

Mobile Findability YOUR "OTHER" COMPUTER



The other day my husband and I were arguing about superheroes.

(Yes, we are a geek couple.) Specifically, we were at odds about the name of Aquaman's seahorse. So, I reached for my smartphone and found the answer in minutes. As it turns out, both of our

guesses were wrong.

This got me thinking about the nuances of mobile Findability. I wondered: What makes my smartphone different from my home or office computer? Efficiency and immediacy came to mind right away.

Efficiency — because I have my smartphone with me at all times and it gives me easy access to information anywhere, at any time.

Immediacy — because I can get an answer quickly; no matter where my job might take me. It does not matter whether I'm ten minutes from home or across the country.

How can your business effectively leverage mobile devices and be findable to prospects this very moment?

The fact is, the differences between a smartphone and a home computer have become fewer over time. Obviously, I wouldn't edit a Word document on my phone but I do use it to search for restaurants, suppliers and retailers, as well as check email and social media portals such as Facebook and Twitter.

On the road, Foursquare and Yelp.com are my primary resources to find restaurants, deals, tips and offers that might be within walking distance from my hotel or conference center.

FINDABILITY CHALLENGE:

Use sites like Foursquare and Yelp.com to geo-target prospects for the highest possible mobile media marketing findability.

STEP 1: IDENTIFY YOUR LOCAL MOBILE PORTALS

1. Set up and claim your Yelp.com account.
2. Set up and claim your Foursquare presence.
3. Create QR codes and actively use them on marketing materials.

These three tactics are often used by clients seeking to drive more mobile, localized traffic to their websites or business store fronts.

Yelp.com has transcended restaurants and now indexes all kinds of businesses.

According to the Yelp.com blog, more than 11 reviews were written every minute on Yelp.com in 2010. Perhaps most significant, Yelp Mobile received 2.6 million unique visitors in September, 2010. Yelp now has an iPad app and check-in offers on iPhone and Android. Simply put, Yelp is one of the most important mobile portals for businesses.

Foursquare is a mobile application that makes cities more user-friendly and more interesting to explore. It's a friend-finder, a social city guide and a game that challenges users to experience new things and visit local businesses, and rewards them for doing so. Users get reviews and tips and can network with others who might be at the same location. Foursquare lets users "check in" to a location when they arrive and, depending on the business, receive free or discounted items. Often, the more loyal a customer, the more rewards he or she receives. As of December 2010, Foursquare had more than 5 million users worldwide.

A **QR Code** is a matrix barcode — or two-dimensional (2D) code — readable by mobile phones with a camera and smartphones. The information encoded can be text, URL or other data. QR codes are not new but they seem to be finally catching on with consumers. The nice thing about QR codes is that they can be used to direct users to a website, online coupon, specific landing page, online map, telephone number and so on. This technology may be a bit passé to the geek in your life, but it's a very effective way of getting real, localized action for your business. At Findability Group, we use a QR code on coffee mugs, t-shirts and at conferences.

STEP 2: USE KEYWORDS PROPERLY IN MOBILE PORTALS

1. Use keywords in Yelp, Foursquare and other mobile portals.

Heather Lutze has spent the last 10 years helping business owners get their enterprises noticed on the Web by their target audiences. She is the author of "The Findability Formula: The Easy, Non-Technical Approach to Search Engine Marketing." Visit FindabilityFormula.com for tools and resources to increase your site's findability.

 WebsiteMagazine.com

Don't Forget Google

People still search the old-fashioned way on mobile devices, going straight to Google. For this reason, be sure to claim your business on Google Local Business Center (LBC) and ensure that all information is accurate and up-to-date. Go to Places.Google.com/Business.

Action Plan:

- 1) Identify local mobile portals such as Yelp.com and Foursquare, and utilize QR codes.
- 2) Use keywords properly in mobile portals.
- 3) Encourage conversation and empower users to promote your business.

—When you “unlock” your business on Yelp, be sure to use the keyword in your company name. For instance, “Findability Group Search Marketing”, where “search marketing” is our keyword.

2. Use keywords in your company descriptions and offers.

—Reflect the content of your website’s company descriptions and special offers by using the same keywords in the content of your mobile profiles. Also be sure to link to those pages on your site whenever possible.

3. Create custom landing pages for Yelp and Foursquare company URIs

—Co-brand your pages with phrases such as: “Thanks for visiting us from Yelp!” Give a special offer for Yelp visitors only. Create a unique URL such as <http://www.yourdomain.com/yelpoffer>.

STEP 3: ENCOURAGE CONVERSATION

Empower Fans to promote for you!

Whenever happy customers compliment your services or products, make it easy for them to review your business on Yelp.com. Although Yelp discourages actively soliciting reviews, having a QR code linking to your Yelp page on your restaurant tables is a great tactic. Always have some kind of special offer set up with Foursquare, such as a small gift or discount. Your ad will stand

out and be noticed. As I was sitting in a hotel, writing this article, the Chili’s from across the street sent me an offer for free chips and salsa.

You need to make it easy to obtain positive comments from happy customers. Otherwise, chances are good that the only reviews for your business will be the negative ones. Reviews and comments provide powerful decision making criteria for prospective buyers.

Even if your business is not set up to serve the general public, these sites can help your mobile Findability. Yelp is set up to review local businesses and, as such, tends to rank in the main search engines when users include a local modifier with their keyword string (such as “Denver” or “New York”). QR codes help connect offline and online marketing, so having a QR Code on the table at the next trade conference helps make it easy for prospects to join your social community and provide their valuable contact information for remarketing purposes.

Mobile marketing has been the buzz for years already but with the rise of smartphones, or what I call “the Other Computer,” we are now seeing real Findability and business results with these portals.

As a smart business owner, use these sites for optimum Findability and don’t forget — they work like search engines. You must use keywords wherever possible if you want to be found by the people who don’t know your company exists.

(Aquaman’s seahorse, in case you were wondering, is named Storm. But maybe you already used your smartphone to find out.) ■



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