

Mobile trends for 2017

By [Diane Gantz](#)

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Mobile is the single most important device that connects consumers with each other, with brands, and products and services. Over the past few years it has demonstrated its power in both marketing and advertising, and as a source of consumer insight.



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The GSMA Mobile Economy Sub-Saharan Africa 2015 report predicts a significant uptick of unique subscriber registrations and sim connections throughout this region over the next few years. Mobile broadband, in particular, is set to grow at an anticipated rate of 235% from 2015 to 2020. This growth in smartphone technology opens up more dynamic ways to interact with consumers, and will shape mobile research trends over the next few years.

Amplified use of mobile to understand moments that matter

Mobile delves into moments that matter to brands – in revolutionary ways. Clients and researchers are no longer interested in what consumers did in the past 7 days, never mind in the past 4 weeks. Mobile enables in-the-moment understanding of consumer choices and behaviour. With smart research design, clients will be able to take advantage of this

opportunity to grow their brands at the margins.

Growth of tools that connect with the interactive consumer

Consumers interact with one another on a daily basis with video, images, audio and open commentary (or chat). Researchers who use tools and means of communication that are relevant to consumers will magnify their understanding of consumer motivations and behaviour.

The saying that 'a picture speaks a thousand words' has never been so relevant - it is no secret that video and images or pictures are now the new way for consumers to communicate with one another. Mobile can be used to share images and video with consumers, but also to get consumers to share their brand experiences with marketers. For example, ad testing on mobile has been validated to ensure quick consumer feedback in order to avoid unnecessary marketing spend. Mystery shopping is no longer done by interviewers, but instead consumers are commissioned to snap pictures of their favourite products in store, send photos of shop shelf displays to ensure better management of inventory, while brand ambassadors are being scrutinised and kept on their toes with ever-evaluating consumers.



Image by 123RF

Passive measurement for consumer insight

With smartphone technology comes an array of new products and consumer tracking tools such as apps for passively tracking what consumers do when and where, with whom they do it, and how long they do it – all providing depth of information that can be mined for consumer insight.

The app era

Smartphone technology boosted the development of research apps, evident in the myriad of research and insight apps that are popping up everywhere. These are set out to deliver a great experience for consumers and clients that are on this journey. Success largely depends on one's ability to engage app users sufficiently so they continue to use it on an ongoing basis.

Engagement is king

Consumers are being targeted on their mobile phones with new product and service promotions, requests for signing up to panels or providing feedback of their most recent brand experience.

In order to cut through the clutter and maintain interest, careful consideration should be given as to how to best engage with, and incentivise consumers. If an incentive is too little for the time, effort and cost of completing a mobile survey, consumers will not opt-in to participate. If exorbitant incentives are being paid out, one is at risk of creating consumer research junkies. Incentive schemes will therefore continually be fine-tuned to ensure optimal incentive structures. Gamification methodologies will be employed actively to reduce respondent fatigue. And, best practices for mobile design have been established and will continue to drive improved data quality from mobile surveys.

Microsurveys

Microsurveys, as termed by a recent GRIT report, are increasingly used to build up knowledge banks of consumer insight. This trend will continue into 2017, with really short questionnaires being launched in order to obtain instant insight from a relevant target audience. Microsurveys underscore the trend towards agile research and in essence aim to speak to consumers where they are – on mobile, and on their terms – by asking only a few questions that can be completed in minutes.

Streamlined end-to-end solutions

In order to fully enjoy the benefits that mobile research can offer – with respect to speed and efficiency of reporting – 2017 will continue to see the development of advanced streamlined end-to-end solutions. Imagine the impact of a fully integrated knowledge, research and insight solution to a client's bottom line. New bars will be set in this regard for research going forward.

Driving predictive insights through integrated and bespoke custom solutions

Mobile will increasingly be used as either a complement to, or an integral part of large, integrated research programs that feed into future-forward strategic decision-making. Versatility and creativity in setting-up these programs will be key in successful implementation at scale, as will the shift towards integrated knowledge systems in ensuring optimal extraction of consumer insight and the pursuit of predictive insights.

Clients will become mobile confident

As clients embark and further explore this journey called mobile research they will establish how mobile best fits into their overall research mix. Mobile's success will be showcased through quality data, timely reporting, agile programs, creative implementation and overall efficiency in using mobile to gain consumer insight.

We are looking forward to seeing how mobile shows off in 2017.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Diane Gantz has more than 10 years of marketing research experience, and specialises in mobile research and insights. She's presented at local and international conferences regarding the subject matter, including Insights Innovation Exchange Conference in Amsterdam and SAMRA in South Africa. In her current role Diane is responsible for driving mobile growth throughout West, East and Central Africa.

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