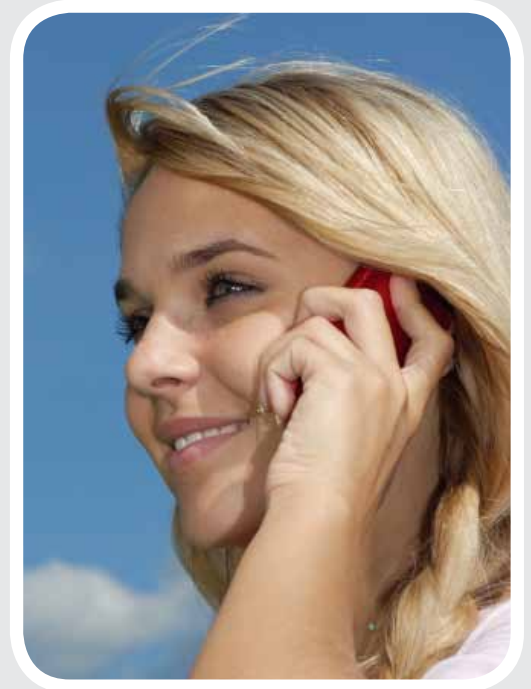


co-hosts



The Future of Mobile Recruitment



attendees



THOMSON REUTERS



Executive Summary

The Future of Mobile Recruitment (FOMR) roundtable was held in Central London in May 2010 and was attended by nine panellists and a chairman. The delegates were senior managers or business owners from a spread of major companies involved in mobile.

It was felt that this could finally be the 'year of mobile' due largely to the developments that Apple have kick-started. The market is seeing rapid growth, even aside from the iPhone & apps, and the future will not be all about Apple as they face new competition from Microsoft and Google.

Consumers are ahead of industry, their behaviour towards mobile changed around Jan 2008. Statistics now suggest that more time is spent on social networking sites on mobile than on desktop.

Mobile has a big role to play in job hunting due to privacy, convenience & immediacy. Access on a mobile handset allows people to circumvent firewalls and internet restrictions in their current workplace.

Consumers need educating that mobile recruitment sites are available. A current lack of marketing and promotion means that usage is mainly limited to those that stumble across them. There are signs of progress here with an increasing use of phone apps for job hunting and the roll out of new recruiting mobile sites.

A current barrier to further expansion is the need to build products for each different mobile platform. There is a view that standards will develop to allow more growth with better profitability by making it easier to develop applications, as previously seen in the PC market.

The key development in mobile's future is cloud computing where thousands of interconnected computers do the heavy processing. Small handsets could become more powerful than the desktop because they can go anywhere and be highly personalised.

We are witnessing meteoric growth in internet access via mobile devices as consumers now want their online life to

move seamlessly between mobile and desktop. The consumer wants internet activity on the move and companies should not be happy for their customers to have a second rate mobile experience. Now is the time to act to match this unprecedented demand for services delivered via mobile internet.

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1.0 Introduction

The Future of Mobile Recruitment (FOMR) roundtable was held in Central London in May 2010 and was attended by nine panellists and a chairman. The delegates were senior managers or business owners from a spread of major companies involved in mobile:

Ian Carrington - Mobile Advertising Sales Director - Google
Oded Ran - Head of Consumer Marketing - Microsoft
Illicco Elia - Head of Mobile - Reuters
Mick Rigby - Partner - Yodel Digital
Gareth Phillips - CEO - 20:20 Media & Analytics
Neil Johnson - MD - Teletext
Alex Kozloff - Mobile Manger - IAB
Dave Martin - MD - Allthetopbananas (co-hosts)
Darren Sher - UX Manager – Jobsite (co-hosts)
René Carayol - BBC Presenter & Leadership Guru - Facilitator of the roundtable
Glenn Le Santo - Freelance writer – Producer of this white paper

The brief was to discuss the current state of mobile, its future and how it is relevant to recruitment. The depth of experience and knowledge present ensured the discussion was as informed as it was lively. Instead of pipe dreams and fantasy, the talk was realistic and full of information and insight.

This white paper distils that roundtable discussion. It contains ideas, opinions, knowledge, experience and inspiration on the subject of mobile internet for recruitment coming from some of the brightest brains and highest achievers in the industry.

2.0 Where is mobile now?

'The year of mobile' is an adage that's been used since 1997 but, with the rise of smart phone apps and phenomenal growth in mobile internet access, 2010 could actually be the year where this statement holds true.

