



## Acquiring + Retaining Mobile Consumers With Interactivity

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## The mobile industry has reached a scale that often lacks context.

Heralded as the “7<sup>th</sup> Mass Media” by some, and described as a new computing cycle by others<sup>1</sup>, mobile is big and growing bigger – not only according to analyst predictions but through the ways that count; actual revenues.

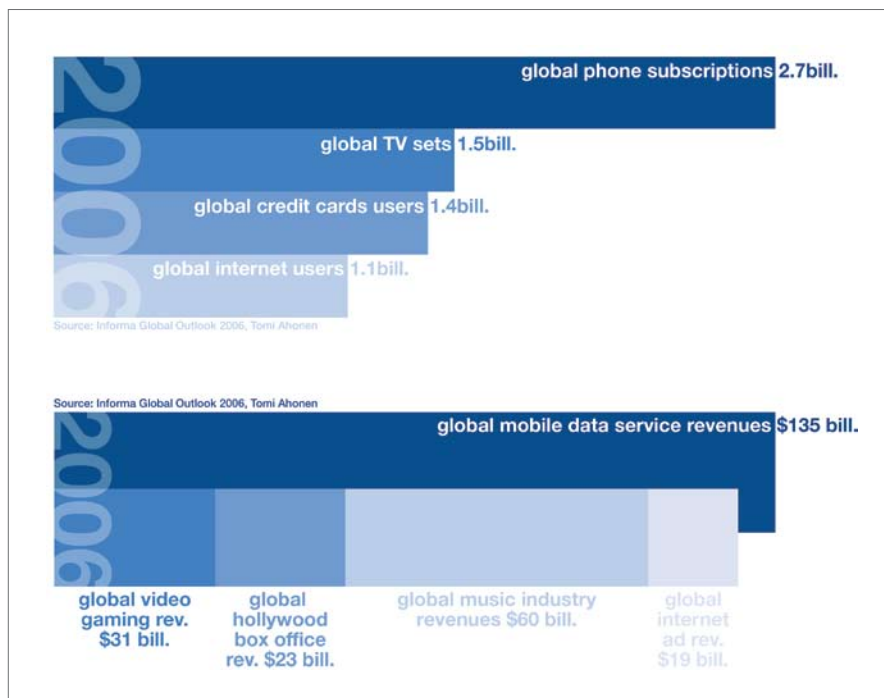
“We are making a significant investment in technology around mobile because of the growth rate of mobile and the ultimate scale of that business.”

Eric Schmidt - Google Inc. – CEO<sup>2</sup>

At the end of 2006 there were 2.7 billion global phone subscriptions – around 40% of the planet’s population.<sup>3</sup> Contrast this to 1.1 billion internet users, 1.5 billion TV sets, and 1.4 billion people with credit cards.<sup>4</sup>

It is not only audience numbers that are impressive, SMS text messaging alone is worth over 80 billion dollars globally, and just one ringtone – Crazy Frog – outsold all of iTunes worldwide in 2005.<sup>5</sup> And in 2006 mobile data service revenues surpassed internet advertising, music industry, Hollywood box office, and video gaming revenues – combined.

These are not analyst projections, but recorded, real revenues.



## How To Get Your Share?

The creation of a mobile service represents an amazing opportunity, however the market and medium is not without its pitfalls. The demise of multiple high profile Mobile Virtual Network Operators (MVNOs), such as ESPN Mobile and Amp'd Mobile, plus the 60 odd mobile services that disappear from United States network operator decks each month make this pretty clear.<sup>6</sup>

For those mobile services that do succeed, there is the opportunity for impressive subscriber growth and significant revenue. One of the keys to this success is to deliver an exciting, rich mobile experience that keeps users engaged and provides them with easy access to relevant, fresh content.

Researchers have found that well designed, rich user experiences positively charge a user's emotions during interaction. In more simple terms, if a user *feels good* during an experience they are more likely to remain *in* that experience.

As companies began exploring requirements for connecting with consumers on mobile phones they were met with some surprises. In contrast to the relative ease of deploying user experiences on the web, the mobile phone has limited screen space and navigation tools, and unlike the PC there are confusing arrays of technical capabilities.

The complexity of the mobile channel makes delivering a consistently high quality experience a difficult and sometimes frustrating objective.

Case studies of the user experience on mobile devices show characteristically shorter consumption time. Demographics of active mobile consumers trend toward younger audiences raised on instant gratification and rich experiences.

To put it succinctly, the bar is set high and timeframes are short.

