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Editorial

Mobile Marketing: The Way Forward

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Firms spent about a quarter of their digital budget on mobile, and mobile contributed nearly a quarter of all digital revenues in 2015 (eMarketer 2015). Mobile marketing has grown substantially in scope from its early definition and stage in development (Shankar and Balasubramanian 2009). Mobile marketing has had a significant impact in the retail environment as most initial applications involved reminders and promotions when a shopper is close to a physical store or is in a shopping mode while in motion (Shankar et al. 2010). The rapid surge of mobile marketing in recent years raises several important questions about marketing communication and shopper response: How has advertising evolved in the mobile context? How effective is mobile advertising? What are the forms and roles of mobile promotions? Which mobile promotions work and which do not work? How relevant is gamification in the mobile environment? How can marketers effectively use gamification in mobile marketing? How do shoppers use mobile in their shopping journey? How should managers use mobile to influence shoppers along and beyond the path to purchase? Exploring answers to these and related questions is the focus of this special issue.

The four articles featured in this special issue address four themes related to these questions: mobile advertising, mobile promotions, gamification in mobile, and mobile shopper marketing. These articles originated in a Thought Leadership Conference (TLC) organized in January 2015 by the Center for Retailing Studies at the Mays Business School, Texas A&M University. Each article addresses the following questions pertaining to its substantive focus: What key issues on this topic merit research and managerial attention? What do we know from prior research about these issues? What framework can we use to organize these issues to enrich our understanding? What unknowns exist from research and managerial standpoints? What are the ways to move forward in continuing investigations to obtain more insights?

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The co-authors of each article in this special issue are leading academic experts and senior executives in the area of mobile marketing. While the collaboration among academics has produced the anticipated excellent insights, the role of executives is a special aspect of each article. The executives have acted as a good bridge between the academic and practitioner communities. They have helped focus the article on key managerial questions such as: What issues on their topic keep managers awake? What decisions related to their topic are important? How do managers currently make these decisions? What frameworks, tools, and insights on their topic will be most helpful to make these decisions?

To provide some guidance to readers of this special issue, I provide a broad overview of selected topics and perspectives presented in the articles. An essential aspect of mobile marketing is mobile communication, which includes mobile advertising and mobile promotion. Grewal et al. (2016) offer an overview of mobile advertising that can be viewed as providing relevant messages on a small screen to consumers with limited attention span. Extant research on mobile advertising and promotions (e.g., Bart, Stephen, and Sarvary 2014) has looked at specific issues in mobile advertising. Taking a broad view, Grewal et al. (2016) argue that mobile advertising's performance depends on several variables organized by the environment, consumer, firm, market and technology factors, advertising goals, and the use of appropriate mobile ad elements. Their framework helps to organize existing knowledge and outline future research avenues in mobile advertising.

Andrews et al. (2016) discuss both the theory and the application of mobile promotions and offer researchers and managers several guidelines. Extending the concept of mobile promotion from those used in specific contexts such as retail (e.g., Hui et al. 2013), they broadly define mobile promotions as information delivered on a mobile device, offering value aimed at effecting short-term specific behavior. Their framework encompasses different stakeholders (e.g., manufacturers, retailers, intermediaries) in the mobile promotion ecosystem. They address

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