



The Mobile Engagement Playbook

Unlock the power of mobile to engage and monetize your digital customers



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A Brief Introduction

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Your customers have become digital. They expect you to go direct with them.

You have to provide them not just products, but personalized content and benefits. In a word: experiences.

How do you engage and monetize your customers?

How do you deliver meaningful experiences on their smartphone where and when it matters most?

How can you take advantage of this amazing transformation and make your business truly digital?

We all know that creating a customer-facing App is a complex, time consuming and expensive task.

You have to find a consultant, understand his technical jargon, and spend much money.

Not to mention the hidden charges and extra fees to keep your App alive and adapt it to the evolving mobile platforms.

And this is just the beginning, since new digital spaces for your brand and products to occupy are born everyday: VR platforms, bots, wearables, IoT platforms, etc.

A continuous effort that will make the cost of your digital developments skyrocket.

You don't really need to go through all this, however. It's time for something better, something easier, something smarter.

It's time for a new approach that delivers your Digital Customer Experience, from your App and well beyond, in 1/10th of the time and with 1/10th of the investment.

To share this insight, with my team I have collected the most relevant content from our DCX Community, to help you overcome the challenges of your digital transformation and grow your business exponentially.

If you have comments or ideas, drop me your thoughts at: dario.melpignano@neosperience.com

The Power of Customer Engagement



"Everything starts with the customer" (Louis XIV)

Even the Sun King was well-aware of the importance of 'clients'.

Consider the world's most valuable brands - Starbucks, Disney, Google, Amazon, Apple, Nike and BMW. They sell different products; they have a peculiar storytelling and identity; they believe in distinctive business principles and mantra.

They have one thing in common, though: they are customer-obsessed. They deliver memorable customer experiences.

Unlike traditional business differentiators like quality or price, a great customer experience is not something that you can't just buy with big budgets or innovative technology. It is, instead, a competitive advantage that can only be earned with a continuous cycle of testing and improvements.

Markets have always been places where two opposite forces meet and face: the seller and the buyer. For centuries, though, the power balance has basically been a matter of production and distribution.

In this scenario the seller was the strong element, with control of prices, point of sales location, and information about products and clients. The only thing people could control was the buying decision, however influenced by brands and companies.

Talking about customer engagement - in a world like that - didn't make sense at all. The one-way communication made it almost impossible for consumers to speak out and influence the agenda of the brand.

Then, suddenly the rules changed forever. What happened? The Internet and the smartphone happened.

Close your eyes and try to imagine for a minute what life

was before the Internet. Can you? The new generations of customers will never experience the world without connectivity. They would never acknowledge a world where they can't influence the discussion.

Even for non-digital customers, it is hard today to imagine the world with no Google, emails, Wikipedia, Facebook, e-commerce or mobile apps.

Organizations have lost their privileged spot. They must accept the shift to a two-way communication where the balance is on the customers' side.

Thanks to the Internet, the smartphone and all sorts of disruptive devices (smartwatch, augmented and virtual reality, to name a few), the business is rapidly shifting from brand-centric to customer-centric.

"We've had three big ideas at Amazon that we've stuck with for 18 years, and they're the reason we're successful: Put the customer first. Invent. And be patient." (Jeff Bezos)

Traditional patterns are unable to ensure engagement and loyalty just because they focus on the brand rather than the customer experience. You have no excuses, as you now know that the experience is the real differentiator in digital markets.

Yet, too many companies still plan and execute their marketing strategies relying on the old certainties. They lack digital vision, believe in outdated marketing tactics

and miss the real point of digital transformation.

Customer engagement is probably the hardest step in the marketing funnel; surely it is the most intriguing and challenging for companies. Before even thinking about conversion, in fact, you need to involve and engage customers, a transition that you should never take for granted.

With the spread of mobile devices, the opportunities to create genuine engagement and deliver meaningful customer experiences are literally everywhere. In general, things have been getting a whole lot better for smart digital leaders, no more sidelined as the weird cousins of traditional strategists.

In our mobile ecosystem - where information is readily available, and customers take instant decisions in a tap - you only win if you and your customers speak the same language. Like it or not, their language is nourished by mobile innovation, digital screens, virtual interactions and disruptive technologies.

People expect that you understand this new way of consuming and communicating, and that you are able to fulfill their needs using innovative tools. Going mobile might be risky (and expensive) but it is also the only way to succeed.

A good customer engagement strategy will make it easier to:

- Attract new visitors and prospects;
- Convert them into leads;
- Close the path to conversion;
- Transform customers into promoters;
- Communicate and connect at a personal level;
- Collect feedback and understand needs and behaviors;
- Decrease churn and increase customer retention;
- Create a sense of belonging (brand based on emotions);
- Generate more revenues from repeat sales.

To build relationships and increase business, you need to engage customers continuously and give them what they want, when they want it, fast and easy.

This is the essence of digital customer experience in the Age of Customer. The only choice is to adapt as fast as you can to conquer customers' attention, retain their loyalty and be first in line in the purchase decision.

Digital will boost your business but you have to be willing to use it to revolutionize your identity and customer experience.

There is a great lesson about customer engagement that we can learn from sports:

If you don't train to offer the best performance and deliver the best results, you will never overcome the competition to win your customers' heart and mind. You will never improve customer experience.

UNDERSTAND WHAT DIGITAL MEANS

Just look around and you will see plenty of articles and researches about the importance of a digital-first approach to engaging the new customer. However, what is digital exactly?

What does it mean - for YOUR company - going digital and developing a digital strategy? This is the 'level-zero' question you should always ask before starting the process of transformation.

Digital screens are everywhere, digital technologies reshape reality: How can you add them to your strategy, without losing your identity and core values?

MAKE DIGITAL EVERYONE'S JOB

The first mistake so many organizations fall into is the idea that digital is a compartment, responsibility of few and not part of the company as a whole.

Digital is not (only) the job of marketers; it should be the rule that guides the actions of every single person involved in the planning and execution of your strategy.

We know that employee engagement is the foundation of a truly innovative brand, and digital is the field of choice where you can measure if you need to bring something into alignment.

