

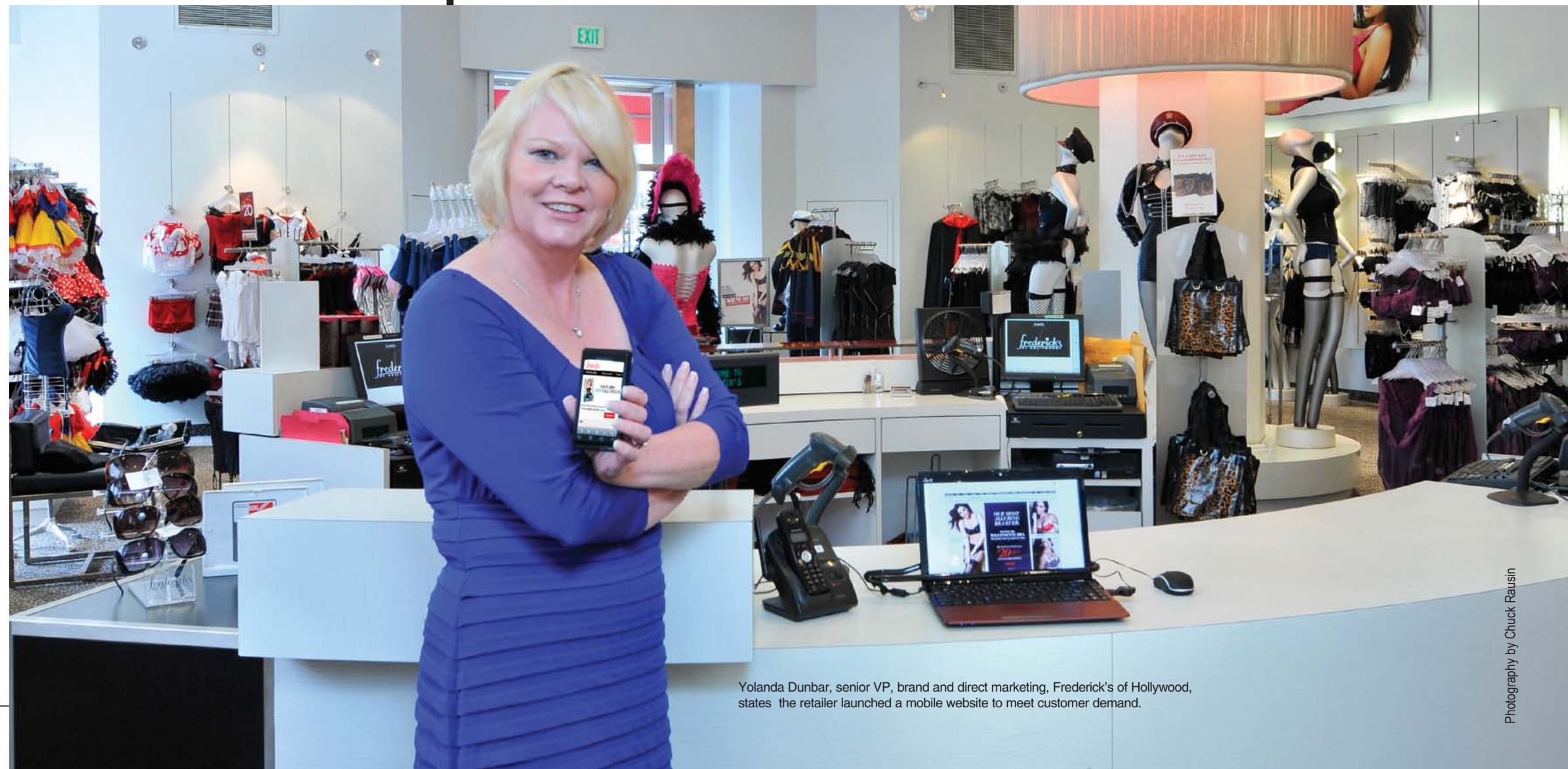
Inside Frederick's of Hollywood's Mobile Website Initiative

The launch of a mobile website helped Frederick's of Hollywood increase its conversion rate.

