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How mobile technology is changing the in-store customer experience

BY MARKETING ON 5 NOVEMBER 2014

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As advertising to the masses changes rapidly, out-of-home advertisers are exploring new ways to target audiences. Kirsty Dollisson, GM at TorchMedia, discusses how mobile technology is being used to engage customers in-store.



To remain relevant and visible to the masses, brands have to constantly re-engineer themselves by evolving their marketing strategy. These days, emerging technologies and advertising platforms have made innovation in marketing far more important. For out-of-home (OOH) advertisers operating within traditional media, such as billboards and posters, the challenge is how they can best utilise new technologies alongside these traditional avenues to enhance the experience for consumers.

Mobile technology, as we witnessed with the implementation of QR code technology and NFC, is a great platform for OOH advertisers to explore. Used correctly, mobile can significantly increase interaction and shopper engagement in-store. It represents a key point of entry for OOH advertisers and an opportunity to enhance their ads and broaden their reach.

One area within mobile technology that OOH advertisers in Australia will be able to greatly benefit from is the delivery of automatic communications to shoppers in the form of push notifications to their smartphones. This type of targeted advertising is already being tested by brands and implemented in certain outlets in the US but it's too early to draw quantifiable conclusions.

However, initial feedback indicates it can be beneficial to retailers and brands in two ways:

Firstly, it has the obvious ability to message consumers while they're in store, notifying them of products, any sales or deals relevant to them, or compare prices of multiple products.

Secondly, and arguably more importantly, it will prove to be a great way to collect vital data to help them identify trends and consumer patterns.

Both retailers and brands can use this information to better segment their audiences and tailor their advertising accordingly, increasing the effectiveness of their campaigns. For the customer, this means a shift in their in-store experience as brands place a stronger emphasis on mobile technology and retailers adopt new solutions to supplement their in-store offerings.

However, brands and retailers will need to proceed with caution in the implementation of such technology. If they opt to use mobile to supplement their in-store offering, they must focus on addressing the consumer's needs and preferences. As such, making the application easy to use and clearly explaining how consumers will benefit from it is essential. Furthermore, brands will benefit from only using mobile technology when they can effectively offer something unique to the shopper's experience, otherwise they risk becoming another spam outlet.

With the technology still in its infancy, it's exciting to see where OOH will progress to, with continued innovation. However, one thing's for sure – as more advances in technology are realised and consumers become more partial to personalised advertising, the mobile platform will redefine the shopping experience.