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IMPACT OF MOBILE MARKETING IN THE CURRENT INDIAN SCENARIO

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ABSTRACT

Innovation creates Marketing opportunities and challenges. MOBILE ADVERTISING, an area of mobile commerce, is a form of advertising that targets users of handheld wireless devices such as mobile phones and PDAs. It can reach the target customers anywhere anytime. In order to promote the selling of products or services, all the activities required to communicate with the customers are transferred through mobile devices. The study also aims to concretize some features enhancing the acceptability / utility of mobile marketing / advertising and suggests an appropriate strategic initiative for the same. The major findings reveal that the perception of consumers towards mobile marketing can be broadly categorized in to following factors:1)Lack of personalization of mobile ads 2) troublesome nature of mobile ads 3) perceived usefulness of mobile ads. Further results indicate that mobile marketing / advertising does not have a significant impact on the purchase / brand decision of consumers. Mobile marketing is relatively at a emerging stage in india. Distinct preferences were expressed by customers regarding the desirable content of such messages. Customers are looking for customization of mobile marketing messages as per their individual requirement, tastes and preferences. Hence the need of hour appears to be CUSTOMERIZATION.

KEYWORDS

Mobile Advertising, Customerization, Telecom industry.

INTRODUCTION

Technology developments have created new marketing communication channels or media such as email, SMS (Short Messaging Service) and MMS (Multimedia Messaging Service).

These digital media are considered to potentially improve the possibilities to reach consumers by allowing personalization of the content and context of the message (Forrester Report2001). Simultaneously there is a potential downside to the development of new digital channels. In a Forrester report companies using SMS expressed fear of invasion of consumer privacy (80%) and negative consumer reaction (60%) as disadvantages of the media (Forrester Report 2001, p. 3). A crucial question is thus whether there are obstacles for the marketer to use mobile media to its potential. Are customers more reluctant to receive marketing information through mobile media than through traditional media or is it the other way round.

Mobile advertising, which is an area of mobile commerce, is a form of advertising that targets users of handheld wireless devices such as mobile phones and Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs). In Comparison with traditional advertising, the main advantage of mobile advertising is that it can reach the target customers anywhere anytime. In order to promote the selling of products or services, all the activities required to communicate with the customers are transferred through mobile devices. Combining with the customer's user profile and context situation, advertising companies can provide the target customers exactly the advertisement information they desire, not just "spam" them with advertisements they are not interested in.

The devices on which these value-added services are pushed onto or downloaded to, operate in an environment that imposes constraints such as: wireless network environments are unreliable and bandwidth is low, and the very mobility of devices increases the risk that a connection will be lost or degraded. More importantly, mobile services must work within the daunting constraints of the devices themselves, which include: memory, processing power, input capabilities, and size of display. It is therefore important that mobile advertisements take into account the user's context, optimize resource usage, and minimize input effort imposed on the user.

What reaching means when considering the empowered and active Consumer. In permission marketing context it has been argued that if the consumers have agreed to pay attention it would be easier to reach them about offerings (Godin 1999). A key issue is the responsiveness of the consumer to marketing communication. Responsiveness depicts the consumer's willingness to receive and respond to marketing communication and can be viewed as a function of the content and the context of the message. Any channel can and should be evaluated according to consumer responsiveness in order to understand communication effects and effectiveness. Consumer responsiveness is potentially more effective than permission because it assumes consumer attention rather than merely permission.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of this research study is to gain an insight into the perception of mobile users, towards mobile advertising and their utility value in terms of impact on the purchase decision. Hence we are attempting to explore consumers' responsiveness to mobile marketing, taking into cognizance the impact of demographic factors like age, gender, occupation, etc. From the marketer's perspective it is crucial to know the utility of mobile advertising, as far as having an impact on purchase decision of a customer is concerned.

