



How Effective is Your Newspaper Ad, Website, App?

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Congratulations, you've finally got a website you can live with. It performs well with search engines, drives people to your storage business and builds your brand. There's more information than anyone storing a circa 1988 bedroom suite could possibly use. You've finally entered the 20th century. The problem is—it's now the 21st century.

Nowhere does *new* become *old* faster than technology. During the last quarter of 2010, American consumers reached a benchmark: more smart phones (100.9 million) were purchased than personal computers (92.1).

The proliferation of smart phones and the intense competition in that market has resulted in manageable price points, exposing the efficiencies of mobile computing to consumers from all walks of life. Note the recent image of First Lady Michelle Obama serving food at a homeless shelter while one of the men in line snapped a picture with his smart phone.

This change in the dynamic means quite a bit to an industry such as self storage, which caters to a significant number of lower income tenants. It stands to reason that many of your customers will only see your website if it is optimized for a phone, because that will be the only way they will look at *any* website.

Mobile app developer SmartOnline gathered data on this subject and found that only 25 percent of mobile phone users will stick with a non-mobile optimized website—35 percent said they'd give up and forget about the non-optimized website completely.

It doesn't stop there. Mobile-optimized websites are not even good enough anymore. SmartOnline found that 67 percent of respondents preferred a mobile application (app) over a mobile optimized website for functionality. Apps, they say, provide seamless connectivity without the hassle of rapidly aging web protocol.

This doesn't necessarily mean that every self storage business needs an app. But anyone trying to keep pace with marketing trends would be wise to look for existing apps that can expose your business to the smart phone universe. Groupon is a perfect example of this. The deal-of-the-day service started as a website in 2008 and only served the Chicago area. Today, the website—and more importantly, the Groupon app—serves more than 150 markets in North America and has amassed 35 million registered users.

One in ten households use self storage, and this coupon app has 35 million users. Use your smart phone to do the math. ♦