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**THE KEY SUCCESS FACTORS OF MOBILE ADVERTISING FROM THE  
PERSPECTIVE OF INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS**

***A Literature Review***

Bachelor's Thesis

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## **1. Introduction**

There have been several changes since the late 1980s which have affected the marketing communications practices. In the new media generation there is an increasing need for engaging and interactive campaigns which are localized for the consumers' interests (Sharma et al. 2008). The mobile media channel represents a potential tool for achieving this. Mobile advertising is a young and fast growing phenomenon of marketing communications. The first papers on mobile advertising have been written around 2002 (see e.g. Barnes 2002; Barwise and Strong 2002). Although the body of literature appears to be quite inconsistent and fairly fragmented (Leppäniemi 2008), the importance of the mobile medium should be noted since it includes huge opportunities to the marketers. Consumers' use of mobile communications is growing up fast and their use has become commonplace in everyday life (Balasubramanian et al. 2002). According to InMobi's (2012) research on global mobile media consumption mobile with 27% has surpassed TV with 22% in terms of spending time on media.

Companies' interactions with customers are increasingly being managed with technologies which enable real-time personalized communications across multiple media platforms and channels (Leppäniemi 2008). Mobile is a medium which is interactive, individually targetable and personal making it the ideal medium for "controversial" one-to-one marketing (Barwise & Strong 2002). However, the interactivity and two-way communications enabled by new technologies require development of communication strategies and a clear understanding about how to best communicate with the target audience (Fill 2009, 736).

The changes in the media environment have brought up the need for effective integration of different media channels. Mobile includes some unique technological features which relate to the ability to leverage other mediums (Sharma et al. 2008). Contextual offerings of advertisements may initiate more interaction opportunities as well as synergies between mobile campaigns and other media marketing (Qin et al. 2009). The theory of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) refers to the coordination of messages and communication channels in order to send the target audience a clear and consistent

message about the brand and its offerings. The IMC is a useful theoretical framework for studying mobile marketing communications (Leppäniemi 2008).

The mobile channel can be seen as an advertising tool in a firm's overall IMC strategy. The mobile media channel should be an integral part of the whole marketing communications strategy. Steinbock (2005: 200) refers that "...*mobile communication should never be a stand-alone channel or an aggressive promotional tactic. It should be used to extend the presence of a company or product into an additional channel. The key is integration.*" This perspective is important when describing the key success factors of mobile advertising. In addition, the unique features of the mobile channel, like personalization, ubiquity, interactivity and localization, distinguishes it from traditional media. This is why it should be embraced differently.

In spite of the potential opportunities of using electronic media to form interactive customer relationships, only few organizations exploit this capability in building IMC programs (Peltier et al. 2003). A better understanding of interactivity of mobile advertisements is important if this interactive media wants to be utilized more effectively and the user wants to be provided with tailored information which is based on effective communication (Qin et al. 2010). A successful mobile advertising campaign requires a clear understanding of the potential customers, the unique features of the mobile medium and the best way to utilize it in the IMC strategy. This study aims to shed light on these issues and give general guidelines for the implementation of a successful mobile advertising campaign.

### **1.1. The objectives and research questions**

The mobile marketing research has previously dealt with consumer attitudes toward mobile marketing, acceptance of mobile marketing and how consumers perceive mobile advertising. However, the effectiveness of mobile advertising is receiving more and more attention in literature. (Leppäniemi et al. 2006) According to Barwise & Strong (2002), with the right execution the mobile channel has the potential to benefit both advertisers and consumers. This is why a comprehensive understanding should be achieved on how the mobile channel is utilized most effectively. In addition, this research aims to

give the reader a comprehensive understanding of the mobile media channel and mobile advertising. The study also aims to form an understanding on how mobile advertising should be integrated in the company's overall marketing communication strategy. In my study I will try to answer:

**What are the key success factors of mobile advertising from the perspective of integrated marketing communications (IMC)?**

This means in other words the question of what factors should be taken into account from the perspective of IMC when designing and implementing a successful mobile advertising campaign.

The sub-questions of the study are as follows:

- 1. What is mobile advertising?**
- 2. What is integrated marketing communications (IMC)?**
- 3. What are the key success factors of mobile advertising?**

The aim of the study is not to give straight answers to every situation. There is no right way to establish IMC (Fill 2009, 261) and advertising may vary according to different campaigns and industries. On the contrary it will provide general guidelines for implementing a successful mobile advertising campaign. Since the mobile media channel has some unique features compared to the traditional media channels, it should not be treated the same way. This study aims to bring these features to the front from the perspective of integrated marketing communication (IMC).

## **1.2. The theoretical framework**

The phenomenon of mobile advertising is applied to the theory of integrated marketing communications (IMC). The IMC is a useful theoretical framework for studying mobile marketing communications (Leppäniemi 2008). Advertising is one part of integrated marketing communications. Therefore the mobile channel can be seen as an advertising tool in a firm's overall IMC strategy.

Hanley & Boostrom (2011) argue that mobile advertising is the most general forms of mobile marketing available to use in an IMC strategy. The theory of IMC also includes characteristics which are suitable for evaluating the new interactive mobile media channel. In addition, the phenomenon of mobile advertising may be defined in terms of different media.

Today digital-based technologies enable the interaction and dialogue with consumers (Fill 2009, 47). The media may be divided into traditional and digital media. In this sense the mobile channel is a subset of the digital media, in which the mobile advertising is included. This study also realizes the mobile channel to be a digital marketing tool. This is due to the unique characteristics of the mobile which cannot be achieved with traditional media. Mobile advertising includes characteristics that go beyond any other form of media (Bauer et al. 2005). When discussing about digital media, a distinction between the Internet and mobile needs to also be achieved.

With the introduction of the mobile Internet, the boundary between the mobile and Internet is blurring. The interactivity which can be provided in mobile communication is assumed to differ from that of the Internet due to the unique characteristics of the mobile communication on handled devices (Kannan et al. 2001; Barnes 2002). This is an important distinction, since it affects the way in which the consumers should be approached via the mobile medium. As the mobile medium offers even more real time interactions with the consumer, it makes it a very sensitive channel. This is why careful planning is needed.

In addition, it has been argued that mobile marketing is a subset of mobile commerce (e.g. Barnes & Scornavacca 2004). Mobile commerce on the other hand is a subset of electronic commerce. This distinction is also noteworthy. However, since the focus of electronic commerce is more in the buying and selling of products via Internet and other networks, this study focuses more on the delivery of effective communication to build brand relationships and encourage the consumers eventually to buy

the brands' products and services. This is why the use of term mobile advertising is more justified. Finally, the mobile advertising is important to distinguish from mobile marketing.

