

Mobile and SMS Marketing – Micro Business Owners Profit from the Mobile Revolution

Mobile marketing can be defined as any technique you use to market to people through cellular phones and other mobile devices. The most common way to do this is through SMS, which stands for 'short message service.' It's a form of email marketing tailored specifically to phones.

How SMS Works

Just like PC-based email marketing, the first step in SMS is to gather a list of subscribers. The best way to do this is through an opt-in form on your website or through your offline marketing channels. You can also use short codes. These are short phone numbers that your customers call. Once they make the call, they're automatically signed up.

Once you have a list, you send them messages. The purpose of these messages is to build a relationship with them by sending them information and high-value offers, such as freebies, discounts, coupons or other special deals.

Who Can Use Mobile Marketing?

Mobile marketing is great for any kind of business. Offline businesses can use it just as effectively as online businesses. In fact, it's ideal for small local businesses since their customers are usually using their mobiles when they're on the go. For example, a local pizza shop can offer coupons to their subscribers. They send the coupon at the top of the lunch hour when their subscribers are getting hungry, and their shop becomes the natural choice for lunch.

The Benefits of Mobile Marketing

Mobile marketing is wonderful because people always have their mobile devices with them and turned on. You can get immediate results. Most people consider mobile marketing to have a more personal touch than PC-based email marketing.

Virtually everyone uses mobile phones while not everyone is online. This means that you can reach a wider market that doesn't necessarily use PCs. Moreover, the number of people using mobiles is increasing each year.

Marketing surveys have shown that open rates are much higher on mobiles than on PCs. This is possibly because people are flooded with emails in their inboxes. Mobile marketing is still new and fewer companies are doing it, so your customers will be more responsive.

The Disadvantages of Mobile Marketing

Mobile marketing is relatively new, uncharted territory and this has its perks. It also has its downsides. One downside is that mobile delivery systems aren't as reliable as PC email. Your emails may get lost somewhere on the way to your customers' phones.

Mobile devices have no standard platform like PCs do. This means you have to be extra careful to make sure your messages can be seen on a variety of devices. Screen size varies from one device to another, so it may be difficult to make your messages look right.

Navigation is also an issue. In addition to the smaller screen size, it's difficult to type on mobile devices. Scrolling, panning, and zooming are annoying to users. Buttons that you want your customers to press must be located in the right places and your content must be easy to read at a glance.

With SMS marketing, there's another challenge. Messages can only be up to 160 characters. This is around 40 words or less. Your messages have to get straight to the point and make their impact quickly.

Mobile Is a Whole Different World

The key to success with mobile marketing is to understand that mobile devices are completely different from PCs. Mobile web surfing behavior is also different. People have shorter attention spans and you need to grab their attention in a second. The challenge is to engage people and get them involved with your company through their mobile device. The more interactive your marketing campaign, the more effective it will be.

Content Is King – The Basics of Education-Based Marketing for Busy Solo & Micro Business Owners

Content marketing is an umbrella term that refers to many marketing strategies in which you're using content to build a relationship with your audience. You share helpful information with your target market and establish yourself as an expert, and then you start making useful offers.

How Education/Content Marketing Works

First, choose a niche that you're passionate about. Spend time getting to know people who are interested in that niche. Join forums and online groups so that you can learn what they want, how they think, and how you can benefit them.

The quality of your content is all-important. If you can't write content that's high-quality, original and engaging, you can hire a ghostwriter to create it for you. The important thing to consider when it comes to content creation is that it must offer tremendous value, whether it's information, problem-solving, or even entertainment.

The next question to ask is how you're going to publish your content. You have a number of choices. These include blogging, social media, article syndication (where you put articles on other sites) and video marketing. Each publishing channel you use has a link that leads back to your main site.

Remember that content includes more than just written articles. It includes images, photos, videos, audio files and anything else that your audience can consume.

When to Use Content Marketing

Content marketing doesn't get you quick sales. It builds a long-term relationship with your market. Gradually, they come to see you as a trusted expert. You become their go-to person for the information they need.

