

Mobile Marketing - Sifting the Hype, Finding the Value

Candice Goodman is the co-founder of Mobitainment, also known as mo-B in South African marketing circles. mo-B is an international award-winning mobile market

By [Katharina Scholtz](#), issued by [GottaQuirk](#) 30 Jun 2010

They were also the first African company to win an MMA award when they were the co-winner at the MMA Awards 2009 for the EMEA region with Live Mobile Football. Candice heads up the Education & Training committee of the South African local council of the Mobile Marketing Association, and was kind enough to answer some questions on the state of mobile.

Can you tell us a bit about yourself, how you came to work with the MMA and where your interest in mobile originates?

I'm a techie by training, with a BSc in Computer Science, but a marketer at heart. The technical background allowed me to run various online business since the late 1990s, then specialising over the last nine years in digital marketing, particularly Email Marketing. As I continued my education in the sphere of marketing I started turning my attention to Mobile Marketing starting with simple bulk SMSes. From then I caught the mobile bug quite badly and I left my Email Marketing company.

Together with my partner, Uwe Beckmann, who was a TV producer, I started Mobitainment t/a mo-B, a Mobile Marketing consultancy that specialises in integrating Mobile Marketing in traditional media like TV.

Can you describe what mo-B offers its clients?

mo-B, short for "Mobitainment", as the name suggests, among other specialties, assists companies to bring mobile to the entertainment world, and bring entertainment and value of information into their customers lives through the mobile phone. You can see some example of these at www.mobitainment.mobi.

Basically, we hold the customer's hand through the whole Mobile Marketing experience, from understanding their needs, coming up with concepts, to implementation and project management, and most importantly post-campaign reporting, which forms the basis for the learnings for each of their campaigns.

Could you describe the main goals of the MMA and the kind of professionals who are members of the organisation?

The Mobile Marketing Association (MMA) is the premier global non-profit association established to stimulate the growth of Mobile Marketing and its associated technologies. The MMA is a global organisation with 700+ members representing over 45 countries. MMA members include agencies, advertisers, handheld device manufacturers, carriers and operators, retailers, software providers and service providers, as well as any company focused on the potential of marketing via mobile devices. It is an action-oriented organisation designed to clear obstacles to market development, establish mobile media guidelines and best practices for sustainable growth, and evangelise the mobile channel for use by brands and content providers.

The Mobile Marketing Association's global headquarters are located in the United States and has representatives in over 40 countries across the globe. The local South African council was established just over a year ago, and is making great progress in the various working groups to achieve their mandated objectives in SA:

- Guidelines Validation and Development

Localise MMA Global documentation and guidelines taking into account issues and priorities unique to the South African market.

- Measurement and Effectiveness

Inline with the MMA's current measurements efforts, MMA SA will set out to collaborate and support mobile publisher measurement/tracking reports in order to provide the South African marketing industry with actionable and relevant information relating to the profiles and size of publisher audiences over time.

- Networking and Events

To host, participate, support and sponsor industry events and to provide members with networking opportunities through partnerships and affiliations.

- Education & Training

To sustain the growth of the mobile marketing industry, it is imperative that education and training initiatives are conducted to ensure that the skills pool increases so that MMA SA member companies have the resources required deal with the fast pace of growth in the industry, as well to improve the quality of Mobile Marketing campaigns conducted by brands and advertisers.

What would you describe as the biggest challenge (or a few key challenges) to the Mobile Marketing industry currently?

As you can assume from my answers to your previous questions, I am very passionate about the education of Mobile Marketing. I believe that the main challenge we face in terms of Mobile Marketing today is in educating the traditional agencies and brands as to the use of marketing with mobile. They don't all understand it: what is available, how to use it themselves, how to implement it and finally don't know how to cost it nor how to charge their clients. So, some may find it safer for them to just ignore it.

