The Consumer Behaviors Shaping the Next Generation of Mobile Experiences

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The digital experiences people expect and marketers can deliver have changed dramatically, and Jason Spero has had a front-row seat. Now, Google's VP of Global Performance Solutions is keeping an eye on the consumer behaviors shaping the next generation of experiences.

We're living in the golden age of user experience. Startups are upending entire industries with their focus on simplicity, while traditional companies reinvent themselves on mobile to stay relevant.

But it's not the technology that gets me most excited. Rather it's the rich experiences that technology is enabling for consumers and the impact it's having on marketers like you and me. The speed at which brands are introducing compelling new experiences is only accelerating. We've not seen anything like it before.

For us as marketers, that means consumer expectations are higher than ever. We're no longer competing with the best experience in our respective categories. We're now competing with the best experience a consumer has ever had.

think with Google

Every time a company designs a rich, useful, or new experience, it raises the bar for what consumers care about. On the flip side, if an experience is frustrating or annoying, a consumer may not give that company a second chance. Building a great user experience is a challenge, especially as we all grapple with how and when to experiment with new technologies.

But rather than think about the technologies first, I find it helps to imagine the experience you'd want as a consumer, apply it to your brand, and build toward that. Here are three things I hear from consumers when it comes to what they expect from brands:

Help me faster   Know me better   Wow me everywhere

"Help me faster"

Technology is becoming assistive in ways we couldn't have imagined a few years ago. We can pay for coffee with a tap. We can deposit a check by snapping a photo. And we can order laundry detergent with a voice command to a digital assistant.

But as technology enables faster experiences, consumers are growing impatient. Their willingness to wait is declining and, as a result, consumers are shifting their thinking from, "Who does it best?" to "Who does it best now?"

53% of people will abandon a mobile site if it takes **more than three seconds to load**.

There's a price to pay if you don't consider speed. Fifty-three percent of people will abandon a mobile site if it takes more than three seconds to load.[1] Now here's the reality: We tested 900,000 mobile sites globally and found that the average time it takes to fully load a mobile page is 22 seconds.[2]

Speed is a developer's problem, a designer's problem, and therefore, a marketer's problem. When marketers prioritize speed it has a ripple effect. Designers must then focus on selecting visual elements, fonts, and a design structure that allow for fast, frictionless mobile experiences. And developers can further optimize, ensuring the best mobile experience possible.

"Know me better"

Personalized and relevant experiences are key to connecting with consumers, and they have a positive impact on the bottom line. Eighty-nine percent of U.S. marketers reported that personalization on their websites or apps resulted in an increase in revenue.3

89% of U.S. marketers reported that **personalization** on their websites or apps resulted in an **increase in revenue**.

Source: eMarketer/Evergage, "2016 Trends in Personalization," conducted by Researchscape. Data was provided to eMarketer by Evergage; June 14, 2016.

But personalization is a strategy, not a feature. We have an opportunity to be smarter with data, using important signals about customers—such as browsing behavior or CRM data—to shape their experiences.

For example, when Maybelline was preparing to launch new products for contouring—a type of makeup application that is becoming more mainstream—it used Google Insights to craft how-to videos, which are personalized by intent and demographic. As a result, Maybelline's videos racked up 9M views.

Likewise, 63% of people expect brands to use their purchase history to provide them with personalized experiences.4 In other words, if you know I just purchased a pair of shoes, then offer me socks or a matching belt to go with them.

"Wow me everywhere"

Brands need to consider how all of their experiences—across media, channels, and devices—fit together.
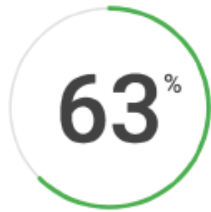
63% of people expect brands to deliver a **consistent experience every time** they interact with a brand.

Sixty-two percent of people expect brands to deliver a consistent experience every time they interact with a brand. But only 42% believe brands actually do provide a consistent experience.

Walgreens provides a good example of seamless, consistent experiences in action. The brand's team recognized that mobile could help it remove barriers between online and offline. Its mobile app connects consumers with a doctor or pharmacist online, and consumers can then pick up prescriptions in-store. Likewise, beauty advisors are armed with tablets, so they can quickly pull up past purchases online and make recommendations for offline purchases.

The approach is paying off. Customers who interact with Walgreens in-store and on mobile are six times more valuable than someone who only visits the brand's physical stores.

Bringing it all together

As consumer behaviors shift, it will be important to rethink the investments we make in the user experience. Removing friction and bridging the gaps between channels—all while treating each customer as a unique individual—will be key.

Ultimately, creating great digital customer experiences is not solely a product challenge or a marketing challenge. It's a business opportunity.

And those who invest in creating memorable experiences will win users' hearts, minds, and ultimately, dollars.

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Jason Spero

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Sources

1 Google Data, Global, n=3,700 aggregated, anonymized Google Analytics data from a sample of mWeb sites opted into sharing benchmark data, Mar. 2016.

2 Google Research, Webpagetest.org, Global, sample of more than 900,000 mWeb sites across small, medium, and Fortune 1000 businesses. Testing was performed using Chrome and emulating a Nexus 5 device on a globally representative 3G connection. 1.6Mbps download speed, 300ms Round-Trip Time (RTT). Tested on EC2 on m3.medium instances, similar in performance to high-end smartphones, Jan. 2017.

3 eMarketer/Evergage, "2016 Trends in Personalization," conducted by Researchscape. Data was provided to eMarketer by Evergage; June 14, 2016.

4,5 Google/Greenberg, U.S., "Rising Expectations in Consumer Experiences," n=1,501 consumers aged 18–54, Mar. 2017.