




# US Ready for Mobile Marketing


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"Marketers who are savvy about using the mobile channel know it is not an interrupt-driven paradigm," said Charles Golvin, the lead author of a recent report by Forrester Research. "The disconnect reflects the difference between how consumers who have not encountered a lot of mobile advertising imagine it to be versus the actual experience of what marketers are doing today."

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When many consumers are asked about receiving advertising  on their cell phones, they react as if they've bitten into a sour apple. Nevertheless, the mobile universe has begun ripening nicely for marketers, according to a report released last week.




The report by [Forrester Research](#) noted: "In 2003, Forrester said that U.S. mobile marketing was only for a small number of marketers due to the nascent consumer adoption of mobile data services and a dearth of marketing infrastructure .

"Times have changed. Today, favorable consumer adoption patterns and emerging mobile ecosystems make mobile a viable channel for U.S. marketers."

## Picking Up Steam

Two years ago, [mobile](#) marketing was aimed mostly at narrow segments like youths and early adopters, but that's not the case now, observed Charles Golvin, the lead author of the report, a copy of which was obtained by the E-Commerce Times.

"Today, we're seeing campaigns from brands as mainstream as Crest toothpaste and Nike," he told the E-Commerce Times. "In the past year, mobile marketing has picked up quite a head of steam."

A significant milestone for mobile advertising was reached at the end of the year when [Sprint](#) (NYSE: S)  and [Verizon](#) (NYSE: VZ)  began allowing advertising on their mobile Internet  portals, opined Diana Lagattuta, director of marketing for Enpocket, a global mobile marketer based in Boston.

"With the big carriers getting in the game, mobile advertising has mass reach," she told the E-Commerce Times. "That hasn't been available until now."

## Changing Attitudes

"Before the carriers began offering inventory, an advertiser would have to go either off-portal or to a mobile ad network. Neither would have the number of impressions that they would get by going to a carrier," Lagattuta explained.

The carriers' moves represent a change in attitude for them, according to Jason Ankeny, editor of FierceMobileContent, a mobile news Web site.

"Carriers have always subscribed to this 'walled garden' mindset," he told the E-Commerce Times. "They do not want to share revenues or editorial control over the content that appears on their decks. That is slowly changing."

## Skeptical Consumers

The report revealed that consumers are very skeptical about mobile marketing. Based on survey data from Forrester, it said that 79 percent of respondents found mobile ads "annoying;" only three percent "trust" mobile ads; and 70 percent claimed mobile ads have no influence over their perception of a brand.

Yet, the report maintained, "Despite consumers' aversion to the idea of mobile advertising, early efforts in North America demonstrate that people will react positively to campaigns that fit the medium and focus on delivering value."

It cited an example of a grocery store in Cambridge, Mass., that has supplanted its loyalty card program with one based on [mobile phones](#). The approach allows the store to deliver promotions based on a shopper's purchase history directly to the shopper's mobile phone. Eighty-two percent of the grocer's shoppers have enlisted in the program, the report said, and 64 percent actively use it.

## Disconnecting Misperception

The disconnect between what consumers tell pollsters about mobile advertising and their actual behavior when the right pitch is sent their way may be due to consumer misperception, Golvin hypothesized.

"Generally, if you ask consumers if they're interested in receiving ads, they'll almost always say no, irrespective of what channel you're talking about," he observed.

That attitude becomes even more pronounced when a mobile device is brought into the picture. "They're thinking about mobile advertising in a traditional, interrupt-driven medium, very much like television," Golvin explained.

"What they're thinking is, if I'm accessing the Internet on my phone or I'm looking for information, I don't want to be hindered in what I'm doing by having to look at advertising," he continued.

"Marketers who are savvy about using the mobile channel," he added, "know it is not an interrupt-driven paradigm.

"The disconnect reflects the difference between how consumers who have not encountered a lot of mobile advertising imagine it to be versus the actual experience of what marketers are doing today," Golvin concluded. **EBT**