Idean (2009) divides mobile marketing into mobile advertising and customer relation communication. As this study emphasizes the interactive nature of the mobile medium, mobile advertising can also act as a tool for building customer relations. Tähtinen (2006) suggests that mobile advertising is a phenomenon which is included in mobile marketing. In addition, MMA (2009) defined mobile marketing as: *“a set of practices that enables organizations to communicate and engage with their audience in an interactive and relevant manner through any mobile device or network.”* In this definition, the *“set of practices”* encompasses *“activities, institutions, processes, industry players, standards, advertising and media, direct response, promotions, relationship management, CRM, customer services, loyalty, social marketing, and all the many faces and facets of marketing”* (MMA 2009). Therefore an assumption could be made that the mobile advertising includes in the definition of mobile marketing. Leppäniemi et al. (2004) define mobile advertising as *“any paid message communicated by mobile media with the intent to influence the attitudes, intentions and behavior of those addressed by the commercial messages”*. This definition is used also in this study.

## **2. Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)**

Kitchen & Schultz (1999) argue that IMC is a reaction by advertising agencies and their clients when affected by factors like new forms of information technology including the media fragmentation, development and usage of databases, global and regional coordination and client desires for interaction/synergy. The IMC is an important topic embraced both by researchers, practitioners and the marketing communication community (Lee & Park 2007). However, the theory doesn't come without its skeptics. According to Cornelissen and Lock (2000) the theory of IMC is little more than a management fashion that is short lived. Although all practitioners don't take a position this steep, it is admitted that IMC involves several problems like how to measure and evaluate IMC, definitional

issues and whether IMC is one subject in and of itself (Kitchen & Schultz 1999). In the following chapter the definition of IMC will be discussed.

## **2.1. Defining IMC**

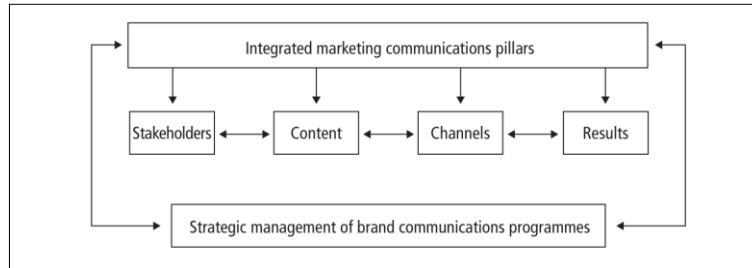
The first conceptualizations of integrated marketing communications trait back to the late 1980s and early 1990s (Kliatchko 2008). Although IMC has been a fast-growing subject of research a mutually agreed definition is still lacking (Kitchen & Schultz 1999). Since its first conceptualizations, integrated marketing communication has evolved from meaning the co-ordination of marketing communication tools to being a business process focusing on more strategic aspects (Kliatchko 2008). Additionally, a conceptualization of "Interactive IMC" has been suggested due to the rise of interactivity of the new electronic media (see e.g. Peltier et al. 2003).

Shimp (2010, 10) defined IMC as follows: *"IMC is a communications process that entails the planning, creation, integration, and implementation of diverse forms of marcom (advertisements, sales promotion, publicity releases, events, etc.) that are delivered over time to a brand's targeted customers and prospects. IMC requires that all of the brand communication media deliver a consistent message. The IMC process further necessitates that the customer/prospect is the starting point for determining the types of messages and media that will serve best to inform, persuade, and induce action"*.

Alternatively, according to Kliatchko (2008) due to the developments in the field of marketing communication and the impact of digital technology the definition of IMC should be revised as follows: *"IMC is an audience-driven business process of strategically managing stakeholders, content, channels, and results of brand communication programs."* This definition is visualized in the following figure (Figure 1). This interpretation takes even more into account the role of the audience. This differs from the definition by Shimp in the sense that the audience is realized to have even more power in



today's media environment. Although all of the IMC definitions are important, the definition by Kliatchko (2008) is applied in this research.



**Figure 1:** Four pillars of IMC (Kliatchko 2008, 145)

Especially the aspect of ‘content’ is considered particularly important when discussing advertising and interactivity. Kliatchko (2008) emphasizes the importance of content creation in today's media environment in which new media platforms offer real-time content due to interactivity, response and conversation amongst targeted audiences. According to Kliatchko (2008), the new interactive paradigm of content creation allows audiences to act as both receivers and creators of content. As today's media environment is becoming more and more audience-driven we consider the aspect of content essential in creating attractive advertising campaigns. In addition, the aspect of ‘channel’ encompasses a broader understanding compared to the traditional media channels, which include all other possible contact points where customers or prospects experience a brand and get in contact with it (Kliatchko 2008).

## 2.2. Emergence of IMC

Integrated marketing communication refers the coordination of messages and communication channels in order to send the target audience a clear and consistent image about the brand and its offerings. There have been several changes since the late 1980s which have affected the marketing communications practices and the emergence of IMC. As mentioned previously, Kitchen & Schultz (1999) argue that IMC is a reaction by advertising agencies and their clients when affected by factors

like new forms of information technology including the development and usage of databases, media fragmentation, client desires for interaction/synergy, and global and regional coordination.

Lee and Park (2007) have also realized quite similar factors. One of these is the fragmentation of markets, which has strongly affected the movement from mass marketing to more targeted marketing programs in order to build closer relationships with customers. Due to the media fragmentation the audiences have become even more difficult to reach in today's media environment. The IMC may also represent a logical step in transitioning from product-driven communication to a more interactive, consumer-, and behavior-oriented approaches of the twenty-first century (Kitchen & Schultz 1999).

The development in information technology has also strongly influenced the birth of the new theory in marketing communications. As the range of media channels has grown dramatically, consumers have become even more difficult to reach via traditional mass media. Consequently, as customers obtain information about a specific brand from various sources they may also get easily confused about inconsistent messages (Lee & Park 2007). Due to these changes the need for integration and coordination of messages is evident. The IMC is not merely a theoretical concern but also a practical problem in today's business environment. The IMC is therefore an important topic embraced both by researchers, practitioners and the marketing communication community. (Lee & Park 2007)

### **2.3. Key concepts of IMC**

The theory of IMC includes various important aspects that are essential for marketers. However, this study applies concepts that are the most important from the perspective of mobile advertising and utilizing a successful campaign. These concepts include integration and synergy, interactivity and content creation, and segmentation, positioning and building customer relationships. Firstly, the concept of integration and synergy is discussed.

### 2.3.1. Integration and synergy

The cross-media integration may enhance consumer engagement in processing advertising messages and thus exhibit stronger brand attitudes (Wang 2007). Various media channels may be used in one advertising campaign. Thus, the mobile media channel should be an integral part of the whole marketing communications strategy. According to Steinbock (2005: 200) “...*mobile communication should never be a stand-alone channel or an aggressive promotional tactic. It should be used to extend the presence of a company or product into an additional channel. The key is integration.*” Using a combination of communication tools in an integral way can produce more positive communication results than using tools individually and in an uncoordinated manner (Shimp 2010, 9). This is why the concept of synergy is essential when aiming at the best utilization of the mobile medium.

