

Marketing your small business on the mobile Web:

The guide to low-cost, high-impact
marketing to millions of mobile
phone users

Introduction

Marketing your small business isn't easy. It's hard to know where to spend your limited budget and it's even harder to know if you've made the right choices.

This guide is a short introduction to an exciting new marketing medium that offers enormous potential for small businesses but costs very little: the mobile Web.

We all know about the "desktop" Web – Web sites made for people who are sitting at a PC. The mobile Web is similar in many ways but different in some important ways as well.

We hope to give you an introduction to the mobile Web, show why you should be thinking about it and suggest ways to start using it today – at no cost (or very little cost).

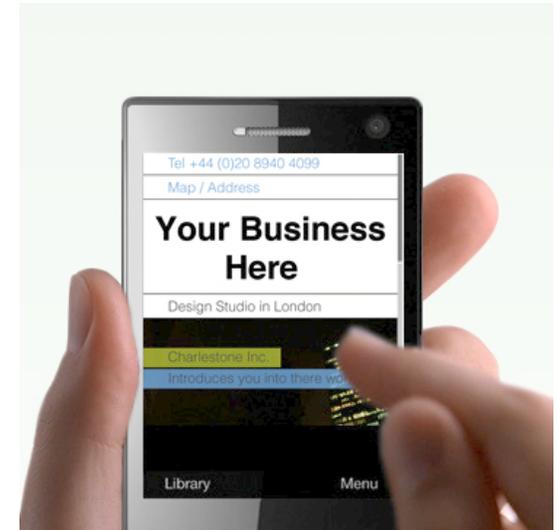
We'll also introduce you to two interesting resources that might help as you explore the marketing potential of the mobile Web:

mobiThinking.com – our Web resource for marketers using the mobile Web. Mostly for big brands but plenty of good stuff for smaller businesses, too.

Instant Mobilizer™ – a tool that turns your existing Web site into a mobile Web site. Instantly.

Enjoy the guide and good luck winning new customers on the mobile Web!

The dotMobi team



What is the mobile Web?

The mobile Web is very different from the normal “desktop” Web – even though it’s accessed from your phone’s Web browser.

Some people access desktop Web sites from their mobile phones but this experience tends to be frustrating. Most Web sites were not designed to be used on a device with a small screen, smaller keyboard and no mouse.

For this reason, businesses that want to attract mobile users often design a special Web site just for the mobile experience. These millions of mobile Web sites are what we really mean when we talk about the mobile Web.

Throughout this guide, we’ll introduce you to some mobile Web sites used by small businesses; but here are some great mobile sites from the big brands:

ESPN.mobi

Get your team’s scores and standings on the go.

ZAGAT.mobi

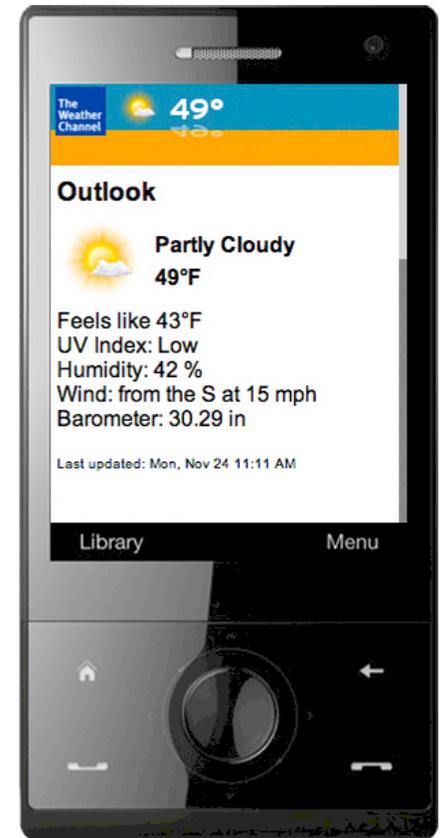
Find a great local restaurant wherever you are.

Weather.mobi

Forecasts, weather maps and much more.

“dotMobi will take global root in 2009.”

Small Business Trends, January 21 2009



Weather.mobi outlook page.

How people use the mobile Web

The mobile Web is really good at two things: entertainment and utility.

Entertainment sites are great for when people want to kill time. Maybe they're on a train, in the doctor's office or waiting to pick up a child from school. These little breaks are perfect for a quick browse of your favorite site about news, movies, gossip or games.

But even more popular than the entertainment sites are the mobile Web sites that are useful, that solve a problem for people on the go.

