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Mobile Marketing 101

If you pay attention to both technology and marketing you can't get too far without hearing about "Mobile Marketing." Mobile Marketing is about engaging your customers and prospects on their mobile devices. It covers text message marketing or "SMS," Apps, Location Based Marketing and Mobile Websites. The proliferation of Smart Phones are the main driver of this trend. In fact, it is predicted that by the end of 2011 there will be 140,000,000 smart phone subscriptions in the U.S (maybe more). To say "you can't ignore this" would be an understatement. So let's start with "The Mobile Internet" and get you up to date.

The Mobile Internet is where web-enabled smart phones do their browsing. About twenty percent of Google Searches are originated on mobile devices right now. (this number is increasing). Google dominates the mobile search market. So what can you do to take advantage of the Mobile Internet long before your competitors? Let's explore...

First you have to realize the Mobile Internet exists. Browsing a website on your desktop or laptop from a broadband connection in your home or office is a much different experience than browsing from a mobile device. As you may have experienced most sites move slowly, are hard to read and sometimes their content can't even be displayed on the small screen. What's the problem? These sites are not "mobile.". Which brings the need for a new player to the internet marketing game...

Mobile Websites

Mobile websites are meant to fit the small screens of smart phones and mobile devices. The key difference is found in the layout of the site. Graphics, text, offers, navigation and information is presented in a different way. And when it's done right, the experience of the person browsing the site is many times better than if they were viewing a "traditional website" from their mobile phone.

So how does a prospect or customer get to a mobile site?

There are few ways. One way is through the use of "Q-R Codes" or "Quick Response Codes." These codes can be scanned by your smart phone and take you to a mobile site.



Another way someone can arrive at your mobile site is by doing a search. Then, when your mobile site is properly installed a piece of code detects the mobile browser and serves the mobile version. You can also get traffic to a mobile site via text message and email marketing by providing links in your communications.

The trend setters in the mobile internet world are the big retailers. Think Best Buy, Target and Amazon. Beyond having mobile websites, these retailers conduct Mobile Commerce or "M-Commerce." Their customers buy right from their phones while on the retailer's mobile site.

For the small business who may not be concerned with conducting mobile commerce a good mobile web presence with "lead generation" and basic mobile search optimization would put you way ahead of your competition. Unfortunately there are still many small business owners who are totally UN-aware of this trend, thankfully that's not you. It's easy to get started with mobile web marketing via mobile sites so get going now.

Five Ways to Put Mobile Apps to Work Today

We have assembled profiles of different dental businesses that take advantage of apps to streamline operations, improve customer service and increase revenues.

While these success stories present only a snapshot of how companies in some sectors of the dental industry are using apps, many of their tactics and successes can be deployed in other sectors as well.

1. Sales - A dental office is increasing sales at street festivals, trade shows and other locations outside of the office with an app that allows them to schedule appointments, sell gift certificates for teeth whitening and other services, and process credit and debit card payments through their mobile phone. Instead of requiring customers to pay by cash or check, they simply enter their customers card information into their mobile phone keypad. They can even print receipts with an attached printer, building trust with their customers. For the dental office, the ability to process card payments quickly lessens the hassle of waiting for checks to clear, while the convenience provided to customers helps increase the likelihood of return business.

2. Dentist/Patient Communication - Other dental offices are serving clients better with a customer relationship management (CRM) app that allows access to contact information, client portfolios and detailed notes, all in one place. Office staff can update their customers notes any time and anywhere. For example, if they learn about a new product or service that might benefit a patient, they can easily record it to discuss during their next appointment. Having mobile access to detailed information allows treatment coordinators and office manager to field patients questions where they happen to be and to better prepare for patient next appointment.



3. Dentist/Lab Communication - Dentists often need to monitor or update patients' case status, review case design, make a payment on account, or just upload graphics and diagnostic images, when they are away from their office. One app enables a doctor to receive a continual stream of status data, such as arrival date, expected delivery date, case change order, quality control issues or a simple communication directly to their mobile phone. This remote capability allows the doctor to quickly alert office staff, or the patient, of changes, helping to avoid crisis. The real-time streaming also provides data gathering for other social media activities.

4. Customer Service - A dental laboratory has improved responsiveness to clients with an app that allows employees and technicians to be reached when they're not in the office. Employees and technicians select a fixed or mobile line for receiving calls, which they can change at any time. When dentists dial the laboratory's main number, they are routed automatically to the number of the employee or technician. Employees and technicians can view phone messages on their smartphones, saving time from dialing into a voicemail system, and they can receive important paperwork via Internet fax, helping answer questions, or address problems more quickly.

5. Delivery Service - Other laboratories use a GPS-based mobile app to improve drivers' productivity and help ensure they are deployed as efficiently as possible. By providing drivers with mobile phones equipped with the app, the fleet supervisor can monitor their whereabouts, see when deliveries are made and reroute drivers as needed through any Internet-connected computer. GPS allows drivers to find locations easily - helping to lower fuel costs - while electronic data improves timesheet accuracy and reduces paperwork.

Want to learn more about apps that can benefit your dental business? Azar & Associates Social Media Solution Consultant can help your dental business be more productive. To schedule a telephone appointment, visit us on-line at www.azarandassociates.com.