

## **MOBILE MARKETING – THE MARKETING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION**

**Abstract.** *The developments in the field of technology changed the way in which consumers behave, inform themselves and communicate with each other. This change in behavior influences the way in which companies have to transmit the marketing message to the consumer. Besides the internet, which is nowadays one of the most used communication channels, in the past years the mobile phone gained more and more importance in the everyday life of consumers. Therefore, the easiest way for a company to communicate with its consumers is through the mobile phone. Therefore a new type of marketing was developed: the mobile marketing.*

*This article presents the definition of mobile marketing with its advantages and disadvantages, as well as the ways in which a company can make mobile marketing.*

**Keywords:** communication mix, interactivity, mobile marketing, mobile phone.

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## 1. Introduction

The last years have brought an incredible number of changes in all areas of communication. In the context where many specialists don't believe anymore in the efficiency of the 30-second TV advertising and its power to achieve its target, many companies and advertising agencies try to look for the technology which has the highest power to transmit in a "non-traditional" way the advertising message to the final consumer. Although experts are still not enthusiastic about the Internet advertising, as this kind of advertising does not have the power of television advertising, Google has proven the opposite. Interactivity is the key word in this time. In the context of an dynamic development of technologies, especially that of mobile phones, a new way of marketing was developed: the mobile marketing

In this article, there is presented the importance of mobile marketing in the communication mix of the marketing strategy of each business and its possible applications. Mobile Marketing is one of the newest forms of marketing which has an increasing importance because of the growing number of mobile phones users. With the generations X and Y advertising agencies have to find a way to gain these new customers, as these new generations of consumer are highly-educated, want to decide for themselves what they want to do, want to take responsibility over their own decisions, have the power of the mobility and they have discovered the infinite world of online communities. In this mobility era, companies and advertising agencies have to find a new way to communicate with its consumers. The boundary between reality and fantasy has never been thinner and the marketing departments of the companies have to be aware of this. With mobile marketing companies have the opportunity to use such marketing instruments that defines very well the target groups, that are not dependent on time and place and that can reach instantly their consumers.

In order to present the application of mobile marketing, we have analyzed as a case study the company Ad2go, one of the first companies which offered mobile marketing services in Romania. Ad2go was founded in November 2006 and offers its customers a wide range of products and services. There are presented the services offered by the company, the advertising possibilities as well as the opportunities and threats of this field.

According to AdMob, Romania is ranked 5 in the whole world for the contemplation of international advertising on mobile phones by browsing web pages (Murphy, 2007). So is an investment in mobile marketing in the Romanian market a very good investment (Mobhappy, 2007).

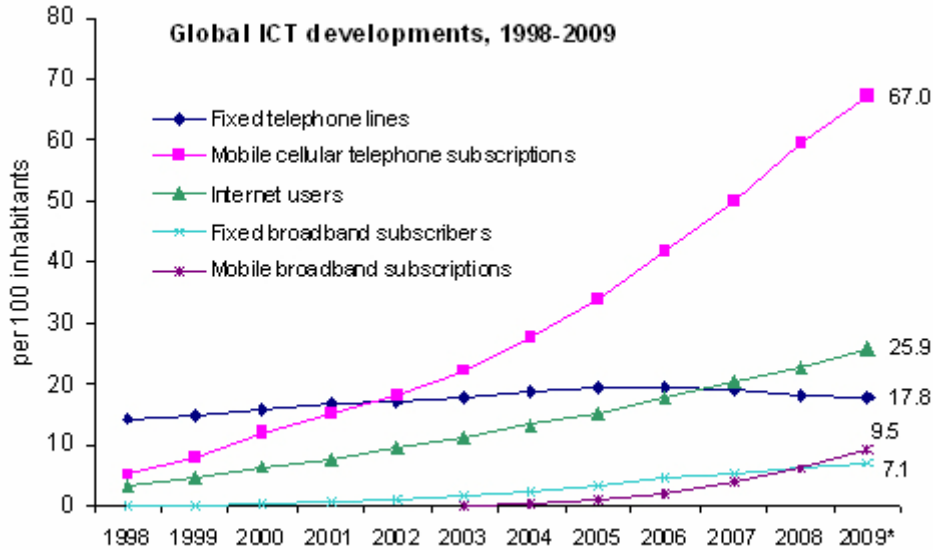
## 2. The development of the mobile phones as a premise for Mobile Marketing

