

# B2B THE MOBILE REVOLUTION ISON (WITH OR WITHOUT YOU.)



AS SEEN IN *CHIEF CONTENT OFFICER* MAGAZINE

# A Look at the Unprecedented Opportunity Mobile Holds for Business Audiences—and Why Mobile Needs to Be Your Brand Priority.

By Christina “CK” Kerley

**W**hether B2B marketers are still reeling from social media’s steep learning curve or haven’t yet connected the dots on how mobile uniquely aligns to their business audiences, they are missing the boat on the mobile revolution. Did I just declare a “mobile revolution” for B2Bs? You bet I did. A revolution, by definition, fundamentally changes the current order in a relatively short time—and mobile’s unprecedented ascendancy makes it the most sweeping set of media of our time.

Let’s first run the revolutionary numbers. With a mind-blowing worldwide adoption rate of 5 billion mobile subscriptions, bolstered by 40% growth predicted for smartphones for 2011, compounded by a whopping 240% year-over-year surge in social networking use via mobile devices in 2010, and topped off with a 100% growth forecasted for tablet computers this year (thanks iPad!)—the numbers are surreal.

And for marketers who have done their fair share of battle in the boardroom over data points, I dare say the data is all-out intoxicating.

The prevailing perception by many B2B marketers about mobile as purely a consumer medium is akin to arguing that professionals “turn off” when they arrive at work—something not supported by the data given that 72% of the U.S. workforce is already mobile and 64% of B2B decisionmakers read their email via mobile devices. The fact is, mobile devices represent a veritable lifeline to both work and home—and the boundaries between the two have been blurring at a rapid clip ever since the Internet connected us in the ’90s.

Perhaps most profound of all, mobile is set to trump laptops and desktops as the “first screen device” for all Internet access by 2013. Indeed B2B, a revolution is certainly afoot. And it’s just getting started. It’s not that B2B markets are going mobile, they’ve already gone mobile—and now it’s your turn.

## **Living (and Working) In Two Worlds.**

We now live (and work) in two worlds—the physical and the virtual—at all times. Whether we’re at our weekly staff meetings and secretly checking our emails, IMs and texts, at the local grocery market and browsing through our mobile apps for new recipes, watching our favorite TV shows while also tweeting our reactions with other fans, or attending industry tradeshow and scanning exhibitors’ QR codes to easily save contact information in our phones ... we simultaneously live in two worlds at all times.

And here’s the kicker, we don’t even stop to think about how often we toggle between these two worlds. Nor do we realize how quickly we’ve become accustomed to this “new normal” where physical and virtual worlds converge on a minute-by-minute basis. If we as users don’t realize how normal this convergence has become, then we can’t expect that of our audiences.

## **Mobile Is Set To Trump Laptops and Desktops As The ‘First Screen Device’ For All Internet Access By 2013.**

Marketers must realize that their brands are equally present and powerful in both the physical and virtual worlds. Said another way, the marketing ecosystem just got larger, with more opportunities, more media and more best practices to learn.

## **Think INSIDE the Box.**

With users’ patience plummeting from the time they wait for a website to load—a load time that’s dropped a startling 50% to two seconds in the course of three years—real time is now the only speed. Forget the wide-ranging mobile tools and cool apps, your first step is to optimize your existing content and “think inside the box” that is the constrained space of mobile devices.

As for B2Bs waiting to go mobile until next quarter or next year, here’s a heaping dose of reality, if you have a website, you’re already in



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the mobile world—and chances are, you're making a terrible impression with your audiences. That fancy website, replete with all the bells and whistles that can fit on a laptop screen, is now scrunched into the miniature screens of your users' mobile devices. Make no mistake, without optimizing for the mobile environment, your site is making for an unusable, illegible experience on the one device that is always on and always within your target audiences' reach.

With that said, smartphones are but one screen for which your content needs to be optimized. The market for tablet computers is also booming, and, whether at home or on the road, executives are using their laptops less in favor of its lighter, hipper cousin. Having just claimed a \$5 billion bounty in the three quarters since launching iPad, Apple has singlehandedly set ablaze

the battle for the in-between screen, a market that will shortly crowd with many contenders. The implication for B2B? Marketers will have to think inside many boxes and build out their content for multiple mobile screens to accommodate varying levels of space and media formats, like video and audio.

The mobile content strategy for *360i's Mobile Marketing Playbook* lives by example. By optimizing its site for each and every device—be it desktop, laptop, smartphone or tablet computer—360i has produced a compelling experience for the business audience, no matter how large or small the screen.



*After downloading the app, Regus users scan the area in front of them through their smartphone cameras while the app populates the viewing area in real time with office options in close proximity to them.*

If you're a B2B marketer, "better, faster, easier" is your mobile mantra. Companies that develop mobile strategies that make their audiences' work-related activities better, faster and easier will win mobile hearts, minds and market share.

