

Mobile Innovation (Part 1): Welcome to Your Innovation Moment, Marketers

by [Christina "CK" Kerley](#) | April 2, 2013 |



***Editor's note:** This article is the introduction to an upcoming series on five mobile innovation strategies, spanning brand engagement, sales channels, product offerings, customer experiences, and value propositions.*

We are witnessing a sweeping phenomenon play out before our eyes. An extraordinary medium called mobile has set the world ablaze with anytime-anywhere communications and placed unbelievable power into the palms of our hands. Via an unprecedented, unrelenting growth tear, [mobile is currently clocking six billion subscriptions worldwide](#)—with planet Earth shortly becoming home to more mobile-connected devices than human beings.

Our mobile devices are the first thing we reach for in the morning. They are the last thing we look at before we go to bed. And in between wake and sleep they are the one thing that we [check 150 times a day](#), on average. When they are not our first-screen productivity tools, they are our [second-screen](#) TV companions. When we are not buying goods on them directly, they are our trusted shopping assistants. And when we are not using them as our phones, they transform into our alarm clocks, cameras, calendars, calculators, notepads, navigational devices, weather channels, and more. Much more.

Make no mistake. We are a planet that is enthralled with, mystified by, and absolutely, positively manic over our mobile media. Without rival, with nary even a close contender, mobile has rightly and categorically claimed its heavyweight title: **Master of All Media, of All Time.**

Thanks to mobile, people are now connected every minute of every day to everyone—everywhere.

We used to endure the wait in line at the drug store, subway, and airport terminal. No longer. Now our smartphones turn all "downtime" periods into "me time" opportunities to text, tweet, surf the Web, send email, play with apps, stream TV shows, and call our business colleagues (and our BFFs).

We don't wonder whether a fact is true or a product is truly selling at the best price available; we validate everything—instantly—on our mobiles. And never again do we need to rely on faulty memory, as apps remind us to take our medicine, alert us to water our plants, and remember for us the name of that familiar song playing in the background.

Mobile is morphing into a veritable remote control of our lives: We can no longer effectively conduct how we live, work, communicate, and purchase... when we're deprived of our mobile lifelines.

Mobile is at the center of customers' lives; now brands can be at the center of their experiences.

Marketers have aspired for their brands to be at the center of their customers' lives; mobile now places that dream within their grasp. Whereas technology was once a smattering of separate devices for separate activities, now there is convergence. Whereas consuming media was once a stationary activity, now it moves with our every move.

Where marketers were once limited to a finite set of touchpoints of time, place, and activity where they could reach their audiences... now mobile transforms every time, every place, and every activity into an opportune point at which to touch our audiences with meaningful messages and provide them with newfound value in return for their interactions.

And where there was once the physical world and the virtual world, now worlds are bridged via [mobile augmented reality](#), and the air all around us becomes a thrilling new marketing channel.

Mobile frees marketers from the constraints that have impeded innovation.

For marketers, mobile doesn't merely herald a new technology; it presents an entirely new reality. Whereas the old reality was fraught with limits, lines of demarcation, constraints, and restrictions, mobile's new reality is devoid of them. Marketers are no longer constrained into using different media in different places: The world is now united via a global set of mobile media.

Marketers are no longer restricted by time, because they don't have to wait for audiences to turn on a computer or check in with their social networks: Mobile provides "always-on" immediacy. Marketers are no longer confined to best guesses as to the context in which their markets will see and act upon their messages, because mobile enables contextual relevancy across where (location), when (time), and what (content) their audiences need—at the exact times and places they are needed. And marketers are no longer split between one media for marketing their offerings, and

another for purchasing them, as their audiences now carry a sales channel, replete with a payment mechanism, everywhere they go—24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 shopping days a year.

Mobile is an innovative medium—but marketers themselves will become the innovators in this revolution.

A mobile revolution is afoot, but marketers must be this era's revolutionaries. They will, in fact, help transform their organizations not only by adopting new technologies for marketing but also by assuming an entirely new role: In addition to being directors of marketing for their brands, they will also act as **architects of innovation** for their businesses.

The importance of innovation cannot be overstated. Inarguably, innovation is the most important part, product, and process of any organization. After all, innovation is how business wars are won, captains of industry are crowned, companies are reinvented, and entire industries are rebooted. Far from an option, innovation is an imperative, as it drives real business growth while providing the only real insurance a company has against obsolescence.

And with mobile, opportunities for innovation abound... more so than with all other media. No other medium in the history of all media has so drastically changed market behavior; no other medium has become so core to all business and consumer activities, or so pervasive across every populace, in all pockets of the world.

A powerhouse pairing of sophisticated capabilities and robust marketing tools, mobile is the only medium that serves as a catalyst for innovation across the *entire* marketing ecosystem. Because, through mobile, marketers have the power to transform the totality of that ecosystem, spanning how their brands are positioned, the channels through which they are sold, the ways in which their audiences are engaged, the new products that they develop, and the customer experiences they create.

Consider mobile your innovation moment: A series of five mobile innovation strategies.

Perhaps most important for marketers to keep in mind: While transformative, mobile is *just* the technology; the innovation lies in how companies strategically wield this remarkable medium to advance their businesses. Marketers are best served by focusing on the spectacular suite of innovation opportunities that mobile affords them across their *entire* marketing ecosystem... which is precisely the inspiration behind, and the information contained within, this six-part series on mobile innovation.

Over the course of the next five segments, I will outline a framework of five mobile innovation strategies supported by a host of brand examples across a wide swath of industries and mobile

tools—ranging from SMS alerts, QR codes, and mobile websites to apps, augmented reality, and mobile sensors:

- Mobile Innovation Strategy No. 1: *Bolstering brand engagement* through mobile
- Mobile Innovation Strategy No. 2: *Initiating new sales channels* through mobile
- Mobile Innovation Strategy No. 3: *Energizing product offerings* through mobile
- Mobile Innovation Strategy No. 4: *Improving customer experiences* through mobile
- Mobile Innovation Strategy No. 5: *Emboldening value propositions* through mobile

Welcome to your innovation moment, marketers—a rare and precious opportunity to rethink, reimagine, and reinvent your brands via the most defining media of your lifetime. Let's make the most of it.

Next Week, Mobile Innovation Strategy No. 1: Innovating Brand Engagement Through Mobile.

Learn how to wield mobile's capabilities and tools to transform why, when, where, and how target audiences engage with your brands.



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