There is now a new and widely accepted definition of what makes a mobile handset 'smart'. It now means a phone that can run programs, or apps. It can connect to the internet, usually via 3G, but also by other methods including wi-fi.

Apple are seen by many as the key player in helping to drive mobile to the place that it is now and have dominated the market up to this point. Their use of an application framework to deliver apps seamlessly, a low-friction payment system and 'eat-as-much-as-you-like' data plans have enabled mobile to jump firmly into smart phone territory.

"Apple's use of their leverage to insist providers sold every new iPhone with a contract that included an unlimited data plan instantly removed a massive inhibitor to use. The consumers' worries about the cost of using mobile internet were now gone!"

We are now witnessing the increasing adoption of the mobile handset as an internet device, led by market demand and fed by a manufacturer with a product that both created and fulfilled the early demand. However, Apple are going to have much less say about the shape of the future because strong competition from Google has arrived in the shape of Android, and Microsoft are getting ready to roll out their new Windows Phone OS.

The data model established in the UK market created user habits different to other markets. In the US, where data is not 'eat-as-much-as-you-like', there is evidence of lower internet use via mobile handsets. In markets where fixed line growth is slow, such as Africa and India, mobile internet access use has already far outstripped fixed line access. Areas with very good fixed line access, such as the USA, show slower growth in mobile internet use when compared to those markets with limited fixed line access.

However, these areas with very good fixed line internet such as the UK, Europe, Japan and the USA are still seeing mobile access booming, even though it may be at a slower pace than other countries. This is because it is being used increasingly in addition to fixed line broadband. All the remaining gaps between fixed line access are being filled by mobile as people access the internet via mobile wherever they are - on the daily commute to work, at home in front of the TV and even in the bath. Importantly, they also use it at work to circumvent corporate firewalls and internet access restrictions. The growth of mobile access is very significant to any business seeking to

maximise exposure on the internet.

Despite the steep rise in mobile internet access we are still, for the most part, missing a proper response from business. The pace of consumer adoption of internet enabled mobile phones has taken many by surprise with business either unaware of it, or unsure how to respond. The consumer is leading business by an uncomfortable margin in mobile, with the current situation being scored a lowly two out of 10.

There has been positive movement though, with a growing recognition of the importance of a mobile strategy. The next step is for this to turn into action. One of the prohibiting factors so far seems to be confusion. Brands know they need to get into mobile but they don't know how and this isn't helped by the conflicting messages they get from their multiple agencies.

"Different organisations need various things from mobile. Some are focussed on using it for sales, some for CRM and others want to extend the spread of their communications with mobile. They are asking "what do we do with mobile?" - they need direction."

Much more needs to be done to move business forward from this early stage, one where they are often only just beginning to recognise the importance of the mobile channel. The goal now is to turn their dawning recognition into action and it is up to the mobile industry and its agents to educate business, as well as consumers, about the power of mobile internet.

3.0 How will mobile develop?

2010 is a year that will see great changes in a mobile market that's alive with creativity, competition and investment.

This year is likely to be about more than Apple and apps. It will also be about Android, about Microsoft and it is likely that some of the carriers may have more influence. Mobile will also be about tablets, and not just the iPad.

Apple, according to some, did much to shift the balance of power away from the operators and into the hands of those making the operating systems. The future mobile market is likely to see Apple only able to hold on to a relative niche market, much as they do in computers. Meanwhile a mainstream standard will probably account for the majority of the market share.

"The iPhone is the thing that has battered down the door but there's an awful lot more to come."

By coincidence, the FOMR roundtable took place on the day Marks and Spencer's launched their new mobile website. When a major brand such as Marks and Spencer invests heavily in a mobile website it is a clear sign of the future. Websites will soon be obliged to work on any internet enabled mobile phone regardless of handset brand or operating system, or risk losing half of their potential traffic. Presently, customers, or potential customers, arrive at websites not designed for mobile, resulting in a poor experience for them. Surprisingly, most brands invest huge amounts of money in their desktop websites and yet seem in no hurry to improve their mobile offering. Brands, businesses and website developers need to address the mobile enabling of websites as a matter of urgency.

Businesses need to be everywhere, including in the mobile space, and the sheer speed of change in mobile can cause confusion. It's most likely that business will be very happy to settle for a standard, possibly something web-based, that's operating system agnostic and can be run from anywhere.

"Companies are already worried and confused by the pace of things. Just when organisations have managed to develop an app for the iPhone, along comes Android and a host of other systems and services."

