

Pay attention to mobile as email marketing channel

 By [Richard Mullins](#)

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Email is still one of the most important and widely-used communication channels that marketers have at their disposal, but the way that many organisations use it is still surprisingly unrefined. Nowhere is this clearer than in the lack of attention many marketers pay to the mobile device as a channel for email marketing.

With smartphone penetration growing at a rapid rate and tablets taking off at speed, there is a good chance that the first time a customer sees a marketing email will be on a mobile device. Yet many marketers are stumped about how to ensure that they are delivering their emails with the right content in the right format, and in a manner that will allow for tracking of users irrespective of the devices they are using.

The reason for this is that many organisations are still using older content management systems (CMSs) that are not able to identify different end-user devices and to format the content appropriately for each. The skills to create email templates that format itself for the end-user's device are also in short supply.

Then, there is the problem of tracking. Since cookies aren't available on most phones, it is very difficult to track what a user does when he or she starts interacting with the email and the website links that it contains.

Smart formatting

Ideally, marketers want to understand when and where users are receiving engagements, and what devices they have, but this sort of information is far from easy to track. The challenges become even more daunting when you want to start tracking mobile email and its interaction with other data channels such as web, search, and social.

So what does this imply for marketers who want to leverage the full potential of email, especially on mobile devices? Perhaps the first point is that they need to start thinking about the formatting and CMSs they have in place and the limitations these impose on the ways they can format and deliver content for different devices.

They should be starting to consider their options in terms of smart formatting that will empower them to deliver links and content in formats that match the needs of users irrespective of the devices they are carrying. A good email format design today should support dynamic engagement where the content is based on business rules - it should not be rigid.

All about data

At the back-end, it is all about data. Companies that want to automate and personalise email for a multi-device world need to

pay attention to the data they have available for each user and how it can be used to inform their marketing emails.

Marketers should be looking closely at their email solutions and putting in place a technology roadmap for email and emerging channels within digital marketing. This roadmap should allow them to accommodate new devices as they emerge as well as to carefully align email with the rest of their marketing strategy.

ABOUT RICHARD MULLINS

Richard Mullins is the director at Acceleration. He opened Acceleration's Johannesburg office in 2000 and has played an instrumental role in the growth of Acceleration in South Africa.

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