

# Consumer integration with fitness apps is worthy of brand exploration

CONSUMER MOBILE TRANSFORMATION

LORNA WHITE, SENIOR PLANNER 19 JUN 2017

A recent cycling accident unfortunately left my Apple Watch smashed, and, unlike smartphones, there isn't an easy way to replace the screen. The option was to go back to my old Casio or pay to replace the whole thing. I decided to try going back "old school," but it's been a few weeks now, and I am desperate to have my Apple Watch back!

This got me thinking about the fitness market as a whole, our reliance on apps, and data we freely record across apps and devices.

Consumers are so reliant on mobile devices, and the wealth of data brands are able to access has transformed the way a brand can target an audience and understand individuals' behaviour.

The global market for fitness apps is expected to grow 31% until the end of 2020, and the

declining costs of fitness apps means they are more accessible to consumers. Apps such as Runkeeper and MapMyRide enable brands to run challenges for communities where they capture consumer data if users opt in. This can be powerful in targeting people at the right time and with the right message.

Integration with social platforms is part of why fitness apps have grown so much in popularity and are increasingly becoming core platforms for fitness and trends in and of themselves. They have even helped create influential stars such as Joe Wicks and Kayla Itsines. These stars provide a great opportunity for brands in terms of targeting their followers all the way up to full brand partnerships.

This is a powerful option for engaging with a passionate community to gain credibility. It is also a great opportunity to use something other than traditional banner advertising. Mobile is still likely to be at the heart of use, given this is the place where consumers access the content.

Overall, fitness provides a great platform with which to align a brand and reach a broad audience. Future use of data, such as heartbeat and health information, is an interesting development and one to watch in terms of regulation.

Thinking of how mobile forms such a crucial part of the consumer journey with fitness in particular is essential for brands to consider and understand in part of their marketing mix and advertising strategy.

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