Consumers and their habits will continue to have a big say in how the market moves. Facebook and the growth of 'now' is a significant driving force of mobile internet use. Consumers are not very concerned with how the content gets delivered; they just want quick and simple access from wherever they

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are. This demand for instant access anywhere and the need for seamless integration with consumer's other connected devices is likely to drive the direction of future mobile growth and development.

Mobile has the possibility to create a highly personalised device that really knows who we are, what we do and how we like to do it. It is already the device that we are most likely to have closest to hand at any point, and probably the first and last one we reach for each day. Mobile cannot be ignored.

Kryder's Law means memory keeps getting smaller; this in turn means handsets constantly get more computing power and the cost of all this keeps dropping. Technology is progressively able to get more function out of smaller devices but despite these advancements, mobile computing power will always be limited by the size of the device.

Handset power combined with cloud computing will be a huge influence on the future of mobile and this is why giants like Google and Microsoft are investing so heavily in it. Cloud computing harnesses the power of hundreds or even thousands of computers to power functions such as search or virtual reality applications. This type of mobile computing is not limited by the power of the mobile phone but instead by the speed of the connection to the cloud. This means connection speeds and data plans are crucial and will always have a great influence on mobile internet use.

"The processing power of that cloud is vital; it is the key that will drive mobile forward. There's going to be phenomenal growth."

Another development will be voice activated searches where you can get information just by speaking the questions into your phone. As the mobile device also knows where you are it can exploit the power of location based services and its camera means it is equipped for Virtual Reality (VR) applications. Mobile is very capable and extremely well suited to the internet.

In fact, given the 'mobility' of mobile and the features it has, like the camera, it can be more powerful than the desktop and this is part of the reason why it's likely to be the preferred

device to access the internet in the future.

"With Google Translate you can hover your camera-phone over an item on a menu in a foreign restaurant and the phone will analyse it. It will then communicate with the cloud and identify the item on the menu and translate it for you."

Any disquiet consumers may feel about using the cloud is likely to be quite quickly forgotten as it becomes the norm. People are committing so much data remotely when using webmail, online banking and social media that it has already become second nature and as soon as they realise that doing this via mobile is the same as desktop, all fears will be eradicated.

"There is an intrinsic hesitancy amongst consumers when they are asked to share personal details in an environment such as mobile. However, once they are used to using the technology then issues such as security and privacy become non issues."

A similar pattern of acceptance will be seen in the business environment. Commercial and retail use of clouds is a bigger issue as there are far more things that could go wrong. Liability issues relating to losing or hacking of sensitive information being high on the danger list. It is thought likely that the march of the cloud will prove inexorable and businesses will have to adopt it - or lose out on the considerable power and flexibility offered by this type of distributed computing.

"There will always be this concern [of security breaches] but businesses will have to embrace clouds even if they are dragged there kicking and screaming - because the benefits will always outweigh the risk."

The mobile internet is now mainstream. It isn't just the use of smart handsets that's on the up; mobile internet's exposure is now much greater. Stories about smart phones, operating systems and reviews on applications appear everywhere, not just in specialist press, or the technical pages but within the news pages of National newspapers.

"You would not have seen a newspaper like London's 'Metro' covering a story on phone apps a year ago, it has now entered into mass media."

It has been argued that there is not yet a situation where mobile developers could show the sort of revenue associated with desktop development. What is missing from the mobile internet market is the financial returns that could be made in the desktop arena.

"With all the talk about mobile apps we have yet to see a single company generating tens of millions from mobile apps or disproving the statement that 'Mobile (apps) is the graveyard of VC money'. Compare that to the many \$100m and more companies built on top of the web stack, or the PC stack, and even now the Facebook stack."

There are many contributing factors to the apparent historical lack of really big rewards in the mobile stack. According to some experts, fragmentation is one to consider. They argue that it may hinder the future development of mobile apps as developers have to write once and debug everywhere, or settle for developing for a single platform used by a single-digit percentage of users. Defragmentation is therefore the key.

The defragmentation of mobile may imitate the history of the desktop market. Here, the rise to dominance of the Windows OS and the standards it enforced could be argued to have allowed a rapid and profitable growth in the development of applications to run on that platform.

"Will we see a small number of players emerging in mobile, too? I think so. Developers are vying for a simple way to write apps and games for PC, for Web, for Phones and for Game Consoles. Consumers are vying for an experience that will span across their multiple screens. Sooner or later, the mobile ecosystem will defragment and provide them with just that."

Standards could promote growth and profitability in mobile; they may also improve the user experience. Many commentators are already making predictions that Google or Microsoft, or both, will eventually dominate mobile.