Synergy may be defined as “*the interaction of two or more agents of forces so that their combined effect is greater than the sum of their individual effect*” (American Heritage College Dictionary 1997). In the emergence of new communication technology the effects of media displacement have been an interesting subject of study amongst researchers (Kayany & Yealsma 2000). For example, when radio was a new medium it was expected to replace the dominant broadcast medium, the newspaper. Later the same concerns aroused from the introduction of television which was expected to replace the radio. According to this history, an assumption could be made that new media has the potential to affect the use of other media because of their interactive and diverse features (Tsao & Sibley 2004). Synergy is a fundamental concept of IMC (Chang & Thorson 2004).

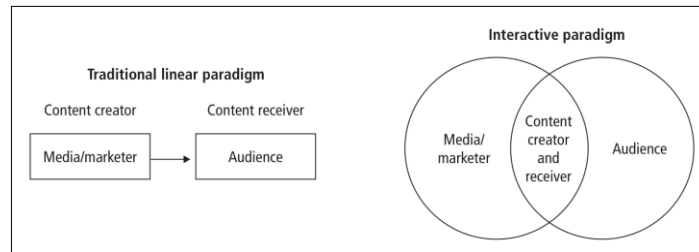
The use of multiple well-coordinated marketing communication tools creates a synergistic effect, which makes IMC a goal worth pursuing (Shimp, 2010, 9). Media synergy, media planning and measurement have been a few of the most general research areas in IMC from 2000 onwards (Kliatchko 2008). Although the benefits of synergy are apparent to many communication professionals, demonstrating how it operates or showing its effects in a field setting has proved to be difficult (Chang & Thorson 2004). However, Peltier et al. (2003) introduce the new term “interactive IMC” in which synergistic value is created with the combination of consistency and customization. This approach

expresses the significance of databases to develop more specific and measurable goals and objectives as well as the meaningful form in the measurement of results.

### **2.3.2. Interactivity and content creation**

Although the topic of interactivity has been widely discussed in the past 20 years there still exists variation in its conceptualization (Qin et al. 2010). Hoffman and Novak (1996) have divided the term “interactivity” into unmediated interactivity (e.g. face-to-face communication between two individuals) and mediated interactivity (e.g. communication between two individuals facilitated by a device). In this sense communication through the mobile medium represents mediated interactivity. On the other hand, the interactivity may also be related to the richness of media (Leppäniemi 2008). This assumption suggests that the greater the mediums’ ability to provide timely feedback the richer the media. The richness also varies according to different media types. In addition, it is suggested often in literature that control over the mediated environment is a key feature of interactivity and that research on the effectiveness of interactive advertising expresses the issue of user control over advertising in an online environment (Leppäniemi 2008). This interpretation realizes the “audience-driven” media environment and the significance of the audience acting as both creators and receivers of content.

Kliatchko (2008) links the term “interactive paradigm” into one of IMC’s main pillars: content. In this concept interactivity refers to content creation in which the audiences are both creators and receivers of content (Figure 2). This differs from the traditional linear paradigm in which firms and marketers were exclusively the content creators and the communication flow is rather a one-way process. According to Kliatchko (2008), the new media platforms which enable to offer real-time content due to interactivity, conversation and responses among targeted audiences will turn out to be quite challenging for marketers in terms of content creation.



**Figure 2:** Content creation model (Kliatchko 2008, 149)

### 2.3.3. Segmentation and positioning

Market segmentation may be defined as *“the division of a mass market into identifiable and distinct groups or segments, each of which have common characteristics, needs and display similar responses to marketing actions”* (Fill 2009, 291). Through segmentation marketing plans may targeted more accurately to different segments which also makes it easier to respond to individual needs. According to Lee & Park (2007) the utilization of proper segmentation variables is essential in creating differentiated messages and choosing the most effective communications channels for different customer groups.

It is suggested that the 21<sup>st</sup> century brings birth to a new brand and customer loyalty approach expresses the “individualization” of different relationships (Schultz & Bailey 2000). This raises the value of segmentation even more in today’s media environment since the right content needs to be delivered to the right consumer at the right time. The new communication technology enables the sending of very personalized content. E.g. the unique features of the mobile channel enable the marketer to send very time and location based ads that are highly targeted. Marketers should also realize that the content needs to be relevant from the consumers’ perspective so that it won’t be perceived irritating or violating in terms of privacy (Hanley & Boostrom 2011).

The new electronic media requires an approach in which the segmentation is database-driven in order to take a full advantage of its unique features in a communication strategy (Peltier et al. 2007). In this approach the information would be collected at an individual level and further used to generate interaction with customers. The new technologies (e.g. the mobile phone) include unique features which enable the gathering of data at a very specific level. This data may eventually be used when designing communication strategies at a niche level. In addition, the effective measurement, monitoring and analysis can help the management to be more conscious about the delivered content, promotion and loyalty programs and customer-level investments (Schultz & Bailey 2000).

In addition, the challenge for firms is to actively manage the ways in which consumers perceive brands. This is not easy, especially in today's markets thanks to the media fragmentation and wide range of different media channels. Positioning may be defined as *“An activity designed to manage the way in which audiences perceive brands. Positioning is about visibility, recognition and understanding of what a brand represents to a buyer”* (Fill 2009, 931). The positioning is an essential concept in terms of IMC since the objective is to deliver a consistent message about the brand and also differentiate it from other brands. It should also be considered that today the audiences have an increasingly active role in producing meanings for brands. According to Kliatchko (2008) the new interactive paradigm of content creation permits audiences to act as both receivers and creators of content. This makes the managing of consumers' perceptions about brands even more challenging.

#### **2.3.4. Building customer relationships**

It is suggested that there is a need for a new brand and customer loyalty approach for the 21<sup>st</sup> century marketplace. In this approach the “individualization” of different relationships defines the new “interactive” marketplace compared to the traditional mass market of the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The interpersonal relationships of the 21<sup>st</sup> century include interaction between the buyer, the seller and all the systems and functions that link them. (Shultz & Bailey 2000) On the other hand, Lee & Park (2007) express the combination of the adoption of new electronic media together with the advancement

of information technology which have enabled the opportunity to move to a customer relationship marketing paradigm.

Relationship marketing, which focuses on the relationship between participants, encourages interaction and dialogue. This is also congenial with the concepts of IMC. (Fill 2009, 217) Although firms have long realized the importance to build long-term customer relationships as a strategic tool for developing long-term profitability it has not been fully embraced as a central concept of IMC. However, IMC literature has recognized the notion to build relationships with customers in general terms. (Lee & Park 2007) According to this claim, the building of long-term customer relationships should not only be a principle in designing marketing communication activities but an ultimate goal in the implementation of communication activities (Lee & Park 2007).

