HOW ARE MARKETERS MONETIZING VOICE SEARCH AT THE LOCAL LEVEL?

With projections of smart speaker usage to grow 130% in 2017 and the rise in monthly virtual assistant usage to reach 1/5 of the U.S. population by end of year, the door of opportunity will open for voice search to have a positive impact at the local level. But in order for its potential to peak, we must take these things into consideration:

IF:

Consumers in a visually-driven society trust their senses and have confidence in the accuracy of the information they hear…

35.6 MILLION AMERICANS use voice activated assistants at least once a month

THEN:

Adoption of voice enabled devices will surge in more touchpoints over the course of a person's day at home, at work and in the car. If not, the old proverbs "seeing is believing" and "be seen and not heard" will present a challenge for voice search.

IF:

Consumer electronics and tech players in the voice-enabled category (eg. Amazon, Google, Apple, Harmon Kardon, Lenovo, Microsoft) nail local targeting on their platforms or forge relationships at the local level with brands and locally-owned businesses and services…

THEN:

Local economies will benefit and businesses with multiple locations will have a lucrative channel through which meaningful connections with consumers will be made. Brands will be able to capture intent with greater immediacy than other channels offer through actions such as: "same-day delivery," "call now," "make a reservation," "schedule an appointment" or "place an order."

IF:

If the same players above don't improve the technology…

For Baby Boomers and Gen X-ers, asking Siri or Alexa a question is the taste that the future has arrived

Rise in voice search opens doors to opportunities for brands at the local level

THEN:

Consumers will have a learned negative response to the idea of voice search and its growth with be stunted. There are may times in which voice search doesn't work or contextually recognize what a person is looking for. Improvement here could be the game changer. With this also comes the increased importance of recognizing pronunciation, something brands and tech developers alike will have to tackle.

IF:

Consumers get more comfortable using voice-activated devices in public versus in the privacy of their home, car or office…

THEN:

Marketers can expect user frequency and query types to increase, creating more opportunities for engagement and bringing customers in-store for local goods or services.

IF:

Brands overlook the importance of optimizing for voice search…

GROWTH IN 2017

130% PROJECTED SMART SPREAKER USAGE

1/5 of the U.S. population will use a virtual assistant at least monthly

THEN:

They'll miss engagement opportunities of a channel that could work very hard for their business. More than ever, it's important for brands with multiple locations to embrace local SEM, have effective directory listings, optimize sites for SEO with voice in mind, incorporate natural language into SEM and SEO strategies, and expand their list of branded terms.

IF:

Millennials and families with children are in your target audience…

Voice Search is part of life as they know it for Millennials and the younger generation

THEN:

You may have an upper advantage. Studies from NPR/Edison Research and eMarketer show millennials and children as drivers behind the purchase and adoption of voice-enabled speakers.

IF:

Amazon continues to diversify its portfolio…

THEN:

Voice search will be a game changer in the speed of delivery and accessibility of virtually anything one could ask for. This will have significant impact on the path to purchase, making the competition more fierce and performance of local digital and other media for local brands more critical. With 70% of the market share for voice-enabled speakers, it's hard not to imagine the potential for the consumer experience through the integration of Prime Same Day Delivery, Amazon Video, eCommerce, other Amazon-built products, and recent acquisitions of software companies and grocer Whole Foods.

*Sources: eMarketer, April, 2017; NPR and Edison Research, "Smart Audio Report," June, 2017

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