CONVERT DATA INTO SMART DATA

Big data have been around for years now, and yet so many entrepreneurs have no idea what it is all about. There's always been lots of data, even before the Internet and the specific analytics dashboards.

"Big data is like teenage sex: everyone talks about it, nobody really knows how to do it, everyone thinks everyone else is doing it, so everyone claims they are doing it."

Innovative organizations are already skipping from big data to smart data, that is the ability to extract useful insight from vague numbers and statistics.

LOOK AT THE EXPERIENCE AS A WHOLE

The only way to deliver a meaningful experience - relevant and personalized - is to look at it as a whole.

Digital customer experience design starts with a comprehensive methodology aimed at creating memorable moments for customers through every connection they have with the brand or the product, where and when it matters the most.

Bringing out emotions, needs, wants, capabilities, and shaping a flawless omni-channel customer journey that is truly custom-tailored.

OPTIMIZE THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

The spread of mobile devices and the emergence of digital customers entail a great challenge for digital

leaders: customer behaviors change endlessly and it is very difficult to track patterns and recurring frameworks.

The customer journey is not what it looked like only ten years ago. You will need a completely new customer journey map to revamp the traditional methodology and give sense to all the different touch points and interactions people have with you, day after day, device after device.

Do you truly understand what customers want?

"You don't build it for yourself. You know what the people want and you build it for them." (Walt Disney)

Digital leaders must learn from the old Mickey Mouse. Whether you are a traditional retailer, an e-commerce firm, a B2B company or a digital brand, unleash the child and embrace the power of magic. Because magic is timeless, indeed.

Marketing For The Era Of Micro Moments

One of the most important legacies of the last few years is the conscience that mobile devices have completely disrupted the way we live, communicate and make purchases. In a business perspective, that means the evolution of what we call customer experience.

Big players have instantly acknowledged this epochal shift. Google, for its own nature, has been first in line, with the latest update of the search engine algorithm (nicknamed Mobilegeddon) and the steadfast belief in the emergence of **Micro Moments**.

There was a clear statement behind the mobile-friendly update and the new image-format ads: mobile devices have completely disrupted the way people communicate and connect with others, products and brands.

"What used to be our predictable, daily sessions online have been replaced by many fragmented interactions that now occur instantaneously. There are hundreds of these moments every day - checking the time, texting a

spouse, chatting with friends on social media." (Google)

As the smartphone becomes an indispensable companion in our daily lives, we are witnessing a change in the way people search for information and decide what product/service fits their needs the best.

Think about it: when you need to find a quick solution to your problem or scan deeper into a certain topic, the first thing you do is to reach for your smartphone. It is now pure instinct, especially for millennials.

This is the Age of the Customer in full display: we don't just go online, we live online.

Rather than spending long periods of time researching on a desktop or laptop, we now turn to our mobile devices in a continuous series of small sessions. A completely new customer behavior.

The customer journey map, shaped by mobile connectivity, is fractured into hundreds of real-time micro moments, driven by specific intents. Each one is a critical opportunity for your brand to engage customers and guide decisions.

Micro moments, as defined by Google, basically unfold through a set of "I want" demands:

I want to know

I want to go

I want to do

I want to buy

"They're all micro moments, and they're the new battleground for brands." (Google)

The challenge for brands, then, is to be visible and reachable whenever customers pick up their phones during these moments. As a business, you need to address three urgent questions:

How can you be relevant in a world where customers dictate the agenda?

How can you build a memorable mobile strategy to engage customers when and where it matters most?

How can you overcome the challenge of the digital transformation to ensure you offer the best customer experience?

The smartphone is acting as the main catalyst for the second Internet revolution.

The first revolution has cabled our houses and offices;

The second revolution connects our entire existence by simply bringing the web in the palm of our hand.

Wherever we go and whatever we do as human beings and customers, we are connected to the world and always traceable and trackable.

We are so used to have the world in our pocket that we do not look at this pervasiveness like a menace to our

life.

"That little device is enabling new ways of doing and learning things. It's helping us discover new ideas and new businesses. It's helping us manage our to-dos, tackle our problems, and inspire our plans." (Google)

If we had to choose three significant consequences of this second revolution, they would be the need for a new 'mobile web' strategy, the redefinition of the digital customer journey, and the emergence of the digital commerce.

Mobile Web Strategy

We check the phone on average 150 times a day. In 2015 the number of mobile searches has finally overpassed desktop ones, making the smartphone the primary door to access the Internet. The web goes mobile, customers go mobile, and your strategy must go mobile too.

If you want to engage and monetize customers with tailored contents (personal and contextual), you should consider 'mobile' as your favorite channel, not just one channel among the others.

Digital Customer Journey

68 percent of customers say they check their phone within 15 minutes of waking up in the morning. 82 percent turn to their smartphone while they are in a store, to get info, suggestions and decide what to buy.

The secret of the Micro Moments is: what used to be predictable sessions have been replaced by many fragmented interactions that occur instantaneously offline and online. This forces the redefinition of the customer journey.

Digital Commerce

51 percent of customers have discovered a new company or product when conducting a search on their smartphone. The multiplication of touch points leads to the emergence of digital commerce, a combination that involves both physical and virtual elements, which might end up online or in store, combining e-commerce and retail store.

The interaction results in a transaction of value where the customer experience becomes the real differentiator.

The idea is that the customer journey - thus the overall digital customer experience - today looks a lot different than it did only a few years ago. The increase in mobile sessions (and in the time spent using mobile devices) states that the smartphone is the prime suspect in this evolution:

"Since we can take action on any need or curiosity at any time, the consumer decision journey has been fractured into hundreds of tiny decision-making moments at every stage of the funnel - from inspiring vacation plans to buying a new blender to learning how to install that new shelf." (Google)

To succeed in this hyper-competitive mobile environment, you must learn to recognize the moments of truth, namely the Micro Moments that really matters (for your customers), those where critical purchase decisions are taken.

Your brand must be here, there and everywhere. Certainly, you have to be reachable whenever - and wherever - customers needs show up, to deliver contents and experiences that answer to those demands in real-time.

Micro Moments have become the new battleground for brands. Anything can happen anytime, anywhere. It may seem a maze, but where others see threats, digital leaders see the opportunities.

