



How Successful Accountants are Solving the Communication Challenge

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Biography

Mike Page is Head of Product Management and Customer Experience strategy at MyFirmsApp (www.myfirmsapp.co.uk), developers of the largest global App platform for accountants and bookkeepers.

As a qualified accountant, Mike has come to appreciate the challenges faced by the profession in a world where always-on clients are demanding instant answers and he firmly believes that App-driven technology can help put accountants at the heart of their clients' mobile lives.

As App stacks and App Add on Communities grow, the role of MyFirmsApp as the leading App integrator for accountants will become increasingly critical. His goal is to put an App in every accounting firm in the world.

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Abstract

Good communication skills are at the heart of accountancy, yet how many times a week do you hear the words: 'I didn't get your email'? Email was once the most effective way of communicating with clients but now, they have a habit of ending up in their junk folder where they are unlikely to see them, let alone open and read them.

Introduction

Research at MyFirmsApp suggests that for the accountancy profession, the open rate for emails is very low at just 23% and as email applications employ more machine learning, this is likely to fall even further. Even if the subscriber has signed up to emails by a company, more are being re-routed to spam folders as predictive technology determines whether the user will want to receive that message.

How are successful accountants solving the communication challenge? They are increasingly finding that the best way to reach clients is with consistent messaging across multiple channels and part of this strategy is to use a mobile communications platform that becomes the 'go to' place for all communication.

Businesses are now spoilt for choice with lots of channels to choose from and everyone will have their own favourite but here are our top five that are returning



Analysis

great results for the accountants using them as part of their communication strategies:

1. **Text messaging** – Texts have an excellent open rate of 90% so if you want to get a client's attention and ensure they see your message, this is an effective option. The downside is that the cost of sending is high.
2. **Chat based Apps such as WhatsApp** – Chat based apps are beginning to steal a march over email when it comes to business communications. Companies that need to be able to rely on efficient and streamlined communication systems have started to use them – and smaller businesses are following suit. WhatsApp, for example, provides a simple, multi-platform and ultimately free solution.

When it comes to easing communication, Apps win out against email, as they can provide a way of texting, calling and checking voicemail over Wi-Fi, even when you have no phone signal. However, a disadvantage to their use is that they cannot be linked to other practice systems or joined up with other connection methods.

3. **Push notifications** – These pop-up notifications can be used to help communicate with clients and contacts quickly and easily and delivery can be automated to individuals and groups, which almost immediately 'ping' onto the home screen of client's mobile devices. They have a 93% open rate which means that these messages are almost always read – typically, within minutes of delivery. This presents firms with the opportunity to automate the distribution of content, ranging from reminders about an upcoming meeting to news on services and invites to webinars and because they can be automatically triggered by sending an email, they are a huge boon to productivity.

One of their advantages is that is easy to track and identify whether clients have received messages and our mobile platform makes it is possible to automatically link to emails. How does this work? If an accountant sends an email to a client to remind them of a meeting or something they need to do, the email is automatically converted to a push notification message, so they receive both and the chances of getting your voice heard increases significantly.

4. **Facebook messenger** – Today, businesses are increasingly connecting through a powerful, personal new medium: messaging.

Business messaging is gaining a measurable edge over more traditional communication methods as client expectations evolve. The immediacy of messaging wins hands down in terms of appeal as time becomes an ever more precious resource. It also meets the demand for personal client interactions and a streamlined experience.



5. **Pick up the phone** – Don't forget that picking up a phone to talk to a client can be a very powerful act. With so many different channels evolving, making a business call has fallen to the bottom of the list and yet, the simple act of making that call can be perceived as requiring real time and commitment and that your firm is offering a greater level of care.

A mobile communications platform

Ultimately, it's not about one channel being better than another; it's more about employing consistent messaging across multiple channels. One client may respond to texts while another will prefer push notifications so as with most things in life, it's down to choosing the right channel to ensure the best levels of response.

Employing the appropriate communication channel can be achieved more easily with a customizable mobile communications platform. Every connection goes through the firm's App and it gives the accountant the flexibility to customize the method of communication according to client preference. This approach can help future proofs the firm's communication strategy and above all, cuts through all the social media noise and ensures the accountant's voice is still heard.