

# Do You Have A Mobile First Strategy? You Should!



We are currently in the midst of one the biggest software and hardware revolutions ever. With processing power, storage, and bandwidth increasing exponentially, smart phones and smart tablets are becoming our main personal computer. As a result, customers, employees, and other stakeholders are bringing and using their smart phones and tablets everywhere, and that definitely impacts how they see your company online and how they interact with you on a daily basis.

Unfortunately, many leaders continue to view smart phones, tablets, and the consumerization of IT as a threat. In

reality, they are major, game-changing opportunities.

Never before have companies been able to interact with customers anywhere at any time and start a meaningful dialog with them. Rather than throw a bunch of advertising messages out and hope your customers not only see them but also act on them, you now have the opportunity, via their mobile devices, to engage your customers directly with the precise information they need at the moment they need it to make a buying decision. That alone is a big reason to develop a comprehensive mobile first strategy right away.

So let's look at a few components that would help all organizations embrace a broader view of what a mobile first strategy really looks like.

**1. Make your website adaptive.** You probably have a mobile website and a main website for your organization. But chances are they don't look good on all the various size smart phone and tablet screens because they aren't adaptive. Therefore, make your site adaptive so it automatically adjusts to the size screen the user has. For an example, see <http://calebogden.com/>, <http://owltastic.com/>, <http://thinkvitamin.com/>, or [www.burrus.com](http://www.burrus.com) and give them a try. View them on your laptop first. Shrink the browser window and notice how the site changes to fit any size screen. Then try them on your tablet or smart phone. Regardless of screen size, they will all look and work great.

**2. Design your website for mobile first.** People are increasingly making decisions using their phones and tablets more so than on their laptops. We are well past the point where more tablets and smart phones are being sold than PCs. And for the past two years, the majority of phones sold globally were smart phones. One more interesting inflection point was reached late last year; the cost of making a smart phone was the same as making a dumb phone. The smart phone and tablet trend will only continue to grow, so think mobile first when you redo your website, not desktop or laptop.

**3. Rethink how people pay.** Credit cards are easy, but e-wallets are easier. Currently, Google has a mobile wallet that works with all major credit cards. It is secure and enables you to make payments with your smart phone. In the near future, as every financial service firm gets into mobile payments, we will move very quickly from a leather wallet to a smart phone wallet. One example of an enabling technology is NFC, near-field communications chips, which are being built into smart phones as you read this article. They allow for secure and easy payment, so be ready for it. Not ready for e-wallets? How about payments using smart phones and tablets by adding a Square or similar system. Starbucks and others are using this already with great success.

**4. Look where technology is going, not where it's been.** Apple's Siri is a natural language technology that allows you to ask a question in regular language and Siri answers in a human-like voice. The power of Siri is in the cloud, and other mobile platforms have already come up with their own version of this early stage ultra intelligent agent. The time for an organization-specific or retail-specific version of Siri is ripe. Think of it like a mobile concierge for your company. Yes, the technology is there. It just hasn't been applied in this manner yet.

**5. Make it easy to shop with you.** Many stores are so large these days that it's difficult for shoppers to find things. And to keep costs under control, stores keep staff lean. But when customers can't find what they're looking for and can't find a salesperson to help them, they leave the store frustrated. Imagine how many more sales you'd make if you offered consumers an app that enabled them to find exactly what they want. Rather than work off of GPS, the location feature would work off of wireless local-navigation in the store so consumers can see the store layout and where the salespeople are in real time. Then they simply type in or ask, "Where are the digital cameras (or ladies jogging clothes or gluten-free potato chips or anything)?" and the app or Siri-like assistant tells the consumer exactly where to go in the store. But this isn't just for retail. Service provider firms could also have a custom app that makes their clients' life easier. For example, if you are a financial planning firm, you could give each client an app that lets them manage their portfolio and get daily updates and alerts from you, to name just a few.

**6. Make it easy to work for you too:** Apps aren't just for consumers; they can make your staff more productive too. Rather than have customer service reps tied to a computer at a counter, you can give them a tablet with key apps that enable them to help customers on the floor in real time. With these apps they can see if products are in stock or in the warehouse, give product arrival dates, process simple exchanges, and do almost everything that's usually done at the customer service counter without the long lines. Already leading retailers are using smart phones and tablets as their point of sale (POS) device saving customers time.

**7. Let your apps sell for you:** All stores stock what they think is the best in class for their customers and market. But what if what you carry isn't the brand the customer wants? With your app, the customer can type in a specific product's brand name, and the app will show not only the equivalents that you carry, but also why the brands you stock are better than what the customer requested. Maybe there's an additive in the other product or it's been proven not to last as long. Now you're helping customers make better and more informed buying decisions.

## The Future of Mobile

Make no mistake: It's a hard trend (a certainty) that tablets and smart phones are becoming people's main personal computer. Therefore, you want to create a mobile first strategy that uses the power of these devices to your benefit. Are all these suggestions for a mobile first strategy possible? Most definitely! Remember, if it can be done, it will be done. The question is, *when will you do it?*

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