purchasing a new pair of tennis shoes, they will more than likely do their search to find out what the best colors, styles and

prices are available. If a mobile user searches for new tennis shoes, they are more than likely looking for the closest place to buy them and if there are any coupons or promotions to take advantage of. With this in mind, advertising to offer speed and convenience will win out head over tails than other traditional advertising methods.

For your business to be successful with mobile advertising it is important to remember the mobile user's environment and what will best persuade them to click on the ad and follow through to a conversion. Of course convenience and timing are two of the key factors along with personalizing the advertising experience and honing in on the correct target market. What types of mobile ads will be most successful for your business to pursue will rely heavily on what types of products and services you offer and who your target market is. Of course, in order to do that you need to know what is available in this case it helps to get started with services you might be the most familiar from traditional marketing and advertising means.

Social Media Mobile Ads

The top social media sites offer different ways to advertise to a specific niche of mobile device users and because most everyone is all ready active on social media sites, these types of ads might be the best ones to consider first to create campaigns that will prompt people to join your social media profile, subscribe to your text list, checkin at your business or take advantage of a discount, coupon or other promotional event.

Facebook Mobile Ads Network

Facebook's new mobile ad network is one of the newer ways to advertise to mobile users and includes options that will help target the exact market you need to advertise to in order to increase your conversion rates. Not only do these ads show

up on Facebook, but they will show up across other apps and mobile sites such as Zinga.com. That gives you the opportunity for greater ad exposure and users get the opportunity to have ads they will be most interested in acting on.

This Facebook ad system will target your customers using personal Facebook data including user's age, location and other biographical and social data they have included in their Facebook profiles or timelines. How it works is that you make bids on reaching the target market you want to reach, then when someone from that target market visits a site or app that is involved with this ad network, the ad exchange is paid a portion of that bid in order for the ad to show up and Facebook keeps the rest of the proceeds as payment for mediating the ad process. With this system you can set a budget for your ad campaign and only pay when the ad is shown to assure it stays within an affordable budget for your business.

Of course with Facebook you can also opt for promoted posts that show up in user's news feeds. This can be a touchy way to advertise though because the current consensus is that many Facebook users are not too happy with these types of posts showing up in their social news feeds. They can work out quite well if you make sure the promoted post you create is advertising something for free or something else that will be viewed less of an ad and more of a helpful information type of post.

Twitter Mobile Advertising

Twitter has "Promoted Tweets" and "Promoted Accounts" for reaching out to 100 million Twitterers. When Twitter first began their ad program, the promoted tweets would only show up to current followers, but there are new options today that will allow promoted tweets to show up to a targeted market that is also outside of your

current followers to help you gain a better reach. Twitter estimates that out of their 100 million users, about 55% of them access their Twitter accounts via mobile devices on an at least once a month basis.

LinkedIn Mobile Advertising

While LinkedIn has a great mobile presence with users logging into their mobile site by the millions on any weekly basis, they are a bit slower to have specific ads programs. There is talk that there will be opportunities in the future and if your business caters to other businesses, you will definitely want to stay up to date in regard to what sort of mobile advertising options will come available for this social media network.

YouTube Mobile Marketing

There are over 400 million YouTube videos watched through mobile devices every single day. You can choose from several different advertising options to capitalize on the exposure your business could earn through this advertising medium. YouTube Roadblock ads are one part of the advertising program that puts ads up on the YouTube home page as well as browse and search pages. This program offers the maximum reach and exposure for your advertising budget. In stream ads show up as a video advertisement that plays for 15 seconds before a regular video plays and includes interactive options that will allow viewer to click through to your mobile website or YouTube Mobile Brand Channel. The Mobile Brand Channel is like having your own YouTube station, if you produce a collection of videos, this is an excellent way to gain exposure with mobile users.

Pandora Mobile Marketing

Pandora has just announced that they all ready have \$101 million in revenue for the second quarter of 2013 and their problem is how ads have exploded on their

network due to the success marketers are finding by placing ads on this popular radio station. Pandora is entrenched in the mobile device industry and is even pre-loaded in many car infotainment packages, making the exposure even greater than other social media networks. The advertising options include placing a banner underneath the “Now Playing” screen, or to create an advertisement that will play between songs. The pricing for these will depend on a variety of factors that include what type of ad you choose and how often you want them to show up.

