

Mobile: More than just a buzzword for 2013



By [Ronald Bach](#)

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In the past, almost none of the marketing budget that made its way to digital marketing was earmarked for mobile marketing initiatives.

Looking at how the local marketing game has evolved during the past year, it's increasingly safe to say that brands have finally realised the only ticket to the revolution will be delivered via mobile.

Whereas data recently released by US digital analysts eMarketer showed that consumers in the US spend double the amount of time accessing the web via desktop PCs vs mobile devices, South Africa and other developing nations are resolutely mobile first.

But we live in a world of often meaningless marketing buzzwords. Social media guru anyone? While mobile is big, one size does not fit all and marketers and brand managers need to understand how to market to their customers using mobile platforms properly.

Mobile is king

Sadly, while brands now know mobile is king, many are still not using the technology to the best advantage of their bottom line.

In South Africa, smartphone penetration figures are on an upward trajectory. According to local internet analysts, World Wide Worx, of the about 9.5 million smartphones owned in the country, 4% are iPhones, 8% Androids, 40% Nokias, and 48% BlackBerry devices.

But remember that these are only looking at smartphones, which despite all the media attention lavished upon them, only make up 20% of the mobile phones available in South Africa.

That's a whopping 80% of the possible market brands can communicate with using mobile technology, which is frequently ignored for the simple reason that the people who work in agencies developing mobile marketing campaigns and products aren't doing their research properly and are effectively only designing for people like them.

They may lack the flash and pizzazz associated with smartphones, but feature phones are where the mass South African market is to be found when you're talking not only mobile marketing, but digital marketing.

Mobile will get bigger

With these stats in hand, it is perplexing that a brand, as often happens, will first launch an iPhone app - which only caters to 4% of 20% of the entire mobile market - yet not even consider creating a mobile-site for feature phone users, 80% of their prospective audience.

So what can be predicted for 2013 then?

Mobile will continue to get bigger.

However, just as demands of proving real ROI are now placed on social media marketing, mobile is also headed in that direction.

In 2013, with the initial excitement of this 'new' opportunity calming down, brands and brands managers will demand more of their marketers when it comes to mobile.

Yes, the opportunities brought forth by mobile are numerous and brands are aware of them, but what brands want at the end of day is real return on investment.

2013 will be the year mobile will have to prove what it adds to the bottom line.

ABOUT RONALD BACH

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