

# Mobile Engagement: Moving Beyond Location To Understand Consumer Context

Is your mobile marketing personalized to give consumers the right information or offer at the right time?



*By Carla Fitzgerald from Smith Micro. 14th September, 2015*

**We live in a fully connected world. With an estimated 7 billion mobile subscriptions worldwide, the question facing marketers is: What can businesses do to fully harness the power of this technology in order to connect with consumers in meaningful ways? Simply offering a mobile app with a mini-Web experience falls short given the vast potential of smartphones that are more powerful than a laptop was 10 years ago. The secret to achieving a new level of mobile engagement lies in harnessing the untapped power of smartphones to understand consumer context. This consumer context is revealed once marketers shift their view of mobile as merely a channel and approach it as a relationship.**

Marketers who always talk and never listen without observing and remembering what people like, what they do, and where they go, won't keep relationships long.

The technologies we utilize need to be smarter.

We need to observe more than location and we need to combine a series of events over time to really understand consumer context, preferences, and intent in order to open the door to real engagement.

By taking advantage of mobile-detected triggers and combining this information with purchase history and other customer data, businesses can, for the first time, create highly personalized marketing campaigns that engage consumers with the right information, offers, and/or mobile services, at the right time.

## Beyond Location To Contextual Insight

The advent of location-based services that utilize beacons, GPS, Wi-Fi, magnetic fields and even LED lighting, offer valuable insights into consumer behavior and preferences.

Businesses can see where consumers are going, when they go, and how long they stay to some extent.

This information can be used to trigger offers; however, when supported with additional contextual data gleaned from a smartphone, such as dwell time, repeat visits, app activity, etc., customer preferences and intent can be better inferred.

If location is the only driving factor, marketers run the risk of annoying consumers much like the guy handing out lewd postcards on the Vegas strip.

To make location-based marketing relevant and really elevate consumer engagement, a contextual view of that information is sorely needed.

For example, a baseball fan at a ballgame will pass several food stations on her way to her seat. Rather than barraging the fan with offers, a context-enabled app (assuming opt-in) can observe her lingering in front of a burger joint for two minutes, and detecting several vegetarian-related apps on her phone, can offer a deal on a meat-free mushroom burger.

## **Context = Personalization**

Being able to gain a contextual understanding of consumer circumstances and behaviors allows for true personalization of mobile engagement that doesn't just involve promotions, but also personalized service.

Consider this retail example:

A customer enters a home improvement store and receives a welcome message on his smartphone. The message asks if he needs help shopping today. He taps 'not now' and heads to the washer/dryer section. His phone interacts with beacons and detects that he's been dwelling in the section for 15 minutes. The phone also detects that he's launched Yelp and Consumer Reports mobile apps.

Armed with this circumstantial knowledge, the store sends a price matching notification to his device, offers free delivery on washer/dryer combos, and asks if he needs assistance from a home appliance expert. The customer taps 'yes', gets the details he needs, and decides to make his purchase in store that day.

In this example the customer isn't just offered a discount, he's offered customer service at the right moment, from the right person, and reminded of the advantage of taking home what they wanted on the same day.

Even without any notifications sent to the device, these contextual insights of dwell time and app usage would help to identify showrooming behavior, allowing stores to plan better staff coverage on the floor.

It's an exciting new mobile world for marketers, but without a full contextual picture, marketers are left with a big gap between what can be offered and what should be offered to consumers via mobile.

A context-driven approach bridges that gap, better utilizing the intelligence of smartphones to enable highly relevant and timely engagement with customers.

**Are you harnessing the power of smartphones to understand consumer context and build relationships with consumers?**

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As Chief Marketing Officer at Smith Micro, Carla is responsible for corporate and product marketing, technical sales, technical publications, business development, and investor relations.