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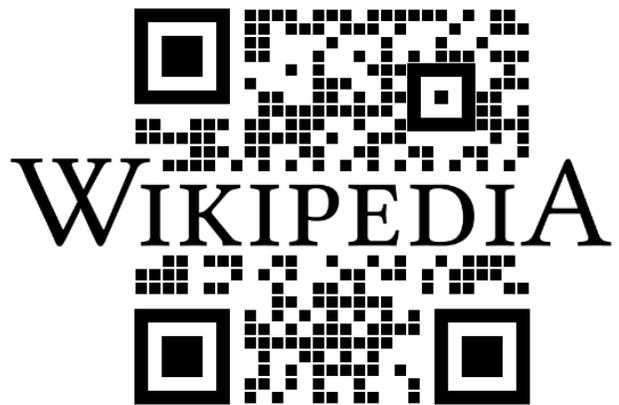
What Are QR Codes and What Can They Do For You?

You've undoubtedly seen a QR code before. These are square black-and-white pixelated codes that are appearing all over the place. They're not just weird, futuristic decorations. The QR code is the modern-day bar code. Instead of using a scanner, you scan it with your smartphone.

QR codes are smarter than bar codes. They can hold much more information. They're designed to redirect your smartphone's browser to a selected URL. When you see a QR code, you whip out your phone, scan it, and you're instantly redirected to the website, coupon, video or other service.

If you use a smartphone, you can probably understand why this is so cool. Typing a URL into a smartphone's browser isn't exactly the most fun experience in the world. With QR codes, you don't have to mess with any typing at all.

Just scan and you're there. QR stands for 'quick response,' and that couldn't be a better description of how they work.



Marketing with QR Codes

For marketers, QR codes are even cooler. For one thing, you can put them absolutely anywhere. They're black and white, and you can print them as stickers. Lots of companies use QR codes to take mobile users to their websites, but that's far from all you can do with them. You can create a QR code that, when scanned by a phone, it instantly signs the user up to your email list; making it just a little bit easier to sign up.

QR codes can be used as part of a promotion with social media. When they scan it, they instantly 'like' or share with their friends. You can combine this with a coupon where after liking your business, they get a nice discount for

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your products or services.

Your QR code could lead to an instant download. For example, you've got a flyer advertising a free report you've written for your customers. All they have to do is scan the code and they instantly get the report.

Information On Demand

The wonderful thing about the Internet is that you have access to all of the world's information at your fingertips. This is even cooler with smartphones, since they're pocket-sized. You can whip them out anywhere and find out about a product you're thinking of buying, a bottle of wine you're drinking, or a service you're thinking of trying.

More than ever, people are researching on their smartphones as they shop offline. They're looking for prices, reviews, and product information. You can put QR codes on your store's products that lead them to the information they're looking for. This information pushes fence-sitters off and turns them into buyers.



You can use QR codes to deliver the real-time information they're looking for. Some weather agencies and mass transit companies have taken advantage of this, embedding their codes with a link to updated info about what's going on now.

If you're not already sold on QR codes, one more thing to entice you is the fact that they're free and easy to generate. There are websites where you supply the URL to embed and it does it for you. You get an image file that you can copy and paste, or print. You can create as many as you want without spending a dime.

Your customers will appreciate the few minutes you spend creating QR codes because that's a few minutes they get save in route to your product or service.

QR Codes Save Your Customers Time

Your customers love QR codes. For one thing, they look cool. But aside from the coolness factor, there are lots of other great things about these odd-looking little pixelated codes. The ability to scan these codes with your smartphone makes everything faster and easier for your customers, and mobile users don't have time to wait.



Visiting Your Website

Lots of companies have QR codes printed on their offline materials with a tagline that says something like, 'Visit us on the web.' Take a minute to compare scanning a QR code with typing in a URL. If you're using any kind of smartphone, you know that typing isn't easy on them. Plus, there's a good chance you'll screw something up since URLs are not always short and simple. With a QR code you simply scan it and it takes you there instantly.

Joining the Club

The same goes for subscribing to a list. Customers want to join their favorite brands' membership clubs so that they can get exclusive offers and deals. Marketers have tried hard to create sign-up forms for mobile sites that ask for a minimum of information – for example, just name and email address. But smartphone users have the same problem. It takes a while to type in this information. If you can scan it and join without all the typing, you're much more likely to do so.

