

M-commerce is changing how retailers engage with its customers



By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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The retail industry has witnessed a remarkable transformation in recent years due to the widespread adoption of mobile devices, leading to the emergence of m-commerce (mobile commerce). This paradigm shift has changed how companies engage with their customers and effectively drive sales.

Mobile devices can collect and provide retailers with huge amounts of information to personalise their messaging based on customer behaviour, preferences, and unique interests. This has resulted in mass marketing being phased out to an extent, as brands and businesses can now rely on much smarter advertising mechanisms.

According to Marcus Zackey, key account executive at Infobip, "we are now witnessing a global increase in conversational or chat commerce, which is essentially the intersection of messaging apps and shopping. Retailers need to understand how to play the two off against each other to allow for a more personalised customer experience."



Marcus Zackey, key account executive at Infobip. Image supplied

In the age of m-commerce, it is crucial for businesses to prioritise their advertising budget on this platform rather than only investing in web browser or billboard advertisements.

Ultimately, the goal is for brands to connect with consumers on their preferred platforms and engage with them where they want to be reached.

By optimising websites and apps, this allows for a quicker check out process for consumers and an overall better shopping experience - ultimately, enhancing the customer experience.



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"This optimisation enables consumers to effortlessly browse, compare, and purchase items from their mobile devices in the comfort of their own home, rather than having to travel to a physical store and battle queues or out-of-stock products," says Zackey.

Customer touchpoints

When asked how do communication strategies, such as push notifications, SMS, and in-app messages play a role in promoting retail products to mobile users, Zackey responded, "through m-commerce, consumers are now able to receive advertising material from their favourite retailers that is tailored to them – via SMSes or push notifications.

Essentially the promotional offers that one consumer receives will be different to the offers that another consumer receives – all based on customer preferences, and this is where the notion of hyper-personalisation comes in."



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When a customer shops with their favourite retailer, and swipes their loyalty card, that card gathers information relating to the customer's preferences and behaviours, and depending on their phone settings or browser settings (cookies), they will receive targeted advertising based on their purchase history or search history.

"Consumers can however, opt for non-specified tracking on their devices to enable the anonymisation of data, should they wish to not be targeted," Zackey adds.

So how data analytics and personalisation contribute to improving communication strategies in m-commerce?

"Hyper personalisation is gaining traction globally and becoming a prominent marketing tactic, allowing retailers to move away from mass broadcasting. Instead, marketing messages can be hyper personalised via a range of channels and with the aid of smart technology."

"All mainstream retailers have advertising strategies in place, but to ensure that these strategies are effective, companies need to stay top of mind for consumers. This means embracing new technologies that improve the customer experience and this translates to hyper personalised messaging over a mobile device," comments Zackey.

Retailers, are you keeping up with the evolution of consumer behaviour?





However, retailers should be aware that consumers are bombarded with hundreds of adverts on a daily basis, so it is important to find ways to keep a customer's attention and maintain their brand loyalty.

This is where personalisation comes in.

Based on user behaviour, messages can be triggered during very specific events, matching the right message to the user, on their channel of choice, at a time that suits them.

Overall retail experience

Effective social media engagement is helping retailers connect more with its customers and is therefore enhancing the overall retail experience.

Through social media engagement, marketers can personify a brand which allows for a sense of community to be felt by their consumers and a sense of connection. Based on this relationship, the target audience is more likely to feel aligned with the brand in question.

Retailers are now even using location-based marketing to target customers near their physical stores and drive in-store purchases.

Consider this: a consumer has a number of items in their online shopping basket, and they leave the check-out process without transacting. The consumer then comes into close physical proximity to that brick-and-mortar store - perhaps by driving past.

Based on that physical proximity, a retailer should be able to pick up the consumer's location and send them a notification via the app alerting them that they still have these specific items in their check-out basket and encourage them to visit the physical store to complete the purchase.

In the m-commerce era, retailers can benefit by effectively leveraging such communication strategies.



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"The benefits are two-fold," says Zackey, "from the retailer's point of view, shops can benefit from the increased spending by customers. Then, from a customer's point of view, if they are receiving targeted advertising from retailers that truly talks to their needs and interests, customers will appreciate the level of effort that goes into knowing them as a buyer."

Furthermore, mobile devices are also the ideal platform for retailers to provide aftersales service or support. However, retailers do need to acknowledge the contact preferences of their audiences, as some prefer to correspond with customer care via email, others over WhatsApp, or some via calling the contact centre.

with that being said, there are certainly key challenges that retailers face in implementing and executing effective communication strategies in the m-commerce landscape.

"Firstly, in the 4IR, we live in an information-overload era and consumers are constantly inundated with mobile, TV and radio marketing and promotions. So, it can be a battle for retailers to 'cut through the noise'."

"Secondly, recognising and abiding by data privacy regulations can be a challenge, and overmarketing can be a breach of the PoPI Act. Retailers, and companies in general, need to ensure they adhere to data regulations and remain compliant with local law - from a marketing, operational and legal perspective," concludes Zackey.

As consumers spend more and more time on their mobile devices, it's clear that the future of m-commerce is bright.

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