

At the Intersection of Content & Context



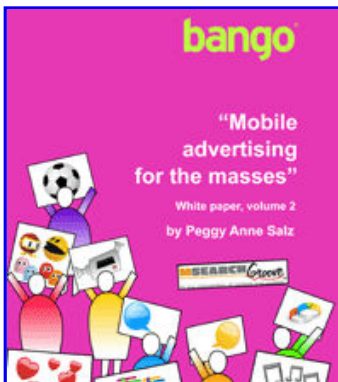
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Mobile Advertising For The Masses: Mobile Social Networking Companies Cash In With Opt-In

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Starting this week off with a bang. I arrived back in Germany from ThinkMobile in NYC just in time to put some of the insights I gained from the mobile social media panels during the event to good use in Vol 2 of my series of mobile advertising white papers. (Kudos to **MobileMarketer's Dan Butcher** for doing an expert job of capturing the key points and messages in his coverage (which you can [read here](#)), and a big thank-you for sending me his notes from the session that brought together **MocoSpace, Buzzd and Cellufun**. I had to step out for some client meetings but later caught up with the CEOs, all three of which are excited about appearing on MSG in podcasts and guest columns.



I'll follow up on those conversations next week. For now, all attention is focused on **Mobile Advertising For The Masses, my new-release white paper timed to CTIA and an essential read for marketers** who want to tap into mobile social networks (and the ad networks they provide) to drive positive results. This time I evaluate the analytics capabilities offered by **three ad networks: BuzzCity (BuzzCity), itsmy.com (itsmy.biz), and Peperony (AdMob)**. I also compare the depth and breadth of analysis they provide, and examine the need for an additional comprehensive mobile analytics package to connect the dots, fill in the gaps, and give me the big picture view of what my campaigns achieved and how I might use this insight to plan and target future campaigns.

It's among my best work and worth the all-nighters during and since my stay in New York to put in the final finishing touches. I won't go into the details here (for that you'll have to [download the free white paper](#)), but I can say **BuzzCity came out on top, allowing me to visibility into who my customers are (gender), where they are (location down to the U.S. state level), and handset make and model, for a start.**

itsmy.com also allowed me to hone my campaign to target my key demographic, but outdated order and payment systems dampened my enthusiasm. Peperony also had a few highpoints, but hasn't quite reached its full potential.

I look forward to catch-calls and briefings with senior executives at both networks. My mobile advertising experiments cued me into some interesting features and functionality in the pipeline and I am anxious to learn more, insights into their ad networks, **which I'll be sure to share on MSG.**

BTW: I'm also pleased that I have been invited by Andrew Darling to speak on mobile advertising, social media and my key findings during **Mobile Advertising & the Rise of Social Networking: What does it mean for Brands, Agencies and Service Providers?**, a **Knowledge & Networking Seminar organized by AIME**, (The Association for Interactive Media and Entertainment) that will take place in London on April 2. (More details on the program and [venue here](#).)

All attendees will receive copies of my two best practice white papers - "Mobile Advertising for Newbies" and "Mobile Advertising for the Masses."

Speakers include:

- Nandi Gurprasad, VP of Alliances, **Bango**
- Matt Dicks, Commercial Director, **Flirtomatic**
- Dusan Hamlin, Joint Managing Director, **Inside Mobile**
- Mark Brill, Chairman Mobile Council, **DMA**
- Henry Stevens, Director of Media and Entertainment, **GSMA**

Key themes to be explored:

- Is advertising content?
- Brands in social media advertising - listen first, then join in the conversation.
- If social networks have become the new 'water coolers', incubating new micro audiences with differentiated tastes, what makes advertising too intrusive in this new environment?
- What's the 'next big thing' in mobile advertising - mobile for the masses?
- Is it just about advertising messages? What kinds of mobile services suit mobile advertising?
- Measuring success and understanding how important targeting is. Which types of campaigns work?
- Are social networking services the ultimate channel for the 'long tail'?
- What is 'social currency' and how do you convert it into revenue?

As I illustrate in my white paper, mobile social networks have the inside track on their growing membership. Opt-in procedures, often requiring users to register and fill out detailed questionnaires, put **mobile social networking companies in the enviable position of being able to not only collect valuable customer data, but also provide advertisers a breakdown of customer segments** by gender, location, make and model of handset - and much more. It's valuable information brands can harness to fine-tune and plan future campaigns.

But, as I show in my final analysis, you can do one better if you also employ a more **comprehensive analytics solution** to measure success, failure, and how well your campaign *really* achieved your business objectives.

A comprehensive analytics solution represents a perfect complement to the solutions provided by mobile social ad networks, giving advertisers a more holistic view of their customers and allowing them to answer the critical questions every advertiser and publisher needs to know: Who are my customers? What did they look at? Where did they come from? What were the results? Did community members convert to the campaign goals?

My take: To maximize results on a social networking site, it's critical that advertisers follow these three principals.

- **Make the most out of mobile analytics offered by both the ad network and an independent vendor** such as Bango to match your marketing message/campaign with the community. Social networking sites generally require members to register, which raises the bar in terms of interest, motivation, and qualification. This puts your message in an environment where members are predisposed to relevant messages. In a best case scenario, people should view your marketing as an extension of their mobile experience, rather than spam.
- **Consider virtual gifting and other schemes to provide something of value to users and their community.** After all, the goal here is to encourage user interaction, cultivate a two-way conversation, and boost brand awareness. This is not an environment for marketing pitches and product-pushers. Success stories include [Flirtomatic](#), a pioneer mobile flirting service with the ability to monetize mobile users through conversation with added fun and great content such as virtual flowers, chocolate, and kisses. The company recently extended its reach to enable members to give the objects of their affection real gifts including chocolate and sexy underwear.
- **Participate actively in the community, and interact with members to build relationships and enable them to deepen their relationships with each other** by providing tools that will let them do what they are there to do: Keep in touch with friends, connect with people who share their interests, and share content and feelings with the community. More importantly, keep in mind **you don't need whiz-bang technology to engage with members in a meaningful exchange about your brand.** Text ads and banner display ads are a great way to start. Besides, they are going to be around with us for a while yet to come. The innovation is not in advertising formats, but how we use them.

In a market where two-way conversation is the end-goal, and where traffic on mobile social networking is on the rise, brands that lend their voice to the conversation wil most likely deliver their advertising message loud and clear.

Disclaimer: Bango is an MSG supporter.

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