I also strongly believe that sometimes the fact that mobile is such a measurable medium, can be used against it. For example, it is very easy to put a billboard on a highway and think that you have done a good job because your boss or customer drives past it every day. But if you put an SMS short code or mobisite address on that poster as a call to action and people do not use it, then numbers are low and the blame tends to fall on mobile and then "mobile does not work". So, sometimes, it is because of the very fact that the mobile medium is so measurable that traditional marketers shy away from when the problem is not with the mobile medium per se but in how it is used.

What do you wish more people knew about mobile?

How popular, effective and widely used it really is, especially in the lower LSMs in South Africa. It is truly such an effective medium to open up the channels of communication to your customers, and not only talk to them, but listen to them. We see everyday when we read the heart-warming and personal replies we get to brand messages sent from their customers. It reminds us that we are not dealing with a database or a list of numbers, but real, true South Africans with heart, valid opinions and a voice, and now with a technology that gives them the opportunity to be heard.

Do you have any advice for separating the hype around mobile potential from the reality of what it can offer businesses and individuals?

At the end of the day, mobile is a technology. Do not use a technology just because it is there, or new, or the flavour of the month. Use it because it provides your marketing campaign with tangible, measurable benefits and value, if integrated effectively. No one technology replaces another.

Your responsibility as a brand is to open the channels to market and carry your message on as many communication platforms as is feasible and relevant to your target market, and then let your customer decide how they want to communicate with you at any given point. Empower your customer or prospective customer by offering them choice: and you will see that mobile will become a popular one.

Often people focus on the wonder of smartphones, and other communications methods for simpler phones are neglected - what advice do you have for a marketer wanting to decide where to invest their budget?

You obviously need to understand your target market and who you are talking to: what phones they have, how cost affects their decision to communicate with your brand over their phone and also how to reward them for it. We have found that the most successful campaigns, judged by response rate and quality of response, has been the simpler campaigns run on simple phones using the lowest common denominator technology like SMS or USSD. Mention the use of USSD to a traditional marketer, and because they might never have used it they assume the same of their target market. So, my advice to fellow marketers out there is to go out and experience the technology first hand. Send a Please Call Me, top up airtime via USSD and download a ringtone on MXit using your Moola, and then decide where to place your budget.

Does the MMA have some main goals for 2010? How can readers connect with the organisation in order to learn more about Mobile Marketing?

The MMA has been making great progress in its achievement of its goals in each of its working groups:

1. The Measurement and Effectiveness working group, apart from progressing other measurement related initiative to provide us with stats of our own South African market, produces a regularly updated, very insightful report focused on the use of mobile in the South African market based on the latest AMPS study results. This report is distributed to MMA members only, so if anything is a reason to become an MMA member - this is it!
2. Members of the Education & Training working group are contributing their Mobile Marketing knowledge and experiences to Quirk's impending publication of their Mobile Marketing textbook, and online training courses. These will be very useful in preparation for the soon-to-be launched Certified Mobile Marketer Program for SA (planned to be launched at the Marketing Mix Mobile Marketing Summit in August 2010). This will be an internationally standardised and recognised certification for the South African mobile marketer. Watch this space if you are interested in furthering your Mobile Marketing knowledge.
3. The Guidelines Validation and Development working group are working hard to produce guidelines for the South African market with their primary focus being on SMS, MMS and mobile Internet. The outcome of this will be very useful to all us South African marketers.
4. The Networking and Events working group is planning some very exciting workshops, forums and publications and is a great platform to mix with fellow mobile marketers to exchange ideas and create a spark for some new ones.

In summary, your next step, if you share the vision of success and passion for Mobile Marketing, would be to make contact with the Mobile Marketing Association of South Africa. Call the MMASA GM, **Terry Murphy** at (011)234-7008, 083326245 terrym@systems.co.za or visit <http://mmaglobal.com/region/emea/south-africa> and learn more about what's in it for you, and why you should get your company to invest \$1,000 to become a MMA member.

Candy can be contacted on candy@mo-b.co.za or on 083 326 2461.

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