

# GETTING STARTED GUIDE:

## Making Your Marketing



The mobile era has more than arrived, and that means marketers and business owners need to tweak their messages, media and metrics for mobile devices. As the usage of mobile phones and tablets continues to surge—market research firm IDC forecasts that over a billion new smartphones will be purchased this year alone—marketing only to those on desktop computers or laptops is no longer an option for businesses large and small.

The mobile phone market grew 7.3% in 2013, marking a sharp rebound from a flat 2012, [the IDC says](#).

Worldwide smartphone makers will ship more than 1.8 billion mobile phones this year, growing to over 2.3 billion mobile phones by 2017.

The growth of mobile devices affects more than just how people communicate, it's also changing how they consume everything from news to entertainment to advertising.



According to the [Pew Research Center's Internet Project](#), over a third of those who access the Internet from their phones mostly go online using their mobile phone. For lower-income Americans, the mobile device is fast becoming their primary portal to the online world, "...a development that has particular relevance to companies and organizations seeking to reach these groups," says the Pew report.



This shift has affected marketing strategies, specifically for small to medium businesses with limited marketing dollars. According to the Mobile Marketing Association (MMA)'s [Mobile Marketing Economic Impact Study](#), the

mobile marketing ecosystem generated \$139 billion in 2012, a figure expected to rise to \$400 billion over the next five years.

"Mobile advertising alone is projected to climb to \$9.2 billion over the next five years," the MMA [stated recently](#).

## Designing websites for small screens

The first step for most businesses looking to adapt to the mobile era is making sure their website, blog and other online content is easily viewable on mobile devices. Depending on the approach you take, that can be a quick, inexpensive task or a more challenging one.

The easiest way to design a website that works across mobile devices is to use [responsive design](#).

Simply put, responsive design automatically adapts itself to the size of the screen that's being used to view the page, rearranging itself from, say, three columns down to two on a tablet and one on a mobile phone. Responsive design uses a

grid system to adjust its layout and size based on “media queries,” which allow your server to detect the device making the request for a page.

Web developer and designer [Ethan Marcotte](#), considered the inventor of responsive Web design, [wrote a book](#) on the topic in 2011. “The thing that excites me the most about the web is its ubiquity,” Marcotte says. “I could design something that's viewable anywhere in the world regardless of the device the person has in their hand.”

If you're planning on using WordPress for your website, or already have a WordPress site, the simplest way to access responsive design is to use (or switch to) a responsive WordPress theme. Responsive themes will usually say so in their description; some popular responsive WordPress themes are WordPress' own 2012 and 2013 themes. If you're hiring a designer to build your website, work with someone who has experience with responsive design and can show you examples of his or her work.



## Build a mobile site or app

Mobile-native sites or apps aren't incompatible with responsive web design, and may be useful depending on your budget and the type of business you have.

Mobile strategist [Curt Prins](#) recommends separate mobile sites for those not updating their websites more than monthly, especially retailers and restaurants, since people looking for locations or phone numbers want information



quickly, and responsive sites are a bit slower than dedicated mobile ones.

[Natedogs](#), a food truck based in the Twin Cities, has a website, mobile site (complete with easily accessible social media buttons) and an app.

Sites that do update regularly, specifically ones that are not location-based, may be better off with a responsive design rather than a separate mobile site to avoid duplicating their efforts by having to re-post content to several sites.

Some full-fledged news sites that have a lot of multimedia often have separate mobile sites, but others are slowly testing out responsive design on some areas of their site while working out the kinks. For example, the BBC is working on slowly rolling out a responsive site but is temporarily limiting it to users on handheld devices.

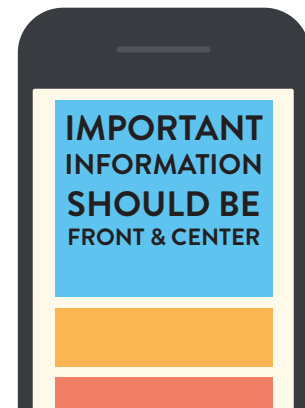
## Optimizing the mobile experience

### 1. Bring device testing into the design process.

“I think we tend to think of websites in isolation from actual browsers,” Marcotte says, adding that many designers do work in Adobe Photoshop, for example, build and only then test a prototype. Instead, test early versions on multiple mobile devices and tablets.

### 2. Put important information first.

If you have limited screen real estate, make sure the most critical pieces of information are front and center. This could be your location, phone number or other contact information. It'll vary by business.