Google first highlighted the importance of these moments, and has developed a guide to help companies build experiences that are immediate, relevant and frictionless.

'Micro Moments - Your Guide to Winning the Shift to Mobile' is the main reference to understand how you can build a mobile strategy for the age of Micro Moments.

BE THERE

This is level zero in mobile marketing. If you do not have a strong presence across the various touch points of the customer journey, customers will never find you when

they need you (and they are ready to take decisions).

Google states that 65 percent of smartphone users when conducting a search on their smartphones, look for the most relevant information regardless of the company providing it. Being there in the critical micro moments (the 'I-Want-To' moments) is imperative to shape decisions and preferences.

BE USEFUL

Mobile is the perfect bridge to connect the offline life of customers with the online ecosystem. The ideal customer experience is not only memorable and distinctive, but it is also - and above all - useful. 51 percent of smartphone users have bought from a brand other than their intended one because the information provided was useful.

To understand what contents you should deliver, you need to wear your customers' hat and see the world (and your brand) the same way they do it. Mobile marketing is the field of action for personalization.

BE QUICK

Your ability to be there and to deliver useful contents are just two sides of the perfect triangle of mobile engagement. The third one, maybe the most relevant for your business transformation, is the ability to be quick and reach your customers in the exact moment they need it.

Content without context is of little help. 60 percent of online users make purchase decisions more quickly now than they did a few years ago. Customers move at lightning speed, whether they are looking at your website or using your mobile App. Be quick or be dead.

PLUS: CONNECT THE DOTS

Last but not least, Google has one final advice for digital strategists: do not forget to connect the dots. Today, you do not have offline customers and online customers: you have digital customers that move from one context to the other in the blink of an eye.

If you still think and act using silos and separated channels, you are doomed. Connect the dots across screens, across channels, across teams.

Here's the battlefield you may want to control to become customers' top choice. The constant flow of communication makes it difficult to differentiate yourself from competitors.

Shorter attention-span make it even harder to acquire customers and retain their loyalty:

"Google's concept of micro-moments represent the new frontier (and reality) of digital marketing. It's all real-time and everything is on demand." (Brian Solis)

The Experience of Happy Customers



In the age of mobile nothing is more sacred than the happiness of customers. As we move from a product-centric approach to a customer-centric strategy, creating happy and loyal customers becomes a great deal of concern for businesses.

For this very reason, they are turning towards different ways to generate genuine engagement and **improve the digital customer experience.**

For many brands, employing innovative channels - such

as mobile - represent the missing link to get closer to their customers. The question is: How can you harness the power of mobile Apps to change positively your customer experience and gain a competitive advantage?

Today, the smartphone acts like a personal metronome that sets the pace of our daily routine. Therefore, we strongly rely on mobile devices and Apps to carry out the most diverse activities: playing, communicating, socializing, buying.

Let's start with some numbers. According to recent researches:

- More than 80% of all online adults of the most developed countries now have a smartphone.
- 60% of searches on Google now arrive from mobile devices, forcing companies to a mobile-friendly evolution.
- Apps now account for 86% of the time spent on mobile, replacing web browsers as the primary door to access the Internet.

It is no wonder, then, that companies are increasingly relying on mobile applications to interact and connect with digital customers. Apps are not just a way to 'be there'.

They can be the perfect mean to engage with customers, reach them when and where it matters most, sell products (ever heard about mobile commerce?) and increase revenue.

Mobile Apps represent a unique opportunity to build a deeper relationship with customers. As the number of competitors continues to grow, though, the real challenge is to avoid the backlash of bad development and prevent that the app ultimately disappears in the *mare magnum* of the stores.

"*Be different, be epic*" this is the secret to achieving sustainable growth in the expanding global market we live in. The question is "How?"

Consider these insights, collected by Google researchers:

- 91% of smartphone users turn to their phone to look for instant ideas while doing a given task;
- 82% of users turn to their smartphone while they're in a store, to decide which product to buy and influence the purchase decision;
- 62% of users are more likely to take action right away toward solving a new task because they have a smartphone;
- 90% of smartphone users have used their phone to make progress toward a long term goal or multi-step process while 'out and about';
- 69% of online customers agree that the quality, timing, or relevance of a company's message influences their perception of a brand.

Any industry is facing this challenge, in a scenario where the only constant is constant change.

Consumer goods and retail brands need to overcome

the rise of e-commerce, mobile and social commerce, reinventing the very idea of store to reach customers when they are ready to take decisions.

Insurance and financial services are now evaluated by customers like any other type of brands. They need to start caring about loyalty, reinventing the experience and exploiting multiple touch points to connect with clients.

Fashion and luxury brands probably have the hardest task. They need to embrace the power of technology to appeal digital customers; at the same time, they need to preserve their legacy and the sense of traditional and exclusive that nurture their identity.

Health and government services need to shorten the distance that separates them from customers. They need to overcome the greyness of bureaucracy and evolve to become more open, accessible and efficient.

They all share a common problem: find a way to connect the physical and digital worlds in more meaningful ways.

So it happens that the need to differentiate themselves from competitors brings the attention to what is really important: the experience.

Happy customers are the result of an amazing experience. Experiences that are truly unique and personalized drive satisfaction, encourage positive word of mouth and pave the way to customer advocacy.

Driving market share and revenue growth.

How do you connect the online and offline dimensions?
In a world shaped by all sorts of mobile devices (smartphones, smartwatches, activity trackers) the answer is right in front of your eyes.

Following this line of thought, more and more businesses are uploading their branded Apps to the stores. The problem is, many are doing it with no plan, no expertise and not even a strong reason why.

They are not developing digital tools for their customers; they are doing it because everyone else is doing it. A mistake that only leads to disaster.

The fact that mobile Apps have become a popular tool for business marketing does not necessary mean that they will work for your business as some sort of magic, bringing customers to your stores like the pied piper of Hamelin.

Being easily accessible via mobile devices is top priority but, in the end, it is not the *what* that will decide your success; it is rather the *how* and the *why*. How are you going to engage customers and monetize them? Why are you doing it in the first place?