According to the Forester Research Report from the Business Communication Review, in 2005, 67% of the US American households had at least a mobile phone and the households with only one mobile phone were in minority. Moreover, the

number of households with more than four mobile phones was growing with more than 50% (Business Communications Review, June 2005, pg. 6). According to Ben Wood, vice president of Gartner Research, the demand for mobile phones has exceeded the most optimistic expectations (Business Communications Research, September 2005, pg. 8). In 2009, there are worldwide 4.6 billion mobile phone contracts (Bodeanu, 2009).

Besides the statistics which give us exact information regarding the spread of mobile phones, it is enough to look around to observe the importance of mobile phones in our lives. At least every second person on the street uses a cell phone and it is often annoying to hear a mobile phone ring tone at the restaurant or at the cinema. With such a ubiquitous presence in our lives, it is not surprising that the preferences of people for mobile phones changed their communication styles and their social behavior.

The biggest change brought by the mobile phones is that it frees the consumer from the constraints of physical proximity and spatial immobility (Gesser, 2004). Telephones have suffered many changes in time: so a phone call in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was possible only if there was a certain proximity between the two parties, newer telephones have given man the opportunity to move in the house, first with longer cables, then people could also move up in your garden. Mobile phones allow us to move in different geographic areas, while we talk. You can leave the house, the neighborhood or even the city without having to terminate the call.



Source: Bodeanu, T., 2009; www.ziare.com, 2009.

Figure 1. Global ICT developments 1998-2009

Mobile phones can be used in more ways, so they are no longer just the „conversation” machine, but they also offer games, access to various information and interactions such as cameras or music in MP3 format or even access to the internet. Usually when they travel people are motivated to use their new technologies at the time distribution. Lasen observed that "mobile phones give us new options for waiting times and transition spaces and allow us to escape from boredom (Lasen, 2002).

Mobile phones give also the possibility to eliminate unpleasant or unfamiliar situations, for in a few seconds one can be in contact with a familiar person and the unknown situation turns quickly into a familiar one. As a consequence, with the help of mobile phones, the public sector, where unknown people meet, becomes a more pleasant space (Simmel, 1983). By this, the meaning of the physical space is changed. Although the person is situated in a certain physical space, with the help of mobile phones a virtual reality can be created that takes one out of the real world and brings it into a virtual one (Fortunati, 2002).

Regarding the communication aspect, Fortunati stresses that the use of the mobile phone has also a restrictive feature: a person remains in contact only with the people he knows (in the familiar social environment) and he interacts no longer with "strangers" and because of this a person doesn't extend its fields of interest but remains to the same inflexible and inert subject. As our circle of acquaintances/ friends is known, certain communication patterns and themes will become dominant. In opposition to a stranger we know what to expect and how we have to address to something, etc. This familiarity makes the mobile phones unlimited because it transforms the unknown in a foreign country to something known by activating its social network - through the mobile phone (Fortunati, 2002).

Both Fortunati and Simmel, have noted that mobile phones keep our communication on a level of description and they don't let us explore the world around us. More than that, the communication loses its non-verbal part, because the sitting opposite is not possible. We will quickly realize how difficult it is to understand the right message, if the intonation and other non-verbal elements are missing. The problem is even greater in the case of the messages send by phone – which by the way is one of the most used phone functions in Europe. The SMS (short message system) increases the limitation on the quality of the communication. The message is short (about 160 characters) and it lacks on non-verbal communication. As a need for non-verbal communication, in the SMS language there have been developed „emotions” to compensate this aspect (also in online communication).

