



The Carphone Warehouse harnesses the power of mobile marketing to propel its multi-channel strategy



At a Glance

Goals

- To give customers multiple ways to access the advice and expertise of The Carphone Warehouse
- To facilitate the efficient sales of services and products

Approach

- Replicated The Carphone Warehouse website as a mobile optimised site
- Used Google Mobile Ads to drive smartphone traffic to the site
- Incorporated click-to-call in ads and on the site to enable multi-channel access to The Carphone Warehouse knowledge
- Utilised Mobile Ad Sitelinks to offer instant access to The Carphone Warehouse store finder

Results

- Since launch, approximately 10% of all unique visitors to The Carphone Warehouse have been from the mobile optimised site
- The click-through rate for Mobile Ad Sitelinks was 312% greater than mobile search activity where Sitelinks did not appear
- Mobile activity as a whole delivered a cost per click that was 36% lower than the desktop search campaign

Talk of the town

The Carphone Warehouse launched in 1989 as a UK mobile phone retailer, and opened branches in other European countries in 1996. From 1998, the business supplemented its organic growth with a series of acquisitions both in the UK and Western Europe. Today the group has a portfolio of 2,453 stores across nine European countries.

Enabling telephone communications on the go has been at the company's core since the start. With strong retail propositions already in place through its network of stores and e-commerce site, The Carphone Warehouse is ideally situated to take advantage of the new marketing opportunities now available through mobile phones featuring full internet browsing capabilities.

Heeding the call

The Carphone Warehouse is intent on enabling customers to access its knowledge, services and products in as many convenient ways as possible. "The mobile in your hand is essentially now a mini computer with phenomenal processing speed," notes Gareth Jones, the company's head of online marketing. "Clearly The Carphone Warehouse has a natural position in this new emerging mobile space, and we view it as a key way of driving efficient sales but also fulfilling what we refer to as multi-channel assistance."

Offering customers seamless connectivity with the company is a critical focus. "In this confusing world of mobile technology, we stand by the principle of offering impartial advice and knowledgeable service," Gareth explains. "A broad proportion of the marketplace needs assistance, and that's what The Carphone Warehouse does through all of our channels." And so The Carphone Warehouse together with its agency Efficient Frontier took advantage of Google's range of tools to forge valuable connections with users via mobile.

On the move

Their first step was to build a site optimised for mobile that replicated almost everything on the desktop site, enabling visitors to browse and research handsets and price plans. Gareth explains, "Previously if you searched for 'carphone' on your mobile, you'd have gone through to the dot-com site. We were selling through that, but that was more to do with the tenacity of the user to pinch, scroll and end up at the checkout."

To enable consumers to buy from the current information only site, the company needed a way for users to connect and make a purchase. In every page where the dot-com site allows visitors to click to buy, on the mobile site you'll instead find click-to-call functionality. Here a user can directly access the call centre, speak to a representative, gain further advice and complete a transaction.

With the site built, the next task was to create an AdWords campaign specifically for mobile. Efficient Frontier chose a keyword set that was not as complex as it would be on desktop search, including shorter strings and different match types. Analysing results day-by-day, they noted a higher proportion of broad matching as a function of misspellings and the limitations of handset keyboards, and refined their efforts accordingly.

As soon as Google Sitelinks for Mobile launched, they rapidly incorporated this into their work too. This feature allows an AdWords result to include additional links to the site's deeper content. The decision was made to implement Google's click-to-call phone extensions product to direct users to a trackable call centre number. In addition, their AdWords result linked to the store finder page on The Carphone Warehouse site. "That's a clear multi-channel dynamic," Gareth observes. "You're walking down the street, you fancy buying a phone, you need to know where The Carphone Warehouse is and you use your mobile search functionality to do that."

"Consumers want to be able to seamlessly jump from online to retail back to online – and mobile is increasingly becoming the conduit to facilitating that gracefully. Mobile is critical to our success going forward."

**—Gareth Jones, Head of Online Marketing,
The Carphone Warehouse**



A clear connection

With both a link straight to the store finder and a click-to-call number in their pay-per-click ads, The Carphone Warehouse gave customers two ways to reach its representatives – in-store or via the call centre – before they had even clicked to the site. And by tracking click-to-call from the ads separately from those included in the site, the company gained valuable insights. "Interestingly, we're seeing a comparable level of calls from search ads to people who have called from the site." Average call durations for both are lengthy, suggesting that customers are using the facility exactly as The Carphone Warehouse had hoped – to obtain help and make purchases. "Click-to-call is an important element of our paid marketing activity because it's clearly driving calls that are converting very efficiently for us," says Gareth.

He's also happy with the decision to focus the majority of m-commerce efforts on the mobile site rather than apps. "We offer apps as well, but there are probably certain benefits to having your commerce functionality through a mobile site, not the least that through Google it's easier to find than trawling through a multitude of different app stores with half a million apps." He notes that a mobile site efficiently capitalises on impulse buying as well, pointing to the example of a visitor to a shopping centre seeing a compelling offer. "You can search for 'carphone' through Google and be at the store in a millisecond, then research and buy. If you didn't have an app uploaded you probably wouldn't be able to do that."

Another benefit to the activity has been the chance to develop best practice in mobile internet marketing before it has even begun to approach its full potential. "We've started to glean various nuances about behavioural differences," Gareth says of monitoring desktop versus mobile search. "There's a lot of benefit in being an early adopter; whilst other people are catching up, we're on the next evolution in our thinking. And it is relatively cheap to do because from an auction perspective there just isn't the competitive intensity that there is the desktop space." With their attention fixed firmly on their multi-channel strategy, the company's next steps include enhanced location-based services and further exciting developments to the mobile site. In the meantime, they're continuing to rack up impressive stats; the month after launching the mobile campaign, the click-through rate for Mobile Ad Sitelinks was 312% greater than mobile search activity where Sitelinks did not appear. Mobile activity as a whole delivered a cost per click that was 36% lower than the desktop search campaign.

