

Top mobile trends for the 2018 consumer

By [Lynette Hundermark](#)

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It's been seven years since the explosion of the smartphone market and, thanks to the increased availability of low-cost smartphones, there is now a phone in almost everyone's hands.



Lynette Hundermark, co-founder Useful & Beautiful

A fiercely personal device

Before we can start talking about any trends, mobile marketers need to have an understanding of how fiercely personal this device is. It has become more of an appendage than a device.

Walk into a hospital waiting room, hop on the Gautrain, or just stand in a checkout queue in the supermarket and you will see that everyone is pretty much attached to their mobile devices.

“ With that as a starting point, it's easy for us to then understand that mobile is connecting us to our digital worlds but increasingly it is also about activity in the real world and real connections. ”

Mobile is the bridge between the physical and digital worlds and that is exciting for marketers as the messaging can start on mobile and then extend to the real world, with real results.

A shift from contextual marketing to cognitive marketing

Mobile marketing originally started off with understanding the context. That is, delivering the right message to the right person at the right time. However, seven years later we are refining that and taking it to an even more personal level.

A mobile phone is a personal device, so we understand the need state of our consumer, what they require, and what they are using the device for - be it advice, help in purchase, information. And now it is about using the data to deliver the appropriate messaging to cater to their needs.

The key now is for mobile marketing to be truly in the right context, appropriate channel, and be genuinely useful and relevant to our customers.

Each customer is different. Therefore, understanding the signals (the channels) and using tools like clustering, looking at metrics like customer retention, and having a clear idea of the customer journey are crucial to successful computational or growth marketing – put that all together and you have a mobile holistic approach that will ultimately lead not only to user buy-in, but also to seeing mobile customers 'grow' from 'minnows' to 'whales' in terms of their wallet share on your mobile platforms in 2018.

Incorporating the omnichannel customer

We hear and speak a lot about the omnichannel experience, but many brands seem stuck in a single-channel paradigm when it comes to their digital marketing approach.

“ In 2018, brands can no longer afford to still 'think channel', they have to think customer experience with all channels integrated (mobile, online, social, bricks and mortar) or risk losing significant market share. ”

Despite how great an app or mobile idea is, remember that your app is just another touch-point in your digital ecosystem and it is a consumer's expectation that it will work seamlessly across all channels.

The mobile phone is the one thing your consumer will carry with them no matter where they are and if there is one experience that you want to get right in 2018, it's the experience your customer will have on mobile. It has to be a unified experience that brings all channels together.

An example to illustrate this would be the traditional retail sector. Still to this day, brick-and-mortar retailing continues to dominate retail sales, as opposed to mobile commerce in South Africa.

However, retail consumers will create the omnichannel experience themselves by using mobile as a catalyst (e.g. looking up product information and price comparisons) to drive them in-store where they will complete the path to purchase. With the shift to cognitive marketing, you will know what your customer intents are based on their activity from their mobile device, followed through to their browsing patterns which may lead to conversions. Based on this and other data, you have the insights on hand to tailor relevant messaging and deliver personalised products and information.

Customisation and personalisation

In the consumers' eye, the perspective is very much a case of: "You know who I am and what I am consuming, please send me relevant information." People want more customisation and personalisation and marketing strategies will need to change accordingly to cater for this. This is a trend we will continue to see this year.

Artificial intelligence and chatbots to improve customer service

“ 2017 was the year of the chatbot and this is a trend we're likely to see continue into and throughout 2018. ”

However, just as there is “an app for everything”, do not fall into the trap of assuming your company must automatically have a bot integrated into your mobile communication strategy. Rather, think omnichannel, think customer experience, and incorporate a bot strategy into your mobile execution that actually accomplishes a business objective/customer goal.

If, for example, your business objective is a decrease in call centre volume with the aim to improve customer experience, then consider having a chatbot that not only answers basic questions but also gets trained to deliver relevant and appropriate messaging based on who the actual customer is (empowering the customer to make better decisions), rather than generic messages which may end up in a frustrating customer experience.

Artificial intelligence can facilitate this superior customer experience by learning about your customer's mobile behaviour from the vast quantities of data available that have previously been untapped by marketers. This is part of the shift towards cognitive marketing, which we will see as a rapidly growing trend this year.

With mobile, the power is literally in your hands. You have access to personalised real-time information about your user and, as a brand, it is an amazing opportunity to be able to get to the bottom of the data and understand your audience. This is the key to creating great cognitive marketing campaigns that will make a lasting impression.

ABOUT LYNETTE HUNDERMARK

With over 15 years of experience in the tech, digital marketing and mobile solutions space, Hundermark co-founded specialist mobile solutions consultancy Useful & Beautiful. With a passion for developing mobile products that are aligned to business goals, Hundermark's appetite for keeping abreast of the latest industry trends is fast establishing her as an expert tech commentator and opinion leader in South Africa. Follow @lynetteanthony on Twitter.

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