### 3. Mobile Marketing

In the past years, depending on the development of the market, many types of marketing have been developed, as for instance Buzz Marketing, Evangelist Marketing, Guerilla Marketing, experiential Marketing and so on. They give a good overview on the diversity of the customers in the past years, for they have been developed in the last 5-10 years. One of these marketing forms is mobile marketing.

Like for all new forms of marketing, it is difficult to give a clear definition of mobile marketing. Michael Becker, president of iLoopMobile defines it as follows: “Mobile marketing is the process by which the brands, content owners and marketing agencies interact with the consumer through a mobile channel. Mobile marketing is an interactive channel, however: it does not stand alone. Mobile marketing uses traditional media to invite people to participate with the brand” (iMedia.com, 2004). Mobile marketing is much more than just a „different” form of marketing. More and more companies change their communication mix so that they have a mobile element in each of their campaigns. In search for the non-traditional issue which attracts the attention of the consumers – mobile marketing has what the traditional media don’t as for instance: personal environment, interactivity and independence upon time or space (Mobile Marketing Association, 2008). According to the MMA (Mobile Marketing Association), mobile marketing is the use of wireless media as an delivery of an integrated content and a means of direct reaction in a cross-media marketing communication program (Mobile Marketing Association, 2008).

Jonathan Bass, Managing Director of the Mobile Marketing Agency Incentivated believes that there are two kinds of mobile marketing. On one hand a marketing that focuses more on the consumer, which he calls „Mobile Entertainment” and on the other hand a mobile marketing that deals more with companies, marketing magazines and the brands themselves (Mobile Marketing Magazin, 2005).

Andrew Jones, Managing Director at Aerodeon believes that the starting point for mobile marketing to consumers, are the SMS and the blogs that lead us to a new world of networks and relationships. This has a great implication for brands. Nowadays, consumers decide instantly whether they like a product or not. Sometimes they even publish their opinions. It sounds brutal but it belongs to today's reality as the mobile phone does. Mobile marketing is only the beginning of this path. In a few years marketing people will look back and will not be able not remember how it was without a mobile phone, how they can present their brands and products, without the accessibility and the interactivity of the mobile phones (Mobile Marketing Magazin, 2005).

There are several categories of mobile marketing: via SMS, via MMS, Mobile Web marketing, via Bluetooth, via infrared. The most famous is mobile marketing via SMS. This type of marketing has spread very quickly in Europe and Asia, as it was a new channel for reaching the consumers. At the beginning the sending of text messages had a negative impact in the media because consumers didn’t want to receive these messages, but since the introduction of guidelines for mobile marketing via SMS, the short message has become the most popular mean of mobile marketing with more than 100 million advertising messages per month only in Europe (Wikipedia, 2008).

In a world where everything is mobile, more and more people talk about the „Any Era”: Anywhere, Anytime, Anydevice, Anychannel, Anyproduct, Anyevent and AnyMe (Mobile Marketing Association, 2008). Mobile marketing works as a kind of framework, a glue between all the other media (points of sale, events, TV, radio,

outdoor, online etc.). It is the center of all other programs. A campaign can not be done only by mobile marketing, but it supports the others by its main advantage: the interactivity (Mobile Marketing Association, 2008).

The main objective of mobile marketing is to increase the awareness level of the brands. Besides this with the help of mobile marketing, a company can gather information about the customer's needs and preferences. Innovative ideas for mobile marketing campaigns will also trigger a kind of buzz marketing (Levinson, 2002, p. 142).

Mobile marketing had a great importance in increasing the interactivity between the consumers and their favorite brands. This changed the way of communication between the customers and the companies. Besides this the communication in mobile marketing has some characteristics (5I): it is intimate, immediate, intelligent, innovative and in a group (Mobile Marketing Association, 2008).

