

Mobilising social commerce

Ten tips for enhancing m-commerce performance with social content



Seizing the m-commerce opportunity

Mobile is massive. In almost every consumer market, mobile isn't just the next big thing, it's already transforming the market.

M-commerce is often discounted by businesses who see only a small percentage of their revenues coming directly from mobile sites or apps. But these businesses are missing the real role of m-commerce, and its power to increase conversion rates across all channels.

Mobiles are an essential research tools for an increasing number of consumers, who use their phones or tablets to browse different options, compare prices, seek recommendations and ask advice on the move. The key to a successful m-commerce strategy is to look beyond just direct conversions and instead use your mobile channel to engage and inform potential customers throughout the entire purchase journey.

Unsurprisingly, many businesses are still adapting. That means there's a significant opportunity to stake an m-commerce claim. The brands which come out ahead will be the first to do three things:

1. Show up

Offer mobile-friendly sites, apps and services before their competitors.

2. Get the user experience right

Understand the different needs of mobile users and the different capabilities of mobile devices.

3. Earn consumer trust

Ensure browsers feel comfortable enough using this new channel to become customers.

This ebook is here to help you with the area that many brands understand least, but which has the greatest potential for improving m-commerce performance: building trust in mobile channels.



The role of social commerce

Social commerce – reviews, recommendations and other user-generated content – has proven itself the single most powerful trust-builder on the web.

78% of shoppers rate online customer reviews as the most important influence on their decisions, above even recommendations by family and friends, and well above independent industry reviews.

Source: The Socialisation of Customer Experiences, RightNow, 2010

18% sales increase when businesses integrate reviews into their websites, driven by improvements to conversion rate, sales value and repeat business.

Source: Reevoos Insight research, 2011

The trust dividend that makes reviews and social recommendations so successful on the web is the same force that makes them an essential part of your mobile initiatives. After all, trust is what social commerce does best and what m-commerce needs most.

These tips for mobilising your social commerce content will start you on the right path. They're all drawn from our experience of helping major brands and businesses increase trust, conversions and profits by harnessing the power of reviews, recommendations and other user-generated content in mobile channels.

Mobile social commerce trends

Reevoo displays nearly a billion reviews every month for our customers across retail, telecoms, travel and automotive, and we regularly analyse this rich consumer behaviour data to track the rise of mobile. Here are some highlights from our yearly analysis, to May 2012:

- 61%** Consumers reading reviews on mobile devices increased 61% in the last year while overall review reading didn't change.
- 53%** The conversion uplift when people read a review is 53% higher on mobiles than elsewhere.
- 137%** 137% more users accessed retailer sites via mobiles than in the previous year.
- 126%** The share of reviews written on mobile devices increased by 126% in just 12 months. Over 20% of all the reviews Reevoo collects are now submitted via mobile devices - and that share is growing fast.
- 50%** Conversion rates on mobile devices still lag behind non-mobile, with mobile consumers half as likely to convert within one session. This disparity is to be expected, because many mobile sessions are used for research before a conversion offline, on desktop or in-store.

Trends summary

- Social content is becoming more important on the mobile channel, as users expect to see reviews, recommendations and consumer Q&A on their handsets
- Reviews are even more effective on mobile, even more impressive increases in conversion and engagement on mobiles than on desktop websites
- Mobile shoppers don't always convert via mobile - but that doesn't mean they don't convert. For the majority of purchases, m-commerce plays a supporting role to purchases made offline, on the desktop internet or over the phone.

1 Show social content on your m-commerce site

Just because screen real estate is limited doesn't mean you can forego social commerce features on mobile sites.

Quite the opposite: peer opinion is even more important on mobile during the channel's trust-building phase. That's why the usage of reviews and recommendations on mobile is increasing faster on mobile compared to desktop. And users expect consistency across channels: make sure they can find the social features they value on your mobile site.

By 'social content' we mean:

Product reviews

In-store shoppers check their mobiles to help them make better decisions faster. The more reviews they see, the higher the conversion uplift, especially when those reviews are validated, independent and trustworthy.

Consumer Q&As

Let your customers help potential purchasers. But remember: speed of response is even more vital on mobile, so make sure you know how you'll ensure questions receive rapid responses.

Social recommendations

Use the wisdom of the crowd for effective recommendations, tailored to a consumers' interests and location, and available where ever they are.

