KEEPING PACE WITH MOBILE

FORESEE’S FIVE TIPS FOR A BETTER MOBILE EXPERIENCE

By:
Eric Feinberg
Senior Director, Mobile, ForeSee

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INTRODUCTION

The mobile world is maturing at a lightning-fast pace. Extensive research shows that the percentage of web traffic accounted for by mobile devices is growing at an astounding pace.

Across all industries, ForeSee clients see an average of 10%-20% of overall requests to a given company’s digital experiences coming from mobile devices (including mobile web and apps). This means that for a company with 1 million unique monthly visitors, 100,000 to 200,000 individuals are influenced by a mobile experience with that brand—and that percentage is continuously increasing.

More and more, the mobile device is becoming a prime catalyst in the purchase process. Modern consumers, with the growing popularity and affordability of smartphones and the rise of the tablet, have more knowledge at their fingertips than ever before, and they’re not afraid to use it. They can, and do, stand inside a store and use their mobile phone to check the price and availability of products they are looking at on the shelf right in front of them. If they cannot find what they are looking for, they will find the location (complete with turn-by-turn directions) of the closest competitor. In one way or another, mobile contributes to decision making, even if it is not the channel where the product or service is purchased.

It’s confusing enough myopically, looking at just the mobile experience. What makes it even more perplexing is that today’s consumers are multi-channel, multi-device consumers that push the boundaries of traditional engagement. Mobile has an impressive duality, making for a complex, sometimes hard-to-navigate environment. This duality is: mobile is both a stand-alone channel where people can engage with it alone and a companion channel where it supports other experiences they might be having with the brand.
That’s why it’s so important to know: How are you doing? Are you meeting your mobile visitors’ needs? Are you exceeding their expectations? Are you encouraging them to transact with you in other channels like your store, your traditional website, and your company’s social media page? Are they more likely to consume content in other channels that you own, such as print publications, your website, or on your Facebook page? How does their mobile experience contribute to their overall brand perception? Is their experience with your mobile app making them more or less likely to buy from you? Are you inadvertently driving them to competitors?

Fundamentally, are mobile-optimized sites and apps helping or hurting companies? There are a myriad of ways to bring life to the mobile experience: from building mobile experiences completely in-house to linking up with proven third-party mobile platform providers for assistance and expertise to leveraging approaches
like responsive design to extend existing digital experiences to the mobile sphere. Also, what improvements need to be made? Companies or organizations need to be careful when setting sail towards creating mobile experiences, since where they start often determines where they will end up.

These are all hard questions to answer, but they need to be answered. Companies need to start by measuring. Using a reliable, accurate, and sensitive technology to do so will help answer the tough questions and shine light on what is and isn’t working as well as which changes and improvements will work to retain and gain customers and prospects.

ForeSee’s goal is to help create a better mobile world—for the organizations building and maintaining mobile sites and apps and for the people who use them. This paper covers ForeSee’s Five Tips for a Better Mobile Experience.

Although ForeSee is the foremost authority on the mobile customer experience, the real experts are the customers. It’s their point of view that is being channeled and listened to in order to understand the success of client mobile endeavors, the effect the mobile experience has on their other channels (web, store, contact center, social media), and the company in its entirety.

It should be noted that all of the examples used in this report are about smartphones. The tablet, with its unique functions, is also growing exponentially and is a suitable topic deserving of its own white paper discussion.
WHY MEASURE MOBILE

There are two key types of mobile analytics that everyone should be tracking: behavioral and attitudinal.

Behavioral metrics, like Google Analytics, measure what already happened—a second ago, a day ago, a week ago, a month ago, a year ago. Knowing what already happened is critical because it allows executives to understand why something did or didn’t work.

Attitudinal measurements consist of survey instruments that engage consumers during or shortly after their mobile interaction, which allows for a true measurement of customer satisfaction. This is the time to really talk to customers about what their intent is. Are they satisfied? Are they not satisfied, and if not, why not? These key metrics are helpful in guiding analytics and deciding what the next steps should be. Executives can then take intelligent data and make educated and informative decisions to move their company forward. There’s a saying at ForeSee: You have to know what you know, and you have to know what you don’t know.

What most people know in the mobile space right now is the quantity of things: the number of app downloads, the number of mobile websites visitors, and a menagerie of other behavioral data. This is good information to have; however, there’s a bit of a challenge there. Since the popularity of mobile use to shop is increasing and the number of people using mobile is increasing, the basic metrics around the experience are going to increase, regardless of if a company is doing an excellent job or not. This could lead to misinformation and misguided decisions.

What people need to know is what they don’t know—the quality of things and what is motivating someone to take action. As mobile use continues to grow, companies need to benchmark against themselves, their peers, and the market. They also need to understand how mobile is being used. Is it supportive to other channels like web or store? Is it complementary? Is it distinct of them, or all of the above?