by Erin Harris

The mobile phone is evolving into a powerful commerce tool, enabling consumers to review products, run price comparisons, access inventory levels, and make transactions over the mobile network as well as at the POS. Consumers are increasingly using their mobile phones for transactions, and there is no question that the opportunity is growing by the day. Because Web traffic from mobile devices has been negligible until now, what is the best way to ensure a successful mobile website strategy? Once it accounts for more than 10% of traffic, as it is has for some retailers, merchants start to view it as a missed sales opportunity if increased traffic doesn't result in an increased conversion rate. Frederick's of Hollywood, a well-known lingerie retailer, saw its mobile traffic increase significantly. Yet, the retailer's mobile shopping experience and functionality were not optimal for its mobile visitors. Frederick's needed to provide its customers with a true mobile website rather than rendering its traditional e-commerce website on a mobile phone. With limited time and resources, Frederick's turned to an out-of-the-box solution to meet its customers' expectations for a mobile website.

Mobile shoppers use their phones to help determine if a product is needed, to perform research to help decide which products fulfill a need, to make a purchase, to comparison shop for a specific product, and to evaluate a product after purchase. Frederick's of Hollywood's customers (primarily women, ages 18-35) are no different when it comes to their retail-related mobile activity. "Our e-commerce website did not translate well to mobile devices," explains Yolanda Dunbar, senior VP, brand and direct marketing at Frederick's of Hollywood. "For example, mobile shoppers spent less time on



Yolanda Dunbar, senior VP, brand and direct marketing, Frederick's of Hollywood, states the retailer launched a mobile website to meet customer demand.

Photography by Chuck Rausin

Four Reasons To Launch A Mobile Website

A mobile website is important to retailers for four reasons. First, customers expect it. There's a shift from online shopping from desktop to mobile devices, and shoppers will expect a mobile-optimized experience when they visit a retailer's website on their mobile devices. If they don't get it, they'll likely abandon the site and/or form a negative opinion of the brand, often going to a competitor's site. Second, it provides revenue opportunity. Mobile opens a new revenue channel that can drive 2% to 6% of online revenue today (higher for some retailers), with huge upside growth over the next five years. Third, it can increase brand engagement and customer satisfaction. Mobile websites aren't just about the online world, but help connect online to brick-and-mortar. For instance, if shoppers can't find a product in-store, they'll often access the retailer's website to find the product, so having an optimized experience could capture that sale. Mobile websites also provide opportunities for retailers to engage mobile consumers directly with mobile-only offers and promotions and tie-backs to in-store purchases. Finally, your competitors have mobile websites. According to Forrester, about 74% of retailers today have already invested in or are thinking about investing in a mobile website. Retailers should consider a mobile website so they're not left behind by the competition. ■

the site, bounced more than nonmobile shoppers, looked at fewer pages, and didn't buy on their mobile devices nearly as frequently as other Web shoppers. Our customers were purchasing on an unoptimized site, which provided a suboptimal experience for the customer and jeopardized the sale for us. Since customer engagement and purchasing patterns were different for mobile shoppers, we needed to make it easier for our customers to purchase via their mobile devices." Indeed, Dunbar explains that Frederick's of Hollywood wanted a plug and play version of a mobile website that both increases sales and improves customer satisfaction.

Data Analytics Critical For Mobile Platform Launch

Since 1997, Frederick's has had some form of an e-com-

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merce platform. At first, the retailer operated a Yahoo store and then migrated to a homegrown website. About three years ago, Frederick's overhauled its homegrown, legacy e-commerce platform with Demandware Commerce, an on-demand commerce platform. And, Demandware has measured data (e.g. conversion rates) for the e-commerce platform. More recently, within the past 18 months, as Dunbar and her team have been measuring and analyzing conversion rates via Google Analytics, Google's free data analysis tool, they decided to launch a mobile platform. "We analyze the data to measure our mobile traffic," says Dunbar. "We can also see what percentage of our customers visits us via mobile, and we can see the conversion rate from mobile versus the regular website. Before we had a mobile-friendly site, Google Analytics data showed that there was a large gap between mobile and the regular website in their conversion rate, so we saw that there was opportunity there."

Once Dunbar saw opportunity in mobile, she turned to Demandware again, this time for a mobile website. "In one of our regularly scheduled bimonthly meetings, where we share our business data, we discussed launching a mobile website," states Dunbar. "Demandware anticipated this, as they also analyze our e-commerce data." Dunbar and her team chose Demandware Mobile Cartridge, a plug and play mobile solution that integrates with Frederick's regular e-commerce platform. Mobile Cartridge is a preconfigured, mobile storefront purposely designed and optimized for quick, customized

implementation of a mobile website. Dunbar reports that implementation took about three weeks. "We have found that implementing and operating a mobile-friendly website is attainable if you follow the proper procedures," says Dunbar (see sidebar below).