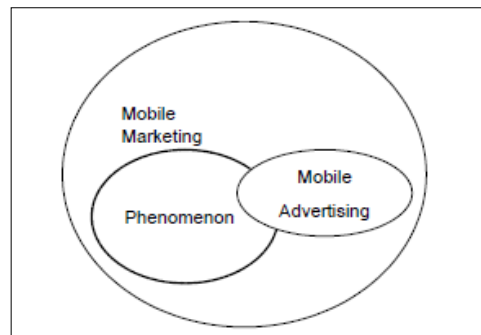
### **3. Mobile advertising**

As mentioned previously, mobile advertising is a young and fast growing phenomenon of marketing communications. With the right execution the mobile channel has the potential to benefit both advertisers and consumers (Barwise & Strong 2002). The mobile includes some unique technological features which relate to the ability to leverage other mediums (Sharma et al. 2008). However, due to its unique characteristics it should not be treated like the traditional media (Bauer et al. 2005). In addition, the interactivity of the mobile channel is assumed to differ from that of the Internet (Kannan et al. 2001; Barnes 2002). The following chapter aims to form a comprehensive picture of mobile advertising and the aspects that should be taken into consideration in order to utilize a successful mobile advertising campaign.

### 3.1. Defining mobile advertising

Although there are various definitions for the concept mobile advertising in both academic and industrial publications no commonly accepted definition exists (Leppäniemi et al. 2006). There are many words referring to the same phenomenon. Keywords like mobile marketing, mobile advertising, wireless advertising and wireless marketing have been applied (Tähtinen 2006). In order to gain a justified vocabulary for the research the first distinction needs to be done between the terms “mobile” and “wireless”. Wireless does not necessarily mean the same as mobile (see e.g. Varshney & Vetter 2000; Balasubramanian et al. 2002). The wireless interfaces do not necessarily support true mobility. For instance, consumers’ communications from a desktop computer with signals carried over a wireless local area network (WLAN) would qualify as wireless but not necessarily mobile communications (Leppäniemi et al. 2006). True mobility can only be achieved with the mobile network. This is why the term mobile is used in this research.

Additionally, a distinction between the terms marketing and advertising needs to be made. The American Marketing Association (AMA 2007) defined marketing “*as the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large*”. It is reasonable to argue that when talking about mobile marketing mobile advertising is included in this definition. According to Tähtinen (2006), actually the phenomenon is somewhere in between mobile marketing and mobile advertising. These findings are shown in the following figure (Figure 3).



**Figure 3:** The relationship between the terms and the phenomena (Tähtinen 2006, 9)



Since the terms ‘mobile marketing’ and ‘mobile advertising’ are so strongly interrelated this study uses the term ‘mobile advertising’ as a principal term and ‘mobile marketing’ occasionally when referring to communicational part. In addition, there also exists variation in determining mobile advertising. Leppäniemi et al. (2004) define mobile advertising as “*any paid message communicated by mobile media with the intent to influence the attitudes, intentions and behavior of those addressed by the commercial messages*”. This definition is used also in this study. However, the aspect of communication is even more in the two-way mode. Mobile advertising includes characteristics that go beyond traditional advertising (Bauer et al. 2005). The Mobile Marketing Association (MMA 2009) has redefined mobile marketing as “*a set of practices that enables organizations to communicate and engage with their audience in an interactive and relevant manner through any mobile device or network*”. This study realizes the mobile advertising to be included in this definition.

### **3.2. Mobile advertising categories**

Mobile advertising can be divided into two main categories: push and pull advertising. Push advertising refers to “*sending or ‘pushing’ advertising messages to consumers*” whereas pull advertising “*involves placing advertisements on browsed wireless content, usually promoting free content*”. (Barnes 2002) Barnes’ classification has been widely used in the research and no new theoretical structure has emerged that would have an alternative framework (Okazaki & Barwise 2011). It should be noted that when executing advertising programs marketers are required that permission (an opt-in) is received from the respondent before any message is sent to an individual (MMA Code 2008).

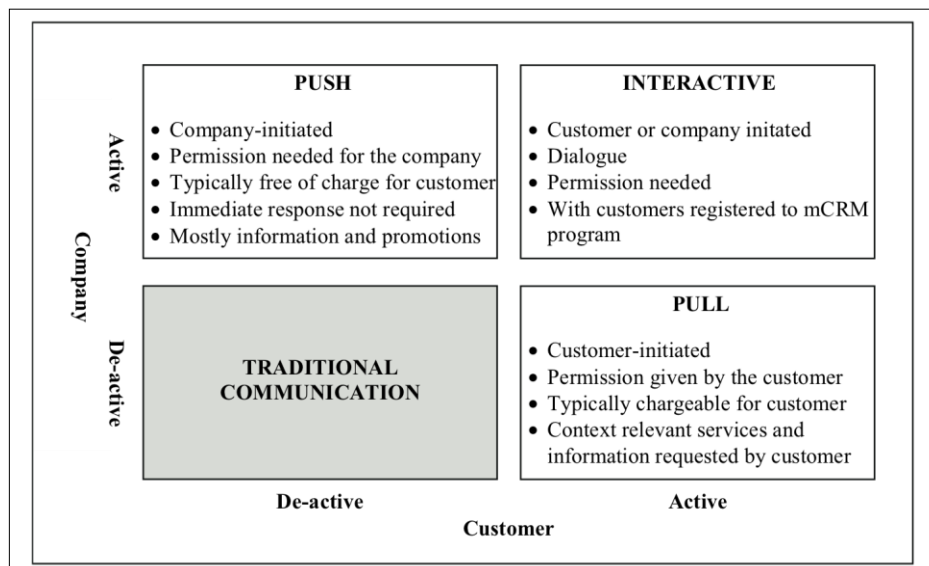
Most of mobile advertising research is done on push advertising (Okazaki & Barwise 2011). However, according to Okazaki & Barwise (2011) this research involves some limitations in today’s market. In addition, the research has mainly focused on SMS text messaging without visual or audio effects, limiting the hedonic experience (Zhang & Mao 2008). Also the role of trust in SMS advertising has been studied with a model related to technology acceptance (TAM), which does not take into account continuing users. Therefore the trust should be studied in a more realistic setting that would take into

account the grown privacy and security concerns (Okazaki & Barwise 2011).

Pull advertising and the use of mobile as a channel for consumers to respond to traditional media and promotions has been a much less researched area (Okazaki & Barwise 2011). This deficiency should be realized since according to Okazaki & Barwise (2011) the biggest opportunities in mobile advertising will be those that use mobile as a pull (or response) channel rather than for push advertising. One example of this kind of trend is the growth of two-dimensional barcodes. These QR (quick response) codes are readable codes, which can be scanned with smartphones to redeem convenient information. This allows the integration with traditional and interactive media and as it is typically initiated by consumers it is less intrusive and more engaging, leading to the ideal mode of consumer communication (Xue & Hairong 2008).

