BLOG

It's easier than ever to create compelling mobile advertising

MOBILE

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By Steffen Krabbenhoft, Head of Mobile, MediaCom EMEA

The fuss around Mobile World Congress has died down. The fireworks that announced the latest mobile technology have fizzled out and the tens of thousands of delegates have gone home. You've read about the augmented reality spectacles, the mobile enhanced house and the world's fastest smartphone (the Ascend P2 from Huawei).

But what you haven't read is that the mobile advertising and communication eco-system is becoming much less complex.Once agencies (of all types) and marketers were wary of dealing with mobile, too many handsets, too many screen sizes, too many operating systems and just too much difficulty. This

year's Mobile World Congress showed that the barriers to engaging advertising are coming down. To explain why the big news from this year's show is about the advertising eco-system, I'd like to highlight two key developments that make mobile much simpler.

This year highlighted the power of open apps. The rise of HTML5 means that advertisers can create one platform and reach consumers whether they use Apple's iOS or Google's Android (or any other browser or IOS). This has been written about before - notably in relation when the FT shifted from iOS - but in Barcelona, the launch of a new operating mobile system from Firefox, which is browser based, creates even more opportunities for open apps to gain real consumer traction. Much of our future focus from a campaign perspective should be on web apps rather than native ones.

When we create apps that are personal, location-based and intuitive, the result will be more compelling products that are more useful for consumers and hence are used much more. And because there's no need to seek approval from native app stores such as Apple's App Store, open apps are also much more in tune with real-world campaign timescales.   Another complexity faced by brands is the need to deal with an increasing array of different screen sizes (including the ever-larger "phablets").

One of the companies we met with in Barcelona builds publishing platforms that give consumers the chance to specify their screen size, be it desktop, tablet, smart phones or even feature phones.   Of course, brands may still decide to build native apps and dedicated mobile sites but that decision will need to be based on how you want to use mobile and in which context.

What's important is that brands now have a choice to use a simpler, all

encompassing solution.   One final point to note is that even augmented reality is becoming easier. Simple systems that provide retailers with the chance to demonstrate what's in the box have become much more affordable. In Barcelona we saw examples involving IKEA and Volkswagen.

The gap between the time consumers spend on their mobile devices and the amount of advertising spend in this area is continuing to widen and brands are missing out on a massive amount of consumer media time.   The promise of this year's Mobile World Congress is that it's becoming much easier for brands to have a much more personal dialogue with the consumer. That will be delivered by their new-found ability to add value and earn a place in consumers' daily lives.

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