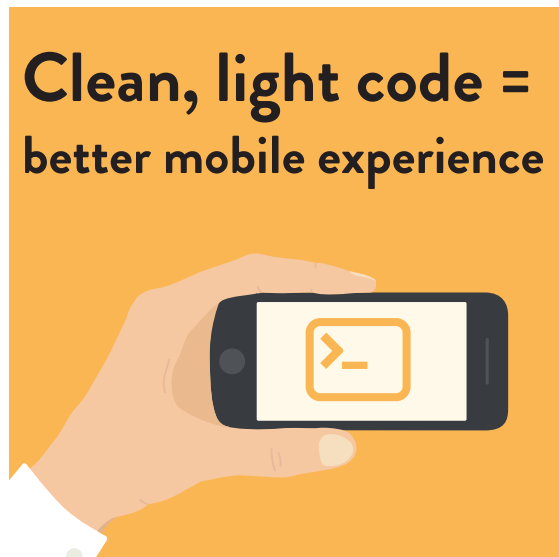
## Examples of great responsive designs

(from Ethan Marcotte)

Make sure to shrink your web browser window if viewing on a computer to see how the columns rearrange depending on the size of your device.

- [8 Faces Magazine](#)
- [BiowareB](#)
- [Hello Geri](#)
- [Jessica Hische](#)
- [Nismo Performance Academy](#)
- [NPR](#)
- [Stuff & Nonsense](#)
- [Ugmonk](#)
- [Verge buying guide](#)

### 3. Keep the experience as light as possible.



Some websites will overload visitors with unnecessary code they won't benefit from. Ask your designer/developer to make sure the design doesn't have unnecessary JavaScript that's not appropriate for the device that renders it, and that it only loads if certain conditions are met (for example, if a screen is above a certain size).

### 4. Consider a 'performance budget.'

"Site load times and page performance directly impacts conversion rates, visit duration and bounce rates," Marcotte says. Some businesses are responding by creating a performance budget—for example, aiming to have pages load in less than 10 seconds on a 3G connection, or keeping them under 300KB in size. "When [those firms] add new graphics, content or functionality, they test it against that performance budget," Marcotte explains.



## CASE STUDY:

### Mobilizing a brewpub

One local business that mobile strategist Curtis Prins helped make a push into mobile was [Northbound Smokehouse & Brewpub](#), located in Minneapolis, Minnesota.



“Northbound’s owners were open to experiment with mobile marketing and, after a year, mobile has become a core marketing tool for gaining loyalists and tracking results,” says Prins. “Nearly all of the promotional tools, internal and external to the brewpub, use an SMS call-to-action with a unique keyword for tracking. This included magazine and transit ads, beer coasters and contests.”

The brewpub used an SMS (text message) campaign to allow the community to vote for the two nonprofits who’d benefit from their annual [Beer4Life giveaway](#). The restaurant sold raffle tickets at the bar, and allowed the organizations to sell tickets themselves, and raised \$10,000 for the charities.

“They chose to have both a main website and a separate mobile site because they understood how customers use them—for directions, menus and the phone number,” Prins says.



## Optimizing email marketing for mobile

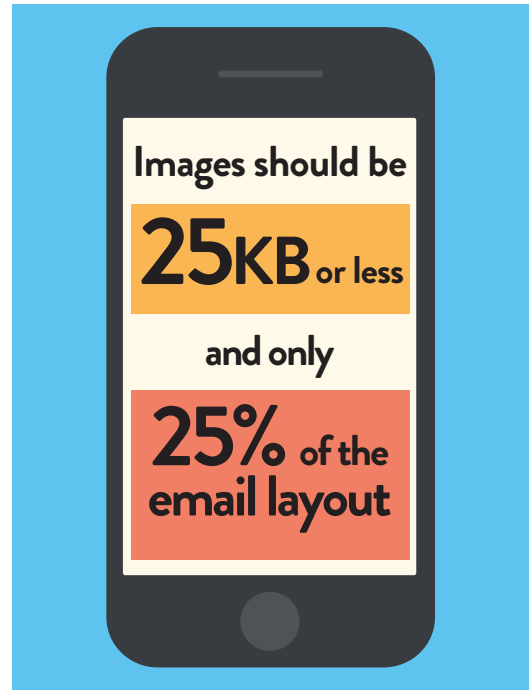
It's no longer safe to assume that the majority of your email recipients will be reading newsletters or promotional messages on their laptops or desktops, so make sure that you're optimizing your email marketing for mobile, as well.

- 1 Pay attention to your subject line and headlines so that they get people's attention.
- 2 Put the most relevant and important information first. Make sure you've said what you want clients to read before something else pulls at their attention.
- 3 Use buttons for calls to action instead of links. These are easier for people to click on touchscreens and less likely to be overlooked in a small setting.
- 4 Break up your text. Avoid overly long paragraphs, and don't crowd too many hyperlinks together at once.
- 5 Make sure your design is clean and simple, and that your emails are about 500 to 600 pixels wide so that they'll be easy to scroll through.



## An important aspect of good mobile marketing has to do with images in email and on your web page:

- 1 Don't use images that are too big and take too long to load. Keeping photos and pictures under 25KB is a good rule of thumb.
- 2 Don't use too many images. Aim to use three quarters of the space in an email message for text with about a quarter devoted to images.
- 3 Give your images 'alt tags,' or alternative text, that pop up when an image is not displayed on a device.