It works best for specific niches that are hungry for information and not already

saturated. For example, it would require a mammoth effort to get anywhere with the weight loss niche. It would be much easier to choose a very specific group of people in the weight loss niche to market to. Go for small niches like snail farming, chakra meditation, fear of flying, getting over a breakup, or how to stop sweating. If you can find enough people desperate for information in small niches like these, then you have a potential target market for content.

The Benefits of Education-Based Marketing

The greatest benefit of content marketing is that it builds trust. You brand yourself and your site as the place to go for answers. Once you're a recognized source of the high quality information people need, your offerings basically sell themselves.

Content/Education marketing is great for people who don't consider themselves sales-oriented. There's really no hard sell involved. This is an inbound marketing strategy where you put the content out there and it brings people to your offer.

The Downside

The only real downside – and this can be quite a downside – is that creating content is not always easy or cheap. You have to become a true expert and create it yourself, which takes time, or you have to invest money in your expert writer. There are shortcuts to creating content, but the content has to be exceptional.

How to Succeed at Content Marketing

The key to success with content marketing is to approach it in the spirit of giving, not selling. Share your information with an audience that's hungry for answers. Focus on communicating and building a relationship. The more value you give, the better you can expect your returns to be.

Email Marketing for Solo & Micro Business: Getting Your Message Straight to Your Client's & Prospect's Inbox

Email marketing involves sending email messages to a list of subscribers that contain information, offers, discounts, and promotions. It's one of the most common and effective types of marketing used online today. There's a popular saying among internet marketers that states, 'The money is in the list.'

The Basics of Email Marketing

The first step in email marketing is to build a list. You can do this by either creating a website or using offline materials to collect names and email addresses. This is what's called an 'opt-in' list and it's very important that people have chosen to be on the list. If they haven't opted in, they won't be responsive to your offers.

The best way to get people to sign up is to offer an exclusive freebie or discount. Once they've signed up, you send them an email to confirm, and they receive the free offer or discount. A software program called an autoresponder is used to manage your list and automatically send messages to your subscribers.

Getting names and email addresses is just the beginning. You then have to nurture your list and build a relationship with them. You can do this by providing helpful information and high-quality content. They see you as an expert and friend, and this builds trust so that you can then start making offers.

Email marketing is useful for any kind of business, whether online or off. In fact, it's an easy method for offline businesses to increase engagement with customers. Email is also a great way to market to cell phones and mobile devices. You can send coupons they can use at your bricks-and-mortar business.

The Benefits of Email Marketing

Email marketing is wonderful because it's cheaper and faster than direct mail. Instead of spending money publishing brochures and other print materials, you only have to compose email messages. Unlike direct marketing, you also get global reach.

It's easy to monitor and track the response of your prospects to your emails. The autoresponder service that you use to manage your list will handle your tracking for you, giving you detailed analytics. You can easily see which messages are getting opened and acted upon and which aren't.

The only real disadvantage of email marketing is that people might ignore your emails. With all of the spam people get, your messages may end up in their spam folder. Government regulations have also gotten stricter about how you do your email marketing.

How to Make Email Marketing Work for You

The first guideline for success with email marketing is that you should never buy or trade for a list. Subscribers need to opt-in and confirm their subscription. When you buy a list, not only are you getting untargeted prospects who are probably not interested, you're also spamming them when you send unsolicited messages. With new anti-spam laws like the CAN-SPAM Act of 2003, you could pay dearly for this.

When you do start making offers, be careful about the products and services you promote. Don't pass off anything on your list that's less than the best quality. Nurturing your list is about building trust, and one bad product can destroy that trust quickly. Remember that people can unsubscribe by simply clicking on the link at the bottom of the message.

Always be responsive to your list and treat them like gold. When they have comments or questions, listen and communicate with them. Pay attention to your analytics so that you know what works and what doesn't. Marketers who take care of their list keep their subscribers for the long-term.