

A man with dark hair, wearing a red and blue plaid button-down shirt, is looking down at a smartphone in his right hand. He is standing on a city street with a brick building in the background. The text "A Micro-Moments Report Card: Are We Making the Grade?" is overlaid on the image in white.

A Micro-Moments Report Card: Are We Making the Grade?

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Every day, people use mobile devices to look for answers, discover new things, and make decisions. In these micro-moments, marketers can be there to help, but are we? Google data shows that many brands are missing this opportunity. See how FIAT, Walgreens, and Unilever meet the moments that matter.

think with **Google**

If you're a marketer, you see the massive revolution that's taking place as a result of mobile every day. Scratch that—if you're a *human being*, you see it taking place. For many of us, our phones are the first things we pick up in the morning and the last things we put down before we go to sleep.

For brands, mobile is creating more moments to connect with people than ever before. Some of those moments, such as when we're catching up on relatives' vacation photos or texting with friends, may be useful to us, but they're not really times when brands should be there. Then, there are those moments that matter—the [I-want-to-know](#), [I-want-to-go](#), [I want-to-do](#), and [I want-to-buy](#) moments. At Google, we call these [micro-moments](#), and we see billions of them every day as users look for answers, discover new things, and make decisions. These are the moments when brands *should* be there to help, but are we?

Share of intent

As marketers, we all want our brands to be there when consumers are looking for us. We obsess over our share on the shelf, our share of voice on TV and the places we can put ourselves, hoping people can't help but stumble upon us.

But maybe we are obsessing over the wrong things. We grade ourselves on impressions. Not impact. Frequency. Not utility. Maybe we should be looking instead at our share of *intent*—the percent of time we are there to answer people's needs, questions, and wants.

Being there and being useful in these moments won't only improve your customers' lives; it'll improve your bottom line. Looking across 36 studies, we found that just showing up in search results on mobile grows unaided brand awareness by an average increase of 6.9 percentage points or 46% among those who saw a search ad.¹

Opportunity for improvement

The moments that matter are often small, everyday moments. Here's an example: I recently searched for "best curly hair shampoo." (It turns out I'm not alone in my quest for help on this topic. Searches for curly hair help are among the top haircare-related searches.) And searches like this one are clear opportunities for brands to be there in moments of need when someone is actively looking for a product. So how are the top products doing?

Share of Queries



Source: Google Search Data, Q2 2015.

For this search term, top haircare brands (shown as Brand A, B, and C) are each there at most 10% of the time: Ninety percent of the time, ads from these brands aren't showing up when someone searches.² Across the board—travel, auto, packaged goods, and finance—we see similar gaps between the moments consumers are looking for products and the percentage of time brands are actually there for them.

And this isn't just happening on Google Search. The same is true when we look at the second-most-popular place people go to find answers: video. Looking at YouTube searches for haircare, the top brands are once again largely absent—despite the fact that beauty and fashion videos are wildly popular on YouTube, have been watched more than 51 billion times, and have an accelerating viewership rate.³

These missed opportunities happen on Search and YouTube as well as across industries and verticals, and they are happening more and more on the powerful computers in our pockets. We're not the only ones who have noticed. [The latest report from Mary Meeker](#) sums it up: Consumer mobile usage outpaces mobile advertising spend by 3X.* If this were a report card I received when I was a kid, my teachers would have said I was failing. Today, they would say there's opportunity for improvement.

“Being there and being useful in these moments won't only improve your customers' lives; it'll improve your bottom line.”

Meeting the moment

Some brands are taking full advantage of this opportunity. A great example is Unilever. By using Google data to analyze hair trends and by talking to consumers, the brand's marketing team figured out that many people were getting styling and beauty tips on YouTube from video bloggers. The team decided to meet the moment by hiring those video bloggers to create videos on behalf of the brand. Its YouTube channel, All Things Hair, is now live in five countries. To promote it, the team ran Search, TrueView, and Lightbox display ads. In the first year, [consumers have used this channel for their haircare tips more than 50 million times](#). Consumers looked for help, and 50 million times, Unilever's channel is

where they found it. Within ten weeks of launch, Unilever became the top hair brand channel on YouTube.

Brands are recognizing that these small moments happen for big purchases as well. Take [FIAT](#). In 2009, the car brand re-entered to the U.S. market after a 27-year absence with its city car, the FIAT 500. FIAT needed to grow brand awareness among young consumers without spending big on mass media. At the time, Americans were in the midst of the recession, so their interest in small, efficient cars was at an all-time high. The FIAT team saw the trend and deployed search ads on category terms like “small car” and “city car” to reach people in their moments of intent. FIAT also took advantage of context, directing desktop users to a car configurator tool and mobile users to the nearest dealerships. The results were tremendous: [FIAT saw a 127% increase in unaided recall](#), and the Fiat 500 became a huge success in North America.

The brands that really get it aren't just there for consumers: They're also useful to them. Take Walgreens, for example. The retailer built an all-in-one app to address common points of friction for its consumers. [The app](#) lets you refill prescriptions in 30 seconds by scanning your prescription bottles with your phone's camera. In a couple of clicks, you can also print photos directly from your phone and pick them up at a local store. By eliminating common points of friction, Walgreens has seen a 6X increase in spend among shoppers using their app, as compared to those who shop without it.

Utility trumps novelty

In advertising, we often want to be the first to do something, and we want it to be amazing. But more often than not, what really matters to consumers and to your bottom line isn't the novelty of your work; it's the utility.

The truth is that the least sexy stuff is often most important, such as making the process of ordering prescriptions easier or offering a way to find that perfect hairdo for unwieldy curls. In these moments, being there and being useful is essential.

So where do you begin? With tools like Google Trends, Google Consumer Surveys, and YouTube Trends, you can uncover valuable insights into what your customers are looking for and watching. And although the data that digital provides is unprecedented, some of the best insights come from good old-fashioned methods such as talking to your customers. Once you know the questions and needs they have, you can make sure you're there for them in those moments. If you aren't, the immediacy of mobile means that people will go to the brand that *is* there.



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* When comparing % of total media consumption vs. % of total advertising spend.

Sources

- 1 Google/Ipsos MediaCT, Search for Brands Industry Research, 2013–2015.
- 2 Google Search Data, Q2 2015.
- 3 Pixability/YouTube Research, Global Data, 2005–2015.