As mobile devices integrate deeper into the digital marketing strategy, it is time to bring the conversation to the next level.

The keywords here is VALUE. You need to define how

you will deliver value to your clients and provide a superior overall experience, across all stages of the improved customer journey.

Here are some ideas on how you can harness the power of mobile to fulfill customer's desires, and live with them happily ever after.

GUARANTEE CONVENIENCE

A well-thought mobile App is the perfect tool to engage customers in the exact (micro) moment that matters most, wherever they are.

To work efficiently, your tool must be smart (able to deliver the right content), personalized (able to learn from behavior), contextual (able to show location-aware content).

PLAY WITH CUSTOMERS

Customers love discounts, and marketers know it. They also love reward, and not so many marketers know it. Reward ensures loyalty, but traditional loyalty programs are costly and not efficient anymore.

The answer lies in games: success stories show that gamification dynamics helps to engage customers and keep them coming back to your digital and mobile properties.

CREATE AN 'APPMOSPHERE'

Digital leaders sometimes struggle to maintain the right balance between two distinctive demands: customer engagement on the one hand and brand identity on the other hand.

One way to connect the two is to improve the online presence through an innovative customer-facing App that delivers a sense of exclusivity and creates a unique '*appmosphere*'.

DEVELOP A HUMAN BRAND

Despite the prejudices, a branded content is not meant just to remind customers of your brand's existence. They can be used for various purposes, which includes engagement, loyalty and customer service.

Opening a two-way dialogue with users can be used to improve the connection, get feedback, respond to issues, and ultimately show the human face of your company.

CAPITALIZE ON DATA POWER

Customer-facing Apps improve the communication but also serve as collectors of information about customers, their social habits and purchase behaviors.

Apps can be substantial sources of data that enhance your knowledge if you know how to read them.

You will get a better understanding of your customers, and you will be able to predict their behaviors and adapt your strategy accordingly.

The evolution of mobile (last, but not least, the Chatbot mania) teaches us that competing solely on products, price or features is not sufficient to gain a competitive edge.

The new rules of engagement demand that you invest and work to deliver a memorable and unique digital customer experience.

How Engagement Leads To Loyalty



What can we learn from celebrities like Lady Gaga, Oprah Winfrey and Jennifer Lawrence? They are A-list celebrities and they have an astonishing ability to build and nurture a community of loyal and faithful fans.

The entertainment business is a mirror that reflects the changes all other industries are going through: a digital transformation that leads to the Age of the Customer, where people - not brands - become the core of every digital marketing strategy.

In hyper-competitive markets, the only way to grow

shares and stay top of mind is to stop being self-referential and start focusing on your customers.

This line of thoughts brings in another question. What is more critical, customer acquisition or customer retention? Today, social connections and the 'word of mouth' have reached a strong impact on the relationship between brands and customers.

Thus, you must deal with a strategic decision: focus your efforts and budgets to acquire new leads or to improve customer retention. A conundrum that somehow resembles Shakespeare's *"To be or not to be?"*

It is now undeniable that customer retention has a strong cause and effect link with digital customer experience. The milestone of this connection is called loyalty.

As a matter of facts, then, retention and acquisition should have - at least - the same consideration, yet many marketers still insist on putting all their money on strategies of mere client acquisition (traditional advertising, just to name one).

If you look at it from a broader perspective, this is the same doubt that SEO specialists encounter when they look at web analytics: should you favor new visitors or returning visitors?

As the debate still goes on between acquiring new leads and potential customers, or retaining and nurturing the

current clients, the real question becomes clearer: which one convert the best?

Luckily, in the age of smart data, you can rely on dependable numbers in your search for the right answer. Three key statistics - taken from recent industry studies - tell the value of loyalty:

- The probability of selling to an existing client is between 60 and 70%, while the probability of selling to a new customer is just 5-20%.
- It costs 6 times more to attract a new client than to retain an existing one.
- A 2% increase in customer retention has the same effect as decreasing costs by 10%. A 10% increase in customer retention result in a 30% increase in the value of a brand.

It is surely cheaper to maintain an existing relation than to create a new one; on the other hand, however, retention is harder to get.

You can buy new leads but you can't buy trust and loyalty.

Retention is not a consequence of product quality or price but it is *"strongly related to the way a company services its existing customers and the reputation it creates within and across the marketplace."* (Wikipedia)

To step from customer engagement to customer retention you need to develop the ability to maintain a

profitable relation with clients in the long term, to strengthen that connection, and - as a result - ensure competitive advantage, repeat sales and enduring profits.

Well, how can you do that? Improving service to avoid pitfalls and guarantee a seamless - yet innovative and compelling - customer journey across all touch points.

In the Age of the Customer, if you really aim at retaining customers, you need to win their love.

There is no 'one-fits-all' recipe that tells you how to train this ability. It depends on your brand identity, your peculiar KPIs and the industry you compete in.

What we can do is to trace few steps easy step that you can take to get through this process.

SURPRISE CUSTOMERS

To stay top of mind, you must be one step beyond their needs and desires. When you sell your products, you always sell yourself, your story and brand identity through your content marketing strategy.

EXCEED EXPECTATIONS

Empowered customers demand a fulfilling experience. Try to "tell them what they need well before they realize it themselves." (cit. Steve Jobs)

DRIVE INNOVATION

Customers expect that you keep pace with technology. Try to offer them what they need, when they need it, wherever they are and whatever device they are using.

PERSONALIZE CONTENTS

Personalization is not just about service; it involves the overall purchase journey (proximity marketing is just an example of how to personalize the shopping experience).

ENGAGE EMOTIONALLY

The renewed customer journey involves both technological and emotional aspects. Try to create a whimsical experience, so that they feel inspired and generate a positive buzz among others.

STAY HUMAN

Technology improves efficiency, but you should never forget that, as they get more and more submerged into a world of smart objects and pervading devices, customers search for human interactions.

In a few words, customer retention is about adopting a proactive approach to understand needs and wants, and deliver real-time answers.

Now that personal networks extend to the virtual interconnections of social media, when you retain customers, you are retaining their lifetime value, in terms of their spending and power to influence other potential customers.

