

How mobile marketing failed in 2011

 By [Vanessa Clark](#)

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Mobile marketing failures in 2011 were arguably less about campaigns going horribly wrong, and more about missed opportunity, too little integration of mobile into overall marketing tactics, and the need to be much more strategic about using mobile marketing.

Some of the areas mobile marketing has room for improvement in include:

1. Closing the loop with CRM

Mobile marketing is a great way to engage with customers at the point of sale when they have your product in their hands. From something as simple as an SMS to a shortcode to get a discount, to QR codes providing links to unique content, to the customer winning a prize for sharing a picture of them using the product, mobile marketing gives brands a chance to connect with their customers immediately, on the go and via a favoured device: their mobile phone.

Unfortunately all too often the very crucial next step doesn't happen. Companies seldom use the opportunity to further engage with these customers, either by mobile, or by other channels such as social media, email or even a voice call. This wastes an opportunity to build on a positive initial encounter between the brand and the customer, where the customer has already volunteered certain pieces of information.

2. Real, ongoing engagement via mobile

As well as being a useful stepping-stone to ongoing engagement on other channels, mobile needs to be seen as primary customer engagement channel especially for the many people for whom a mobile device is their only internet device. And even if it isn't, in some cases the mobile channel just makes more sense. For instance, towards the end of the year retailers will often send out discounts vouchers to say thanks to their loyal customers (and of course to encourage customers to spend money with them during the holiday season).

It's one thing to email a statement to a customer, but it makes no sense to email a voucher to a customer, hope the customer hasn't already gone on holiday and actually receives it in time, and then expect the customer to print it out (especially when the you've just sold them the idea of email statements as being environmentally friendly) and remember to take it along to the shops with them. Far better to send a mobile voucher that can be redeemed via the mobile phone - a device that the customer will definitely be checking all through the holidays and will definitely have with them when doing their shopping.

Likewise physically posting reward vouchers is problematic: it's costly, not very green, you risk the customer only receiving the voucher after the expiry date.

3. Clever use of new technology

QR codes, augmented reality and location-based mobile technology have been derided as a waste of time in some quarters. It can also be argued though that we just haven't seen these technologies being used in compelling ways that capture people's imaginations and get them talking about it. Nine times out of ten, the cleverest use of a technology is also the simplest. Hopefully in 2012 we'll see some interesting uses for QR codes, AR and LBS.

4. Spam

Unscrupulous and possibly sometimes just careless companies risk turning people off mobile marketing by spamming them. Email spam is one thing, but SMS and other types of mobile spam are so much more invasive, taking place on such a personal device people carry with them 24/7. For the ongoing success of the medium, opt-in needs to be the cornerstone of all mobile communication.

ABOUT VANESSA CLARK

Hi! I'm a freelance journalist, copywriter and editor based in Cape Town, South Africa. I write as a journalist and for corporates and agencies. My specialties are business-to-business and technology writing. I like unpacking complex ideas so they are more easily understood - especially when it involves innovation taking place in South Africa, and the rest of Africa.

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