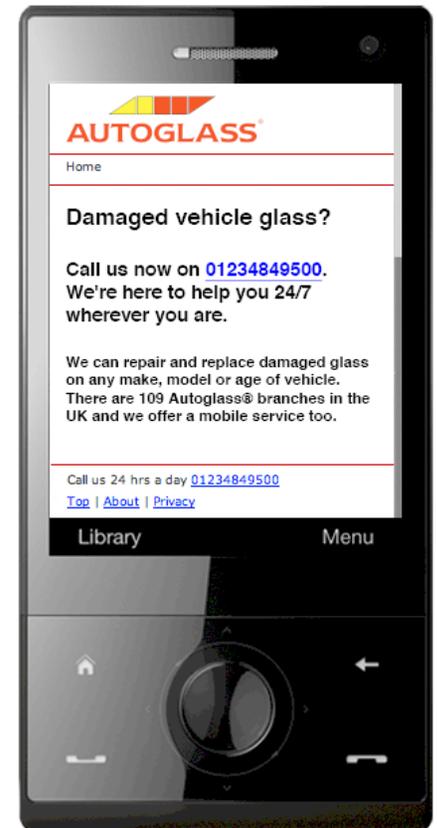
Airlines offer mobile check-in and flight status reports.

Banks offer mobile banking to pay bills and transfer funds.

News companies offer quick updates and alerts.

Quick Tip

Think about how you can make your customers' or prospects' lives easier when they're out and about. The first – and simplest – way is to get your address, phone number and opening times up on the mobile Web, so they can find you 24x7. And remember: a mobile phone with a Web browser is still a phone, so make your number a click-to-call “link” that automatically dials your number!



Autoglass.mobi

When you discover your windshield is cracked or broken, you don't want to find a PC to do a Web search for a repair company. Autoglass.mobi in the UK is a simple, useful Web site that gets you help fast – a great example of mobile utility.

Why you should market your business on the mobile Web

For an increasing number of small businesses, the answer is: because it's a low-cost way to help people find you and your products. Here's why it's growing so fast:

The mobile Web is huge

If you thought the World Wide Web was big, consider this: there are nearly four billion mobile phones in the world – about four times more than the number of PCs.

There are over 40 million mobile Web users in the USA and more than 42 million in Europe.

That's a lot of consumers.

The mobile Web is growing fast

Every day, more and more people are using their mobile phones to access Web sites.

A new generation of phones with Web browsers (including the popular iPhone and many more) has made it easy. New mobile networks have made it fast. New “flat rate” data plans make it affordable.

As new phones replace old ones, millions more people will be using the mobile Web.

The mobile Web is branded

The explosion of mobile Web use has not eluded the big brands. Nearly every one has some kind of mobile Web presence already or is planning to launch one in the next twelve months.

And many smaller businesses – everything from a one-office real estate agent to the local pizza restaurant – are following in their footsteps.

Quick Tip

Are these early days for the mobile Web? Definitely. Does that mean you should wait a while? Definitely not. Using the mobile Web now – and getting there before your competitors – will give you a real advantage. It will also show your customers that you're doing everything you can to serve them better.

Anything you might put on your normal Web site could be useful on your mobile Web site.

Essentials

Contact details

An essential for any business.

Directions or a map

Make it easy to find you.

The basics

Who you are, what you do and why they should choose you – in as few words as possible!

- A fitness club might post class schedules on its .mobi site.
- A restaurant could post its seasonal menus.
- A locksmith could list after-hours contact numbers.
- A plumber could list rates and hot line numbers.
- A bookshop could list the latest readings it's hosting.
- A theatre could post its schedule.
- A nightclub might promote theme nights and new cocktails.
- A hairdresser could post the latest looks.
- A gift shop could run weekly coupons.
- A local newspaper could offer a sponsored news digest.

Whatever business you're in, there's a good way to put the mobile Web to work.

Case in point

Bigfishtackle.mobi reaches anglers

Bigfishtackle.mobi is a mobile Web site that provides anglers with information, advice and discussion forums on their favorite sport. Run by Predatorial Advertising Associates, the site gives tips and techniques, up-to-the-minute fishing reports and connections to like-minded anglers – all without leaving the riverbank.

“One of the most exciting and innovative services we've been able to provide anglers.”

Mike Hodgson, VP of Operations

How to make your first mobile Web site

The easiest way to make your first mobile Web site requires no technical knowledge and costs less than lunch!

All you have to do is put your current desktop Web site through dotMobi's Instant Mobilizer. Just enter your Web address (your URL) and Instant Mobilizer does the rest.

Instant Mobilizer optimizes photos and images, formats all text for small screens and makes sure your site will work on all mobile devices.

Where to find Instant Mobilizer

To put it to use, you need to visit a participating .mobi domain name registrar or reseller, buy your .mobi name (usually around US\$10) and you can use Instant Mobilizer right away.

You can learn more about Instant Mobilizer and locate a participating registrar, at InstantMobilizer.com.

Other ways to build a mobile web site

Other ways to get started on the mobile Web include:

mobiCreate.com – the template tool from mobiManage.

site.mobi – another template-based mobile site builder from dotMobi.

To find a certified mobile Web developer who can build a .mobi site from scratch, see our directory on mobiForge.com/directory.



Instant Mobilizer™
Turns your Web site... into a mobile Web site. Instantly.

Ten tips for making a great mobile Web site

1) Think about the mobile device

Recognize its limitations (small screen, no mouse) but also think about its extra capabilities (it's a phone, a camera, a text device...).

