

QR Codes – Are They Here To Stay?

With more smartphone users and increasing efforts targeted at mobile marketing, the Quick Response code (also commonly known as QR code) is becoming a common offline marketing tool for many organizations. Two key reasons behind the success of the QR code are its usefulness and convenience in connecting potential customers to multimedia digital content within seconds¹.

The QR code is similar to the barcode used by retailers to track inventory and price products. The key difference is that QR codes can hold more information than barcodes. This has allowed many organizations to store and embed URL links, text and images in it. The QR code also provides convenient and fast readability to users, as it can be easily picked up by a smartphone. Should you be holding on to a smartphone now, do scan the QR code here with a QR code reader to try it (Hint: It will take you to the Spire mobile site)!



Organizations can “push” customers in the direction they want by adapting the information on the QR code. Most commonly, QR codes contain information such as corporate website URLs, contact details such as email addresses and telephone numbers or marketing offers, such as free vouchers. The power of a

¹ Supporting QR code campaigns with SMS, Four Source, Alastair Shortland, 26 October 2011

QR code lies in its ability to transform the user experience from a “quick glance” to a “deep dive.”²

However, as with any other marketing tool, the QR code would not work its magic unless organizations use it in the context of a good strategy. Here are some key points to note when designing a successful QR code campaign³:

- Define your QR code campaign strategy.
 - It is essential to define the target audience and the intent.

- Create quality QR codes and test them on multiple readers and devices.

- Link QR codes to mobile-friendly or mobile-optimized websites.
 - The last thing any user wants is to be directed to a standard webpage that is not well supported by a smartphone browser.

- Track your users’ scans with code management systems.⁴
 - Many organizations use code management systems, such as Google Analytics, to track the effectiveness of their QR codes.

Some organizations have even included their corporate colors and logos in their QR codes – this also assures users of the authenticity and security of the QR codes⁵.

² 5 Steps for a Successful QR Code Marketing Campaign, Mashable Business, Hamilton Chan, 12 November 2011

³ 5 Steps to a Successful QR Code Marketing Campaign, Social Media Examiner, Jeff Korhan, 24 August 2011

⁴ How to track QR codes in Google Analytics, Redclay Interactive, Tim Zack, 17 February 2011

⁵ QR Codes – How Are You Using Them?, Apogee Results, Aubrey Curry, 4 August 2011

However, the outlook for QR codes is not uniformly rosy. Not everybody has a smartphone and even for smartphone users, the process may seem too confusing or troublesome. For instance, users may have a difficult time figuring out which compatible QR code reader to use. A bad experience could leave users with an aversion towards the brand and QR codes in general.

Despite its detractors, an increasing number of organizations are including QR codes in their marketing campaigns. The QR code is probably here to stay – until it gets replaced by something even faster and better.