



The changing face of marketing: What can the new “apps” do for you?

by Douglas Knorr



Douglas Knorr, known as a “retail marketing activist,” is president of Knorr Marketing (www.knorrmarketing.com), a full-service marketing and advertising agency specializing in the home furnishings industry. The agency provides strategic planning, creative production, public relations, sales promotions, website development and media buying services. Headquartered in Traverse City, Mich., the firm serves clients throughout the United States.

With all the new options in marketing and advertising comes frustration when trying to find advertising efficiencies.

I recently told a client that marketers are beginning to feel like the man who tried to straddle two boats as they began to drift apart. With his left foot in one boat and his right foot in the other, it requires a tremendous amount of concentration and strategy to maintain balance and maneuver to the other side. In the same way, we have to keep one foot in traditional media and put the other in the new digital media because we are in the midst of a major media transition.

In prior issues of NHFA’s *Home Furnishings Retailer*, we’ve talked about real-time marketing, including mobile texting (sometimes called “interruptive marketing”) and QR codes. Now let’s look at how software applications (“apps”) in cell phones and other handheld devices are further changing the face of marketing and other business operations.

Today, 82 percent of all American adults have cell phones, and these have morphed from being just a voice device to a multi-channel device that lets internet-accessing mini computers use a vast array of apps.

Last September, the Pew Research Center released a 46-page white paper on "The Rise of the Apps Culture" that reported:

■ 35 percent of adults have cell phones with apps and two-thirds of those with apps use them.

■ About 24 percent of U.S. adults are active app users.

■ App users are younger, more educated and more affluent than other cell phone users.

■ App use still ranks low when compared to other uses of cell phones. While 76 percent of cell phone users take pictures with their phones and 72 percent send text messages, only 29 percent use the apps on their phones.

The Pew Research Center white paper also cited the Nielsen apps playbook survey. This survey found that the most popular apps are games (60 percent of use) followed by news, weather, navigation, social networking and music apps. Use of apps for "shopping and retail" stands at 24 percent.

According to an AT&T survey of 2,246 small business owners, apps are becoming an important business tool. ("Small" in this survey was defined as companies with between two and 50 employees, both part-time and full-time.) The AT&T study



Why Do Top Furniture Retailers Partner with Cory First Choice Home Delivery Year-After-Year?

- It's not because Cory has the most experienced delivery experts in the country, *we do!*
- It's not because Cory has the most modern delivery fleet, *we do!*
- It's not because of Cory's proprietary warehouse and delivery technology.

The top furniture retailers partner with Cory First Choice because of our 77 year promise to get the job done right the first time, year after year.

No matter the size of your operation, Cory becomes an extension of your business, treating it as our very own.

Cory delivers excellence. We consistently deliver on our promise to provide your customers with the very best home delivery experience.



**To find out
how we can help you
grow your business
Call the Cory Team Today.
201-795-1000
chrisdelisa@corycompanies.com**

It's The Cory Way!

Cory People - Cory Service - Cory Passion - Cory Promise

Do you really know
how well you're

PERFORMING?

Where do your competitors
outshine you?

**Our Retailer
Effectiveness Study
Can Tell You.**

The audience—your
customers—are the judges.



FurnitureCore.com

Research You Can't Live Without

Scan this code with a smartphone
for additional information on
Retailer Effectiveness.



800 826-8868 | furniturecore.com

Hold your efforts accountable and you'll learn what tools work for you!

found that 72 percent of small businesses used mobile apps in their operations and more than 33 percent of small business owners say they couldn't survive or that it would be a challenge to survive, without mobile apps.

For business use, AT&T found that top on the list of apps were GPS and mapping, with nearly half (49 percent) of companies using them; and 26 percent using apps for document management. Sixty-two percent of small businesses polled said they used mobile apps to save time; 59 percent cited increased productivity, and 29 percent cited cost savings.

Twenty-six percent of small businesses in the AT&T survey use apps for social media marketing — just a little over the same percent of consumers who use apps for “shopping and retail” in the Nielsen report.

Other survey findings show that the percentage of small businesses with Facebook pages jumped from 27 percent in 2009 to 41 percent today.

More than a third of those polled said social media was good for business with 37 percent saying Facebook increased traffic to their company websites.

What do all these surveys mean to you? After much research, we believe that apps are designed to save time for people seeking answers to a specific need or interest. For the home furnishings

industry, apps currently seem to have more significance for manufacturer and national retailer marketing initiatives than they do for local and smaller regional furniture retailers.

Outside of social media apps, QR code reader apps may become the most popular apps for home furnishings retailers. In the near future, manufacturers may add QR codes to their product tags or retailers may add such codes to their sales tags. Either way, scanning the QR codes could open web pages or text messages that provide further information about a product, such as a description, picture of available colors, video of a product demo or a discount coupon.

How — or whether — you use apps for business operations or to attract customers, it's clear we are in transition from marketing via traditional, static communication media to digital, real-time media. We need to continue using both old and new marketing tools to reach today's elusive customers of all ages.

Hold your efforts accountable and you'll learn what tools work for you. And in old media or new, remember that your unique message and clearly defined promise will always be the most important part of your marketing. Someday, everyone may be using social media and apps — but no one else can be you. 