

Maximize your campaign with local digital marketing

With smartphones redefining prime time, capitalize on geolocation and local digital marketing to reach the right people, at the right time.

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Imagine two restaurants. One has a traditional advertising campaign, the other uses technology to find potential clients in the area and target them specifically. While the former strategy may boost name recognition, the latter is more likely to get hungry clients through the door and ordering.

Tracking mobile devices via GPS, Bluetooth and Wi-Fi allows digital marketing to reach people locally and tempt them with custom messages. And digital marketing on a local level often trumps national campaigns for its cost-effectiveness, especially for retail businesses and restaurants.

Reaching someone at the right time can turn a walk-by into a sale, explain IESE professor [Julián Villanueva](#) and consultants Luis Ferrándiz and Rosa Fernández-Velilla in their technical note "Geolocation and Local Digital Marketing."

Think local, act digital

In addition to being a cost-effective way to advertise, local digital marketing can be used as a tool to respond to the growing need for local information and build loyalty among distributors, retailers and other intermediaries that stand to benefit from a brand's local presence. Meanwhile, many search engines now prioritize results located close to the device making the search. As a result, local digital marketing campaigns can also enhance a brand's organic presence in local search results.

Geographic information, as provided by mobile devices, is highly marketable in conjunction with data on demographics, tastes and usage. For example, with signal readers installed, the manager of a shopping mall can assess the number of customers in each area, the time each person spends in the mall and which stores they visit. This information can then be used to launch campaigns and set rent prices.

Channel your marketing

In local digital marketing, there are seven key channels.

1. **Local websites.** Brands with local websites can guide customers straight to the nearest location. Dunkin' Donuts does this, allowing users to enter their ZIP code or use their cell phone's GPS for a more local experience.
2. **Local searches.** Half of mobile phone browser searches are for local establishments, according to Google. Brands should therefore make sure their local websites are mobile-friendly and use local search engine optimization (SEO) and sponsored-links strategies to complement their national strategy.
3. **Local deals.** From Groupon, which offers deep discounts on various products and services in a particular city or region by requiring a minimum number of people to pre-purchase the deal, to coupon aggregators such as RetailMeNot, there are many ways to promote local deals online. Yet there is some risk that these sites attract customers who will then wait for special offers before making purchases.
4. **Social networks.** For added value, many big brands respond on a local level. Walmart's Facebook application, My Local Walmart, keeps the focus on stores, promotions and conversations in the user's area. Geolocation can be used on both Facebook (the social network with the highest penetration) and Twitter.
5. **Location-based services.** Check-in applications, such as Foursquare, encourage users to share their location. These applications provide companies with opportunities to offer deals, ask for opinions and make recommendations.
6. **Recommendations.** Yelp, TripAdvisor and other recommendation aggregators have enjoyed increasing popularity. Brands should manage the comments posted on these sites carefully, since many potential customers read them.
7. **Advertising and alerts.** Ad networks, such as iAd and AdMob, enable embedded advertising in mobile applications. This type of advertising has yet to take off, due to user wariness about sharing location information. Nonetheless, applications such as Apple's iBeacon are making headway by allowing personalized messages to be sent.

Set objectives, measure success

Localized campaigns are often the last item on the marketing budget. Yet special care should be taken to delegate them to qualified people. Implementing, managing and monitoring local campaigns is a complex undertaking, due to the detail and differentiation needed for each geographical location.

In the local realm, brands should have a defined strategy and a clear goal. The goal may be increasing visibility, boosting store traffic or building customer loyalty on the ground. Choosing the right channels and applications requires well-defined objectives and dependable tracking mechanisms to measure success.

In a globalized world, thinking local can reap real rewards.

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