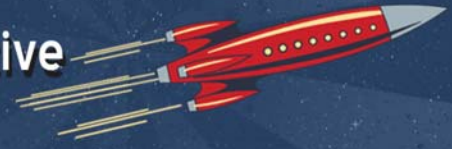


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# FAQ's about Mobile Marketing for Tourism

## Why do I need a mobile site or app?

Any guess as to what the most common item left behind in a hotel room is? According to hotels, it's a cell phone charger. No self respecting mobile phone owner would dream of going on vacation without it.

Simply put, you need a mobile presence because it's how your current and next generation of visitors are searching for and digesting information. The trend is clear that the world is becoming a more mobile environment. Mobile devices like the iPad are starting to replace desktop PCs. Internet search is increasingly being carried out on mobile devices and consumers are using their mobile devices in conjunction with other traditional advertising to make purchasing decisions.

The current rate of growth of the web enabled mobile market is by far exceeding the growth of the mobile phone's early adoption. On average, visits to our client's web sites by mobile devices have increased 400% faster than visits by desktop computers between August 2010 and August 2011. And that statistic includes clients that do not have any mobile presence. Regardless of whether your destination is ready or not, mobile users are beating a path to your door.

If you enjoy numbers, these should be convincing:

- 45% of all Americans are expected to be using smart phones by the end of 2011 (that's nearly half of your destinations visitors).
- Mobile searches are predicted to outnumber desktop searches by 2013
- It only took the iPad 28 days to reach 1Million units sold. It took the Blackberry 300+ days and the original iPod 365+.
- Smartphone sales are set to pass computers in 2012. <sup>2</sup>
- By 2013 mobile phones will overtake PCs as the most common Internet access device worldwide. <sup>2</sup>
- 53% of mobile users will use their mobile device to find more information about something advertised in another media channel (i.e. computer, radio, tv, newspaper, billboards). <sup>4</sup>

## Is my destination too small to need a mobile presence?

No.

Why? If you have been in the travel and tourism industry for more than 12 years you may remember asking yourself a similar question in 1999 about your need for a web site. Even if you turned down the first request to entertain a web site as part of your marketing plan, it probably didn't take you long to realize you were falling behind the times and missing opportunities to engage your visitors.

We are in a similar era today. It isn't a matter of if you need a mobile presence but how far behind are you willing to let yourself fall? Even the smallest destinations will need to find some way to establish at least a basic mobile presence, even if it means offering fewer features and options than your competitors. The reality is that mobile

web marketing is different than the web marketing you have probably just become comfortable with. There will be a learning curve but the longer you delay the inevitable, the harder it will be to regain the missed opportunities.

### **How will my destination benefit from having a mobile presence?**

Mobile marketing is becoming more of a necessity than an added benefit to your Internet marketing plan. However there are some differences in mobile marketing and mobile user behavior that offer benefits over other marketing channels.

First and foremost, the mobile web is where your visitors are and therefore where you need to be in order to meet your visitor's expectations. Although you will find all age groups online using mobile web devices, your next generations of visitors have never known a world without the Internet, mobile phones, and social media.

Beyond the obvious, however, the more intimate and personal nature of mobile web usage provides opportunities for increased brand loyalty and more personal and deeper engagement with your customers. By providing more personalized content to your visitors, you will find they are more willing to give up some of their personal information in exchange for location-based offers and discounts.

### **Can I afford to wait to get started with mobile marketing?**

No.

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### **How can a mobile presence generate more visitors to my destination?**

Travel research and online booking on mobile devices is increasing and will continue to increase as the use of mobile devices increases exponentially over the next 5 years.

Taking advantage of the opportunities to engage your visitors on a much deeper and more personal level can lead to an increased conversion of mobile web visitors into visits to your destination.

### **How many of my destination visitors have smartphones?**

It is difficult to measure how many visitors to a particular physical location are using Smartphones but 45% of all Americans are expected to be using smart phones by the end of 2011 (that's nearly half of your destinations visitors).

## What are my destination visitors using their mobile devices for?

In a 2011 survey by GSM Arena that asked readers what they use their mobile phones for, the top responses included:

- Alarm clock
- Weather
- Accessing web content
- GPS and Digital Maps
- Taking photos
- Social Media

Apparently people are using their phones to wake up, check the weather, search the web for something fun to do nearby, get directions, take some photos, and then post them on Facebook to prove to their friends that they are having a good time.