Content is consumed while waiting in line, sitting on a bus, or waiting at a restaurant for a friend. These experiences are measured in minutes, not hours. Every moment searching for entertainment, waiting for a screen to load, or stumbling through an interface is a moment the consumer is closer to leaving and adopting a different service entirely. By keeping the user closer to content you succeed in providing them with a compelling and usable experience.

Speed to content and clicks to content have become important metrics in the mobile industry. A recent study by research firm Strategy Analytics found that in the US, the number of clicks a consumer was required to make to buy a ringtone on their mobile phone ranged from a best of 18 to a staggering 39 clicks for the category laggard.<sup>7</sup>

There has been a renewed focus in the industry to improve click to content ratios. Alltel, a North American network operator with around 12 million subscribers, introduced Celltop in 2007, "an exclusive, patent-pending technology that offers customers an easier way to access, manage and organize a wide range of information already available on their Alltel Wireless phones." to combat high click to content ratios.<sup>8</sup>

But speed to content is not enough, overall usability must be considered. Alltel's Celltop, although a visually appealing product, did leave important considerations out in its design. Independent analysis has shown that Celltop usability is poor.<sup>9</sup> Only 7 out of 10 usability study participants were able to successfully check the weather in Miami, Florida.<sup>10</sup>

Combine these findings with the wide range of media services that bury content in a confusing myriad of menus and you have a recipe for significant user churn. If 30% of a target audience is not able to use a service as it is intended, the chance



of success diminishes significantly. As always, innovation *requires* intuitiveness to succeed.

Finally, content and service organization must be considered. In the massive rush to ‘mobilize’ the media experience, the organization of the service is often neglected. Consumers browsing for music or a ringtone will likely need to navigate to an entirely different location for a related video, and to another location for related news and other information – this experience is not only infuriating to the consumer, but makes content bundling and cross selling virtually impossible.

If it takes 39 clicks to buy a ringtone, imagine how long the process will be for buying multiple pieces of content using the same experience.

At Nellymoser, we have found there are common attributes of successful mobile services - services that have been able to attract and retain consumers over longer periods of time. We will explore each of these attributes through the remainder of this report and suggest some strategies for addressing them in your mobile services.

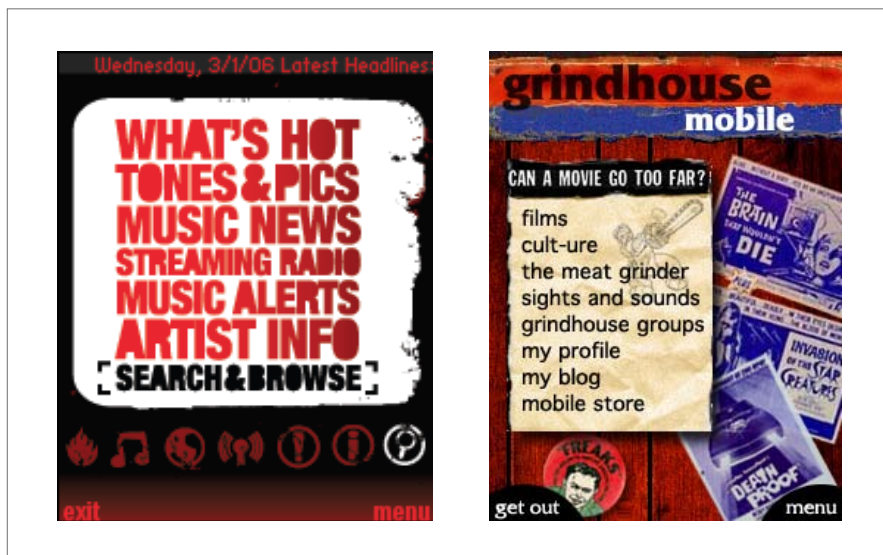
Successful mobile services provide:

- An intuitive user experience with continually refreshed content
- Fast access to content through cross correlation and personalization
- Interactivity and community, enabling user participation and sharing
- Unique branding
- High quality delivery

### An Intuitive User Interface With Fresh Content

The first step to a successful mobile service is to engage and excite users with a rich user interface. This richness will bring users in, engage them with the brand and excite them about the service. A compelling interface provides the user with a positive emotional experience.

The second step to maintain user satisfaction is to continually refresh the content. Fortunately for the mobile market, there are vast libraries of content available. Millions of songs, thousands of TV episodes, and growing volumes of user generated videos can be published successfully for the mobile phone. Yet this significant volume of content is often exactly what handicaps so many



services. Fitting all of this content into one interface has created significant problems on much larger screens. The small mobile screen and limited navigation tools only compound the problem.