**Regus**, the world's largest provider of workplace solutions, developed a mobile app that allows users—be they located in Savannah, Sydney, Singapore or any city across 81 countries—to quickly and easily purchase temporary office space and meeting rooms. After downloading the app, users scan the area in front of them through their smartphone cameras while the app populates the viewing area in real time with office options in close proximity to them, enabling users to simply click on the graphics for more information on respective spaces, or to contact Regus directly via email or click-to-call.

Through location-based and augmented reality technologies inherent to the app, Regus is leveraging features that are all-too-often brushed off by B2Bs as only being appropriate for consumer audiences. Yet, as Regus has found, in less than six months with more than 19,000 downloads across more than 85 countries, business audiences also engage with and benefit from these bleeding-edge technologies. That's right, B2B, given the right mobile strategy, you can create killer apps, too.

**Hoover's** "Near Here" mobile app uses location-based technology as a sales prospecting tool. Through the app, users can identify potential customers, learn about their businesses and get directions to their office locations—a welcome feature for the proverbial road warriors who are sales forces. But there's an added benefit of geographically clustering one's prospects by corporate locations, as sales professionals can use their smartphones to efficiently group their in-person sales calls within a given area which, in turn, increases their productivity.

Additionally, when traveling within territories both close and far, sales forces can use the app to chart which of their prospects' offices are close to their current locations. As several of Hoover's mobile users have found, the feature avails them of new sales calls possibilities that would have otherwise been missed revenue opportunities. The key takeaway? In leveraging mobile tools, Hoover's has made prospecting better, faster and easier for the target

### **Better, Faster, Easier.**

Unlike B2C marketers who tap novel approaches to engage consumers, business audiences are driven by efficiency over entertainment. While consumers have time to spare, professionals never have enough of it.

audience, while making the brand's core value proposition—supporting sales professionals in their prospecting efforts—more relevant than ever in this newly mobile world.

### Now It's Truly Personal.

In the high-touch, highly personal branding environment of B2B, relationships are everything and executives have forever sought tools that bring them closer to the Holy Grail of 1:1 marketing. The 1:1 medium is here marketers, and thy name is mobile.

Think about it: What device is more personal to you than your mobile phone? A device that is always on, always on your person and personally customizable in every way—from the ringtones and pictures set for each caller and utilities uses for daily activities, to the MP3s that fill your playlist and the apps you download for work and play.

After all, through the powerful processing capabilities of smartphones, mobile has morphed into a personal computer that “just happens to ring.”

Due to its personal nature, mobile is the one medium where marketers must be invited into their audiences' worlds. Be it prospects opting-in to receive SMS alerts, downloading apps, scanning QR codes or texting short codes for more information, marketers will need to provide high value for these transactions, ensure simplicity for users and provide an experience worthy of that precious invitation—or they won't be invited back.

### Mobilize We Must.

Whether or not going mobile is on your priority list, the mobile revolution is well underway. In the technology lollapalooza that has been the past decade, digital and social media are the warm-up acts to the blockbuster headliner that is mobile.

But mobile devices aren't the story. They're just the screens. The mobile revolution isn't defined by a migration in devices, but a sea change across our business audiences' needs, preferences, expectations and thresholds. These dramatic shifts mark the difference between a mere evolution in technology and a full-on revolution in how we as B2Bs build relationships and, yes, ROI in this anytime-anywhere, always-on world.

Revolution, anyone?

Through her consulting, speaking and writing, Christina “CK” Kerley guides B2B companies through the opportunities and complexities of marketing with modern media. Find CK blogging at CKBlog.com.

► Watch CK talk about  
the Mobile Revolution:  
<http://dlvr.it/J9hv7>



## 5 Steps To Start Smart In B2B Mobile

Want to launch strong?  
Follow these 5 steps:

- 1 Migrate To A Mobile Mindset:** Always (always!) think “mobile first” in your marketing content and programs. Educate yourself, your team and your company on how mobile is changing your markets, and what that means to your marketing.
- 2 Develop Your Mobile Website:** Don't be going all “app-happy” before you develop a solid mobile website that is designed specifically around your mobile users' needs—remember, they don't have the same needs, or the same screen sizes, when at their laptops.
- 3 Transform Existing Content:** Content is King, and B2Bs are the Kings of content. We invented thought leadership after all! Conduct a thorough audit of all the content you've created and assess how it can be repurposed through new tools (e.g. video, audio, SMS, apps), and in new formats like quicker videos and audio mp3s.
- 4 Mobilize Your Marketing Programs:** Determine how integrating mobile components can improve current programs. Could you feature QR codes at tradeshow? Create an app to ensure mobile access to your branded social-media community? Leverage SMS alerts to promote your annual research study findings? Optimize your email newsletter so they're legible on mobile devices?
- 5 Move The Needle Through Mobile:** Focus on new mobile programs that create real impact, by being first-to-market in your sector and using mobile tools to create innovative programs that truly move the needle for your business.

*Illustrations by J. Kalinowski with images courtesy of Shutterstock.*