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How Mobile Apps Can Grow Your Local Business

According to studies conducted over the past few years, mobile usage is increasing drastically every single day. Almost everyone owns a mobile phone these days – not only that, but many of us own smartphones.

Smartphones are capable of performing a wealth of tasks that one would think could only be handled from a computer. However, smartphones are being used to access the internet, to shop, to play games, to make reservations, and so much more.

Due to the massive level of potential smartphones have to offer, people expect them to make their lives easier and more convenient while on the go.

They want to be able to perform a variety of different tasks from their mobile devices whenever they want – wherever they want. This demand has lead software developers to move full speed ahead in the mobile app creation market.

As a small business owner, mobile apps should strongly be considered when identifying possible strategies that can help you generate more customers, sales, and profits.

If you look around, most of your customers are already glued to their mobile devices when visiting your establishment. So why not take additional measures to keep them coming back by utilizing these personal mini-billboards? - Especially marketing strategies that will help boost your brand, build lasting customer relationships, and generate repeat business...

Mobile Statistics

According to recent statistics, mobile app usage is increasing with no signs of slowing down any time in the future. There are more than 1 billion smartphones all around the world and the number is increasing at astonishing rates.

People are spending more time using mobile apps rather than browsing through the internet on their personal computers. Some of the statistics which you will find interesting are:

- ³⁵/₁₇ There are more than 5 BILLION mobile phone users – More than 1 BILLION of them are smartphone users.

- ³⁵/₁₇ Between 2010 and 2011, mobile application usage nearly doubled. During this time, the number of retail apps increased by 350%.
- ³⁵/₁₇ The average number of apps installed on an individual smartphone has grown to 41 in the year 2012.
- ³⁵/₁₇ It is being estimated that by 2013, there will be more smartphones than human beings in the world.
- ³⁵/₁₇ Mobile apps generated approximately \$8.5 billion in revenue in 2011.
- ³⁵/₁₇ According to the New York Times, smartphone app development is the “most powerful media ever invented.”
- ³⁵/₁₇ The Gartner Group believes the mobile marketing industry will be “a \$58 billion market by 2014.”

Through the above-mentioned statistics, you can see that the trend of mobile app usage isn't expected to decrease. If anything, we can expect these numbers to rise in coming years as mobile usage overall continues to grow.

What are Mobile Apps?

In case you do not know, the term “mobile app” is actually short for “mobile application.” These are software applications that are designed to operate on tablets and smartphones, as well as other mobile devices.

Depending upon the platform being used, these apps are designed in various ways. This means that the apps for the iOS platform are different than the ones that are to be used on the Android platform.

Whatever the platform may be, the basic aim behind mobile apps is to help users perform specific functions from their mobile devices in an easy, convenient manner.

A lot of businesses are making use of mobile apps in order to extend their reach to an audience that is practically glued to their smartphones. Mobile marketing has undoubtedly provided companies with a powerful way to reach millions of people whenever they want.

No other form of marketing has such a strong, direct ability to help you reach your target audience. Due to this reason, mobile apps have a strong ability to increase your sales when properly designed and marketed.

Companies all over the world are continuously creating apps that are aimed at attracting new customers. These apps allow direct communication, such as customers being able to receive alerts whenever you release a new product or service.

Benefits of Mobile Apps for Local Businesses

Local businesses today are usually looking for one thing – and that’s more customers. Mobile apps can help you achieve this goal by improving your brand recognition and allowing you to build a relationship with your customers in a personal way.

Here are some specific ways that Mobile apps can benefit your company and help increase your bottom line.

1. Build Customer Loyalty and Branding

Establishing a strong bond with your customers is very important if you want to succeed in your local competitive market. By having an app on their mobile devices, your customers will have full access to your business whenever they want.

In fact, when they are in need of a product or service that you offer, they will think of your business first. Mobile apps are easy to use, and you can send push-button notifications out to your customers whenever you want.

Through your mobile app, your customers have the ability to get more information about your business, browse through the products and services you offer, place an order or even read customer reviews.

Mobile apps also help businesses generate repeat sales by keeping their brands right in front of their customers’ eyes. Due to this, building customer loyalty is simple and easy – resulting in more revenue for your business.

2. **Gain Immediate Accessibility to Consumers**

As mentioned above, developing a mobile app means that your customers have a way to gain access to your business whenever they want.

They don't have to walk in and visit your business to learn about what you have to offer because they have a virtual representation of your company available right on their smartphones.

Have a new product or service that you want to notify your customers about as soon as possible? A mobile app can help you do just that. With the click of a button, they can learn all they need to know about as soon as you send out the notification.

A lot of businesses are making use of QR codes as well. "QR code" is short for "Quick Response Code," which allows quick access to your brand's website, online videos, social media profiles, a mobile coupon – or wherever you would like to send them.

QR codes are convenient for mobile users because they can instantly be directed to your destination immediately after scanning the code.

For instance, if you want to direct QR code scanners to your website, they will be directed to your website immediately after scanning the code – they don't have to write down your website address and wait until they get home to view it.

So they get that "instant gratification," which is proven to help with conversion rates.

If you do utilize QR codes to send more traffic to your website, make sure that your website is "mobile-friendly." If not, you could be sending your audience to an ill-functioning mobile website, which is frustrating.