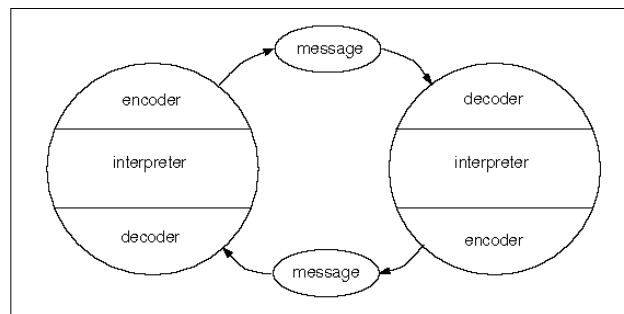
Leppäniemi (2008) suggests that communication through the mobile medium may be divided into three categories: push, pull and interactive (Figure 4). This study expresses the concept of interactivity and the activity of both the customer and the company in a marketing communication context. The concept of mobile advertising in this study is closest to this “interactive” mode since it expresses the dialogue between the customer and the company which is important when trying to achieve true interactive relationships with customers.

**Figure 4:** Communication modes in a mobile context (modified from Sinisalo & Karjaluoto 2006) (Leppäniemi 2008, 50)



### 3.3. Mobile advertising channel

Originally the advertising approach of companies was to use ‘above-the-line’ mass communication campaigns to reach consumers (Fill 2009, 20). This approach assumes rather passive media involvement from the consumers. The Schramm (1954) model of the communication process is very widely used and accepted as a basic model of how communication works (Fill 2009, 4). In this model the receiver can be either the individual or organization. Encoding and decoding happen also on both sides.

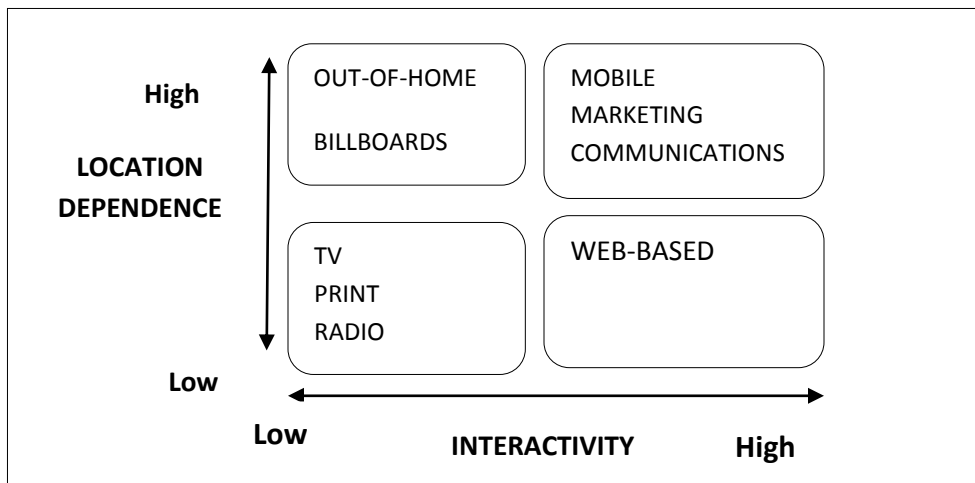


**Figure 5.** Model of the communication process (Schramm 1954, 3-26)

Although the Schramm model takes into account the two-way communication it is still linear. It takes into account only two participants. Two issues that should be taken into account in evaluating the influences of the communication process are the media used to convey information and the influence of people on the communication process (Fill 2009, 47). These are also important when describing the marketing communication in the mobile medium.

Today digital-based technologies enable the interaction and dialogue with consumers (Fill 2009, 47). There are two important changes in the media environment due to the development of digital media. Firstly, the consumers are the drivers in the new media context and act as active information seekers. Also the interactivity occurs with the equipment (e.g. mobile phones) rather than through the machines (e.g. TVs). (Fill 2009, 47-48)

Mobile has some unique features as a marketing medium that cannot be utilized with other forms of media. Sultan & Rohm (2005) have divided marketing approaches along two dimensions: the level of “consumer interactivity” that the medium enables and the degree of “location specificity” of the medium. According to this model the mobile marketing communications is unique in the sense that it enables both high location specificity and interactivity at the same time (Figure 6).



**Figure 6.** A comparison of marketing communication approaches (Sultan & Rhom 2005, 2)

The mobile can also be characterized by personalization, ubiquity, interactivity and localization. This makes it a perfect channel for individualized and dialogue-oriented communication. Additionally, it also enables enlarging a campaign’s reach through viral effects. (Bauer et al. 2005) It is also due to these characteristics why the mobile is distinguished from the traditional media. These are discussed with more detail in the following chapters.

### **3.4. Unique characteristics of the mobile medium**

In order to implement a successful mobile advertising campaign, the marketer needs to understand the unique characteristics of the mobile channel and take them into account when planning advertising

campaigns. These unique characteristics include personalization, ubiquity, interactivity and localization. The personalization is discussed in the following chapter.

### **3.4.1. Personalization**

Mobile is unique device to consumers. Most users have a very personal relationship with their mobile phones (Bauer et al. 2005). This makes it also a sensitive media channel for advertisers. Mobile advertising may also be personalized in terms of various variables like demographic profile, preference and location (Smutkupt et al. 2011). The mobile advertising messages can therefore be highly targeted and contain relevant information for the consumer. According to Smutkupt et al. (2011) personalized ads ensure the most effective results in mobile advertising. However, they also point out that this requires an up-to-date customer database. In addition, mobile devices enable the interaction between the recipient and the sender which may also lead to a personal relationship with the company, product and brand and further enrich an integrated marketing campaign (McGrath et al. 2011). Therefore, embracing this personalization in a right way can yield great benefits for the marketer. However, issues like the sensitivity of the recipient and privacy should be taken into consideration when sending advertisements.

### **3.4.2. Ubiquity**

It is widely accepted that ubiquity is the key feature of the mobile channel (Okazaki & Barwise 2011). Ubiquity of mobile phones enables the consumer to receive information and perform transactions at a real-time basis regardless of time or location (Clarke III et al. 2008). In addition, ubiquity makes it possible to provide content at the right time and point of need which may also influence impulse purchases (Kannan et al. 2001). It should also be noted that when planning mobile advertising the ubiquitous interactivity may give the customer ever more control over the way they see, read and hear the advertisement (Barnes 2002). According to Hanley & Boostrom (2011) ubiquity of mobile devices

also enables the marketer to develop behavioral data related to where customers like to go and when. This data may be valuable in creating a deeper understanding of consumers and their preferences. According to Okazaki & Barwise (2011) there exists little research to date on the ubiquity of the mobile. The authors further express the opportunities in this unique feature especially in terms of location-based mobile advertising.

