

COLUMNS

Most mobile apps have no connective tissue to database marketing

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By **Josh Herman**

"I surround myself with the most talented people I can find."

You will hear that common axiom from successful CEOs of companies, small and large. And the reason that this strategy works for the successful CEO is because he knows that any question or impulse idea he comes up with, his direct-reports are talented and expert enough to know what information he will need to make a decision and take action.

It is that same impulse gratification that smartphones provide now to everyone with opposable thumbs and an unlimited data plan. "Let me check with my Droid staff and see if that's the best one to buy." Or "Let me see if my iPhone staff knows if this is going to be a good place to go."

Reaching for the mobile staff before decision-making is becoming the norm.

Bazaarvoice connected global consumers to more than 2.7 billion customer opinions, answers and stories over the course of Thanksgiving Week 2010, a 44 percent increase over 2009 and 128 percent up from 2008.

The on-command, in-store access to expertise and decision-making information is right there for today's Chief Everything Officer, but there is a catch. There are still some pretty sad limits to the talent and abilities of the CEO's staff due to smartphones, but dumb applications.

Imagine turning to your senior staff with a question only to have them respond, "And you are....?" or "Why is that important to you?"

Cell towers

The challenge for mobile marketers today is that most brands' mobile experience is not quite knowledgeable and talented enough to serve the CCEO, or the Consumer Chief Everything Officer. This is due, in large part, to the land rush to just get a darned application out there last year at all costs.

One of those costs has been the wide-scale development of mobile marketing Towers of Babel where the mobile application has no connective tissue to the database marketing infrastructure and intelligence for brands, small and large.

With all this in-store access to the digital democracy where friends and strangers get a vote in the decision-making process, the brand's voice is in the background if the information provided to the mobile device is not relevant to that individual customer.

The next stage in mobile marketing maturity is to connect mobile marketing engagement closer to the center of the

core target marketing infrastructure, whether it is in-application or out-of-application.

Ideally, the CCEO's in-store experience would include receiving the right product recommendation before he or she asks the question or turns to the Facebook universe for input. Go ask your database marketing executive how they can help give mobile a brain.

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