Service reviews

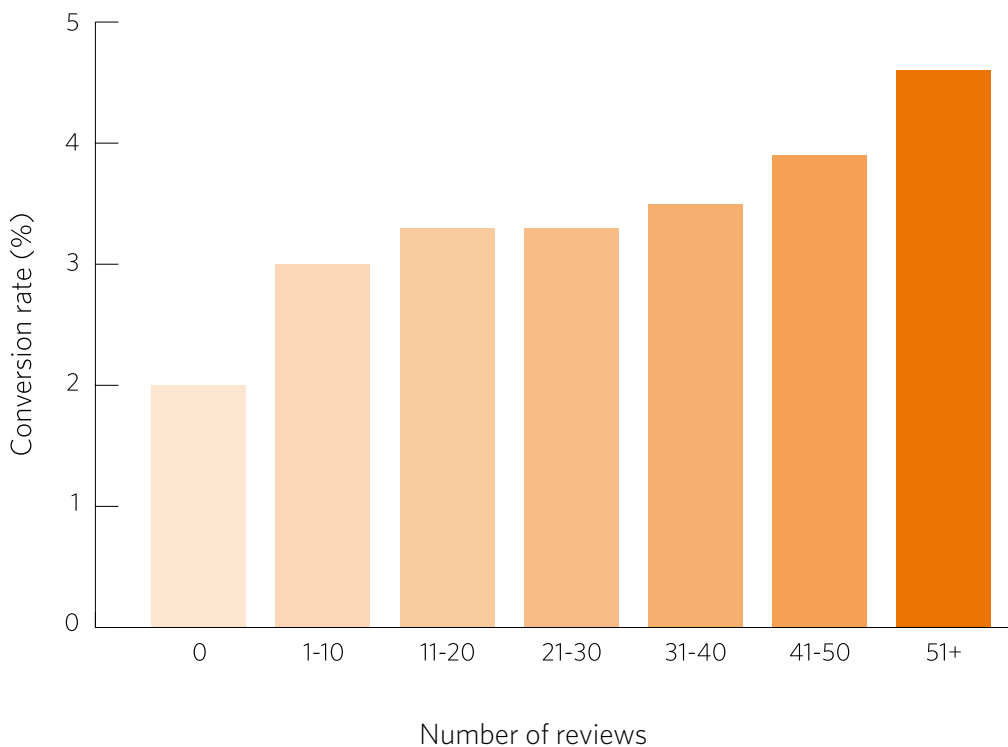
Reviews don't just help consumers decide *what* to buy or book, but *where* too. Service reviews are especially important on check-out pages where last-minute doubts can strike.

2 Collect social content from mobile devices

20% More than 20% of Reevo reviews came from mobile devices in 2011 - up from 10% the year before.

Mobiles aren't just good for displaying social content - they're also good for collecting it.

Ensure your review collection system works perfectly on mobile devices so you can collect as many reviews as possible. More reviews for your site translates directly into more conversions.



Source: Reevo Insight data, 2010

But letting any visitor post a review is just as dangerous on a mobile as it is anywhere else online. To maintain trust and protect your brand you need to ensure every review comes from a confirmed customer and, ideally, is moderated and endorsed by a trusted third party.

3 Make your social content mobile-friendly

There are two things to consider when thinking about how to present your social content on mobile:

Mobile users are different

They tend to be in speed-research mode. They view fewer pages and spend less time on site than typical web users.

Mobile devices are different

A smartphone or a tablet is not a PC. Screen sizes, network speeds and the lack of a full-sized keyboard all have to be taken into account.

In other words, you can't just take your normal web experience and cram it on to a small screen.

A few tips:

- **Display relevant reviews first**

Show the three most recent or three most helpful reviews – or the three best suited to what you know about that user – then let them click for more.

- **Track your page-load times**

Some review software slows down page loading speeds and that drives away users.

- **Never cherrypick the good reviews**

Maintain the high ethical standards you use on your main website. Space limitations are no excuse for cutting corners and risking your reputation.

- **Use device detection**

Make sure you serve the right content to iPhone, Android, Windows Mobile and other smartphones, tablets or PCs every time.

86%

increase in traffic to the mobile site of a major electronics retailer after Reevo helped optimise it with social content on all key pages. Mobile page views per visit went up 30% and share of visits reading reviews went up over 80%.

