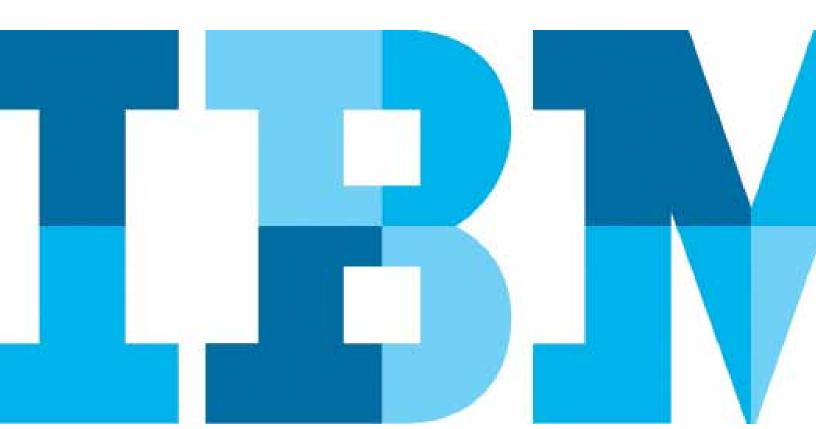# Three mobile email marketing challenges and what you can do about them

Introduction

Until now, marketers have been limited to two relatively uninspired options for sending direct communications to consumers on their mobile phones: SMS (a.k.a., text messaging), and text-only, imageless email on devices like the BlackBerry and Palm Treo. But with the introduction of Apple's iPhone and competitor operating systems like Google's Android and Palm's Pre/Pixi now offering similarly rich user experiences, email marketers have a huge opportunity to reach consumers anywhere, any time, on their mobile devices.

The numbers are staggering. Analysts indicate that mobile Internet adoption is rapidly outpacing desktop adoption. Meanwhile the Radicati Group, a research firm, says it expects the number of consumers who access email on mobile phones will balloon to more than 1 billion worldwide by the end of 2013. The day when more people open and respond to email in the palm of their hand than while at their desks is rapidly approaching, and represents nothing less than a sea change for email marketers.
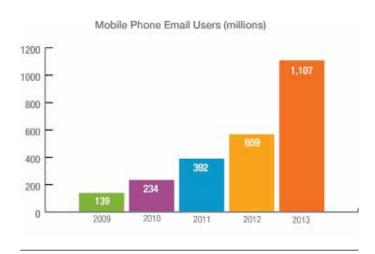

Chart: The Radicati Group, "Wireless Email Market, 2009 – 2013," October 12, 2009, www.radicati.com

To succeed in this new environment, marketers will need to re-imagine the customer experience and adopt a new set of email marketing tactics. In a recent IBM® Unica® global survey of marketers, over one-third of marketers (36 percent) revealed that they are already conducting some type of mobile marketing, and adoption will increase with an additional 40 percent of marketers indicating plans to incorporate mobile marketing. In this white paper, IBM highlights the top three challenges that email marketers face in the smartphone age, and outlines the technologies and best practices they should implement to succeed and maximize ROI.

Challenge and opportunities

Challenge 1: **Finding out whether your customers are opening your email on smartphones and which mobile email operating systems they are using.**
Recent studies have found that over half of all mobile phone owners access the same email account across multiple devices (PCs, laptops, mobile phones, and so on), with the remaining phone owners using a distinct account for mobile-email only. So more than half of your users may be receiving email at a Yahoo, Outlook or Gmail address, but are actually reading the message—at least at some point during the week and day—on a ported BlackBerry, Android, iPhone or other mobile email platform. But how can you tell?

Opportunities
Ask customers directly about their mobile email preferences when they first sign up for your email newsletter, and also offer them the ability to login to your website at any time to update those preferences. Entice them to sign up for mobile email communications in lieu of SMS—mobile email isn't just experientially richer, but also doesn't cost nearly as much to send and receive, whereas text messages typically cost 3-15 cents per message, for both the marketer to send *and the customer to receive.*

Automatically detect which devices your customers are using to read email (and when).

Using IBM® Unica®NetInsight® next generation web analytics or Unica **MailboxIQ** can finally provide marketers with this level of insight. IBM has already observed several Unica MailboxIQ-tracked campaigns where 10 percent and more of messages were viewed using mobile phone-based email readers, and the number often varies by day of week and time of day.

Knowing when and where your customers are reading your email can drive more relevant messaging and multi-channel sales. For example, if a retailer knew that its customer always opens its email using a webmail program on Monday - Thursday, but then opens it using a mobile phone on Friday - Sunday, the retailer might respond by:

• Sending online/website promotions earlier in the week, and send mobile-focused offers on the weekends that are designed to drive offline sales and be redeemed at brick and mortar locations.
• Employing different design strategies to optimize campaigns for both desktop and mobile experiences depending on day of the week and the user's behavior.