Quick and Easy Downloading

What if there's a product or an app you want? Downloading isn't too hard on a smartphone. It's usually just a matter of clicking a button or two using the touchscreen. But QR codes remove steps from the process. Scan it and it immediately starts downloading.

Searching for Product Info

Some offline stores have started putting QR codes on their merchandise

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tags. These codes lead the browser to information online about the product. It could be the company's own webpage or another site like Amazon that has reviews. If you can access this information that easily, you can shop smarter.

This is also useful for people who just want to know more about a product. Some wine makers put QR codes on their bottle labels so that people can look it up and save the information. This keeps you from having to remember the name and year of the wine you're drinking.



Easy Ordering and No Waiting

A few major chains have incorporated QR codes into their ordering process to make it easier. At select Starbucks locations, you can scan the menu item with your phone while you're waiting in line and the baristas will get to work on your coffee. By the time you hit the counter, it's ready and waiting for you.

Unlimited Possibilities

Anything your customers do online can be made easier with QR codes. A QR code redirects to a URL, but that URL can be anything. It doesn't have to be a website. It could be a video, a download, a signup or anything else. This flexibility is why QR codes are so wonderful for businesses.

The more creative you are with your QR codes, the more engaged your customers become with your business.

QR Code Ideas Sure to Enhance Your Mobile Marketing Campaign

QR codes make it easier for your customers to interact with your business. Your challenge as a business is to figure out how to use these codes to help them get what they want. It's tough to think up ideas out of the blue, so here are some to get you started.

Your Promotional Items

One of the best ways to use QR codes is to put them on your promotional items. Put them on any little thing you give away like fans, keychains, mouse pads, mugs, etc. You can even put a small one on a pen. Be sure to also put one on your business card. They can scan it to find out more about you.

Cover Your Store

You can put QR codes all over your store. Plaster them on posters, menus, walls, and all available counter space. Make decals with them and put them on your doors and windows. A great use of QR codes is to put them on your products or product tags. When they scan the code, they're directed to more information about the product. You can also put them on your products' packaging and bags.

All Correspondences

Whenever you send out promotional mail or newsletters, make sure you've got a QR code prominently displayed. This is much better than giving them a URL which they have to go to the computer and type in. Instead, all they need to do is scan it with their phone.

Advertising Materials

You can put QR codes on any of your advertisements. It's just a small black and white code. If you put one on a billboard, it can be scanned by drivers



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as they zoom by. A great way to get them to scan it is to offer an exclusive deal.

Should You Use QR Codes Online?

Lots of marketers say there's no need to use QR codes online. After all, you can just give them a link and they can click on it. But there are some creative ways to use it and they can scan the screen with their phone. For example, you can use it as an avatar for your Facebook or other profiles.

What to Do with QR Codes

The simplest idea is to just send people to your website. But with QR codes, you can direct people to any URL at all. This can be much more than just your website. A few ideas here include:

- **Bookmarking** - When they scan it, it instantly bookmarks your site on their browser.
- **Contact Info** - They get your contact information automatically added to their address book.
- **Maps and Directions** - They get a map or directions to your business. This is great because people use their mobiles to search for businesses.
- **Coupons** - One quick scan and they get a mobile coupon they can use at your establishment.
- **Tweets and Likes** - When they scan, it tweets or likes your business so all their friends can see it. This is a nice promotional tie-in; they like/tweet and you give them a special deal.
- **Download** - They get an app they can use on their mobile.



You can do anything with your QR codes, so take these ideas or come up with your own. The key is to approach it from your customers' point of view. It needs to make interacting with your business quicker and easier for them. Focus on improving the convenience of using your service.

In addition to saving your customers time, you should also be sure that the QR code leads to information they will find useful.

Marketing With QR Codes

QR codes offer an excellent way to attract new customers to your business. These are little blocky black and white codes that can be scanned by smartphones and other mobile devices. The QR stands for 'quick response' and that pretty much says it all

The device is immediately directed to a URL that you've chosen. As more folks use mobile devices, the QR code is quickly becoming the marketing tool of the future.