### **3.4.3. Interactivity**

The mobile channel exhibits all traits necessary to establish a direct dialogue between the advertiser and the potential customer (Bauer et al. 2005). Due to this feature it is also an ideal medium for “conversational” one-to-one marketing (Barwise & Strong 2002). Interactivity which can be provided in mobile communication is assumed to differ from that of the Internet due to the unique characteristics of the mobile communication via mobile devices (Kannan et al. 2001; Barnes 2002).

According to Qin et al. (2010), a new concept for interactivity is needed for mobile communications. It is suggested that the interactive mobile advertising includes six features essential to the concept: user control, two-way communication, synchronicity, connectedness, playfulness and interpersonal communication. The first three features are typical in Internet studies when defining interactivity whereas the rest characterize mobile advertising. (Qin et al. 2010) On the basis of this definition, it could be concluded that connectedness, playfulness and interpersonal communication distinguishes the interactivity of the mobile from that of the Internet.

#### **3.4.4. Localization**

Mobile technologies like GPS (global positioning system) enable location-based marketing. This is why service providers and advertisers are able to receive and send information relative to a specific location of the consumer (Clarke III et al. 2008). Marketers can also offer services at the point of need (Barnes 2002). When comparing to the traditional e-commerce the location-specific information is a key advantage mobile marketing that cannot be utilized in traditional e-commerce (Clarke III et al. 2008). However, it is also important to realize that the utilization of personal and location data may also involve some privacy issues (Leppäniemi et al. 2006). This is why the concept of “permission-based mobile advertising” should be realized as a central area in mobile advertising.

#### **3.5. Permission-based mobile advertising**

Due to the intimate nature of mobile advertising, careful planning is needed before sending any messages to the consumers (Leppäniemi et al. 2006). According to Barwise & Strong (2002) the consumer acceptance of permission-based mobile advertising is also important for the brand since ineffective advertisements may cause resentment and so reduce brand equity. Permission-based mobile advertising is considered more acceptable while sent by a trusted source rather than an unknown one (Leppäniemi & Karjaluoto 2005). It is also suggested that privacy concerns in mobile spam relate to the utilization of personal and location data (Leppäniemi et al. 2006). Mobile marketing is subject to governmental regulation in Europe.

According to the European Union’s Directive 2002/58/EC (European Union 2002): *“For such forms of unsolicited communications for direct marketing, it is justified to require that prior explicit consent of the recipients is obtained before such communications are addressed to them.”* However, permission may be obtained under an existing customer relationship: *“Within the context of an existing customer relationship, it is reasonable to allow the use of electronic contact details for the offering of similar*

*products or services, but only by the same company that has obtained the electronic contact details in accordance with Directive 95/46/EC.”*

Advertising messages that are permission-based are powerful since by signing up to an opt-in list the consumer requests the messages from the advertiser rather than being exposed to it. Consequently, Martin et al. (2003) suggest that advertisers may gain better value for their money since they have already indicated that they are interested in the messages. However, this also requires that it is easy for the customer to opt-out. In addition, when discussing about the permission of mobile advertising Barnes & Scornavacca (2004) express the importance of understanding the unique characteristics of the mobile medium. These include amongst other things the combination of time and location, data given a context by the user and personalization. These aspects should also be taken into consideration when evaluating permission in mobile marketing.

### **3.6. Consumer acceptance and attitudes**

Obtaining permission from the users for sending information to their mobile devices is a key aspect in mobile marketing. According to Barnes & Scornavacca (2004) it is not clear enough how consumers will respond to the idea of mobile marketing and this subject should be further investigated. However, attitudes towards mobile “push” advertising have been a quite popular subject in research. For example Tsang et al. (2004) investigated on Taiwanese students’ attitudes toward SMS “push” advertising. According to this research, consumers have generally negative attitudes toward mobile advertising due to its irritating traits unless the consumer is opted in. This finding emphasizes the importance of permission which needs to be obtained before sending any ads. In addition, Tsang et al. (2004) found that entertainment was the most significant driver of attitudes and certain incentives (e.g. entertainment, informativeness, irritation and credibility) could increase respondents’ willingness to accept mobile advertising.



In terms of mobile marketing acceptance, Bauer et al. (2005) found that entertainment and information value are identified as the most central acceptance drivers of mobile marketing. Therefore the mobile marketing messages should be creative and entertaining and offer high information value. This will eventually result in consumers' positive attitudes toward mobile marketing and the use of mobile marketing services (Bauer et al. 2005). The risk perception was negatively found to determine attitudes towards mobile marketing, which is also why the establishment of trustworthy mobile marketing should be a major goal for the advertising company (Bauer et al. 2005).

Alternatively, a more recent study by Hanley & Boostrom (2011) investigated the smartphone content usage and exposure to and acceptance of mobile advertising in the context of an IMC strategy. According to this research incentives are the key motivators for advertising acceptance. In addition, Hanley & Boostrom (2011) found that perceived risks associated with receiving mobile advertisements could become a significant barrier to their acceptance.

### **3.7. The future of mobile advertising**

Since the mobile advertising is still a young phenomenon, it is important to look at its future and identify the biggest opportunities in this field. According to Sinisalo et al. (2007) the greatest challenge for companies concerning the mobile channel includes the effective integration of mobile and traditional media. Therefore, approaching the mobile medium as a separate project might result in an unsatisfactory and inconsistent customer experiences (Sinisalo et al. 2007). Okazaki & Barwise (2011) argue that mobile advertising should more and more be seen as part of integral two-way communications. This adds to the notion that the mobile channel should be an integral part of the firms marketing communications.

Mobile includes some unique technological features which relate to the ability to leverage other mediums. It comes with no surprise that cross-media or multichannel consumer behavior is seen as one

of the promising areas for future research. This means that the mobile channel is used as an easy, fast, and ubiquitous response channel for other marketing media. (Okazaki & Barwise 2011) According to Okazaki & Barwise (2011) the importance of mobile advertising is growing in particular due to the blurring of the distinction between the online and mobile Internet and the introduction of QR codes. The mobile bar codes can be used as a tool for tracking an ad to the real purchase situation of physical goods. In addition, a promising future trend for the measurement of mobile advertising includes the ability to purchase with the mobile device, where the mobile devices may add payment value directly during the point of sale. This may also allow the advertisers to form deeper levels of engagement with the customer increasing the possibility to lead the transaction to the direction the marketer wants. (Sharma et al. 2008)

In addition, the mobile targeting enables the utilization of smaller niche campaigns which are highly customized and cost-effective. (Sharma et al. 2008) However, the privacy issues should be taken also into account. Barnes and Scornavacca (2004) emphasize amongst other things the importance of consumer acceptance, legislation for privacy and data protection. One future challenge in mobile advertising may relate exactly to privacy issues. According to Hanley & Boostrom (2011), the challenge for marketers is to create relevant messages which are delivered through multiple mobile delivery points as part of an IMC plan in order to build personal relationships rather than invading consumer privacy.

