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## Take 2

« [Collaborating Customer Data is Key to Trade Promotions Management](#)

### Hold Onto That Handheld

Retailers are mad about mobile. *Mad...man.*

There's been some 75,000 applications written for the iPhone to date (and one very questionable one from Pepsi that's got social networks a-hopping this week: "AMP Up Before You Score")

<http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/AheadoftheCurve/pepsis-iphone-app-poor-taste/story?id=8817417>



Robin, a marketing pro, welcomes birthday greetings from companies she likes.

As Forrester Research's Sucharita Mulpuru advised at Shop.org in Las Vegas last month, retailers ought to "Like social [media] ... but *love* mobile." Her comment was adopted as a mantra, repeated by others throughout the conference. Sucharita did not set it up that way. That is not her style. It just caught on... like, uh, that thing, social media.

An intriguing Harris Interactive report released today <http://tumblr.com/x1i3j40i6> that was commissioned by San Francisco-based 1020 Placecast, underscores why. Consumers are more receptive than ever to receiving marketing messages via their cell phones. A whopping 30 percent of cell phone-carrying adults said they'd welcome alerts about apparel specials from retailers they choose.

That's the clincher: Opt in. That group of folks saying "yes" to apparel promos sent to their cell phones outpaces those who welcome alerts from fast food joints, consumer electronics, music retailers and yes, wait for it... even



gin mills offering happy hour specials.

At right is a mobile promo sent to a colleague of mine. Robin giggled with delight upon receiving birthday greetings last week from cosmetics giant Sephora and bookseller Borders. She likes birthdays so when her big day rolled around last week, she was receptive to receiving alerts — from retailers she likes. Again: That's the thing: You wanna go mobile? You gotta respect opt-in. When consumers give you permission, you're golden. If not, don't even...push it. Lest you risk ill will. Robin's a marketing pro <http://www.newhookmarketing.com> and no pushover for lame come-ons.

Retailers are jazzed about mobile despite the belief that there is no solid, quantifiable ROI. No ROI that anyone can see, grab on to. Yet, anyway. And many admit this freely. When's the last time that happened? Even the most staid are saying, "Oh, OK. We're in!" This is fun. Refreshing. Infectious. Retailers taking a risk...nuts! And they are favoring the iPhone from Apple.

This is compelling because only 23% of U.S. smartphone owners carry an iPhone (a 365% increase over a year ago) versus 52% who own a Blackberry from Research in Motion (Canalys). And yet, it's important to note a disproportionately large percentage of mobile-commerce purchases are transacted via an iPhone even though Blackberry dominates the market.

Before we get all nuts, here. I would like to introduce you to Bill Bass. Many of you know Bill as the genius behind Lands' End's e-commerce site who joined Sears when it bought Lands' End. You may not know that Bill co-founded the very progressive Fair Indigo, <http://www.fairindigo.com>, a fair trade apparel retailer, and now is president of Charming Direct at Charming Shoppes (parent of Lane Bryant, Fashion Bug, Catherines). When Bill speaks, I listen. Bill is all about innovation and higher thinking. He's optimistic. He's also, well...grounded in reality.

Bill reminds me that 10 years ago, well-respected prognosticators were saying 80% of retail sales would be conducted online within two years (2001). Bill smirked then and he's got a polite and respectful smirk today. I respect this smirk. There's great potential for a game-changer here, but let's keep our heads, people.

"I think ecommerce on cell phones is over-hyped," Bass said. "But I do think cell phones will have a big impact in brick-and-mortar stores as customers hop online to compare prices and read customer reviews."

The volume of sales conducted via cell phone may not be as huge as some predict, but everyone seems to agree the cell phone is too huge a selling tool to dismiss as a "gadget."

Tags: [Apple](#), [Blackberry](#), [iPhone](#), [mobile](#), [RIM](#)

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