## Advertising on mobile platforms

Good options for mobile advertising for small businesses include video ads, social campaigns, search (those ads that show up when searching a specific word or phrase in a search engine such as Google), and display advertising (such as a banner ad). Some proximity-based or location-based marketing options send location-specific mobile phone advertisements to users within a specific geographical location, but other ads operate similarly on mobile devices as they do on a desktop or laptop computer. Often, mobile ads are included in cross-media promotion, which engages audiences across multiple spectrums.

## NFC

Near Field Communication, or NFC, is another way that mobile marketing services can send data to users' mobile phones. The user simply uses their phone to tap a chip that's been strategically placed on an ad, and the phone responds by making a call or opening a specific website.



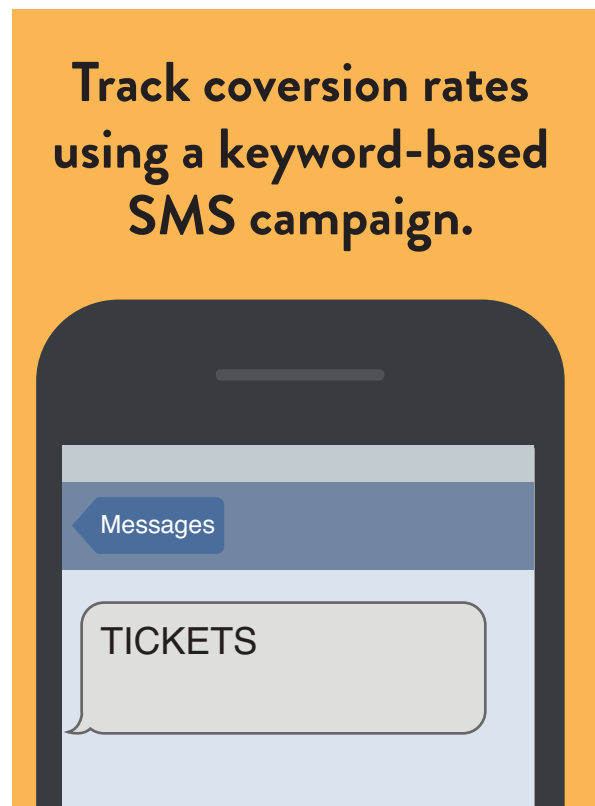
## Text message (SMS) campaigns

One innovative way to take your advertising mobile is to use a [text message, or SMS campaign](#). But beware: while SMS campaigns can be ultra-effective, getting customers to part with their personal information is tricky. “There are two numbers that people are reticent to give out: their social security number and their mobile phone number,” says Prins. “So if you can get that person to text for an offer or to get more information and you use a specific keyword, you can track where that contact point is and, depending on how good your SMS platform is, how these people are at converting.”

As Prins mentioned, using a keyword to tie text responses to offline or online ads or content is key. By typing a keyword to a specific ad, you can determine what's most effective. For example, if you're running a campaign asking people to text a number for free tickets, you may have them text in the keyword, TICKETS, whereas another campaign may have a different keyword. Your mobile advertising service will be able to

provide you information on how many people used that specific keyword, and possibly what their conversion rate is, to help you use your advertising dollars more effectively in the future.

Why gather your customers phone numbers? Not to bother them at dinnertime: many small businesses use text messages to remind clients of appointments (a dentist office struggling with no-shows, for example), or to update clients on what's happening, such as with food trucks or performers who need to keep people informed of upcoming locations or events.



## CASE STUDY: Mobile-enabled brownbags the Sheridan Story

The Sheridan Story is a non-profit organization that provides free weekend meals to students on school lunch programs. “Their funding largely comes from communities of faith—groups that are largely insular,” Prins explains.



To add some virality to their marketing, the organization purchased thousands of brown bags for donors and volunteers, much in the same way that voters or blood donors receive stickers to confirm their participation. Through lunchroom conversations across the Twin Cities, these bags and stickers drive interest and increase donations to the non-profit organization. Each bag has a sticker with QR codes, a phone number for an SMS campaign, and a website URL. (These various methods all take users to a mobile-friendly landing page and traffic is tracked by entry channel to see which is most effective.)

“Donors can purchase the bags or get one when they first donate. By bringing it to their lunch room or filling it full of goodies for guests, these bags function as a conversation piece. The mobile tools move conversations to further engagements and donations,” Prins explains.

## Go forth and mobilize

What's important for every small business to remember, says Prins, is to make sure all channels have at least a basic level of optimization for mobile use today. That can mean a responsive design theme, email newsletters without huge image files and a small mobile-friendly campaign driven by SMS, for example. Bigger investments, such as a mobile app or extensive mobile-only advertising, can come later. And surely there will be more devices, more networks and more opportunities to reach customers in the near future.

This guide was written by Yael Grauer and edited and produced by [VerticalResponse](#).