



EXPERT ADVICE

Is Your Site Mobile Perfect? How to Catch Those Buyers Who Never Stand Still

Mobile search and buying continues to grow as the chosen means for consumers' online shopping experience, with an estimated \$218 billion market in 2019. eMarketer estimates that [72.9 percent](#) of online purchases will be made on *a mobile device* by 2021. If you factor in the Millennial and Generation Z demographics, virtually all sales will soon be mobile-generated.

Online retailers are seeing the writing on the wall: a recent survey notes that over half of retailers plan to invest in mobile and nearly two-thirds forecast it positively will impact their online revenue in 2019. New sites have some advantage since they are designing, from the beginning, for a mobile-centric world. However, all sites can upgrade their mobile-friendly presence and there are ways to do it without straining the budget. To survive over the next few years, a powerful mobile-ready site is a must for any retailer.

Capturing mobile customers is a combination of shrewd site design paired with marketing techniques aimed at creating customer engagement and moving them to conversion. Keep in mind: mobile is a communication channel. Getting a customer to buy still requires doing all the other practices right: like product mix, marketing, social media community building and incentives to encourage conversion.

Get Mobile Smart and Add Customer Love with these Five Practices:

1. **Modernize your website for mobile sales.** Sites designed, in the past, specifically for the desktop, cannot effectively support mobile shopping. To get in the mobile game you have to upgrade your site to capture sales you no doubt are losing if you're operating a non-mobile site. Here are the two dominant design choices:
 - a. **Adaptive templates** are designed for a specific set of screens, typically cell phones, tablets and laptops. The site will detect what device a mobile shopper is using and serve up the format for that device. A shopper, regardless of which device they're on, will see a screen well adapted for their viewing. A key benefit of this format is that it loads significantly faster than the other option, a responsive template. Our own studies of actual sites show that load speeds for an adaptive format can be extremely fast, giving the millennial buyer, for example, the pace they demand in order to have a satisfying site experience. Of

course, site speed is also one of the factors Google uses to determine search ranking, so having a fast loading site could help you attract, as well as keep, more new customers. Entrepreneurs developing a new site will gain a competitive edge by starting with an adaptive template.

- b. Responsive templates** do not have a pre-set selection of screens, and literally respond to what type of device they see a shopper using. They respond to screen size and reconfigure the site layout based on those dimensions. A lot of modern, beautiful mobile sites use responsive templates, but they may be paying a speed penalty versus adaptive sites.

2. Architect the site for the mobile user. Google takes no prisoners when it comes to mobile. Google will not send mobile users to a site that is not mobile-ready. Google search will also penalize slow-to-load sites so your site runs the risk of being invisible and losing at least half of your potential business if you are less than mobile ready. The right template gets you started. Now think about the screen orientation a shopper sees. A must have for mobile is a vertical architecture. Think of walking with your phone and wanting a quick look at a site. Vertical lets you scroll down without missing a step. Another old-school technique to lose is mousing over a pop up or sensitive expanding menus. Mobile people do not want to hover over a link with a finger. Switch to easy click throughs for category pages with drop down menus so your mobile shoppers can quickly get to the level of detail they need to make a buying decision.

3. Make your site sticky for sales. Mobile users want it now. To convert to a sale, retailers need to keep a shopper on the page, deliver all information as quickly as possible and, when needed, add a fast incentive to prevent losing the sale. Be sure to avoid redirects at all costs – they are poison to a mobile shopper. Service businesses need a call-to-action that avoids driving them back to other pages like a directory. OpenTable is a great example of an app that when incorporated into a restaurant’s site, provides a fast sale -- in this case a reservation. If you’re selling a product, consider a third-party app that tells you how long a user has been on your site, and can automatically add an incentive like discounts on shipping, to move them toward conversion.

Should the customer leave the site, be sure to have marketing tools like email or display retargeting at the ready to bring them back. An abandoned cart reminder, for example, tells the shopper that an interesting item can still be had, or an email telling them of a price drop on a product might spur conversion. Targeting display ads based on what a shopper looked at is another retargeting tool.

- 4. Prepare for action.** Mobile browsers are an action oriented bunch and often expect to be only a few thumb clicks away from booking a reservation, scheduling a service call, pulling up directions to a local business or placing an online purchase. While desktop users may be focused on gathering information and reading detailed content, mobile users are typically more interested in getting to a decision point. Be sure to provide easy access to the touchpoints customers need. If you're a local business, be sure to display a street address that actually puts the customer at your door. Similarly, if you're selling online, make it simple for shoppers to find what they need and to pay for a product using familiar payment methods. No one wants to pull out a credit card sitting in an airport or a café. Look for a mobile checkout platform that enables mobile pay for the consumer. PayPal, Venmo and the like go a long way towards increasing conversion rates.

- 5. Think of social media as a marketing channel.** Mobile-ready sites that are most effective are doing a good job of building customer community through offering feedback on their sites and engaging with customers on ideas and inspirations. The millennial/Gen Z demographic is an intensive social media user so leverage that energy to build up your site's relevance. Even if a particular customer has not been to your site, craft a social media program that advertises to followers of sites that matter to your demographic. Also think of Facebook as a prime channel for seeing what your competitors are doing and which potential customers are looking at their products.

Mobile Rules

Whether a new site, or a site that needs a refresh, making mobile a priority is now essential to survival. Having a template that provides an enjoyable experience for the user, with an architecture that makes site search easy for the person on the go, is a must-have. Then, put yourself in a mobile shopper's shoes, and offer a site that makes it easy to pay once a buying decision is made.

To up your chances of a sale, remember to enhance marketing with buying incentives, cart reminders and retargeting. Add to this an active social media presence and you have the complete playbook to capture the mobile customer.

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About the Author

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