The voice of the customer is louder than any other voice out there and should be listened to first and foremost. Start by measuring it.
TIP 1: WELCOME CUSTOMERS TO YOUR MOBILE HOME

When someone visits a traditional website, companies do their best to customize the customer’s experience based on his or her recent visits, referring URL, browser, and so on. The same needs to be done in mobile. Company leaders should ‘welcome visitors to their mobile homes’ the way they would welcome people into a virtual and real home. Here’s how:

> **Say hello.** Repeat visitors are becoming more and more commonplace. Therefore, if a company is taking the time to collect visitor information through cookies, it should take the time to acknowledge these loyal customers personally and say hello. Amazon.com does a great job of this.

> **Acknowledge them.** While most mobile visitors are anonymous, there are many, many things to know about them, such as: their device’s operating system, screen size, and referring URL. The IMDb.com mobile site acknowledges individuals even if they have never been there before by recognizing the type of phone and offering a link to download the app or the option to go to the full site.

IMDb recognizes the operating system being used by the visitor and asks if s/he wants to download from the App Store, which is Apple.
> **Be their guide.** Many mobile experience executives think that if they don’t have the best mobile site possible, then they shouldn’t put anything mobile-optimized out there. That’s not entirely true and in some cases just plain wrong. Customers are smart, and they appreciate honesty and altruistic intent.

Discount Tire does an admirable job of guiding visitors to the three main things people want to do on mobile: find a store, see promotions, or look up product information. After this initial interstitial landing page for mobile handset visitors, visitors still have to go to the full site to accomplish most tasks, but these few mobile-optimized interstitial pages show that the company understands what the customer wants and caters to their needs and expectations. This is a good idea of what a company can do as an interim solution while in the process of instituting a more comprehensive mobile site.

> **All of the above.** Executives should strive to do all of the above. Even if it’s just a single mobile-optimized page, it will show the multitude of visitors that the company is trying to meet their new mobile needs.
TIP 2: CHALLENGE CONVENTION

Mobile is ripe for creativity, and more business leaders need to take more chances. Those who do only the bare minimum will be left behind as others innovate and excel. In addition to assuming that a company can and should deliver everything customers have come to expect from the more traditional website, the amazingly smaller form and fantastic new technologies within touchscreen capabilities factor into customers’ rising expectations and wants in mobile. Here are some technologies available in the mobile space to be creative and take chances with:

> **Geolocation.** By using location-based services like Meijer’s Find-it app, users can track down anything they need while right inside the store. Geolocation can help further customize the mobile experience. All retailers should be providing a different user experience for three groups of people: mobile visitors inside their stores, mobile visitors nearby their stores (or prepping for a store visit), and everyone else. Executives should strive to develop the fourth user experience aimed at those in a competitor’s store.
> Use HTML5 or similar. Like m.ESPN.com and TripAdvisor, using smart layering techniques allows for seemingly magical navigation across and through content.

> Cut or Curate. While one faction of the dueling schools of mobile navigation says to cut content to make it fit in this smaller handset experience, the other side says to simply curate content beautifully and render every piece of content within this new paradigm. Anyone who says that the form factor is restrictive is unimaginative. The people at m.footballfanatics.com did a brilliant job of challenging convention on their retail confirmation page. They put every single thing a visitor would get on the traditional web into a perfectly designed confirmation page.
> **Familiar things in unfamiliar places.** By using Crackle’s and ABC’s mobile phone experiences, visitors can view content on their own time. In some cases, they can view broadcast content before it even airs. Companies should constantly think about how to deliver valuable content and shopping experiences in ways that delight and satisfy consumers.

> **Simple navigation is not better navigation.** Just because it is easy to splash identical navigation on mobile sites and apps doesn’t mean it’s the best for visitors. Navigational structures should be specific and creative. If a company is just getting in to the game by developing a mobile experience, simple might be better. If it comes down to the choice between getting in the game and doing nothing—get in the game.
> **Off-canvas navigation solves much.** When building a proper mobile experience from scratch or evolving an existing, full mobile experience, a navigational schema such as “off-canvas” navigation should be a consideration. Digital product leader and design expert Luke Wroblewski speaks eloquently about this in “Multi-Device Layout Patterns” at www.LukeW.com. This type of design can really wow your visitors without them being mobile experts. These layouts use the space outside a browser’s view to hide secondary elements until people need them. Facebook is the most well-known example of this approach. As a visitor taps the navigation queue in the upper left, the full navigation is revealed as the content slides over to make room.