Intimate means that the mobile phone belongs to our private sphere. In contrast to the computer or home phone, a person shares the mobile phone with other person only in few, rare cases. For this reason, information shared through mobile phones is better perceived in a consciousness or unconscious way by the consumers and having by this a higher impact on them. Immediate means that advertising information on mobile phones are not dependent on time or space. The company can decide when and how many messages it wants to send to the consumers. All sent messages reach customers in the next second. Intelligent stands for the mobile phone, which is considered one of the most intelligent means of communication because it enables communication between persons who are at different places and besides this it also has other features as for instances cameras, music, etc. Besides this, a campaign in this mobile environment must always be something special, so that it can attract the customers. Innovative refers to the fact that mobile marketing exists only since a few years, so it can be considered as one of the newest forms of marketing. Innovation and creativity are the two elements, which each of the campaigns must have in this mobile environment. In markets with an inflation of marketing communication, without innovation, it is more difficult to attract the customers through this form of marketing. In group means that mobile marketing helps managers to define better their target groups. Due to the „opt-in” option, consumers can select what kind of information they would like to receive. By this, consumers can be divided by their needs, regardless of age, social position or beliefs (Mobile Marketing Association, 2008).

Like any other form of marketing Mobile Marketing also needs a policy, so that consumers shouldn't feel that they are permanently attacked by the advertising on their personal mobile phones. The Mobile Marketing Association adopted a guideline, which includes six C-elements: choice, control, consideration, customization, constraint and confidentiality. Choice means that the customer has the possibility to choose whether he wants to be included in the database of a certain company („opt-in”). Besides this, he should have the possibility to leave the database whenever he wants („opt-out”). One must take in consideration the fact that there can be send to the customers both commercial information and other information for his interest. Personalization means in the case of mobile marketing that the customers can be segmented very accurately. You

can differentiate between different age groups or several niches. This advantage can be used in order to adapt the strategies for each group.

Mobile marketing doesn't give the companies the possibility to send sms in an unlimited manner. The number and time of sending sms must be managed very well, in order not to annoy the customer. Another aspect which has to be taken in consideration is the confidentiality of the data. Sharing the data base with the customer information with other might determine the customers to loose their trust in the company. Once the trust was broken, the customer will not return so easily.

#### **4. Application of mobile marketing in Romania**

In order to see the applicability of mobile marketing, we will present the way in which the company Ad2go makes mobile marketing. After the presentation of the company and its applications/ products, the opportunities and threats of the mobile marketing applications in Romania will be analyzed.

##### **4.1. The mobile marketing company Ad2go and its products**

Ad2go is the first Romanian mobile marketing agency, founded by the company One Touch Info in late October 2006. With a board of Romanian shareholders and an initial investment of approximately 20.000 dollars, the agency established the first portal with free content for mobile phone users that was a market break-through (DailyBusiness.ro, 2007). The initial forecast – which has been achieved – was that in less than one year, the mfun portal should have more than 10.000 users (Ziarul Financiar, 2007). One Touch Info has offered complete mobile marketing solutions for the Romanian market, so that each company can use this new instrument of communication. They have relied on the fact that the mobile phone will become in short time one of the most effective media for advertising. The more intense people use their phones, the more advertising they can get.

Ad2go offers its products for two types of customers: the customers who pay for the advertising space, and users that can use these applications for free. There is a direct and dependable relationship between customers and users: the more users there are the more customers have to pay for advertising their products in the advertising space of the applications. But, of course, there is also another benefic part: the more customers the more you can attract new users through the partnerships one has formed with the other companies.