Simple strategies such as featuring, rotating and effectively promoting content to the user are all effective ways to keep a service from getting stale and not overwhelming the consumer. Limiting content to smaller collections and rotating it periodically provides the user with a more consumable experience that can be enjoyed in shorter time periods, and it keeps the user coming back again and again. Featuring specific items helps users explore new areas that might not otherwise be found.

Through active content programming, featured items and in-service promotion, the service provider can reduce the clicks to content that plague so many mobile services today, and enhance the media experience to one that is dynamic and exciting.

These two steps require resources and tools for updating a service and the ability to stage it before publishing. By managing a service with an integrated content management and publishing system, the mobile service provider can actively program content on a frequent schedule. As the mobile channel evolves media companies will not only want to have control over the content within a service, but will demand better control over the look and feel of a live service as well. Mobile platforms will need to support dynamic, over the air updates to the mobile experience to reflect new features and add new media types - shows, episodes and properties.

Through the use of rich user interfaces and active content management the mobile service can provide a user with a consistently fresh and exciting media experience.

### **Fast Access To Relevant Content Through Correlation & Personalization**

Navigating through services to find content can be a frustrating experience. If it takes 39 clicks to find the Mos Def ringtone you have been searching for, and you must go through a totally different set of clicks to get to his most recent music video, you might think twice.

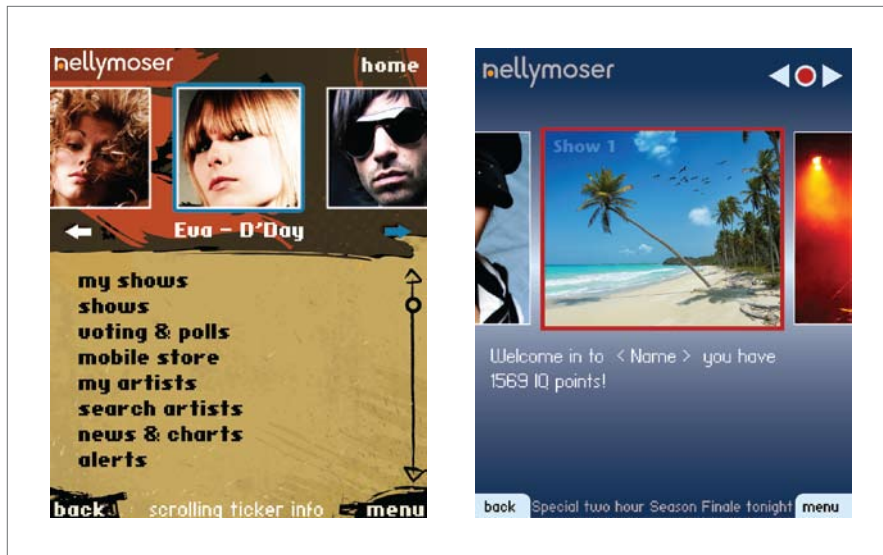
Other media channels have addressed these issues and have provided users with ways to filter, sort and navigate content in an effort to facilitate discovery. TiVo's personalized service provides users with automatic searching based on personal preference - a system capable of filtering through the thousands of hours of content to get you what you want.

On Demand services take a different approach, actively programming a subset of content and updating it on a frequent basis, providing the user a smaller, more navigable window to what content is available at a given time. On smaller devices the adoption of both of these techniques, as well as some new ideas for navigating vast amounts of content are needed to keep the user from getting lost or discouraged.

Cross correlation can be applied to help users navigate through vast amounts of content and find related items. This contextual way of relating content through the use of meta data is an important method which can facilitate navigation, cross selling, and content packaging. The ability to preview a ringtone, watch a video, read a news article and review tour information for your favorite recording artist is a more rewarding experience.

Cross correlation enables the user to go to one central place, an Artist Page in





this example, which provides them a view of all relevant content, information, ringtones, music clips, tour dates, without regard to where it resides. Bringing the content directly to the user in convenient ways creates a service that is much less frustrating for the consumer and offers cross selling opportunities for the service provider.

Personalization, in addition to providing content filters to narrow what's available to a more consumable view and cross correlation to organize all the information about a particular topic, allows a user to easily bookmark content they find relevant so they can get to it more easily next time. This method of saving content to a profile accomplishes two things; it provides the user a way to more efficiently navigate large amounts of content, and it adapts the service to a user allowing them to create their own "mediaspace." When combined with effective search you create a service that can be bookmarked, searched, and filtered based on a user's unique and very personal preferences.