When discussing about the future of different advertising campaign types the future of push advertising relies in the industry's ability to get over the barriers related to consumer acceptance and exploiting fully the latest mobile technology like the mobile Internet (compared to the SMS text messaging) (Okazaki & Barwise 2011). On the other hand, there is a clear need for more research on the pull advertising. According to Okazaki & Barwise (2011) the biggest opportunities in mobile advertising will be those that use mobile as a pull channel rather than for push advertising. This is why research on this area is justified.

### **3.8. Designing an attractive mobile campaign**

Although most advertising researchers, academics and managers would agree that the true value of electronic media is its interactivity, the way to utilize this is less clear (Peltier et al. 2003). Since the mobile channel includes some unique characteristics not typical for the traditional media, it should not be treated the same way. In order to implement a successful advertising campaign, the marketers need to understand the unique channel and how it should be integrated to the overall IMC strategy.

When utilizing a mobile advertising campaign it should be noted that the mobile media channel should be an integral part of the whole marketing communications strategy. Mobile includes some unique technological features which relate to the ability to leverage other mediums (e.g. the mobile bar codes can be a tool in tracking an ad to the real purchase situation of physical goods) (Sharma et al. 2008). However, Qin et al. (2009) argue that consumers should not be offered with too many response options and that a distinct communication channel with the company may increase the “touching area” between the consumer and the company and thereby facilitate long-term contacts. Qin et al. (2009) also argue that contextual offerings of advertisements initiate more interaction opportunities as well as synergies between mobile campaigns and other media marketing.

Privacy issues include another important aspect when utilizing a mobile advertising campaign. Mobile advertising campaigns should be designed with great cautiousness to prevent interrupting or irritating the user. Qin et al. (2009) found a clear correlation between perceived interactivity and the attitude toward the advertisement. According to Qin et al. (2009) one tactic to prevent interrupting the consumer is to design interactive mobile advertisements and empowering the user to select what he/she would like to experience. According to Xue & Hairong (2008), QR (quick response) codes allow the integration with traditional and interactive media, and as it is typically initiated by consumers it is less intrusive and more engaging.

The third aspect relates to the content of the mobile advertisements. Due to the unique features of the mobile communications Qin et al. (2010) suggest that customers expect real-time, reciprocal and playful interactions through their mobile devices. Advertising design and event planning may also help

in developing an interpersonal and involving dialogue with the customers. The first could be achieved e.g. with funny animations or interactive games. The latter may be achieved by e.g. links to websites or alerts for ongoing events. (Qin et al. 2010) In addition, Bauer et al. (2005) found that entertainment and information value are identified as the most central acceptance drivers of mobile marketing. Qin et al. (2009) on the other hand found a clear connection between perceived playfulness and interactivity. Consequently, the mobile marketing messages should be creative and entertaining and offer high information value. In addition to these, also the personal touch of advertisements may be seen effective.

It is argued that mobile devices enable the interaction between the recipient and the sender which may lead to a personal relationship with the company, product and brand and possibly further enrich an integrated marketing campaign (McGrath 2011). According to Smutkupt et al. (2011) personalized ads ensure the most effective results in mobile advertising. The marketer should also consider making mobile game advertisements customizable, since they are recognized less obtrusive and impressive due to the immersive and interactive gaming environments (Qin et al. 2009). The significance of databases has also been realized when considering segmentation. According to Peltier et al. (2003) the communication strategy requires a database-driven segmentation approach, which should also include the development of an interactive, customized, and integrated marketing communication plan.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Due to the media fragmentation of today, consumers have become even more difficult to reach. Consequently, in the new media generation there is a demand for more engaging and interactive campaigns which are specifically targeted according to consumers' interests and offer the right content, to the right consumer at the right time. The mobile media includes unique characteristics like personalization, ubiquity, localization and interactivity, which are perfectly suitable in utilizing these kinds of personalized campaigns. These features are summarized in **Figure 7**. However, these features also distinguish the mobile media from traditional media, which is also the reason it should not be treated the same way. In order to utilize successful mobile advertising campaigns, marketers should

have a thorough understanding of the unique characteristics of the mobile channel and how it should be integrated into the overall marketing communication strategy.

The theory of integrated marketing communication (IMC) is a useful theoretical framework for reviewing mobile advertising, which is a young and fast growing phenomenon of marketing communications. This is because the IMC is regarded as an audience-driven business process and it emphasizes amongst other things on the integration of various forms of marketing communication. In addition, it takes into account the importance of content creation in today's audience-driven media environment and comprises a broader understanding of today's media channels which include all possible contact points where customers or prospects experience a brand and get in contact with it. The first issue of successful mobile advertising from the perspective of IMC relates to the integration.

One of the key opportunities as well as challenges for marketers is the integration of the mobile channel to the marketing communication strategy. It comes with no surprise that cross-media or multichannel consumer behavior can be seen as one of the promising areas for future research. The mobile media channel should be an integral part of whole marketing communication strategy. With the right execution the mobile channel has the potential to benefit both advertisers and consumers. The unique technological features of the mobile channel relate to leveraging other mediums. Context aware offerings (e.g. location-based services) may form synergies between mobile advertising and other forms of marketing. In addition, the QR (quick response) codes may act as a tool for integrating traditional and the interactive media. The mobile bar codes can be used as a tool in tracking an ad to the real purchase situation of physical goods. This creates huge opportunities for the marketer in terms of useful data when designing personalized campaigns. Along with this data come also privacy issues.