**TIP 3: MEASURE, MEASURE, MEASURE**

In the old days, before mobile app and sites and even the traditional website, “location, location, location” was the typical business mantra. Those were the days when a business would live or die by how physically visible its presence was.

In today’s ever-expanding mobile and online world, companies—out of need rather than want—are changing the way they do business, and if they haven’t yet, then they need to soon before they become extinct. In this day and age, it’s more about measurement than location, since consumers, through web and mobile devices, can shop anywhere at any time. Measurement gives executives insights into the who, what, where, when, and why of their customer and prospective customer base.
In analytics, mobile analytics especially, it’s all about measurement, measurement, measurement. Here are four things that will help mobile initiatives succeed:

**FORESEE SATISFACTION ANALYTICS FOR MOBILE**

**Measure effectiveness and success**
- Apply science to continuous customer experience measurement across mobile-optimized sites, tablets, and apps
- Measure satisfaction and drivers of satisfaction and impact on future behaviors
- Measure how mobile influences and is influenced by other channels

**Gain intelligence**
- Profile your mobile users
  - Who is your mobile audience: personas, segments, demographics
  - Where are your consumers using mobile and when in the lifecycle
  - Why do they use mobile
- Diagnose strengths, weaknesses and opportunities

**Prioritize improvements**
- Predict impact of change on satisfaction and behavior
- Provide actionable insights

**Benchmark your performance**
- Compare against peers, competitors, best-in-class, yourself over time

The most important thing is to do these things continuously. This continuous measurement is vital as mobile initiatives are being designed, getting implemented, changing, and moving forward. Not only are companies changing over time, but so are their customers: their needs should be met and their expectations exceeded.
TIP 4: PERFORMANCE KILLS

When mobile-optimized websites or apps work, all is well. When customers request information from their mobile device, the wireless carrier signal goes, finds it, and delivers the data (the content) to the phone. They are satisfied because their expectations were met, and they were able to accomplish their goal.

Satisfaction, however, isn’t always high in the mobile content consumption space. ForeSee benchmark data shows that mobile satisfaction lags behind traditional website satisfaction. As most mobile users have experienced at one point or another, somewhere along the line the signal loses itself, and the page is not delivered or an error message is rendered. If people try to engage a mobile site for content and can’t find what they want, who are they going to blame? Recently there has been a great distinction over who is to ultimately blame for a failed mobile experience. The fact is that customers will blame the company for failures and credit them for successes, regardless of whose responsibility it really is. It’s the company that loses out because performance killed the experience. The truth of the matter is that it might be the carrier’s fault, but the customer doesn’t think so—perception reigns here.

The solution: For every error message that is rendered, there should be a certain level of customization alongside a dose of personality. This allows for the ultimate one-to-one connection that companies should have with customers but is often forgotten about in the digital world. Something as simple as a creatively worded error message can change the customer’s perception of the experience. Companies should take notice of all the error messages associated with their mobile sites and apps, and be clear with the empathy associated with the experience. An apology can also go a long way in creating a more positive customer experience that will garner customers that are more loyal, more likely to make a purchase, more likely to return to the mobile site, and more likely to recommend the company, site, or app to others.
TIP 5: CONNECT THE DOTS

Connecting the dots is a simple exercise of linking a seemingly random group of points in a way, that when done, results in a complete picture. Connecting the dots with deep linkages to inventory is powerful—it’s where everything is headed. This is a technical hurdle to help sew the systems together. However, once achieved there’s still a need to provide a fantastic customer experience for the mobile visitor.

Since the mobile experience is becoming more and more fragmented, using a consistent and powerful technology to measure across the board will help connect those pieces and bring it all together to make a complete picture—one representing the best multi-channel customer experience possible.

Connecting the dots is all about recognizing that mobile influences other channels. It might influence a store experience, a call experience, a web experience, a social media experience, and/or an email experience. We also need to understand that mobile is influenced by these other channels, creating this wonderful bidirectional flow. As people are engaging at a store and want to look something up, they reach for their mobile device, creating an extraordinary and quality nexus point to measure in.

When mobile is measured thoroughly with a scientific measurement, executives will get a clear picture of not just who is coming to the site and why, but also the influence back to these other channels. Tip 3 talked about knowing what you know (the quantity of things) and knowing what you don’t know (the quality of things). These together deliver a complete picture of the behaviors and the attitudes of what people are engaging in.
Attitudes will drive what people do (purchase, purchase again, return to the site, remain loyal, and recommend to others), and that’s an important component when connecting the dots.

