

Chapter 1

Basics of Mobile Marketing Strategy

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ABSTRACT

Recent years have witnessed a rapid growth in internet-enabled devices, including smartphones which have facilitated the performance of many tasks online. One of the major activities taking place on such online platforms is shopping. Indeed, smartphones are redefining the landscape of consumption from visiting conventional physical shops to consuming products and services in a digital arena. Despite a proliferation of both theoretical and empirical studies on smartphones marketplace, there is still a paucity of studies on how mobile phone devices enhance and facilitate consumption from physical marketplace to online marketplace. This chapter aims to contribute to extant studies on how smartphones impact on the consumption process.

INTRODUCTION

The mobile revolution in the last decade has re-created a new era of an always-connected society which has reshaped the retail industry, including the clothing sector, in a major way (Euromonitor, 2013). Mobile devices becoming more powerful with their own operating systems, has given rise to a new marketing strategy enabling companies to connect to their consumers on the go and on a 24-hour basis (Emarketer, 2013). This new phenomenon has impacted on the purchasing behaviour of consumers in the clothing sector as well, who are increasingly adopting this new shopping medium. This emerging trend has resulted in all major clothing retailers working to gain online presence with a view to achieving a stronger customer relationship and sustaining a strong presence in the clothing industry which is becoming highly competitive (Keynote, 2009). With the rise of more sophisticated mobile devices, namely smartphones, this new convergence has resulted in powerful consumers who now have their stores in their hands (Abrams, 2013).

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The purchasing habits of consumers have undergone a drastic shift from traditional physical high street shopping to home shopping (Keynote, 2013; Ozuem, Howell & Lancaster 2008). The role of salesmen and shopping displays has now been eclipsed with modern ways of shopping using technology. Research by Euromonitor (2013) identified consumers who increasingly favour seeking shopping information on their smartphones rather than consulting a salesperson or relying on adverts. The use of smartphones is thus not limited to buying online but rather it is that device which accompanies the consumers in their shopping experience such as browsing for product information, product reviews, price comparisons, consulting friends and families prior to shopping, or simply buying online. “This unique ability has transformed the social and spatial aspects of shopping for many consumers” (Brown *et al.*, 2003). In fact, the ongoing connectivity and exposure to shopping information are resulting in an ‘always shopping’ state of mind (Babbitts, 2013). If the art of mobile marketing is effectively and efficiently mastered by retailers, this can lead to strong positioning in their respective market. Although this new marketing trend has had a strong influence in different retail sectors, a survey carried out by Emarketer (2013) showed that consumers in the apparel sector still favour physical purchase or buying via the PC rather than smartphones when buying online. The main hindrance to buying via smartphones is usually a non-user friendly mobile site (Emarketer, 2013). The answer to successful retailing via smartphones relies on a strong technique and the application of mobile commerce (Branki *et al.*, 2008). Despite consumers showing a preference to shop or buy clothing in physical shops, being “creatures of convenience” there are billions reaching first for their phones when they think about shopping (Boyle, 2013). Much is assumed about the supposed effects of smartphones on the luxury fashion sector, but much research in the field suffers from epistemological and ontological incompatibility and can be interpreted in various conflicting ways. This chapter focuses on the impact of smartphones on consumer buying behaviour, particularly on the UK luxury fashion sector.

A rapid growth in internet-enabled devices including smartphones has taken place in recent years, allowing many tasks to be performed online (Euromonitor, 2013). One of the major activities taking place on these online platforms is shopping. Indeed, shopping has changed the landscape of consumption from visiting conventional physical shops to consuming products and services in a digital arena (San-Martin and Lopez-Catalan, 2013). Boyle (2013) posited that the number of consumers using smartphones to shop is expanding and consumers are now more willing to reach for their smartphones first when the idea of shopping strikes. This global phenomenon is affecting different parts of the world. A survey conducted in June 2013 by Emarketer (2013), shows that China is the leading country in terms of internet users purchasing via mobile devices followed by India and the United Kingdom. The UK was amongst the first nations to embrace digital shopping and buying and to date it continues to consume goods and services digitally at a pace greater than most other western European countries (Abrams, 2013). The UK’s communications regulator Ofcom recently claimed that the UK leads among all other European countries with the highest number of smartphone users (Euromonitor, 2013). UK retail ecommerce sales are estimated to have risen from £38.48 billion in 2012 to £45.40 billion in 2013 with a further increase of 15% forecast for 2014 (Emarketer, 2013). This new trend in purchasing via mobile devices has initiated a new type of e-commerce commonly referred to as retail mobile commerce (m-commerce) which is defined by eMarketer (2013) as “products and services purchased using a browser or app via any mobile device, regardless of where fulfilment occurs.” As the growth of m-commerce is overwhelming in the UK, shopping via mobile devices is becoming the norm for internet shoppers with smartphones: mobile commerce sales are forecast to more than double by 2017 (McCarthy, 2013). With such a proliferation of technologically advanced smartphones and the widespread availability of the internet in the UK, digital

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