Search and Text Ads

Ads that show up as text ads in search engines such as Google is as big for mobile advertising as it is for internet and carries much the same tactics where you create ads based around your keywords, set a budget for how often, when and where they will display and then you are charged when someone clicks on your ad. Google also has a “click to call” mobile ad program that will allow mobile device users to click on a little phone icon to immediately call your business. Along with Google, Yahoo and MSN, now known as Bing, have their own Adword programs. Text ads can also be used for in-app advertising such as what is set up through jumptap.com. Many of these ad campaigns can be created and ran for as little as \$10 per day depending on how much you want to spend on them. The more successful you are at creating compelling ads including the right keywords will tell how profitable the return on investment will become.

Mobile Apps for Your Business

“There’s an App for that” is not just a catchy one liner used by mobile device users, it is becoming an expectation as there are currently over 700,000 apps now available to download and 1 million of them are expected by 2013, and that is only in the iTunes App Store alone. Not only is there at least one type of app available

for just about anything you could think of, more than half of mobile phone users access these apps ten or more times per day and continue to search for and download over 20,000 apps every single day as well.

There is no other way to market to customers and attract new customers in the mobile environment than by creating a great app for them to take advantage of, especially when you consider that apps will hold a user's attention longer than a typical website will because it is much easier to click away from a website while an app offers more interaction. Having a branded mobile app gives your business the opportunity to stand out from the competition, have something new and exciting to use for marketing and advertising goals, retain current customers and attract new customers.

The type of the app you create for your business can be pretty much anything that your customers would find relevant and the more entertainment, fun and value you put into it, the more popular it will be, the more people will want to download and use it, the more they will talk about it, and the more successful your business will become. This makes an app exponentially more valuable than any other type of marketing or advertising you can do in the mobile marketplace. What else is incredible about creating an app is that after the initial investment, the app can continue to market on its own for free when it's uploaded to Android Apps or iTunes Apps for Apple.

The value of creating an app is just as valuable whether you are a B2B or B2C company. You can make use of mobile device features such as GPS, click to call or click to text options and the multimedia functions that allow you to include video and audio into your app if you so choose. In fact the best apps will include the highest sensory value combined with an easy to use and navigate interface.

App Ideas

Depending on the nature of your business, you can create one great app, or an entire collection. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- A Mobile Coupon App
- A Map that will automatically show users the easiest way to get to your location from anywhere they happen to be
- Interactive “How to” App for your product or service
- Premium Customer App that gives them insider information and promotionals not available to the general public
- Display videos
- Quick Order App
- Event App that gives session schedules, speaker bios, contact information, maps, social media integration or whatever else would be helpful for those coming to your special event or showcase
- ROI Calculator
- Networking App that allows customers to quickly communicate to key staff members
- Games App that is based around your particular products or services
- Daily Reminders App
- Anything at all that will provide a better experience with your products and services. For example a yoga studio might create an app that offers yoga positions or a meditation timer; a motivational service might offer a quote app. The amount of ideas you can come up with is pretty much unlimited.

Creating an App

Once you have decided what type of app you would like to create for your business you can begin the app creation process and you will have better success with your

app if you know what mobile users you want to begin to build the app for. To find this out just take a look at your website analytics, you might find more people are landing on your website through an iPhone, so it would make sense to build an Apple app first, if more people are landing on your site through an Android based mobile device, then creating an app for that platform first would be the best idea. You can create an Apple App through Apple iOS which has a \$99 fee to use, but is well worth that price for the features made available to you. The iOS Developer Center has all types of tools, debugging tests, guides, tips and how-tos that will help your business build the perfect app. Apple goes to every length to help every step of the way so they can market your business app at their iTunes site because even free apps help bring marketing value.