From an academic perspective the issue of responsiveness to a media is interesting in itself. The media in use influences the effect of the marketing communication in addition to the Marketing message. Finally an attempt has also been made to broadly concretize some features enhancing the acceptability/

utility of mobile marketing/ advertising. Also a strategic initiative (*Intelligent Software Agents*) has been proposed, so as to incorporate the entire positive attributes perceived as important by the customers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A study done by Heinonen & Strandvik (2003) showed that mobile channels are perceived to be more personal than traditional and e mail channels. This creates high expectations for the relevance of marketing communication messages. A consumer expects messages to be personal and of high interest and this makes the disappointment greater when they get undesired messages. Mobile advertising may even step over the line of discretion and invade consumers’ privacy because of the personal nature of the mobile device. Li et al (2002) discusses how negative reactions like irritation arise through intrusion advertising. The channel influences consumer responsiveness to marketing communication by being perceived as either disturbing or acceptable (Abernethy 1991). If the consumer considers marketing communication via a channel as disturbing it may negatively affect the attention to and perception of the message. In contrast, the channel may also enhance the acceptance of the marketing communication if it is perceived as appropriate for the specific marketing communication. Also, some consumers may perceive the channels as neutral, i.e. it is neither disturbing nor accepted. According to the descriptions of the new model (Informed 2001) advertising attentiveness is considered to be a measure of the degree to which those exposed to the advertising are focused on it. Advertising communication refers to information retained by the consumer after exposure to the message. Advertising persuasion measures shift in attitudes and/or intentions produced by the communication and advertising response is other consumer response than purchasing. This would for example, include click-through, lead generation, mail response and coupon redemption.

METHODOLOGY

The research design chosen for the study is conclusive (cross sectional descriptive design). A survey instrument was developed based on previous studies done on consumer perceptions of mobile advertising. Quota sampling (multi stage) has been employed with the questionnaires being sent to approximately 1000 respondents. However 660 questionnaires were found complete in all respects. The response rate was 66%. An attempt has been made to keep the sample fairly representative across the demographic variables by constructing quotas according to these factors e.g. age, gender, occupation, and level and purpose of mobile usage. Almost 54% of the respondents belonged to the age group of 20 to 30 years and approximately 30% of the respondents belonged to the age group of more than 30 years. 30% of the respondents were students, 27% were in service, 14% were housewives and 29% were in business. 59.7% were males and 40.3% were females. Almost 85% of the respondents rated their usage of mobile in the range of medium to high. 75% of the respondents used their mobiles primarily for personal communication. The area of our sampling is the city of Lucknow (mobile density in Lucknow is at par with the major cities in India). The time frame of the study was June 2007 to October 2007. Primary- stage sampling units were the mobile users, while the secondary stage sampling units were markets, shopping malls, institutions and localities of Lucknow. In order to make the sample representative, sampling was performed in various market places, shopping malls, office complexes and some residential localities considering the desired quotas. A group of respondents were also chosen from Lucknow Telephone Directory using systematic sampling scheme.

The study used a likert scale of 1-5 to elicit response of mobile users. The statistical Techniques used to analyze the data are factor analysis, discriminate analysis, perception maps and non-parametric two-independent samples test.

We have examined the reliability of the data to check whether random error causing Inconsistency and in turn lower reliability is at a manageable level or not, by running Reliability test. For various sets of important associated factors used in the questionnaire, values of coefficient alpha (Cronbach’s alpha) have been obtained. Amongst the reliability tests that were run, the minimum value of coefficient alpha (Cronbach’s alpha) obtained was 0.732 (Table1.1-1.4) (which is substantially higher than 0.6) which shows that data has satisfactory internal consistency reliability.