Remember: a loyal customer is forever ... as long as you are able to engage him with an amazing digital customer experience.

Mobile Apps & Customer Engagement



What is the first thing you do when you wake up in the morning? Before even drinking coffee, more than likely you pick up your smartphone to read the emails, check Facebook updates or look for promotions and special offers on your favorite products. Surfing from one App to another.

In the previous chapters we have seen how mobile has

become an integral part of our daily life, making **mobile App marketing** fundamental for brands to understand where (and how) they can invest to improve customer engagement and boost revenues.

The main reference for the realization of this part chapter is a research on customer acquisition and usage behaviors, conducted by Google in partnership with Ipsos MediaCT, with the aim of understanding the drivers behind app discovery and engagement.

Mobile marketing is still a field full of opportunities but, as the number of competitors continues to grow, the real challenge is to prevent that your App simply disappears in the ocean.

Sure, store optimization (that we will discuss in the next chapters) is the first mandatory step to ensure that customers can find you. Even a well-conducted optimization, however, is not enough.

There are too many Apps out there and you need something more. Even when it gets downloaded and installed in your customer's phone, it doesn't mean you are hitting the target by delivering a great customer experience.

Downloads might be an eye-catching key performance indicator but they rarely tell the truth about the success of your strategy.

To move on, let's take a step forward. Why should you

invest on digital development in the first place?

Easy: Apps now account for 86% of the time spent on mobile devices, replacing web browsers as the main entrance to the Internet.

In a marketing perspective, that means a unique opportunity to build deeper relationships with customers.

In the era of Micro Moments, Apps play a key role in what Google has called the '*I want*' moments, driven by specific intents and decisive for online and offline purchases: I-want-to-know, I-want-to-go, I-want-to-do, I-want-to-buy.

Mobile marketing should not be confined into the online ecosystem, as it has extended consequences on your traditional marketing strategy, influencing the offline retail customer experience.

As said, mobile devices help you bridge the gap that separates the physical and digital worlds, connecting with customers/prospects to enhance their loyalty.

To understand the boundaries of the battlefield, just take a look at the following stats:

- Users spend an average of 30 hours per month in Apps;
- The average App user has 36 apps installed on the smartphone;
- Only 26% of installed smartphone Apps are used daily;

- 25% of installed Apps are never used;
- Only 19% of daily used Apps are retail related;
- Nearly 90% of users discard an App if the brand fail to engage them.

In the best case scenario, customers open your App once in a while and devote less than one hour per month to it, if you're not Facebook, YouTube or Instagram.

With few getting the highest share of attention, you definitely need to learn the rules of mobile app marketing to stand out and encourage long-term user retention.

APP DISCOVERY

When you plan your mobile marketing strategy, you might be led to believe that the App store is the main source to find new tools.

Data show, instead, that Apps are often discovered outside the store: 52% of customers becomes aware of an App thanks to the opinion of friends, family or colleagues.

Only 40% actually browse the store, 24% directly goes on the official website, while an interesting 27% bump into them while looking for information on a search engine.

APP DOWNLOAD

The connection between search engines and discovery is

probably the most useful insight of the entire report. Search is especially effective for technology (43%), travel (35%), and local business (34%) Apps.

If the organic search leads 1 in 4 downloads, you can also rely on search engine marketing to increase the adoption rate: search ads have become the main driver of download (50%), followed by social advertising (49%). Be sure to be reachable wherever customers are looking to discover Apps relevant to their interests.

APP PRICE

The top reasons why users decide to download and install an App are recommendations by their trusted circle of friends/family and the perceived level of fun/interest. But the actual decision is mostly influenced by price: 82% of users indicate prices as the main factor, followed by description and reviews (60%).

How much are they willing to pay? Not that much: 3 in 4 actually expect that your App is free; they are willing to pay only for technology, financial and local Apps (and no more than 3 dollars anyway).

APP BEHAVIOR

What makes one product successful and another one nonperforming? The ability to make customer's life easier. This is the key attribute of frequently used apps (63%), together with clear instructions (63%), appealing design (57%) and consistent user experience across

devices (57%).

You should focus on these features to increase spending: 50% of customers use the App to help make purchase decisions, scanning for information (49%) to actually buy in-app virtual goods or in-store products/services (29%).

APP ENGAGEMENT

Even when your tool effectively responds to customers needs (let's say a purchase), it could be abandoned after few sessions. 38% of users are likely to download an App when it's required to complete an action, but 50% of those will uninstall it right after action is performed.

More, 25% of installed Apps are never used because of a sudden loss of interest. There's a huge opportunity here, if you know how to maintain engagement: discounts, bonus contents, exclusive features. Only incentives will foster customer engagement and prompt renewed usage.

A customer-facing App is critical if you want to reach - and exceed - your business goals in an era defined by mobile technology.

If you just throw a badly-shaped application to the stores you will only prepare the ground for inevitable failure. Maximize your presence and keep customers engaged: the App is only a piece of the customer journey, not the final purpose of your marketing strategy.

Mobile & The Retail Experience



Is mobile killing the physical store? If you are a retail brand, right now you are probably trying to find an answer to the most critical question of our times: *"How can I overcome the challenge of thousands of digital competitors in a global arena?"*

Mobile shopping is not just a trend that we might or might not see in the near future. It is a reality that customers live every single day. Retailers must embrace this reality as soon as possible. The smartphone, however, does not inevitably have to be an enemy: it can

help you to connect the online experience with the physical store.

The mobile shift has changed our life as human beings and is constantly redefining our behaviors as customers. Whether you are a small local shop or a big company competing against the whole world, you need to acknowledge this (r)evolution and start from there to renew your digital strategy.

Under the pressure of the Internet (before) and mobile devices (after), there is no doubt that the retail industry is undergoing its deepest transformation, somehow stuck between the fall of traditional certainties and the urge to replace them with innovative approaches.

At the core of the discussion, we find the new role of customers (always connected, empowered and extremely demanding), and the influence of technology in reshaping the connection between organizations and people. For their nature, retail businesses are in the forefront in this change.

We are at the dawn of what Gartner has called "Digital Commerce": it generates from the combination of online and offline transactions; it involves both mobile and traditional relationships, and it might end up in a digital or in-store purchase.

