

## **Does your business appreciate mobile marketing?**

With 50 per cent of mobile phone users in the UK predicted to own a 'smartphone' by this time next year\*, mobile marketing is certainly big business. Here, Richard Houdmont, Director for Wales of The Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) explores whether businesses in Wales should be capitalising on this latest technology.

In the past year there has been an influx in people accessing social networking sites, browsing the web and downloading applications from their smartphones, high-end mobile phones that offer advanced computing ability and functionality, such as the iPhone and Android devices.

And through this technology, consumers are now able to use their phones for a lot more than just calling and texting. The smartphone is fast becoming a key platform for marketers and businesses to engage with their target audiences.

In a recent paper\*\* published by The CIM, the Institute's Head of Research, Mark Blayney Stuart argues that the growth of the mobile phone and its impact on our lives outstrips any previous technology. The rapid development of the phone not only provides opportunities for marketers in terms of new product development but equally important new routes to market.

So should the smartphone revolution be of concern to Welsh businesses, brands and organisations?

Considering that an item is sold on eBay Mobile every two seconds and MediaMind reported that the average click-through rate (CTR) on mobile banners on their network was more than eight times as high as the CTR for standard online banners - then the answer is yes we should be concerned.

The Valleys Heart and Soul campaign, an initiative to promote The Valleys as a key tourism destination in Wales, launched an iPhone app earlier this year and generated over 1,000 downloads in only three months. The app gives visitors and locals all the information they need about the Top 50 things to see and do in the region at their finger tips and positions The Valleys as a forward thinking destination.

Smartphone apps are a fun and interactive way of getting consumers engaged in a product, but it is crucial to consider how the app will benefit your potential and current customer base

before creating it. An app must offer something unique from its website equivalent and stand out from the thousands of others in the marketplace in order to be a success.

In addition to apps, more users are browsing the internet from their smartphones than ever before. To put it in perspective, there are more than 250 million active users accessing Facebook through their mobile devices, a third of its members, and people that use Facebook on their mobiles are twice as active on the social networking site than non-mobile users.\*\*\*

With this in mind, ensuring that a website is 'mobile-friendly' should be high on Welsh businesses' priority lists, to ensure that the content can be easily navigated from a smartphone device.

But, is mobile marketing just another fad or is it really worth investing in?

Since April 2010, 2.5 per cent of phone owners have shifted to smartphones every four weeks in the UK alone\* and global financial services firm, Morgan Stanley, expects mobile internet usage to overtake desktop usage by 2015.

Another contributing factor to the rise of smartphones is accessibility. The average price of the device has fallen in the UK while mobile phone providers' contracts are becoming increasingly competitive, allowing more consumers to own one.

'Mobile marketing' is one of the most exciting developments for the industry in the past few years and will continue to grow. The phone will eventually become the principal technology we use to communicate with our audiences, while the term 'mobile marketing' will become redundant as it will be the default communication tool.

Word count: 626

#### **Sources:**

\*<http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2011/jul/11/ios-android-blackberry-smartphone-data>

\*\* It's not a phone: a future of mobile marketing - [www.cim.co.uk/papers](http://www.cim.co.uk/papers)

\*\*\*<http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>