TABLE 1: CASE PROCESSING SUMMARY

	N	%
Cases Valid	660	100.0
Excluded(a)	0	.0
Total	660	100.0

TABLE 1.1: RELIABILITY STATISTICS (PURCHASE DECISION & BRAND DECISION)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.785	2

TABLE 1.2: RELIABILITY STATISTICS (PERCEPTION TOWARDS MOBILE ADVERTISING)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.732	4

TABLE 1.3: RELIABILITY STATISTICS (POSITIVE REACTIONS TOWARDS MOBILE ADVERTISING)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.788	3

TABLE 1.4: RELIABILITY STATISTICS (DESIRED ATTRIBUTES OF MOBILE ADVERTISING)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.757	7

FINDINGS

Consumer Perception about Mobile Advertising

TABLE 2 TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED

Component	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% variance	Cumulative %
1	2.572	29.781	29.781
2	2.429	23.685	53.466
3	1.891	17.550	71.016

On drawing a perception map, in order to study the impact of an individual’s occupation on his reactions’ towards mobile advertising, it was found that there were significant differences in the reactions of Businessmen and other Self-Employed people. The businessmen reacted with confusion towards the plethora of information and advertising that they were subjected on their mobiles, whereas the self-employed respondents found the information (pertaining to either their work interests or leisure interests) relayed through their mobiles useful. It can hence be inferred that incorporating attributes like contextualization, relevant utility value.

The **factor analysis** results are shown in table 2, 2.1 & 2.2. The variance explained by the initial solution, extracted components and the rotated components are displayed in Table 2.

The total variance shown in table 2, accounted for by all of the three components explains nearly 71% of the variability in the original 13 variables. So we can reduce the original data set by using these three components (Eigen values greater than 1 as shown in Table 2.) with only 29% loss of information.

The Rotated Component Matrix reveals three factors (which represent the three perceptual dimensions about mobile advertising) derived from 13 variables (which represent the perception of mobile users towards mobile advertising). The components of each factor have been highlighted in Table 2.2.

Factor 1 comprises of the variables- mobile ads being less informative, not suiting personal needs, inappropriate timing, and clutter. Since all these variables are related to lack of contextualization and personalization, this factor can be labeled '**Lack of contextualization**'.

Factor 2 has components- brand recall, recall of sales/promotion information, recall of product/services, ad positioning, and repetitive nature of mobile ads and positive impact of mobile ads. Since all this components are related to perceived usefulness of mobile advertising, this factor can be labeled '**perceived usefulness**' of mobile ads.

Factor 3 has components- disturbance at work, busy work schedule, wastage of time, loss of privacy. Since all these components are related to disturbance caused due to mobile advertising, this factor can be labeled '**disruptive nature**' of mobile ads.

Further to gain an insight into the perception of mobile users towards mobile marketing vis a vis their demographic characteristics, a series of **Perception Maps** were also prepared.

ANALYSIS OF DESIRED ATTRIBUTES (IN MOBILE MARKETING/ ADVERTISING) - SO AS TO ENHANCE THE OVERALL ACCEPTANCE OF MOBILE MARKETING/ ADVERTISING

This study also attempts to broadly concretize some features or attributes, which will enhance the overall acceptance and utility of mobile marketing and advertising. For this purpose the non parametric Two-Independent-Samples tests were performed. The results (Table 4) revealed that customization of mobile marketing messages according to the demographic characteristics and individual tastes and preferences (P value >0.05), would enhance the overall acceptance of mobile marketing messages, and have a positive impact on the purchase decisions being made by these consumers. Hence the mobile users are apparently seeking customization of mobile marketing messages as per their individual requirements, tastes and Preferences. Thus the marketing firms need to combine **Mass Customization** and **Customized Marketing** i.e **CUSTOMERIZATION**. Customerization combines operationally driven mass customization with customized marketing in a way that the company is able to respond to individual customers by customizing its products, services, and messages on a one-to-one basis. Another desired attribute as per consumer perception is that they would prefer *session based* messages, which would *self delete* after a given period of time- hence saving the mobile users the hassle of clearing the clutter of marketing messages in their inbox and occupying unnecessary memory space.

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