With Unica MailboxIQ, you will finally know the truth about which platforms and email clients your customers are using to read your email across mobile, social, search, and traditional web and software based email clients. You might be surprised to find out how many of your emails are actually being read on the small screen.

Challenge 2: Knowing how your email will look on a smartphone.

Designing emails that are optimized for smartphone viewership can mean the difference between sending an elegant message that the user is engaged with or one that looks broken and is deleted and forgotten. Compounding this challenge, the same email sent to five different customers using five different smartphones will display uniquely on each device. For example, see the screenshots below of how the same email will render across the Android, BlackBerry, iPhone and Windows Mobile 6 mobile email platforms.

Android: Rich graphics; user may need to side-scroll to view full message
iPhone: Richest experience; links and images on by default

BlackBerry: Shows text part of HTML as well as URLs for links and images

Windows Mobile 6: HTML supported, but images-off under default settings

Opportunity

Design email templates that are optimized for the platforms and email clients that your customers are using.
Once you have identified which of your subscribers are using mobile platforms to open your email, you should ensure that you are designing messages that will render optimally on them and generate higher open and click-through rates. You do not need to focus on every mobile device, per se, but certainly on the email clients (mobile and otherwise) that make up the majority of opens on your list.

A smaller screen size, of course, will mean a smaller viewable area. With that in mind, having a powerful subject line and designing a compelling "top of the fold" is more important than ever. Consider dropping "Add to Address Book" or other appeals that may eat up precious real estate. The same goes for overly long "From" names that can push down your subject line and the start of your message by several lines. Avoid including multiple columns and wide graphics or tables in your email, and make sure users can view your entire message by scrolling down—not to the right. Keep the "weight" of the email below 20kb.

Using solutions like Unica Email Optimizer and its eDesign Optimizer tool will enable you to identify coding errors when you are building your templates and also show you how your email will render on the screens of dozens of popular mobile, web and desktop email clients.

Challenge 3: **Tailoring communications for the mobile experience.**
The consumer mobile email experience is fundamentally different from the desktop or laptop ones. Marketers must cater to the different needs and expectations of subscribers who are increasingly opening and responding to messages while on the go.

Opportunities
Leverage customer data with Unica Campaign and the first-hand knowledge to build mobile campaigns that hit the mark with existing customers and promote loyalty and social advocacy. Leverage the latest technologies to help predict behavior, improve campaign relevancy, and trigger multi-channel messaging that is aligned with the customer's lifecycle and buying habits.

Drive measurable multi-channel sales. Studies show that the vast majority of American consumers say they would sign up to receive coupons through SMS, but only if they were free. Email is in the best position to fill that gap. Studies predict that mobile coupon transactions will be over two billion by 2013 versus just a half a million a couple of years ago. Marketers should deliver coupons through email to drive provable offline sales that are directly attributable to email marketing efforts.

Test, Test, Test! We are still in the earliest stages of mobile email marketing and have a lot to learn individually as marketers and collectively as an industry. In addition to ensuring that email campaigns are designed to render properly on web, desktop, and mobile email clients, marketers must also learn what works as well as what does not on the most popular mobile platforms as relates to an evolving customer email experience.

Conclusion
The smartphone revolution is reinventing email as the "killer app." As a marketer, it is your job to understand as much as you can about how your customers prefer to consume your marketing offers. Fortunately, next generation technologies can provide the granular level of information needed to effectively communicate—and successfully compete—in this rapidly changing landscape.

Leveraging customer-level knowledge and insight, mobile direct marketing can finally emerge from the SMS and plain-text email Stone Age, deliver greater value to consumers, and drive incremental email marketing revenue and ROI.

About Unica Email Optimization
Unica Email Optimization is a comprehensive set of digital marketing tools empowering marketers with cloud-based technology to optimize their email content, track their email deliverability, and measure the viral value of their email links across the social marketplace. With Unica Email Optimization, marketers can gauge the deliverability of their mission critical content, remediate problems before launching emails into production, and see what their content will look like across web, desktop and mobile email clients. In addition, marketers can optimize the click after the click by ensuring the uniform rendering of their landing pages across the world's most popular browsers and mobile devices. Unica Email Optimization is a critical set of tools that optimizes every step of the design, testing and production email-marketing life cycle.

About IBM Unica solutions
IBM Unica products are innovative marketing solutions that turn your passion for marketing into business success. Our comprehensive approach to interactive marketing enables organizations worldwide to understand their customers and use that understanding to engage buyers in highly relevant, interactive dialogues across digital, social, and traditional marketing channels.

Recognized as a leading integrator of enterprise systems for multiple industries, we help organizations with a wide variety of projects, analyzing real-time information and returning measurable value to stakeholders. In addition, we provide worldwide support for a variety of industry-partner content, services, and applications.

For more information

To learn more about IBM Unica soluitons, please contact your IBM marketing representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website: **ibm.com**/software/info/unica.

Smarter Commerce: An integrated approach

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