Branded Mobile Apps: Possibilities for Advertising in an Emergent Mobile Channel

Jean M. Brechman
The College of New Jersey, USA

Steven Bellman
Murdoch University, Australia

Robert F. Potter
Indiana University, USA

Shiree Treleaven-Hassard
Murdoch University, Australia

Jennifer A. Robinson
RMIT University, Australia

Duane Varan
Murdoch University, Australia

INTRODUCTION

"How important is the branded app to the marketing mix? To use an analogy, if that mix formed a cake, what ingredient would it be?" According to Thiago de Moraes, creative partner, Abbott Mead Vickers BBDO: "It depends on the campaign. Sometimes it can be the whole cake. And other times, it can be the horrible marzipan you scrape off the top" (Levy, 2011).

An increasing number of marketing professionals are interested in creating branded mobile phone applications. These "apps" perform a range of functions from e-mailing and text messaging to weather reports and navigational tools to games, online shopping, product how-tos and more. Importantly, branded apps prominently display a brand's identity throughout the user experience, typically in the form of a brand logo.

The appeal of the mobile app as a marketing device is manifold. At a base level, apps create an ecosystem of services, ranging from social connectivity to functionality and this, in turn, extends a brand's relationship with its consumers. For example, the Zipcar app guides users through the reservation process, locates nearby cars and contacts customer service. Users of Kraft's iFood Assistant can browse recipes by category or occasion and conveniently add ingredients to a shopping list.

The personal nature of mobile phones generally requires opt-in permission from advertisers utilizing this channel (Tsang, Ho, & Liang, 2004). Apps overcome this barrier, however, insofar as they utilize "pull" rather than "push" advertising (Li & Stoller, 2007). Consumers opt-into only the apps they download and they control information exposure based on their customization preferences.

Moreover, apps encourage interactivity. Interactivity in advertising is associated with high levels of user engagement; this engagement enhances the persuasiveness of advertising messages (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009; Calder,

Malthouse, & Schaedel, 2009; Wang, 2006). Users of mobile apps tend to process brand-related information more deeply (Liu & Shrum, 2002; Sundar & Kim, 2005) and for a longer period of time (Cauberghe & de Pelsmacker, 2010). Positive interactive experiences typically result in positive effects on attitudes toward the sponsoring brand (Cauberghe & de Pelsmacker, 2010; Hutton & Rodnick, 2009) and brand purchase intention (Bellman, Schweda, & Varan, 2009). In short, well-developed and executed apps present advertisers with a powerful way of engaging the consumer and creating a "reservoir of goodwill" towards a brand (Levy, 2011).

OVERVIEW

Mobile research in general can be found in the pioneering work of Stuart J. Barnes (2002a, 2002b) who proposed preliminary conceptual frameworks for value-chain creation and wireless advertising, respectively. These frameworks have served as a foundation for empirical explorations that followed.

Some of the earliest work on the effectiveness of advertising via mobile channels involved testing the effects of customized text messaging. Drs. Patrick Barwise (Barwise & Strong, 2002), Ting-Peng Liang (Tsang, Ho, & Liang, 2004) and Shintaro Okazaki (Okazaki, 2005) are among the earliest examining this topic.

Identified as a potentially effective medium for advertising due to its high market saturation in certain segments, Barwise and Strong (2002) provide strong evidence for the use of Short Message Service (SMS) based advertising in the UK. Tsang et al. (2004) contribute to the viability of "permission-based" marketing in Taiwan. In one of the few attempts to consider the strategic perceptions of mobile marketing among marketing professionals, Okazaki (2005) conducted a series of 54 qualitative interviews with European executives.

SMS-based, push-type mobile advertising continues to be one of the most studied areas undertaken in m-commerce as SMS features are constantly and rapidly enhanced. For example, Application-to-Person (A2P) SMS messages (i.e., automated alerts, offers and messages from retailers and service providers, e.g., banks) are projected to outnumber person-to-person SMS by 2016 (Amarsanaa & Anjorin, 2012). In summary, the general consensus is that well-executed SMS-based "push" advertising can work, particularly among younger consumers, if three general criteria are met: the source of the message is trusted, permission is given, and the messages are relevant and/or entertaining (Okazaki & Barwise, 2011).

The restrictions imposed by issues of permission, acceptance and trust highlight an attractive advantage of advertising via mobile apps. Mobile app advertising presents an opportunity for "pull" rather than "push" advertising (Li & Stoller, 2007). That is, the consumer downloads only apps they opt-into, and they are the ones to initiate conversation rather than the other way around. Empirical research that tests the actual impact of branded apps on consumers is in its infancy. Dr. Steven Bellman and colleagues are among the leading experts in this area (Bellman, Potter, Treleaven-Hassard, Robinson, & Varan, 2011).

CURRENT SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

In the following sections, the work of leading researchers in areas relevant to branded mobile phone application is reviewed. Two important areas include (1) the effectiveness of mobile phone apps as a form of persuasive advertising and (2) factors that moderate these effects, specifically creative execution style and product category relevance.

Effects of Interacting with a Branded App

A critical area of inquiry, particularly for marketing and advertising professionals, is whether or not branded apps are an effective form of advertising. Advertising effectiveness is often defined in terms

7 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/branded-mobile-apps-possibilities-for-advertising-in-an-emergent-mobile-channel/130135

Related Content

Older Adults with AMD as Co-Designers of an Assistive Mobile Application
Lilit Hakobyan, Jo Lumsdenand Dympna O'Sullivan (2014). *International Journal of Mobile Human Computer Interaction (pp. 54-70).*
www.irma-international.org/article/older-adults-with-amd-as-co-designers-of-an-assistive-mobile-application/107990

Cultural Differences in Managing Cloud Computing Service Level Agreements
Stefan Balduf, Tina Balkeand Torsten Eymann (2011). *Handbook of Research on Culturally-Aware Information Technology: Perspectives and Models (pp. 1-26).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/cultural-differences-managing-cloud-computing/45035

Mobile-Based Appointment System for Remote Patients
Imran ud Dinand Noreen Fayyaz Khan (2019). *Mobile Devices and Smart Gadgets in Human Rights (pp. 153-170).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/mobile-based-appointment-system-for-remote-patients/214098

Workplace Cyberbullying in the Remote-Work Era: A New Dimension of Cyberology
Nashra Javed, Tasneem Ahmed, Mohammad Faisal, Halima Sadiaand Emilly Zoë Jeanne Sidaine-Daumiller (2023). *Advances in Cyberology and the Advent of the Next-Gen Information Revolution (pp. 166-177).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/workplace-cyberbullying-in-the-remote-work-era/325551

Using Mobile Touch Devices to Provide Flexible Classroom Assessment Techniques
Séamus C. McLoone, Rudi Villingand Simon O'Keeffe (2015). *International Journal of Mobile Human Computer Interaction (pp. 1-15).*
www.irma-international.org/article/using-mobile-touch-devices-to-provide-flexible-classroom-assessment-techniques/132648