

# Three vital lessons for mobile marketers

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Over five years of developing and delivering a platform that enables retailers, brands, agencies, banks, mobile apps and mobile wallets to work together to make mobile marketing and mobile transacting easy, we have discovered three important lessons for mobile marketing.



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## **1. *Implement, measure, adapt, repeat***

Whatever campaign a retailer embarks on - whether it is implementing a loyalty programme, collaborating with a brand for a special promotion or launching a series of special offers - the ultimate point is to deliver more sales at the till.

Mobile brings something new, as it is now possible to track the sales impact of every campaign in fine detail, from first touch to till.

This is a big deal. It has always been possible to check the sales impact the next day after a new TV ad airs but now one can do that at the level of the individual customer. Which deals do they go for? What is the lag between getting the voucher and completing the sale? What messages are most effective at triggering impulse buys? What is the real impact of in-store media? One can measure it all.

Then one needs to take it one step further, change what one is doing based on what the numbers are telling one. Do more of what works and try something different to what is not working. Check the numbers again and tweak again. Do this until one is an expert at fine-tuning one's campaigns on the fly.

## **2. *Play to one's strengths***

Retailers are not all technology experts but fortunately, they do not have to be - that is what technology suppliers are for. What retailers are experts at, the one thing they seem to do better than anybody else, is understanding their customers.

That customer insight, not knowledge of technology, is what drives a successful mobile marketing campaign. To take just one example, during 2013 we saw mass-market retailers such as Shoprite Checkers starting to offer prepaid airtime as loyalty rewards. We think this is a stroke of genius. R2 or R5 of airtime means nothing to the average reader of a business magazine, who is probably on a post-paid contract anyway - but to the average South African, it is a real reward.

A retailer needs the right technology platform in place to enable campaigns like this, of course - but once that is done, the possibilities are limited only by one's imagination.

### ***3. Look for inspiration in the right places***

We have read many white papers in the past few years and a lot of research reports and articles full of advice on how to do mobile marketing. Most of them have one thing in common: They are not much help in a South African or African context. The reality of North America, Europe and other developed-economy markets is near-universal smartphone penetration, relatively high disposable incomes and a population that is so media-saturated there is a constant arms race to see who can produce the biggest Next Big Thing.

Our local reality is very different. Smartphone penetration may be growing rapidly, but it will continue to be a minority for the next couple of years at least. Disposable incomes are so low that people will go out of their way for R2 of airtime and people are more media starved than media saturated.

A different landscape calls for a different strategy - and those who win are going to be those who understand this best.

## **ABOUT BEVAN DUCASSE**

After completing his Financial Analysis studies at Stellenbosch University, Bevan joined UCS solutions as a junior consultant. He went on to work at a firm in the mobile payment industry, and slowly started to connect the dots between business, retail and mobile systems and seeing how the three could work seamlessly together.

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