

QR Codes: Tying it all Together

A brief white paper on QR Codes, their role in print, and how to leverage them to grow your business



"In 2011 QR Codes will continue to transform the marketing landscape as marketers try to take advantage of new communication channels provided by smart phones."

and finding the relevant information for the individual.

History

A QR Code is a Matrix code, a two dimensional bar code developed in Japan in 1994 to help track automobile parts throughout production.

This technology has been around for over a decade but has since become popular as a medium for marketers to reach smart phone users. It is already widely used in Japan and Europe and it is anticipated that the United States will be next to follow.

How Does it Work?

To actually use a QR Code is quite easy. All an individual needs is a smart phone with internet connectivity.

QR Codes can be located on anything from business cards, coupons, flyers, postcards, signs and even billboards. Once an individual finds an advertisement to be interesting, all they must do is aim their smart phone camera and snap a picture. The rest is easy as the cell phone does the rest of the work, translating the bar code

What Does this Mean to Printers?

For print, QR Codes can be thought of as a gateway that extends the usefulness of a printed piece. This gateway has the ability to connect print with digital media and provide consumers with additional relevant information they need to make a decision. This unique opportunity to provide interested consumers with additional information beyond the initial attention grabber significantly enhances the value of each printed piece as a marketing vehicle.

QR Codes also give marketers the ability to track response rates and modify their marketing campaigns to increase ROI. QR Codes can be used to route interested prospects to a landing page to collect additional information and provide more information to setup the next steps in the multi-touch campaign.

Do People Really Use Them?

According to a recent study conducted by Pew Research, it is estimated that 42% of Americans now own and use smart phones on a daily basis. Many of these smart phones already have QR Code readers built in or have Apps that can be downloaded to support QR Codes.

To further support evidence of a large adoption trend is recent research done on consumer awareness of QR Codes. According to a recent study conducted by QRaware over 52% of consumers have seen and heard of QR Codes, 28% of consumers have actually scanned a QR Code, and 6% of consumers claim that a QR Code led to an eventual purchase.

These statistics may not be earth shattering today, but compared with the fact that Mobile Marketing spending grew over 600% last year, QR Codes represent a growth segment ready to be tapped by the printers and marketers brave enough to do so.

The Real Value In Integration

Much has been written about the different types of items and ways in which QR Codes can be delivered, however this is not the only factor to consider when designing a campaign with QR Codes.

The main focus of your QR Codes should be on how this tool integrates the different marketing channels you provide into one cohesive marketing message. When marketing there should no longer be a deep divide between print and digital media, instead a transparent loop that allows each medium to build off the other, which strengthens the value of both.

Is it Time to Get Started?

As the margins in traditional print continue to decline, progressive Print Service Providers are adding services that leverage the core print business and provide additional services such as Email Marketing, Personalized URL's, Promotional Products, Apparel, and Asset Management that require only a moderate amount of

effort. QR Codes provide a logical extension and to provide this solution may require minimal time and investment. It would make sense to at least be capable of providing a QR Code solution before someone else captures the business.

Keep it simple and make it easy for the end user to use the codes in their marketing pieces. QR Codes do not replace extensive multi tiered marketing campaigns. They are simple information extensions to the printed pieces you provide.

Many software vendors allow the use of QR Codes to be used in a printed piece however, only a few provide a completely integrated workflow to allow their end user to create and easily insert the QR Code into the marketing pieces as they order and customize the material through a shopping cart experience. Taking this technology even further, some vendors even have QR Codes stored in the user profiles that may be automatically inserted into the template during the order process which simplifies the process further.

Keep it simple for your end user and you will be sure to enhance your services and the margins that go with it.

Want to Learn More?

For more information on implementing QR Codes and similar value added technologies visit www.responsivesolutions.com.