Android apps are easy to create by using Java for Android, a free software development kit. This kit has many of the same features as Apple's iOS Developer's Center including all the instructions and articles you need to help you build the perfect app. There is a onetime \$25 developer fee in order to distribute the app when you have created it in the Google Play Android marketplace, but this is a fee that will quickly recover itself from the increase in customer engagement your new app will afford.

You can just opt to create an app using a Windows platform and there is an easy to use interface that allows you to do that. This will not afford you the same marketing support as what is offered through the Apple iOS or Android platforms, but there is no cost and you don't have to worry about staying within the Apple or Android guidelines.

If your business doesn't have anyone on staff that can create an app, you can always outsource the work to a freelance designer. In fact, any part of going mobile can be outsourced and this is typically a savvy investment to make into your business to assure that you have experienced experts doing the work in order to compete well within the mobile marketplace.

Outsourcing for Mobile Success

To help your business take advantage of all the opportunities available through having a mobile presence such as helping with mobile marketing and advertising or creating apps, it might be the best return on investment to outsource some of these tasks to experts who have the training and experience to do the work required in a way that will offer the most success. This is often more cost effective than hiring someone into the business full time to complete a project based objective. Also, when you stop to consider the learning curve that is expected in order to fully keep up with the mobile climate, paying the man hours for staff to have sufficient training, not to mention the time it will take them to complete tasks, may be much more expensive than just hiring a professional freelancer to do the work for you.

If you decide to outsource any tasks including mobile SEO, getting your mobile site up and running, creating an app, creating content or helping with any part of mobile marketing and advertising, figuring out where to find the best contractor can be tricky because there are so many resources offering these services. Of course your local job listing pages and Craigslist is one place to consider, but you will have much better luck going to actual outsourcing services. How almost all of the organizations work is fairly similar and involves posting a job, getting bids from candidates and offers the capability to look up candidates profiles, ratings,

background, portfolios and other information that will help you choose the best candidate for the job.

Most Popular Outsourcing Sites:

- The number one outsourcing site for quality of contractors is Elance.com. This site facilitates hiring freelance contractors by the hour or on a per project basis and offer a virtual “workroom” that allows you to view and manage any work in progress. This workroom contains space for messages, screenshots, files and keeps the entire project management, start to finish, organized and in one place for both you and the contractor you choose. It also allows for any additional coworkers you decide need to be involved with any given project to gain access. There is a onetime \$10 fee for getting started on Elance and then 6% to 8.75% of each payment made to a contractor goes to Elance for facilitating the process.
- oDesk is another highly successful website that helps find high quality workers for short term, long term or hourly based projects and is known for having the highest quality worker accountability system. This system includes taking screenshots of their computers and logging keyboard and mouse activity to assure that company’s only pay for when a contractor is actually working for them. Payments are created due to hours worked or can be set up as fixed price projects that are paid when the work is submitted and approved. There are no upfront fees to get started. Odesk charges 10% of the employer’s payment for a total of 11.11% on top of whatever you agree to pay the contractor.
- Finding app developers in particular makes Guru.com a great place to shop for a contractor. This site does have membership fees though that range from \$29.95 to \$99.95 per quarter and then they charge 5% to 15% of the Invoice

or Escrow amount depending on what level membership you sign up for. There are a few other fees associated such as 4% if you use a credit card for payment and 2.5% for Withdraw Method fees. While this site can be a bit more expensive than the others, it does have a high number of great professionals to pick and choose through.

There are of course lists of other freelance sites you can research to find the one you think will be the best choice for your business. When you find where you want to post your jobs to you can set up account(s) and begin to list job specifications. The more specific and detailed you can be, the better bids you are going to get. For example, if you post “Web Designer Needed”, you are going to get a huge amount of responses and few, if any, will know you are looking for a mobile web design professional. You will also want to list if the project you need done is hourly based or project based, what industry your business is in if you need a contractor that will have any special knowledge about your industry, and anything else you can think of in order to get the most intelligent, high quality responses in return.

