

QR Codes and Trade Shows

By Susan Burgstiner,

Do you know what a QR Code is?

QR (Quick Response) Codes are one of the latest ways to create engagement. Curiosity, exclusiveness and discovery are just a few of the reasons people scan QR codes. A QR Code is a square two-dimensional barcode read by smart phones with a QR Code reader application. When the QR Code is scanned into a smart phone, it links to a URL, text or other information.

QR Codes can be placed on almost any form of marketing such as direct mail, email, websites, product packaging, signs, business cards, invitations, brochures, advertisements, trade shows and much more. QR Codes have recently become a popular way to link customers and prospective customers to a wide variety of online media.

The good news is there is no real investment associated to add a QR Code to your current marketing. The Codes can easily be generated at a variety of free online sites and then downloaded for marketing use. There are many sites which offer QR Code creation which can be easily found with an Internet search. Here are a few which are easy to use:

- [kaywa](#)
- [qurify](#)
- [delivr](#)

Ease of registration

Looking for a way to boost attendance at a conference? Especially if a significant portion of attendees are college students and recent graduates, you may want to add a QR Code to your announcement or registration brochure. This QR code can take potential attendees directly to the online registration page by eliminating the need to type a lengthy web address for registration.

An association wanted to boost attendance at a conference that had seen diminishing attendance in recent years. After determining a significant portion of their attendees were college students and recent graduates, we recommended, among other things, to add a QR code to the announcement and registration brochures. This QR code took potential attendees directly to the online registration page which eliminated the need for them to type the lengthy web address for registration into their computer. While there was some concern that people would not register via their smart phone, they did see an increase in registration, not only among the younger demographic but nearly all age groups. Fortunately, this was not a significant obstacle for this client as they have an above average in-house web marketing group.

Ideas and points to consider

Here are some usage ideas to consider for a QR Code:

- Direct the customer to a homepage, online store or video
- QR Codes on trade show name tags which act as electronic business cards
- Import contact information from a QR Code placed on a business card
- Link to a Facebook Fan Page
- Instantly Tweet information with a quick QR Code scan
- Link to a sweepstakes entry
- Download coupons
- Promote events and upload calendar information
- Link to Google of conference maps and locations

While a QR code is a quick and easy way to get your target market to a website, don't forget the website is only accessed by a smart phone. What this means is you need to ensure the site you send them to is smart phone friendly. (No Flash sites, elaborate forms or other things that don't work well with smart phone.) Bottom line: test your site with a smart phone!

Summary

While the world of mobile marketing continues to zoom forward, QR Codes may soon go the way of Beta VCRs. And, of course, QR codes have been the subject of debate. Some worry about personal information issues and others already argue the codes are antiquated. Some say the codes are ushering in a new era of mobile marketing and consumer-business interaction. Google recently weighed in on the debate by dropping their support for the codes. This has had little effect on how people perceive them, however, and the codes have continued to grow in popularity at a rapid rate.

The codes have been used in many industries, from fashion to real estate and others are turning to QR codes to add a new dimension to their product marketing. With mobile technology gaining momentum, QR codes are becoming the tool of choice for just about everyone.

QR Codes are one of many ways marketers can engage customers and provide them with convenient and meaningful content. They are easy to use and don't cost anything to create. However, traditional marketing factors still apply. The value of the content provided by the QR Code will most certainly affect the response rate, as will the technical savvy of your customers and the quality of your marketing.

As president of Marketing On Demand, Susan Burgstiner created a company to specialize in tactical execution and strategy creation. Servicing businesses of all sizes since 1994, Marketing On Demand acts as a resource for sales, marketing and other related needs. As part of their full service approach to client services, Marketing On Demand offers advertising specialties as well as sales and product information training/motivation. Other areas of expertise include the creation, implementation or management of marketing campaigns /projects. Trade show management, promotions, special events and management of creative services are also part of the company offerings.