3. **Increase Sales**

As mentioned above, a mobile app is a business's way of promoting itself. There's no need for you to hand out flyers because you can send promotional information to targeted consumers through your mobile apps – their own personal, digital "flyers."

Mobile apps can notify potential customers about special offers, coupons, special events and so much more. These apps can also allow customers to buy gift cards whenever they want. As you can see, they don't need to be physically present in your store in order to benefit from your app or to make a purchase.

4. **Enhance Your Social Viral Effect**

We live in a world where social media plays a very important role in business marketing.

Mobile apps enable users to utilize the very powerful online 'social' element by 'sharing' what they like with their friends, families and colleagues.

This includes sharing the businesses, services, and products they like.

Through mobile apps, your customers and prospects can easily share information about your business via social media, email and text messaging.

For instance, if they like your promotional offer, they can talk about it and share it on various social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, or Google+.

People today are crazed over social media; they love its sharing aspect and most people use it daily. You can make your app go viral simply by adding a 'share this app' option on your mobile app.

When people share things they like about your business, you essentially receive "free" promotion – because you get more eyes on your business with no additional effort on your part.

5. **Secure a Constant Connection to Consumers**

Studies show that approximately 97% of all mobile app push notifications are opened and read.

Businesses that take orders over the phone or internet can add this as a feature to their mobile apps. Businesses that want consumers call in or email them can make it easy for them to do by having "one-push" access directly from their mobile app.

Furthermore, businesses can have a built-in map and directions generator to help consumers find their establishment within a couple of minutes. As you can see, with mobile apps, your customers can have an instant connection with you no matter where they are in the world.

6. **Generate Repeat Business and/or Referrals**

When consumers have a business's mobile app downloaded, they are more likely to think of that business first when they are in need of the type of product or service the company provides.

That's because access to that business is virtually available right in their pockets. If your app is helpful and interesting to consumers, they will be naturally inclined to choose your business over your competitors.

In today's busy world, "convenience" also plays a huge role when it comes to which companies consumers choose to do business with. Having an app that is loaded with features and easy to use is crucial to making it work well for your business.

Mobile apps also work extremely well for referral purposes – consumers who are using your mobile app are more likely to refer your business when a friend, family member, or colleague is in need of your type of product or service.

Benefits of Mobile Apps for Consumers

Not only do mobile apps benefit businesses; they also benefit consumers in many different ways. Otherwise, they wouldn't be as popular as they are today. Consumers today download a lot of apps – in some way, it's almost like an addiction.

If you've ever heard the phrase, "There's an App for That...", it is true... there's an app for just about anything consumers could ever want to do on their mobile devices.

Here is more information about why consumers love mobile apps:

1. **Easy to Use and Convenient**

The best thing about mobile apps is that they are very simple and easy to use. All mobile users have to do is download them on their mobile devices, launch and use them whenever they want.

They don't have to learn some difficult, long, drawn-out software before they put your app to use. Because they're so simple to use, the learning curve associated with them is usually just a few minutes.

In other words, your app will start working for your business within moments of mobile users downloading them.

2. **Easy One-Touch Access**

Your mobile app will function as a virtual location for your business. Consumers can become familiar with your app fairly quickly and if they find it useful, they will continue to use it and refer it to others.

Not only that, but a mobile app will make it easy for your customers to get in touch with your company; it's as simple as a few taps on their smartphones. Whether you want them to call you, email you, or text you, they have the ability to do it immediately from your mobile app.

Your customers also have the ability to receive instant directions to your establishment from your app, which is very convenient for those who are on-the-go and may be trying to find your establishment.

3. **Receive Instant Notifications**

Consumers are able to receive notifications about special offers and promotions related to your business instantly, which is great in their eyes. Due to this "direct personal connection" with them, they feel special being that they're one of the first ones to get your messages.

4. **Have Pertinent Scheduling Information at Their Fingertips**

As mentioned above, consumers have quick access to important features that can help them do business with you more seamlessly.

For instance, if your company utilizes customer reminders about important dates or appointments, your app can handle that.

Not only can your customers schedule appointments through your mobile app, but they can also receive reminder notifications a few days prior to an appointment.

CONCLUSION

As you can see, mobile apps are an extremely valuable way for businesses to generate more local prospects and repeat customers. The recent mobile apps boom has caused many businesses to finally open their eyes to the potential mobile marketing can bring; they can no longer ignore this powerful creation as a means to generate more revenue.

According to statistics, mobile app usage is growing by leaps and bounds every year. So by developing a mobile app for your business, you can enable potential customers to have direct access to your business at all times.

When done right, mobile apps can boost customer loyalty as well as increase referral business – ultimately helping you generate more profits. Developing a mobile app that your audience will love is a “win-win” situation for both you and your customers.

In the end, you can clearly see that mobile apps are the new digital trend, and it’s a trend that won’t end anytime soon. That’s why it’s time to seize the opportunity and promote your business utilizing the power of mobile apps.

Planning and having a mobile app developed isn’t difficult. However, it can seem like a foreign language to anyone who hasn’t dealt in the mobile arena on a marketing level.

This is why I specialize in helping business owners and professional advisors to create and market their mobile applications in a way that makes sense.

Contact me for a no-obligation consultation if you would like to know more about mobile applications and so you can decide if they're right for you.

Thank you.

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SOURCES

<http://www.trainfusion.com/mobile>

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