

The mobile site's the ticket

TicketsNow boosts mobile sales 100% in the first month with a mobile-optimized site and Google mobile ads



About TicketsNow

- Event ticket resale marketplace
- Rolling Meadows, Illinois

Goals

- Leverage knowledge that 25% of ticket searches occur on mobile devices
- Increase mobile conversion
- Boost mobile sales

Approach

- Capitalized on logarithmic growth in mobile device use by using Google mobile ads and creating mobile-optimized site

Results

- Increased average order values from mobile devices 8%
- Boosted conversion rate 50% and sales 100%
- Increased return on ad spend from paid search 30%
- Quickly covered the cost of building a mobile site using the margin generated by incremental sales

Whether you're looking for tickets to the NBA Finals or want to see Taylor Swift in action, TicketsNow provides safe, convenient access to hard-to-find event tickets. A wholly owned subsidiary of Ticketmaster, TicketsNow is an event ticket resale marketplace where fans of live events buy and sell tickets – and increasingly, they're doing so on their mobile devices. Research from Google shows that more than 25% of ticketing-related search queries occur on mobile devices.

“Search queries and purchases in our space are migrating to mobile at a rapid pace,” says Sachin Gadhvi, Director of Search and Mobile Marketing for TicketsNow. “Mobile is where consumers are now and increasingly where they're headed, so that's where we need to be.”

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—Sachin Gadhvi, Director of Search and Mobile Marketing, TicketsNow

A fan's-eye view of going mobile

Paid search using Google AdWords long ago emerged as one of the company's larger customer acquisition channels – one that's managed by a team of in-house experts. “We've been using AdWords for a long time with great success,” says Gadhvi. “As we started thinking about reaching mobile users, it was a natural extension for us to go with Google mobile ads.”

The TicketsNow team devised a disciplined, data-driven mobile advertising strategy. To build an initial business case, they launched Google mobile ads campaigns based on their AdWords knowledge. They also added Click to Call functionality to make it easier for customers to phone TicketsNow to sell or purchase tickets using mobile devices. Gadhvi notes that it was easy to get started by using the same intuitive AdWords interface and campaign structures they had in the past.

The team first leveraged their existing desktop site to test out mobile ads, and they saw a significant amount of search engine referrals from mobile devices. “We wanted to further improve the customer experience by enabling intuitive ticket ordering in the fewest possible steps,” says Gadhvi. “We predicted this would result in higher conversion.”

App or site – which comes first?

This led the team to the inevitable question: which should we build first – a mobile site or an app? Given that search is one of the company's biggest channels for customer acquisition, it made the most sense to lead with a mobile site and provide a streamlined user experience. A mobile site would also reach the broadest audience rather than having to develop apps one by one for the most popular platforms.

About Google AdWords

Google AdWords™ is a performance-based advertising program that enables businesses large and small to advertise on Google and its network of partner websites. Hundreds of thousands of businesses worldwide use AdWords for text, image, and video ads priced on a cost-per-click (CPC) and cost-per-impression (CPM) basis. Built on an auction-based system, AdWords is a highly quantifiable and cost-effective way to reach potential customers.

For more information, visit:
<http://adwords.google.com>

Cost was another factor. TicketsNow had enough technical expertise, curiosity and specific knowledge about the ticketing industry to create a mobile site faster at less cost in-house. A tiny group of innovators – initially comprised of just one person – had a demo ready in no time. According to Gadhvi, creating a mobile site wasn't a massive undertaking.

To make informed decisions about optimizing the mobile site, marketers analyzed traffic by device to the original desktop site. Based on the insight that 97% of mobile traffic came from Android, iPhone and BlackBerry smartphones, developers keyed in on these three devices when determining the mobile site's design parameters and functionality.

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—Sachin Gadhvi, Director of Search and Mobile Marketing, TicketsNow

Even better than expected

After creating the mobile site, TicketsNow monitored trends: average order values, conversions, sales and more. While the team already knew that ticketing and mobile were a natural match, the power of mobile marketing exceeded their expectations. In the first month after launching the mobile site, average order values from mobile devices increased 8%, conversion rate grew by a sustained 50%, sales grew an impressive 100% and overall return on ad spend from paid search saw a 30% boost.

“At the very least, we wanted to cover the cost of building the mobile site using the margin generated by incremental sales from Google mobile paid search as a result of conversion and efficiency improvements,” concludes Gadhvi. “We are right on track to achieve that.”