When you begin getting responses back for the job specifications you’ve posted, you can begin screening potential candidates, and this process should be gone over with a fine tooth comb. The importance of taking your time with this process cannot be underestimated because nothing is worse than hiring a worker that quits halfway through the process, can’t meet deadlines or creates other nightmare situations for your business. Keeping this in mind, the lowest bid isn’t always the best.

You may also consider creating a Non-Disclosure Agreement that potential contractors need to sign and return to you if they will be working on anything that is considered sensitive information to your business, or with app building or other processes that should be copy written to your company upon completion such as an app or content.

Best Outsource Hiring Practices

- Include as many details as possible in your job specification so contractors have the best understanding of what you are looking for.
- The exception to including details is to leave out whatever might be considered “sensitive” such as exactly what type of app you want to develop because someone could read it and steal your ideas to use for themselves or market to your competition. For example, if you are looking for a contractor to build an app, details about what platform (iPhone or Android) it needs to be built in is helpful, stating what exactly the app will be designed to do is too much information.
- Include a test in your job specification to make sure contractors read through the project and have the ability to follow directions. A way to do this would be to request they add “I am the best person for the job” in the first sentence of their response.
- Only screen responses that were concise and thoughtful toward your job specification. “I want this job” with nothing telling you why they would be best for the project should not make that cut.
- Check out references and testimonials and make sure the contractor has high ratings.

When you have narrowed the list of potential contractors down you can request an interview to ask additional questions and make your final decision. Using Skype, phone or instant messaging is all appropriate for interviews. Remember to make sure you have a signed Non-Disclosure Agreement on file with any contractor before you release any sensitive information. The right contractor will be able to offer high quality work for you to capitalize on for the success of any mobile project you have in mind.

Mobile Affiliates

An excellent way to kick off the mobile marketing efforts for your business is to get involved with mobile affiliate programs in order to quickly increase exposure for your mobile presence, help get leads and increase conversion rates. Affiliates are similar to sales people in that they promote your products or services and receive commission in return for the sale or other type of action you agree they should receive a commission for.

Some affiliate programs work with ads such as Google AdSense where affiliates get paid via click through rates from a percentage of the budget you are all ready paying out, so in that sense, Adword type of affiliates don't cost your business any money and there is really nothing you need to do in order to work with these affiliates. If you use Adwords, then Adword affiliates are automatically included in that program and work directly with Google.

For additional affiliate opportunities some businesses set up their own programs and find an amazing amount of success in paying out commissions for other people to market and advertise their products and services. You might consider that for your business, or you can also join affiliate network programs. These programs work by facilitating the entire affiliate/business relationship from helping to set up campaigns, matching the right affiliates to the right products and services and keeping track of payments and other important analytics. Different programs have different ways that affiliates and businesses work together such as cost per action, cost per click or cost per impression basis which only charge if they get results.

Mobile Affiliate Networks

Here is a list of some of the most successful mobile affiliate networks to help you begin considering which ones will work best for your business's needs. You might

consider working with more than one for different types of campaigns depending on the goals you want your business to reach in the mobile marketing environment.

- Offermobi is the original mobile affiliate network created solely for the mobile marketplace environment. Since they have been established for as long as they have been, they know what works best and they are well known for how well they work with marketers every step of the way including helping to set up campaigns and assuring no risk advertising models. You will find some of the biggest name brands working with the Offermobi affiliates, but they do just as well for small businesses as well.
- While Kissmyads is a German based business, they cater to a worldwide clientele and are considered to be one of the best affiliate networks to become involved with due to their programs and the excellent results their affiliates continue to offer the businesses they represent.
- Sponsormob affiliate network is known for their tracking technology, especially for iPhone applications along with their top notch affiliate services.
- Liquid Wireless has a Cost Per Lead model versus the other affiliate network's Cost Per Action model. If your business is serious about generating leads, this might be the network to get involved with. They also have advanced data capturing technology that business owners find particularly valuable.
- The MobFox affiliate network has two unusual claims to fame. One is that it has some of the highest CPM (Cost per thousand impressions) out of all the other networks. More astounding is that it was founded by a 17 year old high school student.