What is really vital is the value you create for customers during the stages of the transaction, where 'value' is built through different elements: the customer

experience, the ease of use, the quality of the retail journey in addition to the traditional price and quality of the product.

The smartphone is not the only technology that has (or will soon have) a huge effect on the retail customer experience. We have virtual and augmented reality, beacons and geo-fencing, the Internet of Things, wearable technology, machine learning, Artificial Intelligence, and smart data platforms just to cite a few.

What makes smartphones so important is that they can act as a connector for all the technologies above, and - even more important - they never leave us alone.

According to Google:

- 68 percent of users say they check their phone within 15 minutes of waking up in the morning;
- 87 percent of millennials always have their smartphone at their side, day and night;
- On average, we check our phones 150 times a day (177 minutes per day).

We do not simply use the smartphone and then put it back on the bedside. We live in connectivity; we are online 24/7. If this influences our daily life, it also revolutionizes our behaviors as customers. And, as a consequence, the business strategy of retailers.

Few more statistics confirm that mobile devices beat the rhythm of our entire existence, and reshape the shopping experience:

- 60 percent of customers use a smartphone while they visit a store;
- 50 percent of customers use a smartphone on their way to the shop;
- 46 percent of customers use a smartphone to look up prices online before going to the store;
- 82 percent of customers say they consult the phone on purchases they are about to make in a store;
- 91 percent of customers turn to their phones for ideas in the middle of a task.

All in all, more than half users have discovered a new company or product when conducting a search on their smartphones. You need to be there when it matters most: since customers can buy using mobile, showing up will ultimately get your brand to be chosen, not just seen.

Where is retail going?

This is the tough question: surrounded and shaken by new technologies, how will retail evolve? It is evident that in-store purchases won't disappear. Despite the fact that online and mobile shopping keep growing every year at a faster pace, it's still brick-and-mortar retail that dominates customer spending all over the world.

Smartphone penetration rates increase, E-Commerce firms spread and evolve, but people still love to walk and wander into a physical store. What makes it so special? Not the product itself, nor the price.

When competitors with better prices and a broader range of products are just a click away, the retail customer experience becomes the key differentiator for brands.

It's much more easy to click on a 'buy' button on a smartphone, and for traditional brick-and-mortars the only answer is to evolve into something less traditional.

Whatever technology solution you implement, your only chance to survive is to offer truly amazing and unique experiences.

Google recently sent out a report, confirming that the smartphone shopping has reached a new remarkable milestone in 2015: Mobile shopping-related searches increased 120 percent in one year. What does this growth mean? It could be the sign that people want to buy, in the exact moment that their needs or desires show up.

This may seem the end for physical stores. If you combine the previous trend with another percentage, however, the real truth comes out: 47 percent of customers use a smartphone to search for local information. The 'Near Me' searches have grown 2x in the past year alone.

"Our digital lives connect us to our physical world", to say it with Google. The traditional shopping experience is not destined to disappear anytime soon, as mobile plays a critical role in driving people to the store.

As a business, you just need to recognize the importance of the micro moments, and match your contents with signals of intent and context. In other words, you need to understand how to engage and monetize digital customers, delivering meaningful experiences in every kind of moment of truth (crucially, I-want-to-buy).

In the same report, Google has selected five ways to engage customers in these critical moments, using mobile to connect the customer to the store (online and offline).

MOBILE AS FRONT DOOR TO THE STORE

"Smartphone shopping has created a new front door to the store." The retail giant Target started to use this phrase after learning that three-fourth of its guests start their shopping journey on mobile, and that one-third of guests who click on a mobile search ad take a trip to a Target store.

An optimized mobile experience (website, App, e-commerce) can open huge opportunities for brick-and-mortars.

CUSTOMERS WANT LOCAL INFORMATION

Mobile devices enable different approaches to old problems. Local information, for example. As said, we have seen a twofold increase in local searches last year.

Customers want local info, and they want them quick: more than one-third are in a hurry searching for local

business on their smartphone. If you can engage them, you will have enormous benefits: 50 percent of those customers visit a store within a day.

LOCAL INVENTORY ADS DRIVE CUSTOMERS

Recent researches found that online ads that show local inventory have become an important driver of in-store traffic. One in four people who avoid stores say it is because they do not know if a product is in stock.

Customers do not want to waste their time looking for unavailable products. Showing them that you have that product in stock is critical, whether you have an e-store or not.

SMARTPHONE AS IN-STORE ADVISOR

Even when they enter the store, it does not mean that customers are willing to make a purchase. What happens while they are there will ultimately decide whether they will take action or not.

And, again, the smartphone becomes critical, this time as in-store research advisor. Be careful: Nearly one in four shoppers say they have changed their minds while in a checkout line after looking up details on a smartphone.

OMNI-CHANNEL CUSTOMERS SPEND MORE

Customers that use the smartphone as shopping companion spend more - also in store - compared with

those that only use one channel.

If you are still skeptical about the importance of an omni-channel strategy (mobile first), think again:

Customers who shop both online and off with a specific retailer buy 250 percent more on average (Mastercard);

Omni-channel shoppers are 8x more valuable than those who shop in a single channel (Macy's).

How To Win With Mobile Marketing



Everyone wants to build the next Snapchat, Uber, or Angry Birds. Developers usually assume that their App can become the next big thing because it is a solid product, with a clear value proposition and the aim to improve customer's life. However, this is just the beginning.

Let's face it, you are not alone: there are now more than 2 million mobile Apps available for Android, and more than 1.5 million in the Apple Store.

What makes a digital tool successful is not the fact that it has been created. It is how you can plan and execute a mobile marketing strategy to engage and monetize customers.

The focus on marketing does not mean that a good development and the inner value of a mobile application are not important.

If your product is defective, delivers a bad user experience and has a dull design, you will never stand out from the crowd. Therefore, you are doomed.

At the same time, if you do not build a strong 'reason why' and a distinctive essence, you would never answer the most critical questions of the mobile era.

"Why should I care to download and use your App?"

"What makes it different from the thousands of alternatives out there?"

