

Two crucial elements of mobile success

 By Leigh Andrews

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If you're looking to make a success of e-commerce in Africa's mobile markets, best you pay attention to ways of raising awareness and conversion, says Paul Casarin of Gumtree...

The second day of the eCommerce Africa conference kicked off at the CTICC on 4 February 2015, with a content track on multiple retail platforms. The first of these keynote sessions was on the role of mobile in growing C2C markets and understanding mobile marketplaces in Africa. [Paul Casarin](#), who handles operations and strategy at Gumtree South Africa for eBay Classifieds, started by quoting Jeff Bezos of Amazon, who in 1997 wrote to his shareholders that it was 'day 1 of the internet', and stated that we can relate this to the state of Africa's internet today.

Make it affordable and accessible or the people *won't* come

“ each of Africa's 49 countries have their own culture, challenges & need to be treated differently in commerce

[@paulcasarin #eComConfex](#)- Emerge Commerce (@EmergeCommerce) [February 4, 2015](#) ”

Casarin said most of the key challenges for sub-Saharan Africa's marketplaces lie in scale, especially in terms of affordability of Android phones and accessibility, with only 50% 3G coverage expected by 2020. But who are the key marketplaces in Africa? Casarin said that [Opera](#) has a high mobile browser share in Nigeria and South Africa.

According to the estimated active mobile internet users in the markets, Nigeria has a relatively low active user reach at 30m users and South Africa a promising active base at 24m. Mobile Facebook users, who are highly social and ready to trade, also had low figures if compared with [World Bank](#) stats.

In terms of reach and market, Casarin recommends tools such as [Google's Keyword Planner](#), a new feature of AdWords launched late last year that lets you see the figures across both mobile and desktop. Casarin also recommends using products like [Flurry](#) to study mobile metrics in particular.

Africa-specific mobile challenges



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Casarin pointed out that one of Gumtree's biggest challenges, shared by most in the mobile space, is that of getting consumers to [download their app](#) and increase their reach. He pointed out that the overall lay of the land in South Africa, according to mobile, shows a real battle for reach, app growth and mobile development. That said, Casarin welcomes the use of other media to advertising mobile to raise awareness. In particular, he said TV as an amazing channel through which to attract new mobile users and educate consumers, if you have the budget to do so.

Moving further afield to Nigeria and Kenya, as these are the 'usual suspects' first targeted when devising a mobile strategy, Casarin said those markets face similar mobile challenges to South Africa, but they also need more competition and differentiation. It's a relatively new race for mobile leadership, and to extend reach in order to build awareness and inbound traffic, resulting in a converted audience.

"There are so many opportunities in Africa, go out there and get it done", Casarin enthused.

For more on the conversion issue, view the Slideshare in the embedded tweet below:

“ *"@adw365: simple and true Optimising conversion in global E-comms by @adw365 <http://t.co/4XaMxvhAiS>*
#eComConfex @ecommerceconfex #ecommerce"- Taryn Gill (@whatfemaleswant) [February 4, 2015](#) ”

Visit www.gumtree.co.za for more, and [click here](#) to view Casarin's Slideshare.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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