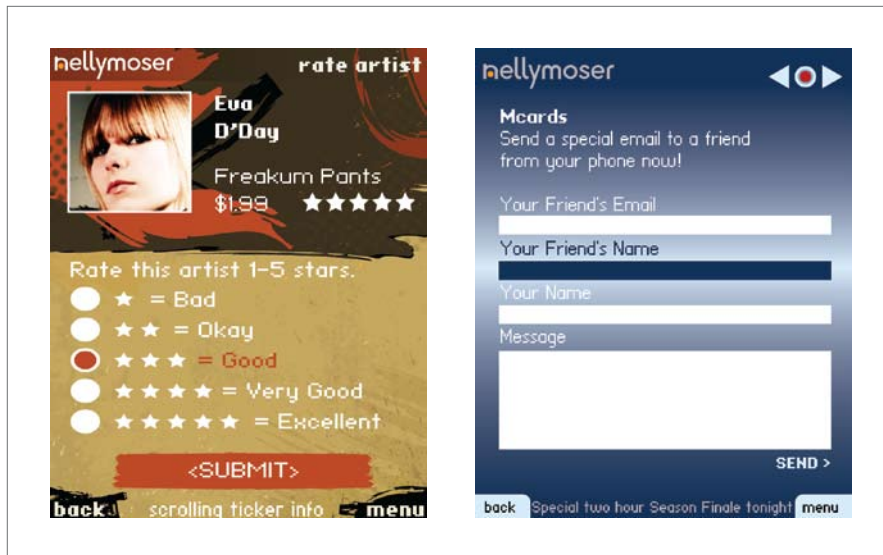
The more users invest in building profiles and an identity the less likely they are to abandon it. Not only does personalization drive uptake and user satisfaction, it also reduces customer churn.

### Interactivity And Community To Engage Consumers

Interactivity is an integral part of successful mobile services. From voting and polling to trivia and quizzes, they offer ways to get consumers involved; provide them with a voice, and provide them a way to show off their knowledge.

Social communities have impacted public perception of the user experience not only on the Internet, but also on mobile devices. The exploration, sharing and saving of content into a user profile makes exploration of vast libraries of content a more enjoyable experience. Content sharing features such as send to friend, user rating and tagging give the community the job of referring compelling content they have found.

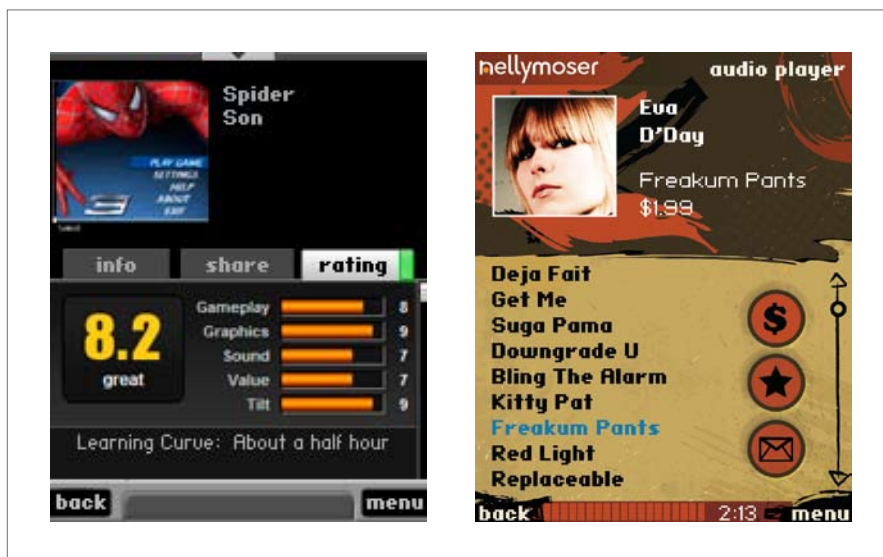
In this example, instead of going at it alone, users can lean on an entire community of content surfers to help them find what they want (and often content they don't know they want). Successful services such as YouTube understand this and have made the personalization and sharing of content central to the user experience.



Personalization and user generated content allow consumers to express themselves and build an emotional bond with a mobile service. But this bond is nowhere near as powerful as when community enters the equation. Sharing content is a powerful way to drive other users to enter the community and help users find interesting content that will keep them coming back. It is also a cheap, fast and easy way to market to others.

