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Maps & Apps: Mobile Media Marketing Education for Food and Farm Entrepreneurs

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Maps & Apps: Mobile Media Marketing Education for Food and Farm Entrepreneurs

Abstract

With an increasing number of consumers using smartphones, tablets, and other mobile devices to find and interact with local businesses, Ohio State University Extension developed a new curriculum aimed at improving market access for food and farm entrepreneurs. The literature review, curriculum framework, and lessons learned shared in this article can be used by Extension professionals to improve their own online presence, as well as by educators working with entrepreneurs and community leaders.

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Introduction

How the world communicates is changing (Cornelisse, Hyde, Raines, Kelley, Ollendyke, & Remcheck, 2011). With an increasing number of consumers using smartphones, tablets, and other mobile devices to find and interact with local businesses (Forrester Research, 2010 & Pew Research, 2013), Ohio State University Extension provided leadership for a new curriculum aimed at improving market access for food and farm entrepreneurs.

Because marketing is everything from the customers' point of view, as suggested by Peter Drucker (1954), the curriculum development team aspired to provide Extension education for smaller businesses to make them more visible to consumers using mobile devices. The resources developed and lessons learned from this program not only benefit entrepreneurs, they can benefit Extension professionals who want to improve their online connections and communications.

Figure 1.

Multiple Mobile Devices Consumers Use to Find and Interact with Businesses



Theoretical Framework

Because the program is about using technology for marketing communications, the program is based on both mobile marketing and relationship marketing for entrepreneurs.

Relationship Marketing

The focus of marketing has shifted from a transactional marketing approach to a relationship marketing approach (Ambler, 2004; Christopher, Payne, & Ballantyne, 1991). Relationship marketing is a strategy that involves all activities of a business to build, maintain, and develop customer relations.

Mobile Marketing

In 2013, tablet shipments are expected to grow 67.9%, and the mobile phone market will grow 4.3%, with volume of more than 1.8 billion units (Gartner, Inc., 2013). Most Americans never leave home without their mobile phones so they can email, browse the Internet, and communicate through social media (Google, 2012). Mobile marketing has the potential to change the retailing environment to one in which retailers enter the consumer's environment through anytime, anywhere mobile devices (Shankar, Venkatesh, Hofacker, & Naik, 2010).

Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurs are innovators trying new combinations of resources to generate new products, new production methods, entry into new markets, new sources of supplies, and new organizations of any industry (Schumpeter, 1934).

Curriculum Resources

The curriculum development team began by conducting:

- Targeted interviews with a variety of entrepreneurs throughout the food system;
- A review of literature from academia and trend data from industry sources; and

- Ongoing inquiry focusing on interactive marketing, relationship marketing, adult learning and technology.
- The curriculum framework focuses on technologies consumers are using to find and interact with local businesses.
- Internet Search & Maps (Google, Yahoo, Bing, and community-specific online directories)
- Mobile Web Presence (How the business website looks on a variety of smartphones and tablets)
- Mobile Apps (social and navigation) Online social networks such as Facebook and YouTube are very popular and can reach large audiences (Kinsey, 2010).
- Other Mobile Media Marketing (GPS, 2D Codes Geocaching, Emerging Apps, and Gadgets)

With consumers posting photos, reviews, and location-based check-ins, the program helps entrepreneurs realize they can gain a degree of control with their owned, earned, and paid online presence.

Figure 2.

Program Image Used in Curriculum and Communication Materials



Providing step-by-step social media training (O'Neill, Zumwalt, & Bechman, 2011) by involving practical application is of the utmost importance (Seger, 2011). To guide entrepreneurs in creating a consistent mobile presence, the OSU Extension team developed comprehensive resources, including:

- Seven conference seminars,
- One in-depth hands-on workshop.
- Two recorded webinars, including one with eXtension.

- A business profile series, and
- Online tutorials and other technical assistance resources.

Business Checklists and Quick Resource Lists were included for each topic.

Figure 3.

Hands-On Workshop Participants Attended the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) event



In 2013, 417 people participated in the conference presentations (295), webinars (100), and hands-on workshops (22). On a scale of 1-7, with 7 being the highest rating, conference participants rated the session 6.25. Workshop participants completed a printed post-workshop evaluation, reporting the following.

- Satisfaction—100% of participants were very likely (82%) or likely (18%) to recommend the workshop to others.
- Increased Knowledge—91% of participants reported a very high (67%) or high (24%) increase in knowledge.
- Increased Confidence—91% of participants reported a very high (50%) or high (41%) increase in confidence of how to use mobile media marketing as part of their marketing practices.
- Improved Abilities—96% of participants reported a very high (55%) or high (41%) increase in ability of how to improve their online presence for customers.

Recommendations & Conclusions

Emerging trends in social, mobile, and location-based marketing present unique opportunities and risks for entrepreneurs throughout the food system. Some of the lessons learned include the following.

- It's not as much about the technology as it is about communication and relationships.
- While many entrepreneurs want to jump right into social media marketing, mobile device users report the most critical information continues to be consistent:

Name of business

Address

Phone number

Hours of operation

(comScore, 2012). In the curriculum materials, this is referred to as "NAP Hours."

- Learners have a wide range of prior knowledge and experience, therefore, any pre- and post-event education educators provide can improve participants' overall learning experience and adoption of mobile marketing.
- There are a wide variety of devices with various operating systems. The OSU Extension team tested a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) hands-on workshop and found that while participants were familiar with their devices, onsite support professionals can provide additional assistance to improve the learning experience.
- Mobile and social media usage statistics change frequently, so the team chose to include only a few quick data examples to introduce or emphasize certain points. Additional data sources were provided online.
- The rapidly changing technical content that could be included in the curriculum can be a challenge for educators and learners. By providing entrepreneurs with multiple modes of instruction, they can learn at a pace and place they choose as they continue to build on their knowledge.

Figure 4.

Ohio State University Colleague Wearing Google Glass, a Wearable Device, Not Yet on the Market, That Allows Users to Read Email, Capture Photos or Videos, and Experience Augmented Reality Experiences



The Maps & Apps mobile media marketing curriculum is part of the education provided by the OSU Extension Direct Marketing team. Materials will be updated annually and provided at <http://go.osu.edu/MapsAndApps>.

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