- The affiliate network who seems to attract the most affiliates is YeahMobi due to the options for different types of campaigns and the variety of advertisers looking for affiliates through this network. YeahIncent and YeahCPA are both siblings of the YeahMobi network.

You might find working with one or more of these types of mobile affiliates are just what you need to get your business going full steam ahead in the mobile market place.

Mobile Marketing Strategy

By this point you should have a great idea about what is available for your business to pursue in order to capitalize in the mobile marketplace. The sooner you are able to get started building a presence and creating a robust marketing and advertising strategy, the better off your business will be. It doesn't matter what your industry is or whether you cater to other businesses or consumers, there is room to grow your business in astounding new ways by becoming involved in one of the fastest growing marketplaces in history. Creating a strategy to take your business mobile can include every aspect of your business from the initial lead generation all the way through the sales and customer service follow up activities.

Having an internet website is not enough to build the best presence for mobile device users who are looking for your products or services, in fact, if that is all you have, you might turn mobile users off who expect businesses to have an easy to view and navigate mobile site. This makes it obvious that converting to a mobile version of your site is the first strategy to plan on and implement. Luckily, this is an easy process when you use Mobile Web Pro. The next step in your plan should include implementing a redirect system such as Mobile Device Detects set up to be sure that mobile visitors are automatically referred the mobile version of your web

site when appropriate so they have the highest quality experience with your business's mobile presence.

While you are busy making sure that conversion to a mobile version of your site is getting underway, doing additional research to make sure you are using the best keywords to attract your mobile target market is important so you can make sure your mobile website is search engine optimized. For this, using your own website analytics to see what the most commonly used keywords are being used by the mobile device users that have landed on your site will help. Other tools such as Google Keyword Tool will also help come up with the best keywords.

Once your mobile site is created with the features you feel mobile users will most appreciate, such as mcommerce capability for shopping, directions to your business or click to contact options, you can begin to create a comprehensive marketing and advertising program. It's generally the easiest to start with social media marketing, especially if your business all ready has a base of social media followers. Be sure to include sites such as Google Places and Instagram along with the more traditional social media sites like Facebook and Twitter to get the best exposure possible. From that point, creating text message marketing campaigns and encouraging customers and potential customers to sign up for your text messages is a great way to market and advertise to your target market, as well as offer value added customer services such as texting reminders and other relevant information such as product upgrades or to send discounts and coupons that can be used directly on mobile devices.

Checkins are the next great marketing tool that can be used for a variety of marketing and promotional campaigns in order to give customers a brand new way to engage with your company. Because checkins are so popular and new, it is easy to get people excited about checking into your business. The added social proof this activity offers will further market your products and services in a valuable

way. Creating signs to place around your business asking people to check in return for some sort of reward will help encourage this new behavior and will show your customers that you are up to date with the mobile activities they are becoming passionate about.

With all the activities you can do on a mobile basis in regard to marketing and advertising, adding non-mobile marketing and advertising to grow your text message list, have people check in or otherwise engage with your business on a mobile basis is important. Using QR codes on all printed materials, in email signatures, on your website and social media sites will help with this and so will having your staff ask people during face to face communications.

To fully capitalize on your business's mobile presence and marketing success, creating an app or collection of apps is an idea that could create a viral wave of new attention for your products and services. Whether the app is a quick order app, or a "how To" type of app that will help people learn the best ways to use your products and services, people love apps and being able to market one will bring an excellent return on investment for the time and budget spent on creating the app(s). For any of these activities you can turn to outsource contractors to help take your business mobile. Web designers, mobile marketers, affiliates, app developers and content providers are all standing by waiting to bid on your projects in order to help your position itself as a leader in the mobile marketplace.

As long as you wait to take your business mobile, the farther you will fall behind. There are many businesses today that are just now trying to break into the traditional internet marketing environment because they finally realized that not being on the internet was hurting their bottom line. The same holds true with mobile marketing and if your business isn't going mobile it will fall behind, but now that you have the stats and know about the millions of people utilizing their

mobile devices to find the products and services they need, especially yours, you can see the value in getting started today.