With regards to destination marketing, mobile users are primarily using their smartphones to interact with your destination once they arrive. While your desktop web site needs to inspire and motivate visitors into becoming a customer, your mobile web presence needs to primarily serve your visitors once they are physically at your destination.

Your visitors will use your mobile web site or app as a virtual tour guide, for looking up numbers and addresses of attractions, restaurants, and places they want to visit, for GPS, and for receiving location-based offers for discounts and special deals.

## Are travelers researching and booking vacations using mobile devices yet?

Travel research and online booking on mobile devices is increasing and will continue to increase as the use of mobile devices increases exponentially over the next 5 years.

In a 2011 survey, 27% of respondents reported that they were very/extremely comfortable with making travel purchases via mobile.<sup>4</sup>

It is estimated that by 2012, 34% of Smartphone users and 31% of mobile internet users in the US will research travel via mobile. At the same time, 18% of Smartphone users and 16% of mobile internet users will book travel the same way.

## My ideal customer is 40+ years old. Isn't mobile primarily for a younger demographic?

Mobile apps are popular across all age groups. 40% of U.S. adults 18-34 years old use mobile apps, making this age the largest group of adopters among adults in the U.S. Mobile apps are also popular with U.S. adults ages 35-44 and 45-54. 21% of the people in both of these age groups use mobile apps. While 57% of men use apps, 43% of women do as well.<sup>1</sup>

## How should I get started in mobile marketing?

If you do not yet have any mobile web presence, a basic mobile web site is a good place to start. But a mobile web site shouldn't be a simplified copy of your main web site. It should be designed for the needs of visitors when they are physically at your destination.

At a minimum, a mobile web site should enable your visitors to use it as a virtual tour guide, for looking up numbers and addresses of attractions, restaurants, and places they want to visit, for GPS, and for receiving location-based offers for discounts and special deals.

## How should I use my mobile presence to engage my destination visitors?

63% of U.S. adults prefer to sign up—or opt in—to receive deals, information, and newsletters from marketers through mobile apps. In contrast, only 38% are receptive to commercials or video ads in mobile apps (examples of such ads include those offered by Apple iAds).<sup>1</sup>

Consumers want to sign up for deals, information, and newsletters from brands that they like via mobile apps. They also deem commercial and video to be disruptive to their mobile app usage. To best utilize these insights, you should offer relevant and compelling messages to consumers via your mobile web site and apps.<sup>1</sup>

## How much should I budget for a mobile presence?

Although there is no simple dollar figure answer to this question, an approach would be to start committing a percentage of your marketing budget towards mobile and increasing that amount as you experience a return on your investment.

Mobile web visits are increasing exponentially in 2011. Visits to our client's web sites by mobile devices have increased 400% faster than the increase in visits by desktop computers in the last 12 months. Eventually this will level out. There will probably be a minimum dollar amount required to establish even a basic mobile web site. If 30% of visits to your web site are using mobile devices you may want to consider diverting 30% of your online marketing budget towards mobile.

What is clear is that you cannot wait to get started.

## What is the difference between a mobile web site and a mobile app and which one should I have?

A mobile web site is viewable on any Smartphone using a mobile web browser and requires no special software or download to view it. It is the most cost effective way to reach the widest possible audience of mobile web users and is independent of the phone platform. You must have wireless or mobile Internet access in order to view a mobile web site which means it may not be viewable in all areas of your destination. There is typically never a cost to access a mobile web site.

A mobile app is a software program that must be downloaded and installed on the Smartphone from one of the online app stores like iTunes or the Android Market. The app may be free or a paid app depending on the provider. Mobile Apps typically provide at least some functionality without requiring a Wi-Fi or mobile signal although most take advantage of the Internet to provide content updates or other communication features. Mobile apps have the

added benefit of being able to work directly with other phone apps and features like the phone, GPS, mapping, or a contacts database. Mobile web sites do not have access to these functions. Custom mobile apps are typically more expensive to create than a mobile web site.

## **Should I charge for my mobile app?**

More iPhone apps than not are paid apps. 67% of the 38,606 mobile apps in the iPhone Store are paid applications. However, 95% of the U.S. adult population prefers free apps. Even affluent consumers prefer free apps – 96% of people that have a household income of \$75K plus prefer free apps.

Given that consumers prefer free apps and the costs associated with developing a custom app, publishers typically have to depend on ad revenue to monetize their apps. These findings highlight the importance of effective mobile app advertising.<sup>1</sup>

If you are considering charging for your app, it is important to know that both Apple and Google retain 30% of revenue generated through their respective app stores.