2) Think about the mobile user

Think “fast access to short bits of content.”

3) Keep it simple

Use short, direct sentences. Make navigation easy. Don't expect people to fill out long forms. Let people find things with as few clicks as possible.

4) Keep it fast

Lots of video, animation or large image files slow down your site. Keep them to a minimum (Instant Mobilizer can help – see page seven.)

5) Make it useful

Don't just think about your business and your goals – think about your audience and what they really need, especially when they're on the go.

Quick Tip

Make sure you let users easily switch between your .com and .mobi sites. You can use simple switching icons like these:



www.mobiforge.com/designers/page/mobile-and-desktop-switching-icons

This way, if people accidentally hit your .com Web site from their mobile phones (or your mobile site from a PC) they can easily switch to the site they want.

6) Make sure it works on all phones

Mobile devices are incredibly diverse. Your site may look great on one phone and look terrible (or stop working) on another. Instant Mobilizer will help you get it right – and mobiReady.com will let you test your site for free.

7) Choose your domain name carefully

To make your site easy to find, use yourname.mobi. More on this on page six.

8) Promote your site

Make sure your customers and prospects know about it. See page nine for advice.

9) Never stop learning

Everything you do on your mobile Web site is testable. See what works and keep improving things. Services like Google Analytics can help you analyze your traffic (and it's free).

10) Don't overspend!

The mobile Web site should make you money, not drain away your profits. Start simply and your payback will come more quickly.

There's no sense making a mobile Web site if nobody knows about it. Here are some easy ways to promote your site and start to build traffic:

Put the address on your business cards

Just like you'd do with your "desktop" Web site.

Include it on all promotions

From free handouts to directory listings, e-mail shots, door drops and local ads – make sure they know about your .mobi!

Run a mobile-only promotion

Make a special offer to people who use your mobile site.

Run a contest

Your customers can get a secret code from your site and use it to enter a prize draw — or answer a few questions on the site.

Throw a launch event

Have a cocktail party and tell your best customers.

Put it on your .com Web site

Show your Web visitors you've got a .mobi, too.

Put it in all e-mails

Make your .mobi part of your e-mail signature.

Do some public relations

A local business launching a mobile Web site is still news – tell the local press!

Put your .mobi address on give-aways

Like free branded pens, coffee mugs or USB keys.

Text your best customers

You can send them a direct link to your site in the body of the text message – just make sure they'll be happy to receive it (nobody likes spam).

Tell dotMobi about it

And submit it to our showcase of mobile site's.

Choosing the right name for your mobile Web site

You can choose any domain name for your mobile Web site but one of them works better than all the others: .mobi. Here's why:

A .mobi name tells consumers to expect a mobile experience

Using .mobi tells people that your site is optimized for a mobile device and a mobile user. Using a variation of .com says, "expect a desktop Web site."

It makes your site memorable

Users are more likely to remember yourname.mobi — it's clear, simple and fast becoming the most popular option for mobile Web sites.

It makes your site search-engine friendly

The .mobi domain is found in the Internet zone files — the files that search engines use to start every crawl. Your .com site is already indexed, so you don't get an extra entry if you use any variation of .com.

It's short and sweet

It's the perfect compliment for your business name — and there's no need for www. A .mobi domain will keep your URL concise and tidy, which is good for users.

It's the only mobile domain that's actively promoted

.mobi is supported and promoted by dotMobi, a company backed by 14 of the biggest names in the mobile Web. This powerful backing gives .mobi staying power that no other mobile address has.

It's easy and inexpensive

Many of the top domain name registrars offer excellent value on .mobi names and make it easy to find and register the best available name.

Case in point

GypsyTea.mobi builds a fan base

GypsyTea.mobi is a friendly, well-executed mobile Web site that draws from the look and feel of Gypsy's .com Web site and aims to do four things:

Introduce Gypsy Tea.

Show consumers where to buy.

Offer a sampler tin.

Sign up for the newsletter.

The newsletter sign-up ("Join Our Tribe") presents just two fields: name and email.

No page has more than 75 words.

"When you look at it from the user's perspective, the .mobi is the obvious choice. People are getting to know that .mobi stands for a mobile-optimized experience."

Kerem Benil, Briabe Media,
GypsyTea.mobi creator

The mobile Web is a powerful marketing opportunity for businesses of every size. Many experts predict that it will become bigger than the desktop Web.

For small businesses looking to jump out of the pack, serve their customers in new ways and attract new business, it's an extremely attractive medium.

And with Instant Mobilizer, making your first mobile Web site couldn't be easier and costs next to nothing.

To get started on the mobile Web, visit one of our .mobi registrars, register your name and mobilize your business!

Resources

mobiThinking.com

The Web resource for mobile marketers. Check out the expert advice, case studies, "best practice" videos and blog.

InstantMobilizer.com

Get your mobile site fast.

mobiReady.com

A quick and easy usability test for your mobile site.

mobiForge.com

A great site for tech-inclined people.