With at least two major players fighting over a very lucrative mobile market, it may not prove to be so easy to agree to the actual standards that are needed to smooth out this future. Despite the competition, the larger players in mobile seem very confident that they can use their massive leverage to bring about standards that suit them as much as they suit the user.

Even with the high profile activities of the major brands, the small developer still has a big role to play in the future of mobile. The small developers are very agile and can get new ideas to the market very rapidly whereas larger organisations can take time to get to release. In this rapidly moving market, things are changing. There's plenty of support for small developers and we might still see some really exciting stuff from the smaller players.

"The smaller players are getting access to the data and the API and being asked to see what they can do with it. That's very exciting."

"Part of the success of Apple is the way that they've harnessed the power of thousands of individual developers."

The likely future mobile scenario is one where a universally adopted platform for mobile delivery emerges, decided by a combination of commercial pressure and market input. Developers, both large and small, will then create applications for this standard platform. Frictionless payment and super-smooth delivery systems will take all the pain out of rewarding these developers for their efforts, and they'll make installation a breeze for the consumer too. In this future, the cloud does all the heavy duty computing while the handset helps to personalise the user experience.

"In the PC space, Microsoft emerged as the de-facto standard in the '80s. The '90s saw the emergence of web and internet browsers that levelled the playing field."

With large players putting mobile at the heart of their strategy it means the whole ecosystem built around mobile now has a real sense of purpose, if for no other reason than because there's money there. That's the key change, the injection of real money and real strategic thinking in the game.

Mobile internet has gone mainstream and mobile internet access is booming. The investment is now there and there's a very positive outlook for the new mobile business landscape.

"In a business sense we are at a crossroad and the signals are there such as Google's acquisition of AdMob and Apple's buying of Quattro Wireless."

The real benchmark for mobile computing and internet is when it reaches a point where your online identity moves seamlessly from desktop to mobile, and back. This technology is here to deliver this future and it will probably arrive sooner than many think.

"When it can do everything a desktop can do and do it better then we know it has really arrived."

4.0 Recruitment and mobile

We've already established the importance of business developing a serious mobile strategy, so it seems obvious that the same should be applied to recruitment. Mobile and recruitment have special synergies and cutting edge efforts in mobile internet have already been seen within recruitment.

Teletext research carried out at the start of 2010 suggested that 17% of people searching for a job online were using mobile internet and 4% were doing this via apps. Although fairly recent, the numbers have already substantially increased

since then. However, even these figures represent a decent market share for mobile in recruitment already.

Other statistics suggest that, in February 2010, 290,000 individuals accessed job-related websites via mobile in the UK. Such statistics speak for themselves. A monthly audience of almost 300,000 in the UK, even at this relatively early stage in mobile internet, is significant and represents genuine opportunity. With 50 million mobile users in the UK there is a huge audience waiting to be engaged.

Mobile has a unique position to play in recruitment. One reason for this is privacy. A mobile handset is a very personal device; it tends to be close to hand throughout most of the day and often contains much of your personal data. It has the advantage of accessibility when a fixed line is unavailable, such as during a commute to work. Mobile also operates outside of corporate firewalls and access restrictions, which is a key benefit when thinking about its role in job hunting.

"Key to mobile's nature is how immediate it is. If you are alerted about a job, you don't want to wait and risk missing out, you want to react immediately."

The importance of privacy cannot be understated in job search. The ability for a person to browse job boards from almost anywhere, in private and without danger of unwanted snooping is a significant driver of mobile internet use in recruitment.

Job applicants like the convenience of mobile as it enables them to browse at times that best suit them. There is also evidence suggesting that the majority of candidates are happy to receive push-notifications about job opportunities via their mobile. This information will be of great interest to recruiters worried that candidates might be inclined to resist such active measures to market vacancies.

Jobsite.co.uk, one of the UK's leading job boards, has seen real gains in the use of mobile to access its offerings with a 390% increase in mobile traffic between January 2009 and April 2010 - all achieved without marketing effort in that specific area. Jobsite has now started a big push into mobile, including the recent launch of a mobile version of its main website. Their new mobile

site is experiencing considerable traffic and early signs are encouraging.

There is, however, evidence suggesting there is still far too much focus on fixed line websites in most agencies, and that recruiters need to do more to embrace mobile. It is likely to be another two years before some in recruitment catch up with the shift in the mobile market.

Now may not yet be the time for making really big money in mobile, that may still be two years away, but now is the time to get in and work out how it is done. Acting now will help to make sure you are properly placed for the future, and safeguard you from having to play catch-up.

