

Mobile advertising is 2015's 'media giant'



By [Andrew Kramer](#)

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"I'm under no illusion that 2015 will be any easier."

Mobile advertising has been steadily forging a stronghold in the media industry throughout 2014. Looking ahead to 2015, I foresee the continued trend of positive gains and ROI in the mobile social network ad space, given the burgeoning success and repeat business commissioned by leading brands including MTN, Vodacom, Nandos, KFC, SAB, Coca-Cola, DSTV, Samsung, Microsoft and Unilever, to name a few.

Mobile social network advertising has proven time and again to trump engagement and awareness levels offered via alternative advertising avenues. For B2C brands, mobile has transitioned from being an isolated channel to playing an integral role in the marketing mix. Consumer trends and business models have rapidly evolved and will continue organic growth alongside strides in mobile technology. As a marketer, it's vital to anticipate what to expect in the sector so as to have in your armoury a mobile marketing plan and content strategy ready for the future.

Interestingly, according to [eMarketer](#), mobile ad spend is to overtake print in 2015 and by 2018 it is expected that mobile will claim almost 40% of total paid media spending in the UK, with estimates that mobile will account for nearly 30% of all UK digital ad spending this year, with this figure rising to more than half by 2016.

From our vantage point, it's a natural progression that South Africa will follow in the wake of these mobile advertising trends. I anticipate these key trends looking into 2015:

Trend 1: Seeing but not believing

Mobile social network advertising continues to present phenomenal opportunities for brands to reach and engage with target consumers. However, there is still a large portion of the marketing, media and advertising sector, which don't yet fully understand the powerful and affordable potential of the platform. Many brands and marketers are trapped in traditional mindsets because "it worked before", and as a result, have not taken the time to elevate their repertoire to include trending customer acquisition and engagement practices. As it has become the norm for so many local brands, in 2015, mobile advertising will become the norm for many more brands in tandem with contextualised real-time content becoming an indispensable component of digital marketing and content strategies.

Trend 2: Rich media centre stage

Although rich media is already here, in my opinion it remains one of the biggest mobile advertising trends into 2015. I anticipate that advertisers will move towards campaigns, content and creative that will assist them in promoting the consumption of relevant, cool and engaging rich content including videos, graphics and music downloads. Ads focussed around rich media achieve increased engagement, higher perceived value and is the driver behind generating top-of-mind awareness in driving sales.

Trend 3: Push selling gets ignored

Sporadic, tactical selling is good, no doubt about it. However, when brands relentlessly sell to customers all the time, they risk becoming spam and an aggravation factor. As a result, they land up being ignored, overlooked and dismissed. To avoid advertising fatigue, your content plan should be a balanced combination of selling, rich content, engagement mechanics such as polls, competitions and live chats as well as value adds and freebies with no strings attached.

Ask your consumers what they want, when they want it and make them feel like they have a say in what content they receive. After all, mobile is about building an engaging community for the long haul.

Trend 4: Mobile - Education's helping hand

Witnessing the evolution of education through our Cape Town-based technology client Rethink Education, we've unlocked the power of mobile education. Launching an app aimed at reaching our youth, especially those disadvantaged Grade 8 - 12 students studying Maths, Physics, Chemistry and Natural Science. The Rethink Education app provides access to the school curriculum in both English and Afrikaans, with its learning platforms and aids having received national acclaim.

Today Rethink Education has had over 180,000 active users since launching the app in 2013. The success of this new innovation was thanks to the average high school pupil being far more engaged when using social chat-styled community platforms. The application leverages this preference by delivering bite-sized portions of content in conversational bubbles.

Mobile enables anywhere, any time learning. As our world changes at a rapid pace, we will continue seeing technology maximising on how students learn, communicate, socialise, connect and purchase. Mobile learning is a reflection of the world we live in. We're just at the adoption phase of education harnessing the possibilities of technology in keeping content relevant and accessible to the masses. As more mobile-savvy marketers seek to incorporate technology into the schooling system, I anticipate this trend to be prolific across a host of brands and initiatives going into 2015.

Trend 5: Mobile - Political gateway to youth

In 2014 we witnessed how political parties bolstered social mobile network presence in the lead up to the elections on 7 May, with some developing new specialised apps on Mxit to take election engagement to a new dimension. In future I have no doubt that we'll see our political parties embark on robust campaigning, especially on mobile social networking as one of the critical arenas, particularly in terms of accessing the youth vote.

Let's be honest, 2014 was tough. I'm under no illusion that 2015 will be any easier from an economic perspective. Advertising and marketing budgets will continue being under scrutiny and reduction as the relentless drive to deliver profit and sustainability hang around the necks of South Africans. I believe, however, that mobile social network advertising's saving in cost, time and unsurpassed ROI will provide welcomed relief and alliance to marketers and advertisers.

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Andrew Kramer is vice president of sales at Mxit South Africa, having joined the Johannesburg sales team in October 2012. Mxit is a home-grown mobile social network with 4.9 million monthly active users. Kramer has over a decade's executive experience in media strategy, marketing, advertising and sales.

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