The Similarities Between Mobile And E-Commerce

Frederick's of Hollywood's mobile site is an abbreviated version of its regular website. "Our website has full product images on each category landing page, but from a mobile perspective, that doesn't offer a very good user experience," explains Dunbar. "Our mobile site quickly drives you into the product detail pages, so if you're looking for something specific, you can find it easily. The imagery that we're using for the products is the same, but overall, it's a much more streamlined user experience. We needed to ensure that our brand was clear and distinct."

The Mobile Cartridge is a template based on Frederick's regular e-commerce website. All of the main data — pricing, promotions, customer, etc. — is consistent across both digital channels. Frederick's can manage each channel independently if desired, offering different content, for example, on the mobile website versus the regular website. This close correlation of the sites coupled with an ability to manage them as distinct channels provides Frederick's with the ability to deliver effectively across channels. Frederick's of

Three Components Of A Great Mobile Website

Frederick's of Hollywood's mobile website initiative helped the retailer garner significant growth in conversion rate. As Yolanda Dunbar, senior VP, brand and direct marketing at Frederick's of Hollywood, learned, a mobile website is only as good as its functionality. "A great mobile website is composed of three things," explains Gary Lombardo, manager of mobile, multi-channel, and social commerce marketing at Demandware. "First, a mobile website must have the core functionality that all shoppers expect. Retailers need to tailor the functionality and user experience on mobile devices to the mobile user. They shouldn't take all the same functionality that exists on their main retail site and port it to mobile."

Lombardo explains that mobile shoppers expect certain core functionality, such as prominent search, easy check-out, store locator, easy navigation and browse, etc. Navigation should be easy and intuitive, because mobile users are in a hurry. Ensuring your customers can find information within one or two clicks is essential. Second, retailers must focus on speed and performance. "Because mobile users are in a

hurry, they expect a site that will load quickly and not have latency," says Lombardo. "Some of this is outside of the retailer's control [i.e. carrier network], but other factors are in the retailer's control. For instance, the approach they take to implementing a mobile site can make a big difference. An approach such as creating a proxy site or screen scraping can slow down page load times, while building a site that is directly integrated with the e-commerce platform can provide better performance." Finally, Lombardo suggests integrating the mobile website with other digital channels, but it should also be managed separately. A mobile website should be integrated with all other digital channels (in-store, native apps, e-commerce site, etc.) to provide a consistent user experience, but also for simple management by retailers.

The mobile website should also be managed distinctly to engage the mobile user (i.e. targeted content or promotions), who often has different needs from those visiting other digital channels.



Demandware's integrated approach to mobile commerce helped Frederick's of Hollywood launch a successful mobile site.

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Hollywood's IT team implemented Mobile Cartridge, as it is available for download from Demandware's XChange community, where Frederick's followed a process for enabling the Mobile Cartridge on its Demandware platform. Once installed, Frederick's used the out-of-the-box workflow provided, and it also customized it based on its needs.

Customization Requirements Of A Mobile Website

Dunbar found that there were few customization requirements to keep the mobile website up and running and integrated with the rest of its channels. For instance, whenever Frederick's of Hollywood adds a category to its regular website, Demandware automatically ties it into the mobile site. Frederick's is responsible for ensuring coupons work and that pricing is consistent on both the mobile and e-commerce sites.

Dunbar explains that the primary reason for the mobile website was to meet consumer demand. Yet, she expresses the concern she and her team had around launching a new website. "We were concerned about the resource requirement — in both employee labor and time — to get this program up and running," says Dunbar. "We had

to understand how complex it could be. We were concerned that we'd need to reinvent the wheel. However, Demandware had a template available for us to review, so it was really easy for us to see how the mobile template would operate with our website."

Frederick's of Hollywood is enjoying the benefits of the mobile website. Dunbar explains that the conversion rates for mobile traffic have increased. "We felt that a mobile website was a must-have for our customers who now have the ability to shop for our products anywhere 24/7," she says.

There's no turning back now. The Web has gone mobile. More customers are accessing the Web from more places on more devices than ever before. As Frederick's learned, you must address a mobile strategy to increase conversion rates and meet customer demand. ■



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