"There's a land-grab going on and first movers will be rewarded as mobile matures."

Although mobile is clearly important, there was a call not to forget the desktop entirely. It isn't a matter of either or, digital strategies need to include all spaces. The key is including mobile as part of the digital strategy and not an optional bolt on that is seen as separate to other activity.

"Mobile is discreet and transportable, this makes it essential, but the winning strategies will include both mobile and fixed line action."

When discussing mobile, a distinction should be made between SMS and mobile internet strategies for recruiting. Some feel that mobile internet is still niche and, until it is widespread, SMS still has a big role to play in mobile recruiting. It is interesting to note that there is a marked difference between perceptions surrounding the use of SMS in the UK and the USA. SMS is much more widespread and has more approval in the USA. In the UK it is sometimes frowned upon and is considered to be less acceptable than in the US.

Perhaps due to this, some observers argue that SMS has little value in the UK and suggest that it is tarnished and users are far too worried about receiving spam to accept marketing by SMS messages. In the US where data wasn't cheap, SMS had a bigger role to play. As handsets evolve and the smart

phone becomes the standard handset of the majority of users, SMS will have less and less importance in mobile recruitment strategy.

"SMS needs to be used in concert with other methods."

Recruitment and mobile mix well. Mobile internet is a booming market that moves at a frightening pace. Recruiters must think hard about how to take on the mobile space and make it work for them. Good advice, planning, strategy and flexibility are all prerequisites of a move into mobile. There's a strong belief that now is the time to act and that delay could leave business playing catch-up in the future. It's a situation very similar to that faced by business back in the mid-1990s with the birth of the internet.

The message of our room of mobile industry experts is crystal clear: The future of recruitment has mobile right at its heart. If a recruitment business wishes to increase its chances of survival then it must action a mobile strategy - now.

"Mobile internet access will be half of the total access very soon. Recruitment marketing has to move with this shift or lose out. We are in the same place as we were with HTML back in 1993."

5.0 FOMR - The high and lows

As the FOMR roundtable drew to a close the chair asked the room for their highs and lows surrounding mobile.

There is recognition that consumers are driving the mobile market forward. This strong desire of the consumer to use mobile for internet access is seen as a high because there's so much potential value to business. The low is that business has yet to respond fully to this lead.

The opening up of APIs to developers is seen as a positive, although the fact that so much data is still unavailable is something that is perceived as holding them back. A low is that rewards in mobile for investors have not yet aligned with

those witnessed in the desktop environment. However, the inertia now seen in the market is likely to help change the situation very quickly.

"My low is being asked by an advertiser to link an advert he placed on a mobile site through to his desktop site."

The slow and cautious take up of mobile by agencies was also a cause for concern and a generally poor level of education about mobile in business is still a problem. There is hope for more joined up thinking in mobile in the future, although it is felt that a current lack of data and authoritative case studies might be holding the process back.

There is a hope for something to show up soon that's a real game changer, something to raise the bar in mobile recruitment. If anyone present had an idea of what it might be they weren't ready to share it just yet!

Functionality and clever use of location services is also on the roundtable's menu as a potential high. Alongside them is the desire for websites or applications customised to suit the applicant instead of the agency or recruiter, to help make the process of applying for a job simple and yet very secure.

"My high is the tremendous growth we're seeing in the use of mobile internet."

The seamless connection of the various digital spaces, both for business and for the consumers is seen as a holy grail for mobile. When there's little or no difference between the mobile experience and the desktop then we'll know we've arrived at this particular high.

The lows discussed were more frustrations than barriers whilst the highs suggest that mobile is evolving and is on the brink of some very exciting and extremely profitable times.

6.0 Conclusion

Mobile has finally grown up. The smart phone and apps have dragged it into the present and technology is ready to propel it into the future. Mobile handsets are becoming increasingly sophisticated and yet easier to use.

The power of cloud computing will enhance handsets to allow extremely complex and processor hungry computing and therefore a very powerful mobile experience offering more opportunities than desktop.

Mobile internet will soon account for half, or more, of all internet access.

Mobile has synergy with recruitment. The immediacy, privacy and convenience offered by a mobile handset is very important to a job seeker. An appetite exists for job search via mobile and this is clearly demonstrated in the statistics and anecdotes offered by the panel.

The panel, every one of them deeply involved and very experienced in mobile, all recognised the huge potential and rapid growth of mobile internet. They were unanimous in the message that now is the time to adopt and integrate mobile strategies into your business model. Tomorrow will be too late in such a fast moving market.