Most businesses use QR codes to direct people to their websites. It's much easier than giving them printed materials that say, 'Check us out on the Web at www.blahblahblah.com.' But there's a whole lot more you can do with QR codes and here are just a few things.



Get People on Your List

Instead of your regular website, have the QR code send them to a page that's specifically designed for list building. This is a page that says something like, 'Sign up here for deals and special offers,' and has a form that asks for their name and email. You can then send them email messages with offers.

Get Them to Like You

The URL of your QR code can lead directly to a page that integrates social media. It can be a site with a Facebook 'Like' button or a Twitter 'Follow' button. This is an easy way to get more fans and followers.



Show Them a Video

Since you can choose absolutely any URL anywhere, why not pick your YouTube channel? You can direct them there or to a specific video that teaches them something valuable or sells your services.

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Make a Phone Call

Since most people scan QR codes on smartphones, your code can actually make a phone call. When they scan it, the phone starts ringing and your sales representatives are on the other end.

Marketing your business with QR codes doesn't end with choosing a good site to send them to. What's even more important is putting that code in places where they'll see it. Here are some creative ideas for doing that:

- Signs, billboards and kiosks
- Business cards
- Your website or blog
- Brochures, fliers and other printed promotional materials
- Catalogs
- Postcard mailings
- T-shirts and other clothing items
- Magnets, coffee mugs, and anything else that has your business name on it
- TV commercials and YouTube videos

You can create a stamp or sticker with your code on it and just go wild. Some businesses have created scavenger hunts for their customers where there's a nice prize at the end.

Others have gotten creative with the design, creating something that's truly artistic as well as practical. The cool thing is that you can put QR codes anywhere. Get creative and you'll get results!



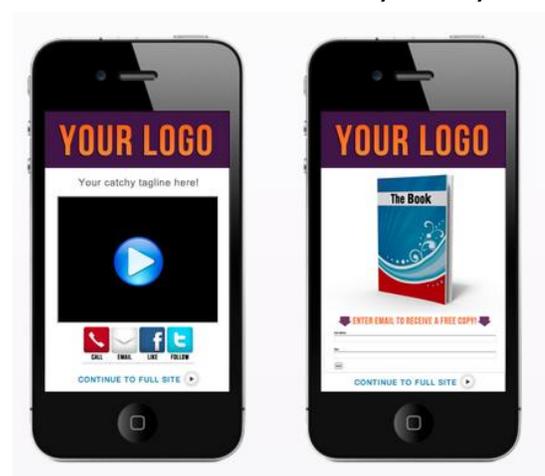
Now that you're bursting with creative ways to use QR codes in your business, here are a few more reasons that QR codes can actually be used to boost your bottom line.

Grow Your Business Through QR Codes

Get People to Your Site

One of the most common ways to use QR codes is to encode a URL on them. You can put your website's URL - or the URL of your Facebook page, YouTube channel, or any other site - on the matrix and send people directly there. This gets you highly targeted traffic to your website that's actually likely to *take action* there.

Putting your URL in your QR code is pretty basic. You can also do other things like turn it into a Facebook 'like.' When they scan the code, they automatically 'like' your business. All it takes is a scan and click. This is a great way to boost your presence on Facebook. The same thing can be done with Twitter and any other social media sites your business uses.



The important thing before you start cranking out QR codes is to decide exactly what you want to do with them. Do you want to get people to your site? Are you building an email list? Do you want more blog subscribers, Facebook fans or Twitter followers? Start with a clear objective first and then it'll be easy to understand exactly how to use your code.

Where to Put Them

The great thing about QR codes is that you can put them anywhere. It's a simple black and white image that can be printed on anything - business cards, brochures, menus, posters, merchandising items, etc. You can have stamps and stickers made of your QR codes and plaster them all over the place. The possibilities are pretty much endless.

If you really want to grow your business using QR codes, offer folks who scan yours a special deal. Give them a discount on your products or services, or a freebie just for scanning. This gives them a sample of what you have to offer and they're more likely to tell their friends about it.

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How do you get started? QR codes are extremely easy to make and there are websites that will do it for you for free. You submit to them the URL that you want to send people to, and they encode it for you.

You can then save, download or print the code and put it wherever you want. This is an extremely easy way to get folks to your website and promotions.