We see a huge opportunity: In 2017, downloads will hit 108 billion. We also see a huge threat: How can you be sure that you will survive the competition?

A thoughtful mobile strategy has four pieces:

- **A strong value** - the reason why people should download and use your App.
- **A strong development path** - any release is the tipping point for the next one.
- **A continuous marketing plan** - the distribution process

does not end after the release.

- **A specific monetization plan** - the revenue model that will sustain your efforts.

They all seem reasonable pieces, and yet only a small percentage of businesses understand how effectively mobile Apps could be used to promote the brand and connect with customers.

The results: Apps with no value; Apps that never get an update; money spent without a marketing plan; developers that have no clue how to monetize their customers.

If you do not have all the pieces in place from day one, you are destined to limp along. The innovation drives fast, and the Apps as we know them now are rapidly evolving into something more complex, integrated and smart.

Chatbots are the main trend now, but they only represent one of the possible evolutionary paths, together with the digital signage and the Internet of Things.

In this ever-changing scenario, do not make the mistake to cling to old beliefs. Downloads, for instance. We do not really need to remember that mobile marketing is not a matter of downloads, but too many brands still focus on the number of downloads to determine the success of their strategy.

This is the result of a misconception born and grown when mobile development was still for the few, and there was not so much competition around.

In today's crowded stores, downloads might be an eye-catching vanity KPI but they rarely tell too much about the destiny of your precious property.

Many important companies have learned the truth the hard way. Even when your App gets downloaded, it does not mean you are hitting the target by delivering a great customer experience.

In fact:

- The average user has 36 Apps installed;
- Only 26% of Apps are used daily;
- 25% of Apps are never used;
- 65% of customers stop using an App within three months.

These numbers mean that you need other key performance indicators to be certain that your strategy is ultimately working. They also tell the importance of an 'app+ approach "*to maximize their potential to win, serve, and retain their customers in their mobile moments.*" (Forrester)

Sure, there are lots of reasons why even good Apps fail to deliver results (ROI, revenues, engagement), but one big reason is the lack of effective marketing. So, how do you create a strategy that puts all the pieces together?

These are five core elements you should never forget.

CUSTOMER NEEDS

If you build an App and you do not know what customers want, you will miss the most critical part. One-fits-all strategies do not work with mobile marketing.

People determine the way brands should address them and reach them, with their habits and behaviors. Start with a question: "*What do my mobile customers need?*"

LAUNCH PLANNING

Mobile marketing is a long-term effort. This is even more true when you are planning the launch of your mobile application. One does not simply publish and wait for miracles.

You need to strategize your launch months before the day it actually goes live. Establish your tone of voice, priorities and messaging. The first impression matters.

APP STORE OPTIMIZATION

What is the point of developing a great tool if nobody can find it? We all understand the importance of search engine optimization to rank higher with online contents.

With more than 4 million Apps available, we also need to familiarize with store optimization, to gain low-cost visibility, increase the quality of your store page and

boost conversions.

USER ACQUISITION

The development is done, your App is online, and your page is well optimized. You have done a good job, but the process is not over yet. Is anyone downloading and using it? Your marketing effort must focus now on customer acquisition.

What channels will you exploit to get customers?

Advertising, promotional materials, social media, public relations, community management?

USAGE INCENTIVES

Distribution and promotion are critical to boosting usage. Usage on its part is essential to retaining users, keeping your brand top of mind, and making your App profitable.

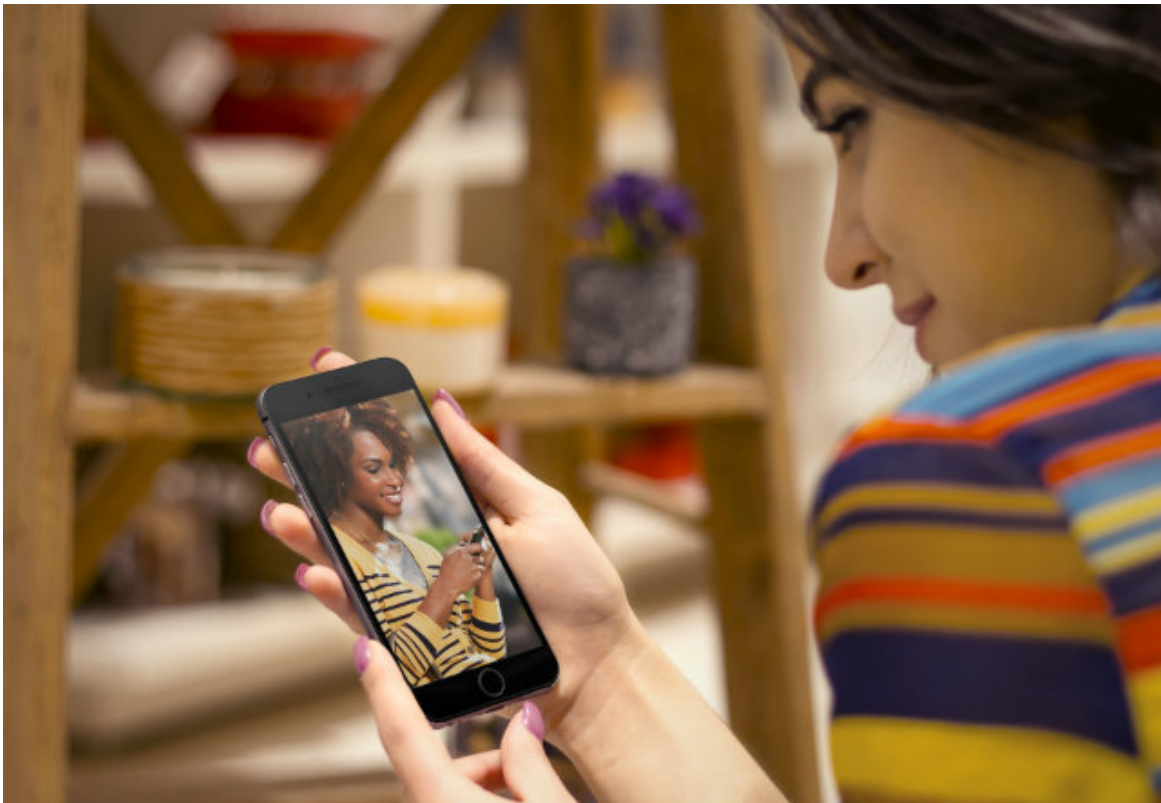
You need to encourage social shares and set incentives to ensure that users do not forget the App: discounts and offers, mobile-only rewards, exclusive events, gamification, advanced loyalty dynamics.

