

SA businesses need to 'mobilise'



By [Brett St Clair](#)

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While consumers have clearly gone mobile, many businesses are still playing catch-up. Most brands have not yet adopted a mobile strategy to engage with these connected consumers and as such are not capitalising on this opportunity.

The era of mobile has arrived. Driven by the explosion of smartphones, mobile is the fastest growing medium in history. Today, over half of all new Internet connections are coming from mobile devices and there are already more than one billion mobile Internet users around the world.

More smartphone users than DStv subscribers

In South Africa, there are more smartphone users (6.7 million) than DStv (5.2 million) subscribers, with 39% of urban South Africans and 27% of rural users now browsing the Internet on their phones (World Wide Worx, 2011).

Research has also shown an increase in the number of mobile searches conducted by South Africans in the last year, with a significant proportion of users searching for products and services on their cellphones.

Here are a few steps that businesses can take to begin building their smartphone Internet strategies today:

1. Keep layout simple

Keep mobile Internet layout simple so mobile users can navigate easily on the small screen.

Use clear and concise headlines, keep scrolling simple (top to bottom) and make search easy for the user by ensuring that search boxes are visible and search results are clean and easily filtered.

2. Prioritise content

Make it easy for customers on the go to find content that is most relevant to their needs.

Select valuable content for users on the go and understand the limitations of the mobile attention span by providing an experience that is more transactional and action-oriented, rather than browsing-based. Ensure that site navigation and load time are as fast as possible.

3. Use uniquely mobile features

Users can interact through touch, sound, sight, and location on their mobile device. Take advantage of this functionality to maximise user experience.

Offer users the most relevant information based on their location and leverage other functions on mobiles such as GPS, cameras and notepad. Building for feature phones is important but smartphones allow for a rich user experience.

4. Design for thumbs, not mice

Remember that most smartphone users will be interacting with your website through a touch screen.

Design your site to prevent accidental clicks and avoid hover over menus. Distinctively coloured buttons and stand out conversion buttons should be larger and more prominent.

5. Make it easy to convert

Make it easy for users to convert on the go.

Shorten the conversion process by keeping forms concise and reducing unnecessary fields. Keep call to actions clear and make account access and login processes quick and easy. If you have sales people: remember a phone is a communication device. Using a click-to-call option is the best way to connect sales representatives to consumers looking for specific products and services.

We're in the earliest chapters of mobile's history. As the mobile web expands, the opportunities available for marketers to reach consumers and grow their businesses will increase as well.

Businesses are boosting sales, brand-awareness, and purchase-intent through effective mobile campaigns. It's not too late to be early to mobilise your business.

ABOUT BRETT ST CLAIR

Brett St Clair is CEO at Siatik, one of Google's leading African cloud partners. He has 20+ years experience in the global digital landscape. He was previously Barclays' digital transformation director for Africa, where he launched a world-first with chat banking in Facebook messenger. Prior to that he was Google's Africa lead for cloud services and led AdMob's expansion across the continent. He was also the first keynote speaker in Africa to accept bitcoin as payment.

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