4 Direct people to your social content with offline triggers

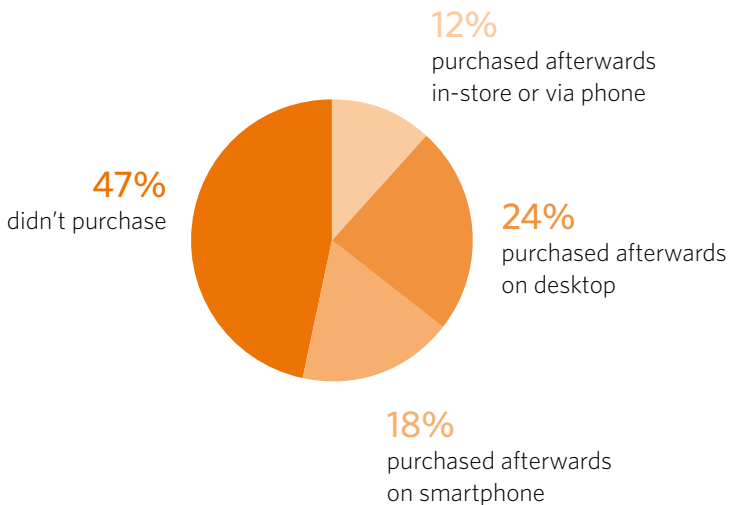
Mobile helps connect your offline and online experiences – and social commerce is the ideal bridge.

Links or QR codes on advertising, displays, packaging and shelf talkers make it easy for shoppers to access reviews for the products they're considering. And the conversion uplift is just as powerful in-store as on the web.

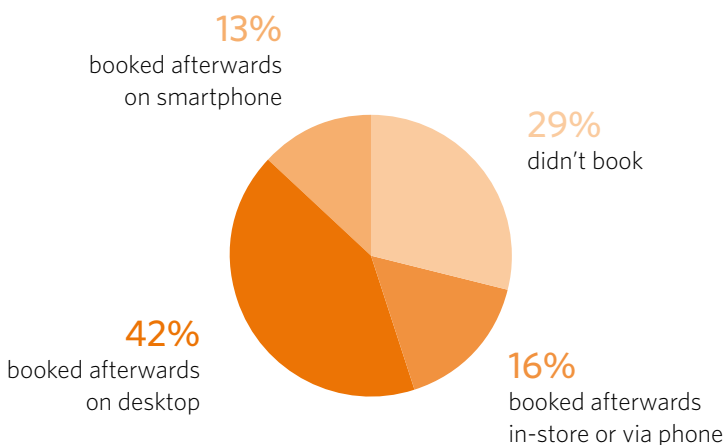
You can also display review content or ratings offline – even posting live review scores to digital signage and on-shelf pricing panels.

If QR codes are your chosen channel, make sure you offer alternative ways to get in-store consumers to your reviews and social content, like simple or shortened URLs, or even Bluetooth. Many smartphones don't come equipped with QR readers out of the box.

People who researched vehicles on smartphones



People who researched trips on smartphones



5 Extend your social content onto Facebook and Twitter

35% (or 17 million) of all UK mobile owners accessed social networking sites or blogs via mobile - half of them on a daily basis.

Social content is far too powerful to confine to just your own apps and sites. Make sure users can also post their reviews, recommendations and conversations to Facebook, Twitter and other social networks directly from your sites.

For smartphone users, nothing comes more naturally. They already use their mobile devices for social networking throughout the day. Using them to share their views on your business, products and services is a natural extension.

How do you encourage this kind of social sharing? Make sure your social commerce solution makes sharing easy right from the review and Q&A pages.

6 Promote your mobile services

It seems too obvious to mention, but you'd be amazed how many brands build terrific mobile experiences, then keep them quiet.

An engaging, social-enabled mobile site or app is a major competitive advantage. You need to tell the world so you can grab market share.

Promote your shiny new mobile site with all its social commerce features:

- **On your normal website**

Let your web visitors know you've got a great mobile shop waiting for them; and re-direct mobile browsers straight to it by default.

- **In store**

Tell shoppers they're a click away from lots of information, reviews, recommendations, and consumer-to-consumer Q&As.

- **In traditional advertising**

Outdoor ads especially need to direct people to mobile commerce sites or apps, not to desktop sites.

- **In mobile advertising**

Mobile ads must link to mobile sites: sending smartphone users to a non-optimised website is malpractice. Think about running mobile ad campaigns just to promote your mobile storefront.

