



## Adding mobile to the marketing mix

**By Robert Thurner, Commercial Director, Incentivated**

In an era of time-shifted media consumption and a culture of ad avoidance, today's brands face a tough challenge in developing highly targeted campaigns which not only boost customer acquisition, but also create one-to-one relationships to improve long term retention. Increasingly, the mobile channel is being adopted as the cost-effective, fully trackable answer.

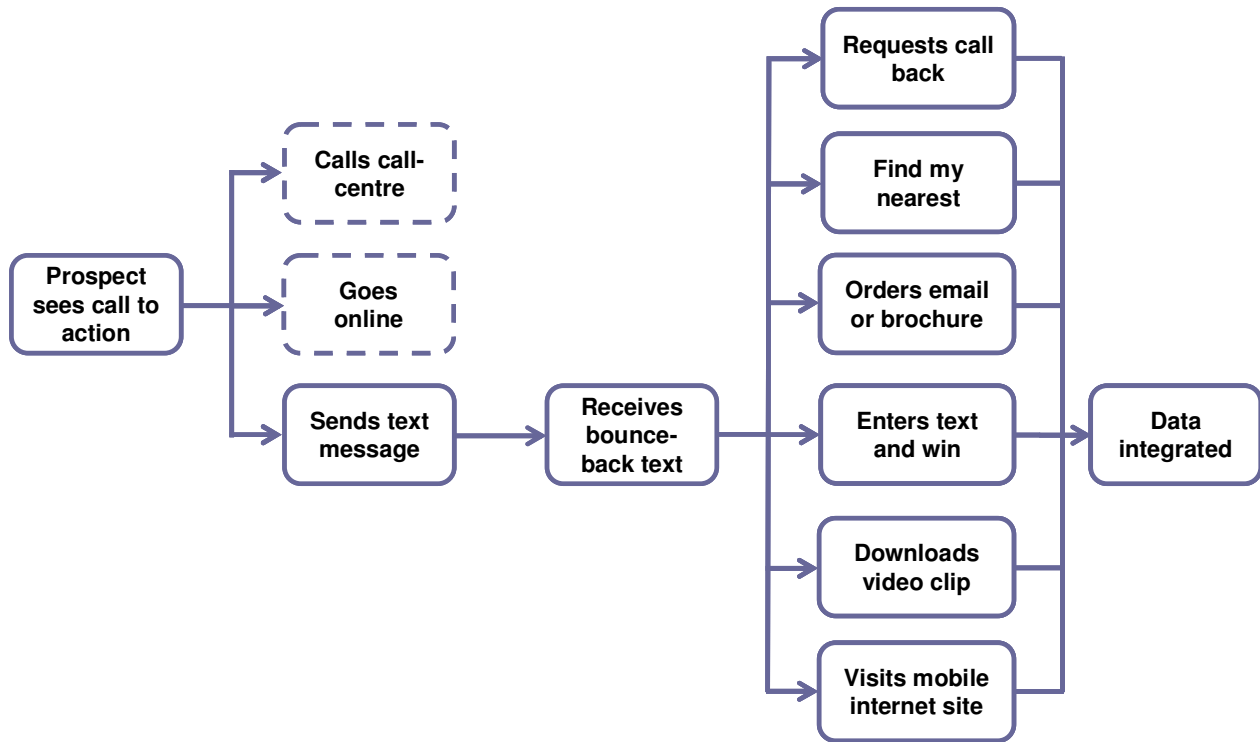
Mobile is fast emerging as an important communication channel for advertisers from all sectors. What started as a trickle two years ago – with early adopting brands from the entertainment sector cautiously dipping a toe in the mobile channel – has rapidly turned into a stream of blue chip brands now embracing mobile as a core part of their marketing mix.

To get the best from the mobile channel, it's worth considering its unique strengths:

- \* **Direct response:** Mobiles are with us 24/7, in-home and out-of-home, which makes them an instant, realtime response channel for any other media channel – ads on TV, press, radio and outdoor, direct mailers, in-store and on-pack promotions
- \* **Personalisation:** The mobile channel puts the consumer at the heart of the communications process. Mobile phones have one user - unlike PCs which tend to be used by multiple users - which means they are a powerful channel to deliver highly targeted and relevant information
- \* **Location:** Mobiles are designed to be portable, and thanks to GPS we can track their location at any time allowing brands to send location-specific information
- \* **Accountability and measurable feedback:** The mobile channel provides realtime reporting of SMS responses generated by above and below the line advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion or public relations. This reporting output means that you can tweak your 'traditional' budgets to boost the channels which generate the highest response levels, each of which can tracked by carrying different 'keywords'
- \* **Integration:** Mobile works best when carefully integrated with other parts of the marketing mix. In the early days, mobile was added as an after thought, which failed to realise its full potential as an

instant activation tool for the whole campaign. Today, it's encouraging to see the launch of an increasing number of integrated campaigns for which mobile plays a core role

The last point warrants plenty of thought as there are sound commercial reasons for careful integration. The mobile channel provides your customers with quick and easy interaction with your brand. The way it works is alarmingly straightforward, and reassuringly affordable.



By adding a text call to action, you offer your customers an immediate response path which requires neither pen and paper to write down a long phone number, nor a laptop to log onto a website. In time, the text response option will make both phone number and URL response options redundant.

The key to running slick mobile campaigns lies in the bounce-back messages you send in response to the incoming call to action text message. The bounce back message may ask customers what time when they wish to receive your customer service call. It may ask for their post codes in order to find their nearest store, or to order a brochure. It may ask for their email address in order to receive an email with details of the promotion they've just seen, and a hotlink to your website. It may collect answers to your text-to-win competitions. For a rich media experience, you may send video content onto their handset, or a 'WAP push' message which opens your mobile web site via their mobile browsers. Each option offers increasing levels of interaction with your brand.

The added bonus, of course, is that you'll be gathering valuable customer information including mobile numbers, post codes, email addresses and responsiveness to any of these calls to action for

your CRM database. This is when things get really interesting - as you datamine this information you can develop relevant, targeted one-to-one messages to up-sell, cross sell and build long-term customer loyalty.

Looking ahead, there are new opportunities emerging for marketers using mobile. A new generation of 3G handsets is flooding the market, allowing a superior user experience of the mobile internet and content downloads. Mobile operators are offering flat rate data charges, removing one of last barriers to people browsing the mobile web.

Anticipating the growth of mobile internet browsing, there's been a spate of acquisitions in the mobile advertising space, with Microsoft buying Screen Tonic, and AOL buying Third Screen Media. The mobile advertising industry is taking shape, allowing brands to get their message directly into the hands of their customers, and to track their response rates in realtime.

#### **Notes**

Incentivated ([www.incentivated.com](http://www.incentivated.com)) works with brands, the public sector and charities to help them communicate with customers instantly and easily via their mobile phones. Founded in 2001, Incentivated's fast growing client base includes British Airways, Central Office of Information, Halifax Bank of Scotland, Hilton Group, Macmillan Cancer Support, Masterfoods, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Scottish Power, Transport for London and VisitBritain.

Robert joined Incentivated as Commercial Director in April 2006 and is responsible for building the company's sales and marketing team to service advertisers, agencies and media owners. Previously Robert was Group Marketing Director of media company Clear Channel.