

# Q&A:



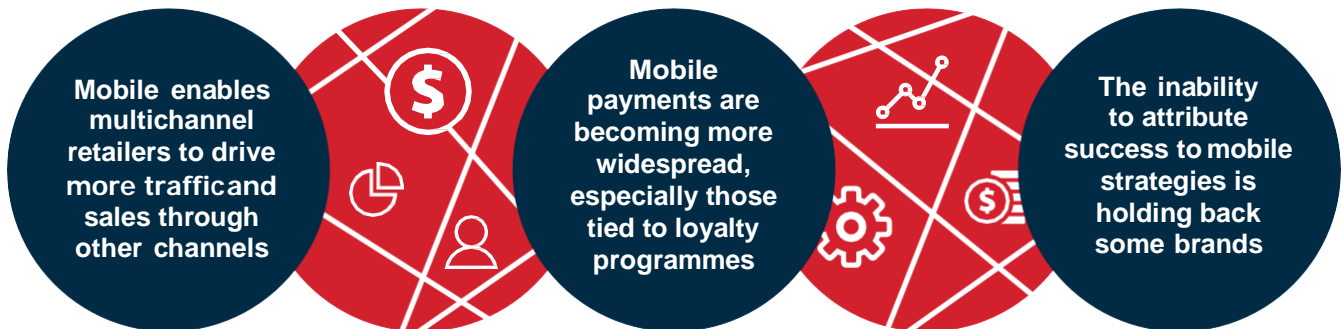
Mickey Alam Khan  
Editor in Chief  
**Mobile Marketer &  
Mobile Commerce  
Daily**

## An Insider's Look at Mobile Innovation in 2016

*An interview with Mickey Alam Khan, Editor in Chief of Mobile Marketer and Mobile Commerce Daily.*

In November 2015, the people behind eTail sat down with Mickey Alam Khan, Editor in Chief of Mobile Marketer and Mobile Commerce Daily, to discuss trends and opportunities for m-commerce and mobile marketing in 2016. Mr Khan weighed in on how mobile is becoming the most important enabler of multichannel commerce, how brands can better utilise mobile capabilities, and which brands are doing mobile best.

### Key Trends M-Commerce and Mobile Marketing



### A Way of Life for Consumers, a multichannel Enabler for Brands

*"Mobile is a way of life for consumers. And it is the glue that holds the whole multichannel experience together. It's mobile's ability to leverage the strengths of different channels and amplify those channels that will matter most."*

- Mickey Alam Khan

Mobile is becoming an increasingly important revenue channel for retail brands, but it is mobile's role as the primary enabler of multichannel shopping experiences that makes mobile such an important asset. Retailers can no longer think about mobile in isolation, either as a commercial or a marketing channel. Rather, mobile is deeply linked with in-store success.

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By dramatically expanding the competitive landscape, digital commerce has gradually weakened customer loyalty while simultaneously empowering consumers to instantly access near-complete information that they can use to compare products and brands. Strictly as a commercial channel, mobile is simply an extension of this hyper-competitive digital marketplace, which has come to be dominated by online pure-play retailers like Amazon. Therefore, the primary advantage which mobile offers to multichannel retailers is the ability to increase traffic to shops and improve the in-store customer experience.

After all, the advantage multichannel companies have over the digital retail giants is the capacity to satisfy consumers' desire for instant gratification.

Mobile's ubiquitous, constantly connected nature is central to this opportunity to drive more consumers to shops. Consumers are becoming accustomed to looking up products on mobile devices, giving brands the opportunity to encourage mobile users to view products in shops. Brands are also working to drive consumers to shops through hyper-contextual marketing using capabilities like geo-fencing. As retailers implement and optimise these mobile capabilities, they must also consider how mobile can become a more integral and stimulating part of the in-store experience. Mobile capabilities that retailers can leverage to improve the in-store experience include Bluetooth beacons that make displays more interactive and innovative point of sale tools that can streamline checkout.

## The Proliferation of Mobile Payments

*"It will be great to watch mobile payments take off, but I would stress that mobile payments must be very strongly linked to customer loyalty. The only way you can justify the use of mobile wallets and payments is by linking it to a CRM programme or by making it easier to use than other payment methods.*

**- Mickey Alam Khan**

Mobile payments are gradually gaining in popularity, with mobile payment terminals becoming available at all sorts of retail locations, from corner shops and petrol stations to coffee shops and supermarkets. However, there are still many barriers to wider adoption. For instance, the multitude of mobile payments technologies has in some cases served to confuse and divide consumers. In spite of those obstacles, many brands see tremendous opportunity for mobile payments to enhance their customer loyalty programmes and streamline their check-out procedures.

In fact, Mickey asserts that the most effective mobile payments programs either link the mobile purchase to a loyalty programme (such as Starbucks' loyalty programme syncing up with customers' mobile devices) or make the check-out process easier than it would be with a credit card or cash. In other words, the best mobile payments programs remove friction from the purchasing process or incentivise customers to pay with their mobile devices.

Another barrier to the proliferation of mobile payments has been shop assistants' reluctance to encourage customers to pay with their phones. Even if the mobile payment technology is installed in shops, assistants need to be trained to show customers the value of that payment method.

When properly implemented, mobile payment systems have significant benefits for businesses. This is the case with Square, a tool that turns any smartphone or tablet into a payment terminal. Technologies like Square have given small businesses the ability to accept payment methods that were previously closed off to them. For these businesses, mobile payments cut down on the friction in their transactions.

## Mobile's Best in Class Brands

From Mickey's perspective, **Target, Best Buy, Macy's, Starbucks, and Wal-Mart** are five of the most successful players in mobile retail.

*"The best brands use every mobile tool at their disposal: from mobile browsers and apps, to mobile beacons and payment systems, to promos. These are well-rounded, 360-degree strategies with mobile at the centre of it all."*

**- Mickey Alam Khan**



## Driving the Next Phase of Mobile Innovation

*"Many organisations attach too many metrics to mobile and it inhibits them not only from understanding its impact, but from properly investing in that channel going forward. At this point, we need to treat mobile as more than just a science."*

**- Mickey Alam Khan**

The pace of mobile innovation is furious, and there is surely another phase of mobile disruption just around the corner. However, many brands may miss out because they are having difficulty attributing success to their mobile initiatives. Mobile marketing is still a relatively new discipline, and most brands are still only scratching the

surface of understanding how mobile fits in with their shopping experiences. There are many grey areas, but that should not be surprising considering the fact that mobile is the only medium that can have a profound influence on every other sales channel.

Mickey believes that although many marketing or e-commerce executives can make the case for mobile, most brands still lack the organisation-wide commitment needed to maximise mobile's potential. Mobile can be a fundamental challenge for businesses, because it often demands a re-evaluation of those business's retail models. Customers now have a mobile-first mind-set that retailers must adopt, but that can entail a major strategic shift.

## About eTail



*Transforming Retail. Together.*

We launched eTail in 1999, and have been dedicated to supporting the growth of the retail industry ever since. What started off as 100 people in a room discussing where this sector was headed, has led to 2000 senior-level eCommerce executives being inspired whilst learning and developing their company as well as their careers.

Want to hear more from the innovators shaping retail? See what they will be discussing at ETail Europe 2016!

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*"It was another great show...thank you! In prior years I came as president & CEO of Ritz Interactive, Inc. a mature company, and found the show extremely important in helping build our business. This year I came as president and CEO of a start-up company, MailPix, Inc., and continue to find the show critical in the building of my new business. Thank you again!"*

**- Fred H. Lerner, President & CEO, MailPix.com**

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