With mobile device sales steadily growing all over the world, you are facing a unique opportunity to reach your customers and engage with them with meaningful experiences in every moment of truth.

By focusing on mobile marketing alongside development, you can create a product that not only

makes life easier for customers but also makes a profit for your company.

Measure The Success of Your Mobile Strategy



The mobile market has reached 36.7 billion dollars in revenues by the end of 2015. With App stores rapidly becoming crowded, how can you measure the success of your efforts?

Mobile development is not just a matter of downloads anymore. You need more specific KPIs to understand what's going on.

We say it again, downloads are the first and most eye-catching key performance metric any company will analyze. They tell you how many people have chosen your brand and whether or not your launch strategy was really effective.

Like all other marketing-related fields, though, a single number means nothing without context.

Many years ago, when digital markets were much less competitive, getting your App installed could be considered a great accomplishment in itself.

Today, this is just the first step of the mobile customer journey, and it does not guarantee success in the long term. Too many users install Apps that immediately fall by the wayside, forgotten and neglected.

A business development plan for the Age of the Customer can't do without a **customer-facing App**, to bridge the online and mobile experiences.

That said, the number of downloads does not indicate success.

Yet, marketers often still focus their attention on this vanity KPI, spending their budget in huge one-shot advertising campaigns (even worse on traditional media) rather than planning a long-term customer engagement strategy.

Considered in a broader digital marketing perspective, a well-designed App is a unique opportunity to add value

to your strategy and instill the idea of a cutting edge brand, ultimately unlocking the power of a truly amazing digital customer experience.

While a mobile-friendly website is still considered the most important business card, in many respects it is not the top priority anymore. Apps now account for 86% of the time spent on mobile devices, replacing web browsers as the primary door to access the Internet.

In a world where the smartphone is considered by digital customers (and particularly millennials) an extension of their body, an application should not be treated as a simple porting of the official website.

Your brand will be in the hands of users practically 24/7; your products and services will be one tap away in the purchase moment. This is an opportunity you should not waste. To ensure success, you should bring something fresh and exciting to the table, enhancing the mobile customer experience and stimulate emotional connection with the brand.

With the launch of other disruptive mobile devices (i.e. the smartwatch, with **Apple Watch** and **Android Wear** already battling), and the connectivity of cars, objects, houses and stores, new products will invade big and small digital screens.

This trend forces developers and marketers to adapt their output to the needs of tech-savvy customers. The number of downloads, needless to say, is totally

inadequate when considered as the only KPI to measure engagement and loyalty.

To optimize the reach of your App, you need more specific and dedicated KPIs. Every tool is different, and there is not a 'one fits all' solution, a set of **key performance indicators** working with no distinctions.

You need to pick the ones that fit your strategic vision. The ones that fit your business goals. And measure them in a given period of time.

ACTIVE USERS

To download an App (particularly when it's free) is the easiest thing in the world. What happens next is really critical: how many of those that have installed actually use it? Monthly and daily active users tell you the truth about how much the world loves your product.

VISIT FREQUENCY

How many times the users open the App and interact with your contents? The fact that they have it installed in their smartphone is not important if they just open it once and for all. Hold the visit frequency in check, and bear in mind that the usage during the first week is a plausible signal of what will happen in the future.

SESSION TIME

The length of a single session is a performance indicator that you should always consider, in correlation with the

number of active users in a given time and the depth of visit. This is even more true for gaming Apps or a specific section dedicated to the games or loyalty / gamification dynamics.

DEPTH OF VISIT

This is a critical signal of engagement, a metric that also highlights the quality of the user experience. The depth of visit is the number of screens or pages visited in one session. This information tells how engaging and useful is your content; how seamless and smooth is the experience you actually deliver.

CONVERSIONS

When the primary objective of your strategy is to sell or convert (i.e. retail, fashion branded App and e-commerce), you should measure conversions in a given time. A conversion can be a purchase, a subscription or registration, depending on who you are. But remember that lifetime value is always more important than one-shot sales.

REVENUE PER USER

The potential of a loyal user base is pictured by a metric too often overlooked: revenue per user. This number indicates the overall value of an individual to your business. This value includes the in-app purchases (the Holy Grail of mobile marketing these days), but also the spending across all other digital channels.

SOCIAL SHARES

If your App is content oriented, in-app purchases are not the only KPI you might want to monitor. Mobile customers, more often than not, connect the App they install with their social media account. Social shares indicate interest in the content you deliver, and are perfect to increase word-of-mouth and build a trustful community.

RETENTION RATE

When you plan a loyalty strategy, one sale is nothing compared to repeat sales. Customer retention is cheaper than acquisition but harder to achieve. In a mobile market where a roughly 65% of users stop using an App no more than three months after install, retention rate in a given time is perfect to tell you how much your customers are engaged.

ACQUISITION COST

To know what's the cost of customer acquisition, you need to understand where existing users found you. App stores, in fact, are just one of many channels to promote your product. Search engine advertising, organic search, in-app referrals or social networks: different tools with different costs. This metric shows you the most efficient way to reach your potential audience.

USER EXPERIENCE

You can have the hottest tool in the whole Internet but

it's customer happiness that ultimately proclaims your success. And happiness is strictly connected with the user experience. Defective UI, bugs and crashes keep users away. Always check reviews and ratings to understand what customers think and what needs a fine tuning.

Success is marked by having loyal users that are regularly engaging with the App: spending their time to visit the different sections, converting, making purchases, playing with it.

In the race to mobile engagement, the install is only the opening sprint. And the App is only one step in the customer journey. Find the right partner and develop a long-term omni-channel customer experience strategy. Only then the kingdom of mobile heaven will be yours.



Download the free DCX 7-Steps Checklist by Neosperience with requirements for a successful digital transformation.

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