The mobile experience continues to get more complex when looking at the impact that mobile has on other channels. What happens when customers go from the web to mobile to a store, or they go to a store, then to their mobile device, then to the web, then to social media to ask friends, then back to mobile because they were using that for their social experience, and then make the final purchase on the web? How can company leaders get the most reliable data from a multiple-device experience like that? Better yet, how can they predict what a multi-device consumer will do next? With the right technology—one that is accurate, precise, and sensitive—they can measure across all touch points, see where the different experiences intersect and actually predict what the consumer will do next.
> It doesn’t have to be pretty. Below is an example of a basic mobile site from an automotive company. While it won’t win any mobile customer experience design awards for this, the ‘call’ to action is clear. This is a simple example of connect the dots—simple yet effective.

> From another channel to mobile. Some great examples of this include HSN’s constant awareness of what’s being broadcasted so that users who are co-browsing while watching TV can easily get in the funnel.

> Mobile to retail store. Lowe’s has a fantastic interconnected mobile site and app experience. With great ease, a visitor can prepare for a store visit via mobile device. It’s what the customer wants, and it’s built beautifully.
Mobile lives before, during, and after key experiences. So when measured well—the behaviors and attitudes of what people are doing—it starts to connect the dots, and the full picture of the customer experience begins to emerge, lending a sense not only of mobile attribution but of mobile contribution.

CONCLUSION

The mobile experience is becoming more challenging every day because there’s so much more to navigate. There are phones operating across mobile sites and apps; there are different-sized screens and diverse functions among the various smartphones; and there is an increasing array of operating systems. This makes mobile a hard and confusing landscape for companies to navigate.
Tracking and counting through traditional metrics can be a little misleading when trying to traverse through this new multi-channel landscape. Just because a company’s analytics or information technology teams measure more people coming to their sites doesn’t necessarily mean the company is doing a good job of meeting the expectations of its visitors. It could mean that more people are using mobile experiences, but it doesn’t mean they are satisfied with the experiences provided. It doesn’t mean they’re going to buy anything, or subscribe, or come back again.

Mobile is cool and exciting, but executives and decision makers first have to grow out of the mindset that, just because they’re developing a mobile experience, it will serve the customer admirably. It might; it might not. The customer is the key here. Until the customer is measured, the dots remain just dots. Only when they are connected, through measuring both behavioral and attitudinal behaviors, can business leaders create the experiences that customers are looking for and deserve.

As far as mobile has come already, it is still a new and nascent industry full of possibilities and open to innovation. Instincts are important when developing mobile experiences and should always be trusted. If there is an adventurous and exciting mobile idea on the boardroom table that everyone believes will work, it probably will.

Mobile is the one channel where there’s still the possibility of piquing people’s interest, changing the ways they engage with companies, and offering them the ability to do things that are easier, faster, and more convenient than ever imagined. There’s a certain flexibility in mobile right now that offers companies an opportunity to do what they want to and to do it in the best interest of the consumer that will positively influence the other channel experiences that they have control over.

Before implementing any of these tips, though, companies need to first talk with their customers and find out what they want, need, and expect, by measuring their experiences. Then, from their perspective, companies can design a mobile experience that works for the customer and for the company.

In the end, everyone wins.
ABOUT ERIC FEINBERG

As ForeSee’s Senior Director of Mobile, Media & Entertainment, Eric provides leadership to the company’s mobile solutions as well as solutions related to the media and entertainment industries. He is responsible for working with product, delivery, sales, and marketing teams to ensure that ForeSee continues to bring innovation and operational excellence to its mobile offerings. Since joining ForeSee in 2004, Eric has been contributing to the strategic growth of the organization. He brings 15 years of customer-focused experience to the team, and is a frequent presenter at conferences in the United States and United Kingdom.

Eric is on the Board of Directors of the Digital Analytics Association and serves as instructor for various trade groups on the importance and application of attitudinal analytics. Previously, he has held positions that include web analyst, multichannel strategy consultant, usability specialist, and focus group moderator. His goal is to best understand and motivate multi-channel consumers on behalf of his clients.

ABOUT FORESEE

As a pioneer in customer experience analytics, ForeSee continuously measures satisfaction and delivers powerful insights on where to prioritize improvements for maximum impact. ForeSee applies its trusted technology across channels and customer touch points, including websites, call centers, brick-and-mortar locations, mobile experiences, and social media interactions. Because ForeSee’s proven methodology measures satisfaction in a manner that is predictive of customer loyalty, purchase behavior, future financial success, and even stock prices, executives and managers are able to drive future success by confidently prioritizing the efforts that they know will achieve business goals.
Working across the public and private sectors, with deep expertise in a range of business and consumer industries, ForeSee combines the best in customer satisfaction measurement, proven predictive analytics, actionable usability analysis, and rich observational data to work with large and small organizations around the world. The result of measuring success through the customers’ eyes is better outcomes for businesses and a better experience for consumers.

ForeSee is a privately held company headquartered in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Visit us at www.foresee.com for customer experience solutions and original research.