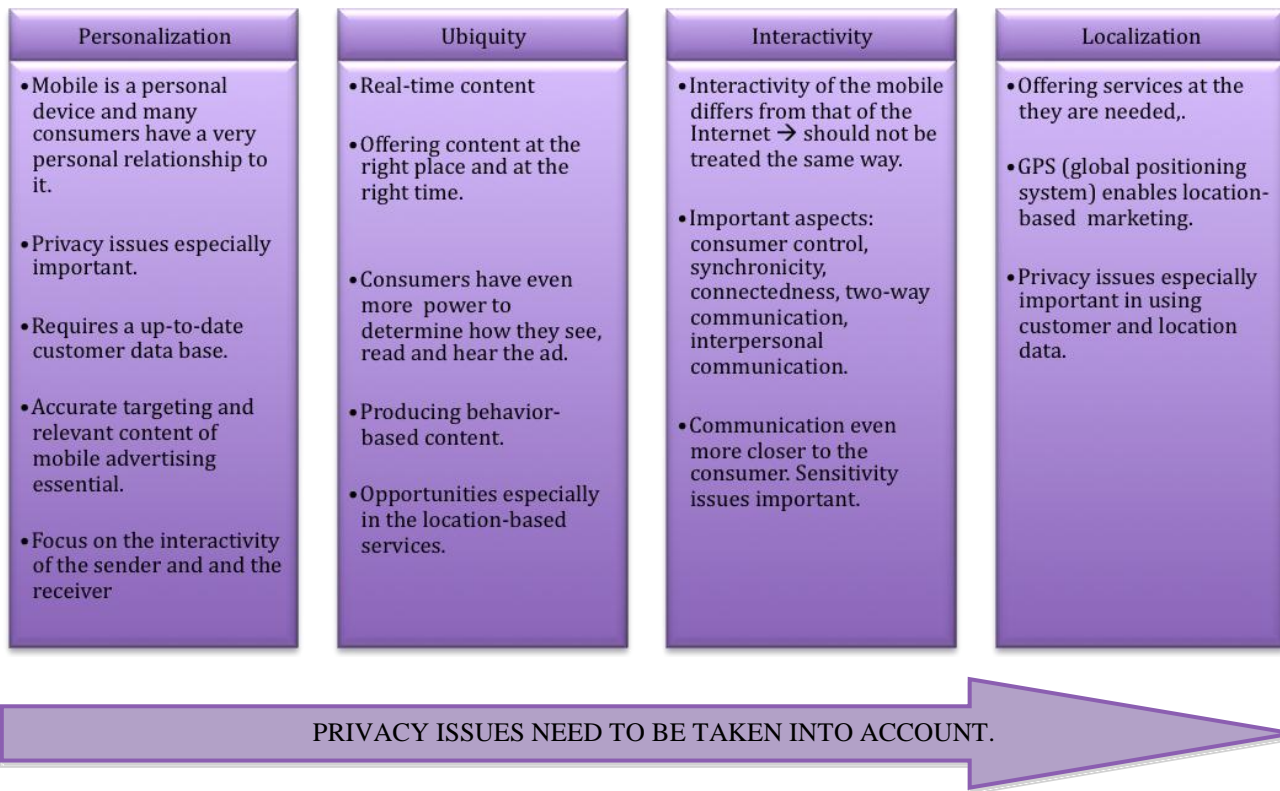
The marketers need to find a balance between privacy and embracing personalization and interactivity. It seems that one of the greatest challenges for marketers relating to the mobile channel includes the privacy issues. In order to utilize a successful campaign the mobile advertising needs to be permission-

based. A clear correlation has been found between perceived interactivity and consumer acceptance. In order to send effective advertisements, the marketer needs to focus on accurate positioning and segmentation. The mobile channel requires also an up-to-date customer database in order to offer content with high information value. One tactic to prevent interrupting the consumer is to design interactive mobile advertisements which empower the user to select what he/she would like to experience. This would be beneficial both for the company and the user. Alternatively, the use of QR (quick response) codes may be perceived engaging and less obtrusive since it is initiated by consumers. In addition to the privacy issues, the advertising design is another key aspect in delivering effective messages to consumers.

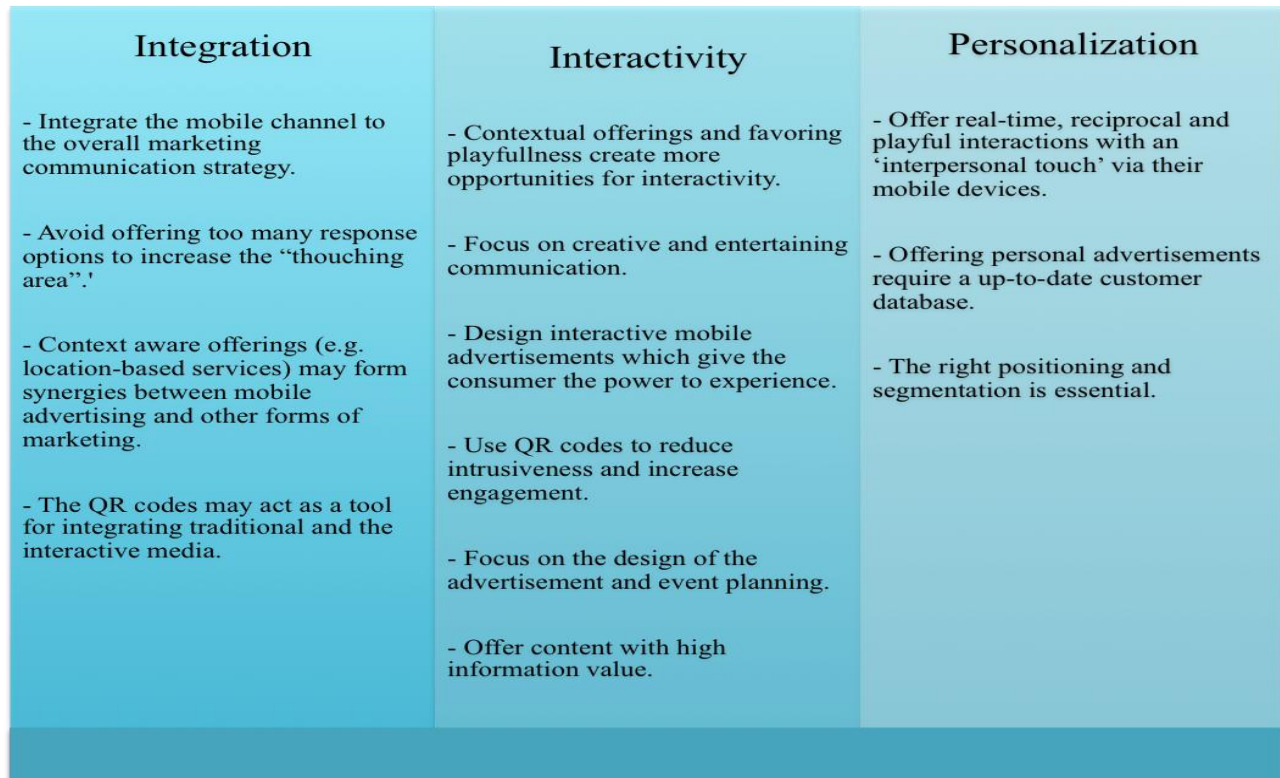
The mobile marketing messages should be creative and entertaining and offer high information value. The marketer needs to make sure the message is offered at the right place and at the right time. It has been realized that personalized ads ensure the most effective results in mobile advertising. With effective timing, the advertising messages may at their best affect purchase decisions. In addition, it has been argued that customers expect real-time, reciprocal and playful interactions with the mobile. The customers should also be offered with valuable content and incentives. All of these guidelines are summarized in **Figure 8**.

All of the previously mentioned factors are helpful guidelines for implementing a mobile advertising campaign. The opportunities of the mobile medium are undeniable and should be realized by the marketers. However, as mentioned in the introduction there is no right way to establish IMC and advertising may vary according to different campaigns and industries. The marketer should therefore evaluate every situation separately when deciding about the most appropriate tools for the communication strategy.

**Figure 7:** The key characteristics of the mobile channel and their effect on advertising



**Figure 8:** Summary of key factors for successful mobile advertising from the perspective of IMC



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