



Newsletter

March 2007

Mobile Money

Money makes the world go around, that's doubly true for the world of business. So this month we're concentrating on how you can make more money without spending a fortune in the process. Technology. It's not just a pretty word.

Plus we're talking about the mysteries of MCommerce. Never heard of it? Plunge into the last article to find out more. Then feel free to pitch into the debate.

Oh and don't miss the last article, you could win a great prize.

Have your say – what do you think about our newsletter and the topics we've raised? email us at news@rapide.co.uk

Or call our automated feedback line
0870 428 0436

This Month's Stories

- ❖ **Just one question - Page 2**
Harvard Business School know a thing or two about how business works. According to their research, there's only one question you need to ask your customers to measure how your business is doing. No more wading through oceans of statistics. (And you can win the book!)
- ❖ **Text Part Three - WAP - Page 3**
Wireless Application Protocol. It sounds horrid, but it's just a simple way to give customers access to a website on their phone. It's very handy when they want more information and they can click around to pick up exactly what they're looking for.
- ❖ **M-Commerce – fantasy or reality? - Page 4**
Does M-Commerce actually mean anything to your business? No? But do you remember when E-commerce was just another one of those words? Of course, it could all be a version of Betamax or the next Sinclair C5. How can you tell?
- ❖ **Win the book - Page 5**
The Ultimate Question by Fred Reichheld is the book behind the one question you must ask your customers. You could win it and read all the details behind the research.

The most important question to ask your customers

It's a big claim. Ask your customers one question and their answers will give you an insight into the strength of your business. So what's the question? And what makes it so important to your business?

The question

Would your customers recommend your service to their friends or colleagues?

Why it's important to your business

According to the research boffins at Harvard, the answer isn't just interesting, it's vital. It holds the key to the future growth of your business. The original idea came from Fred Reichheld, author of 'The Loyalty Effect'.

He asked customers to rate how likely they were to recommend a brand on a scale of 0 to 10. The highest scorers reported a significant increase in sales.

David Tiltman summed up the research in his article in Marketing Magazine recently -

"It is a recognition of the power of word of mouth in an age where blogs and easily accessible online customer reviews have arguably made recommendations more important than ever."

He quotes a UK study conducted by Paul Marsden at Enterprise LSE confirming the relationship between the score and business growth holds true for the UK market too.

"The research estimated that for the average company, a 1% rise in word-of-mouth advocacy led to £8.8m in extra sales..."

It's simple

There's no long winded number crunching producing figures that need a first class degree in statistics to understand. So your board and your managers are both more likely to get involved and use the system.

Set objectives

What gets measured gets done. And Rant & Rave from Rapide makes it easy for you to measure your score regularly. It's specifically designed around the Harvard research so you can see the results at a glance, online, even check every day if that's your thing. You can set objectives, target your staff and make sure they deliver.

Time to throw away the research agency?

No, it might be tempting, but not quite yet. It's important to use the right measures for the right reasons. If your score changes dramatically, a research agency can help you to work out why.

Call us on 02476 430 180 to see our system in action

Text part three - WAP

WAP. It might sound scary, but there's nothing to be afraid of – it's just another acronym. This one stands for Wireless Application Protocol and it's simply the stuff that allows you to access web pages from your mobile phone.

Talk about mobile internet being 'the next big thing' has been around for a long time. And we do need to be practical about this, it's not going to be your regular company website appearing on the tiny screen on your phone. It's edited and formatted to suit a mobile handset.

But it isn't just for teenagers checking their Myspace pages either, WAP offers serious and tangible benefits for business.

Your customer's expectations have changed. They want instant gratification. So if you've caught someone's attention with a message – whether that's a news article or a promotion – they want to know more right now.

How it works

You add a five digit short dial number and a keyword to your article or advert.

The customer sends an ordinary sms text with a key word so you know what information they're after and where they've seen the code.

The text reply includes a link to your WAP site which includes anything you think the customer might need to know – just like you would on your regular website. So you might include a contact form to register for more information, download pictures or music and key data about your product.

Call us now if you'd like to see a WAP site in action on 02476 430 180

M-Commerce – fantasy or reality?

Never heard of it? Or are you thinking you've found a spelling mistake because you know all about E-Commerce already? Talk about M-Commerce has been around for a long while, after all, the BBC wrote an article about it almost seven years ago – so is it all a myth?

Definition

"A monetary transaction made over a portable device."

So, buying a book from Amazon while you're wi-fi from your laptop is technically M-Commerce. You could consider calling and reading your credit card details from your mobile are M-Commerce too. But we're most concerned about transactions you make directly on your mobile phone and even if you didn't call it M-Commerce, you might have already experienced it.

Premium rate calls

This is when the cost of the call pays for the service you get on your phone – for example a charge of £5 is made on your bill for a 3 minute call of today's horoscope. The provider of the service is taking a cut of the £5 to pay for it. The lion's share is often going to your network provider such as orange, O2 or Vodafone.

Reverse billing

When you send a text message to download a ringtone, music or wallpaper, the text you receive as a confirmation is charged to your mobile bill.

Neither of these systems are very flexible. The amount you can charge is set at the outset and fixed, making it a bit like a pound shop – everything on one number has to cost the same. And the network provider takes the bigger cut.

That means you have mobile phone networks operating like a bank, but without the same regulations – they have no obligation to refund if someone else has cloned your phone. This system doesn't verify who you are either, it assumes as your mobile is a personal item, that it's you using it - not very helpful when you've just left it in a taxi.

WAP payments

A WAP site is just like being online on your mobile (have a look at this month's feature on text part 3 - WAP). So it's possible to use a webpage to pay for products using your credit card. However, until 3G becomes widespread, while there are already many possibilities, the internet on your mobile is in its infancy.

Secure payment applications on your mobile

Rapide also supply groundbreaking secure SMS messaging. Instead of accessing a secure area on a WAP site, you can download the security software direct to the mobile phone. Information moving between the supplier and receiver is encrypted - which sounds very James Bond, but it's actually really simple to use and most importantly makes the data completely confidential. When you access the information using a PIN, it's presented in a graphical format, just like you the way your're used to seeing a HTML email. While it's perfect for payments, you may have other needs that deal with confidential information with your staff and customers - let us know if you've got some ideas you'd like to try.

For making payments, the last two depend on a consistent standard between financial institutions and retailers so transactions can be made with any supplier from any credit card or bank account.

Call us on 02476 430 180 if you'd like to know more about secure SMS from Rapide

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Win the book - 'The Ultimate Question'

You've read the article and you're fascinated by the one question you should be asking your customers? If you're itching to get all the facts behind the research then enter our competition - you could win your own copy.

Text 84070 with 'Nigel' and your answer to this question -

The Ultimate Question is written by

- a. Tony Blair
- b. Fred Reichheld
- c. Richard Branson

Terms and conditions

Competition entries cost 25p per text plus your usual text charge.

1. The closing date for entries is 30th April 2007
2. The winning entry will be picked at random from all correct entries by an independent person.
3. Names of winners will be available from 7th May 2007 by writing to Rapide Communication, Business Innovation Centre, Binley Business Park, Coventry CV3 2TX
4. Entry is not available to staff of Rapide Communication or their immediate family.
5. By entering you agree to be bound by these rules.
6. The prize is The Ultimate Questions by Fred Reichheld. There is no cash alternative.