## **How will people find my mobile web site or app?**

The easiest way for people to find your mobile web site is through automatic redirection when visitors come to your website using a mobile device. Your web site can be setup to detect mobile visitors and automatically redirect them to your mobile site. This method works reliably for most, if not all, Smartphones.

Google has a separate index for mobile websites so it is critical that you setup a separate mobile sitemap. Make sure your mobile website is optimized for organic search and is being properly indexed in their servers.

QR (quick response) codes are another way to direct people to your mobile website, mobile landing pages, and mobile promotions. QR codes have been successfully used on billboards, signs, storefronts, direct mail pieces, business cards, advertisements, and any other place you can put a printed or digital graphic.

Placing links on your main website to an informational page about your mobile site and/or your mobile app will also make your visitors aware of your mobile presence. Wherever appropriate you should provide links to the app store where your mobile app can be downloaded.

Traditional PR should not be overlooked as another viable resource for getting the word out about your mobile site or app. Getting local buy in from local attractions, lodging owners, restaurants, etc., is a good way to generate some buzz and word of mouth referrals.

## **How can I measure the effectiveness of my mobile web site or mobile app?**

If you are not concerned with traditional mobile phones, which are on the decline and will account for less than half the mobile market at the end of 2011, then you can use the same program you are probably already using to measure your desktop site, Google Analytics.

All Smartphones that use a mobile web browser are compatible with Google Analytics. Google also has a separate program called Google Analytics of Mobile for measuring usage of mobile apps for Smartphones.

Those are both free options. There are other vendors that offer paid measurement services as well. A Google search for “mobile analytics” will produce 289 Million results on the subject.

If you are heavily involved in mobile marketing and need to track the effectiveness of traditional mobile phone users you will need additional software.

## **How do I manage the content of my mobile site or app?**

Ideally you should be able to manage both your mobile and desktop content from a single CMS. Much of your database content will be shared between both your desktop and mobile website.

Mobile screens are small and therefore consideration must be given to the amount of content you deliver to a mobile device. Many sites provide condensed versions of content for mobile consumption. This may mean creating separate copies of your content for mobile.

There are stand-alone mobile CMS applications from many different providers. A Google search for “mobile website cms” will return 48M results.

If you plan on doing much marketing using QR codes you need to make sure the CMS makes that process easy to manage. Typically a unique QR code is used for each campaign.

## **What content should go in my mobile site or app?**

A mobile destination web site should support the needs of visitors when they are physically at the destination. That translates into making it easy to find:

- Addresses and contact information for attractions, lodging, dining, shopping, etc.
- Integrated mapping and GPS
- Local information – filtered by proximity to the mobile user while they are searching
- Location based special deals or coupons
- Weather
- Integration with social media sites
- Ability for visitors to sign-up for your special deals and newsletters

Within the next few years you should consider adding more content that satisfies travel research such as more in-depth content and video about your destination. Online booking for mobile devices is still new but should become more widespread in the next few years.

61% of consumers are interested in receiving location-based coupons and offers. <sup>4</sup>

## Can my mobile site simply be a miniature version of my main web site?

No. It is important to understand the differences in behavior between your desktop web site users and mobile users. The two groups have different goals and objectives when using the respective web site and therefore the two sites serve different purposes.

## What is augmented reality?

Augmented reality is the term used to describe combining or superimposing computer generated information on top of a real world view. The name certainly doesn't sound as cool and as promising as it just might turn out to be in the next few years. Apps are now available that allow you to point your Smartphone at a landscape which automatically superimposes information about what you are looking at on your phones screen. The Apps use a combination of your phone's camera, GPS, and internal compass.

Watch this video for a better visual explanation:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-A1l4Jn6EY&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-A1l4Jn6EY&feature=player_embedded)

## Are QR codes effective in online marketing?

Yes.

In a survey, 97% found mobile barcodes useful in some capacity, with only 3% finding them "not very useful" and 57% stated that they had used their mobile devices for scanning during the holiday season. Obtaining a discount or coupon was the most motivating factor in scanning a QR code.<sup>3</sup>

## Sources

<sup>1</sup> December 2010 Harris Interactive Survey: How Consumers Interact with Mobile App Advertising

<sup>2</sup> Merrill Lynch

<sup>3</sup> Scanlife Mobile Barcode Trend Report December 2010

<sup>4</sup> Future of Mobile Advertising from the Advertising Research Foundation 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention + Expo