### Unique Brand Identity And Attributes

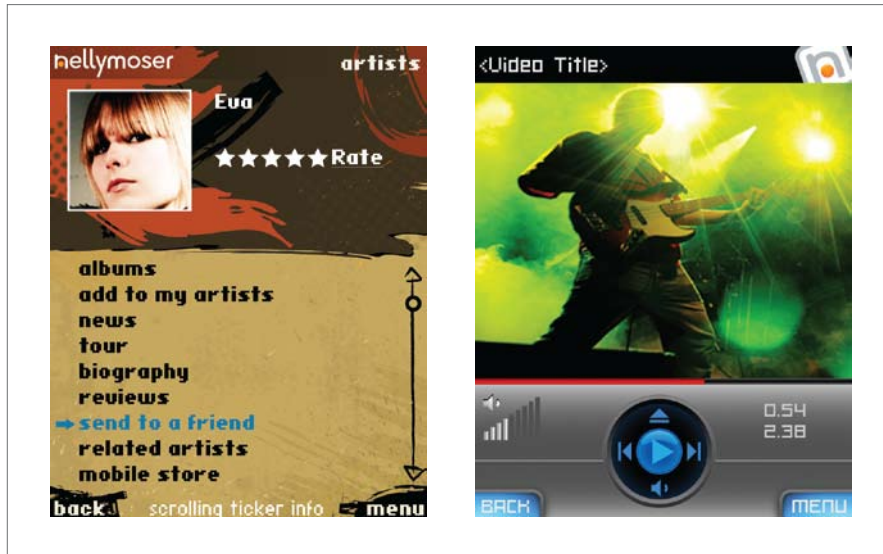
Media brands are some of the most recognizable in the world today. The expectations of an audience familiar with television and web experiences offered by media brands have set the bar very high, and the conversion of these media experiences to a mobile device is certainly a challenge.



Screen size, network speed and other limitations guarantee that a simple redesign of an existing web service cannot be successful. Careful adaptation of user interface, content and navigation need to be implemented in order to preserve the brand's identity, personality, and other attributes.

## High Quality Delivery To A Broad Audience

The mobile phone has won the race for the device of the future. But not all phones are created equal. Mobile services must be delivered to the full complement of handsets according to their capabilities. Successful, interactive mobile services must take into consideration the limitations of the market, and adapt their services to combine rich user experience with the reach they require to generate revenue.



The mobile ecosystem is complicated - dozens of mobile operators and network configurations; hundreds of devices with a variety of media formats; and numerous channels of distribution with different business models make insuring high quality delivery to a broad audience an issue .

More in the upcoming Nellymoser report - *Maximizing Reach of Mobile Services*

## Conclusion

To be successful in mobile, you need to ensure that you have the right design and technology partner. Mobile services need to enable consumers to quickly access, share, and interact with relevant content in a branded, personalized user experience. They need to be delivered with a quality consistent with your brand image.

Mobile services need to deliver:

- An intuitive user experience with continually refreshed content
- Fast access to content through cross correlation and personalization
- Interactivity and community, enabling user participation and sharing
- Unique branding
- High quality delivery

There is a huge up side to delivering the right service to capture and retain the market share you deserve. The channel is extremely complex and growing more fragmented everyday. You need a partner who will help you design and deliver exciting new mobile services.

At Nellymoser we enable media companies and network operators to establish and grow their mobile businesses. Our award-winning mobile services platform, combined with world-class mobile strategy and design, gives you everything you



need to deliver high quality, interactive, rich mobile experiences to the broadest audience.

By managing service delivery for you, Nellymoser handles all the mobile channel complexities, from integration with existing infrastructures to compatibility with the rapidly growing number of handsets. You can reach more consumers and increase retention rates with mobile services that include on-demand audio and video, interactive and community features, and user generated content.

Our current customers include AT&T, Virgin Mobile USA, MTV Networks, Warner Music Group, Sony BMG Music Entertainment, Microsoft, Adobe, Leapfrog, Ericsson, Vivendi Universal and Electronic Arts.

For more, visit [nellymoser.com](http://nellymoser.com)

## About the Author

Todd Griffith is a design and animation veteran, who began his career working in the special effects industry for Silicon Graphics in 1994. He is an award winning user interface designer and real time 3d graphics pioneer. Griffith has worked for numerous clients as an interactive designer, 3d animator, and user experience designer, and has been involved in mobile media since 2000. He is also an entrepreneur, and with financing from Nokia founded the first SMS and MMS based mobile animation company in the US. Griffith also developed the first 3d avatar application for the mobile phone released with Vodafone Live in 2003.

During his career Griffith has worked on interactive media projects with Graham Nash from Crosby, Stills and Nash, Mark Mothersbaugh of DEVO and has designed innovative mobile experiences for clients including Vodafone, Hi Corp, NVidia, Nokia, MTV, Nickelodeon, CBS, ABC, Virgin Mobile, Sony BMG, AT&T Wireless and others.

Todd Griffith is Vice President of Creative at Nellymoser.



## Endnotes

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