- **In emails**

As more emails are read on smartphones, you need to be able to optimise email experience and landing pages for each customer, whether on mobile or desktop.

81%

increase in email reading on mobile devices between October 2010 and April 2011

Source: Email on the Move, Return Path, 2011

7 Track mobile usage...

As your mobile business ramps up, you'll need to track it separately from your other web traffic.

Regularly analyse behaviour of mobile users – ideally segmented by device – to see how they differ from normal traffic. You'll learn a lot about what content works, what drives people away, and where (and for which devices) you need to improve.

8 ...but have a holistic view of conversion

Don't be discouraged if your mobile traffic seems to be dramatically under-performing your other web traffic. If you're just looking at conversion rates, bear these two factors in mind:

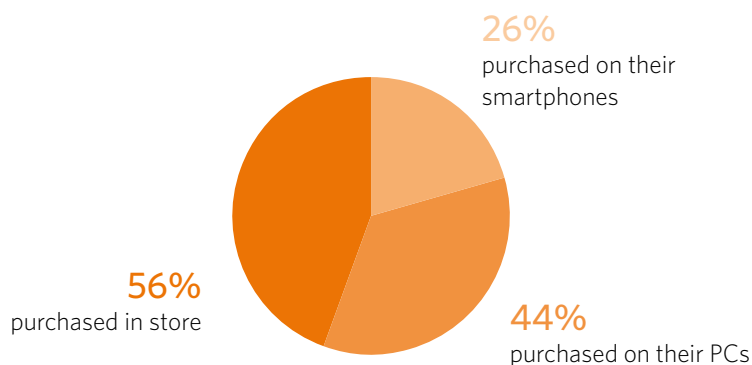
Mobile analytics are often still 'session-level'. As persistent cookies don't work on all mobile devices, tracking the whole purchase journey is harder, so mobile influence in conversions is under-valued.

Mobile shoppers often convert elsewhere, like in-store, on the web or over the phone. That doesn't mean they didn't convert – you just didn't see the direct connection.

When tracking the effectiveness of your mobile channel, remember that a great mobile experience contributes to things that are harder to measure, like long-term brand loyalty that reduces acquisition costs and increases profits.

By just focusing on mobile conversion, you're undervaluing the m-commerce's wider contribution to your business. Focusing on making your mobile site or app into a top-notch research tool (with rich product information, a full range of social commerce features, images and video) can deliver a bigger overall sales boost than just optimising the mobile channel for conversion.

74% of smartphone shoppers have purchased following research on mobile.
Of those:



9 Be app-agnostic

The mobile world loves to fight about which is better: mobile sites or mobile apps. Mobile consumers are just as undecided:

27% have purchased via a mobile site

22% have purchased through a mobile app

Source: The Mobile Movement, Google/Ipsos, April 2011

We're a lot more practical: we think you should support both.

Mobile sites work across all handsets but may not use every feature native to a given device (like touchscreens or location awareness).

Mobile apps use all the device's features but you'll need to build an app for each platform: iPhone, Android, tablets, other smartphones, etc.

The new possibilities offered by HTML5/CSS3 for building a stand-out mobile site experience make this a harder choice than ever.

When it's time to integrate your social commerce content, make sure you're your social commerce provider is flexible enough to integrate seamlessly with whatever route you choose, and understands the best way to use social content on mobile to engage, inform and convert users.

10 Make Q&As mobile

'Ask a customer' style Q&A services are increasingly popular. And mobile versions are a natural fit.

Consumers can post questions in store, after viewing an ad, or when they're out and about. When the answers come in, they're pulled back into your sales funnel, where you want them to be.

The key to mobile Q&A is speed of response. It's no use encouraging people to ask questions if they're going to be met with stony silence – or get a reply a week later. Q&A services need to be proactively managed, not passively offered.

Conclusion

By now, we hope you've come to the same conclusions we have: the time for mobile commerce is now, and mobile plus social commerce is a killer combination.

As more and more consumers start to rely on mobile research, and become accustomed to actually purchasing or booking on their phones, the difference between the leading brands and the followers will come down to trust. And trust is where social really shines.

At Reevoo, we're excited by the potential of social plus mobile to create stand-out experiences for customers, and help businesses convert more browsers into loyal long-term customers. Talk to us as your mobile commerce strategy develops - we'll give you the benefit of our experience, our data and our enthusiasm.

Get in touch

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