



STERLING RESOURCES

MARKETING ON THE GO: A Guide to Mobile Websites

■ By 2013, it is projected that mobile phones will overtake PCs as the most common Web access device worldwide, according to research by Gartner.

No longer just a convenient way to make a phone call, Web-enabled mobile phones are quickly becoming a handheld replacement for the personal computer, offering users the ability to instantly access information and connect with products and services anytime, anywhere, and all over the world.

The good news is that these Web-enabled mobile devices have created a powerful new marketing channel for reaching your customers. But to make the most of this opportunity, it is important to recognize that there are unique characteristics to browsing the mobile Web that must be taken into account for your marketing to be effective. One of the most important of these has to do with your website.

Websites created to be viewed by a personal computer will not have the same impact on a mobile device. There are two main reasons for this: screen size and download speed. Here are a few obstacles that deter users from viewing traditional websites on a mobile device:

- **Excessive scrolling from side-to-side:** Mobile phones have been getting sleeker over the past several years, which means their screens are even smaller. While the width of a standard desktop monitor is around 1052px, the standard width for a mobile screen is only 250px. This can place much of the content of a traditional website out of view on a mobile phone screen—requiring the user to scroll from side-to-side to see it.
- **Small text size:** This can result in the user having to zoom in to read and can make relevant information hard to find.
- **Page height:** Traditional website designs are generally too long for mobile device screens, inconveniencing mobile users by requiring them to scroll down.



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- **Location conditions:** The location of the user can affect the mobile browsing experience. Cell phones are used in a much wider variety of outdoor conditions than most computers. The contrast of the colors and font size of a traditional website may not be legible while using a mobile phone outdoors.
- **Load time:** Download speeds are generally slower on mobile devices. Websites that have not been optimized for the mobile Web may take a long time to load.

Users who visit mobile websites and have a positive experience are more likely to find the information they seek and return to that mobile site than those who have difficulty navigating pages and opening links.

In light of all this, businesses have begun creating special websites designed to enhance the user experience on mobile phones.

■ Same information, different approach

Offering a separate mobile website is fast becoming a necessity, much like creating a traditional website for a business was in the late 1990s. If one of the goals of your traditional website is to provide valuable and helpful information to customers and prospects, a mobile website will help to ensure that they can find what they are looking for when searching with their mobile device.

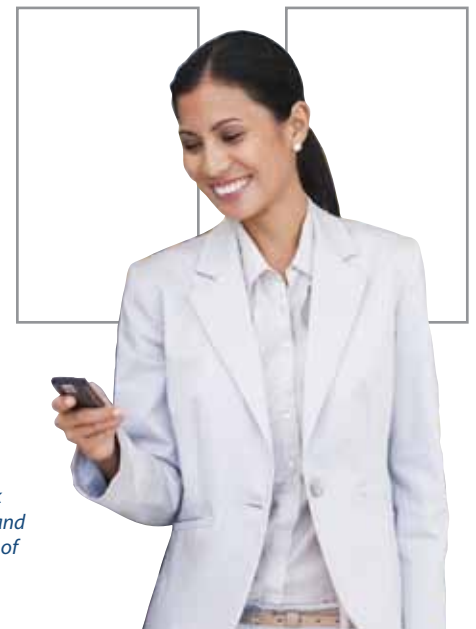
In designing a mobile website, the goal is to organize the most important information from the traditional website in a clear, concise manner that is easy for mobile users to grasp and—perhaps most importantly—navigate quickly. Mobile users tend to scan instead of reading blocks of text. Arranging the layout to keep it in the screen view will ensure mobile users can quickly access and intuitively navigate the site on their mobile browser.

■ If content is King, speed is the Queen

Mobile users do not want to wait for content—and mobile networks are generally slower than dedicated connections. Shortening the text and simplifying the layout, limiting the use of images, and avoiding some Web design elements (such as Flash) that are not supported by all mobile browsers will help ensure the mobile website loads quickly.

■ Improving the user experience improves results

More businesses are now turning to mobile websites as an innovative way to reach customers and further promote their business. Recognizing the important design and usability differences between mobile websites and traditional websites is an important component for businesses extending their marketing into the mobile realm.



Mobile users seek quick access to information and are apt to scan instead of reading blocks of text.

Here are a few examples of traditional websites and their mobile counterparts. Notice the different approaches taken to ensure better usability and design:

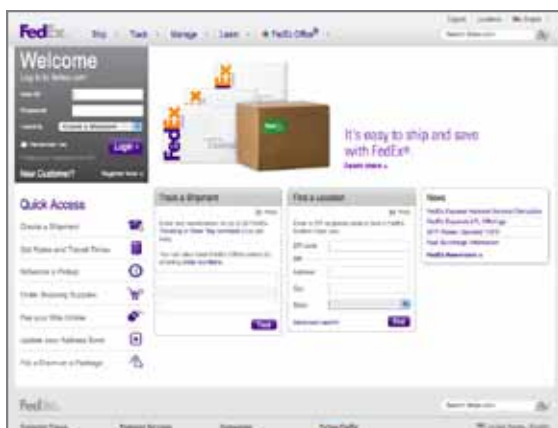


*Have a smartphone handy?
Download a QR Code reader app
and scan the QR Codes to visit the
mobile sites that are featured here!*

<http://ditchwitch.com>

<http://m.ditchwitch.com>

For their mobile website, Ditch Witch has eliminated the video prominently featured on the company website, which may not download as quickly or be easily viewed on a mobile device. The color scheme of the traditional website remains intact on the mobile site, and navigation has been simplified to improve the usability. The mobile site also features handy reference tools for customers working in the field.



<http://fedex.com/us/>

<http://m.fedex.com/us/>

FedEx opted for a clean mobile layout that prominently displays the most important user options: Ship, Track, Get Rates, Find Locations, and Schedule a Pick Up.





Mobile Website Q & A

Q: Will my company need to purchase a separate URL or website domain for its mobile site?

A: No. A mobile website can share the same URL as a traditional website. The mobile files can be stored in a separate folder on your company server.

Q: How will customers find my company's mobile website?

A: It's a good idea to put a link to your company's mobile site on the traditional website and to let your customers know about it by promoting it in your marketing materials. It is also possible to encode your company website to automatically send visitors using a mobile browser to your mobile site.

Q: What are some other examples of businesses using mobile websites?

A: Here are a few:

Cisco Systems

<http://www.cisco.com/web/mobile>

Intel

<http://m.intel.com>

Dremel

<http://m.dremel.com/>

Fast Company

<http://m.fastcompany.com/>



What will your customers find when they browse on the mobile Web for *your* company?

What better time could there be to connect with a customer or prospect than when they are on-the-go, searching for the information that is most relevant to their interests at that moment? The mobile Web offers your company a powerful opportunity to deliver the relevant, timely information that can accelerate the buying process for any product or service. *Having a mobile website is a key way to take advantage of this great opportunity!*