The first products of ad2go were free Mfun Java applications for mobile phones. All these application form the largest collection of Java applications in Romania, with 100% Romanian content. Since all application are gathered under the name Mfun (mobile fun), they will be addressed as Mfun or Mfun application throughout the article. Mfun offers free content for mobile phones, while offering customers dynamic controlled advertising space. The users have access to all Java

application, whereas all application offer advertising space in form of banners and full screen inserts. Ads in the application are non-aggressive and have been agreed by the user. The advertising insert in the application will be made in such manner that the ads will not be annoying nor will they restrict access to relevant information. The Mfun applications are divided into four categories: info applications, lifestyle applications, cards applications and extra applications (www.mfun.ro, 2010).

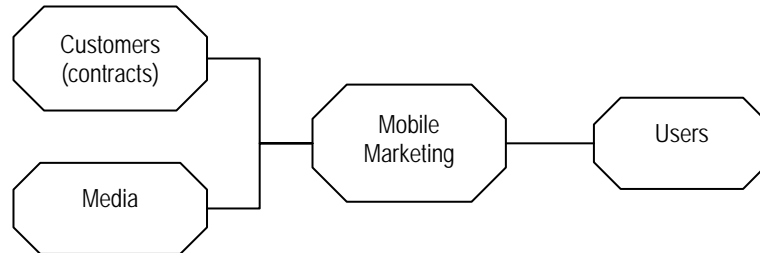


Figure 2. The business model of a mobile marketing company

The info application has the main purpose to give free information to customers. At the time being ad2go has the following info applications: Mobile News, Mobile Business, Mobile Fotbal, Mobile Cinema, Mobile TV Guide (www.mfun.ro, 2010).

**Mobile News** is the news application. This application contains the most important news for specified fields: politics, economy, technology, sports, social, health, entertainment, international news. Additionally, the user can search for specific news in all the fields or he can access all the news containing specific words or names. The update for the latest news can be done any time.

**Mobile Business** is the best application for managers and other people involved in the business area, as employees or as business-starters. This application contains all the necessary information regarding the national and international economy, the exchange rates, the bank interests and a calculator for VAT (value added tax). The application offers relevant information for making the best business decisions and feeling the „pulse” of both national and international economy.



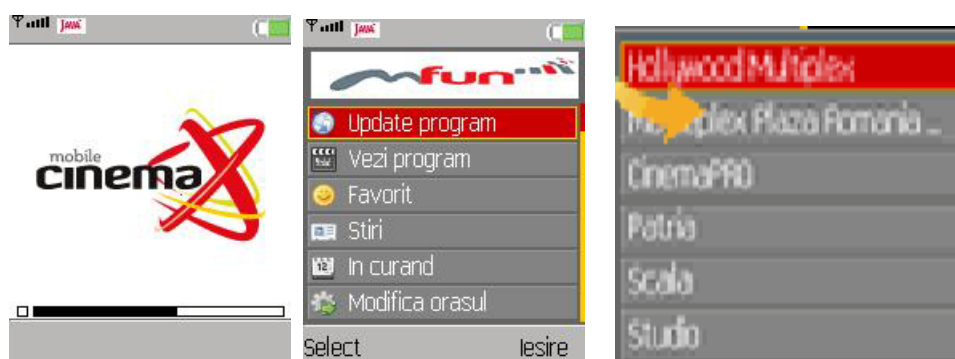
Source: www.mfun.ro, 2008

Figure 3. The ad2go info applications



**Mobile Cinema** is the most important application for all the people who enjoy going to movies. The user can find the programs in all cinemas in the country, helping them to decide where to buy tickets. The application contains all the movies being played in a theatre, the premiers and the previews, as well as the general notification for each movie. The application also provides access to seat reservation for different cinemas.

The application Mobile Cinema is build so that different theaters can advertise through the application. The three big cinema, although direct competitors, agreed to be in the same mobile application, because they are situated far apart in the same city. The partnership between Mfun and the cinemas was an advertising barter. The cinemas got advertising space in the mobile application, whereas Mfun got advertising space in the cinema halls. In time, Mfun worked for an upgrade of the application, so that there could be a direct booking of tickets through the application. Being able to reserve tickets without internet access or standing in queues, the user will be more tempted to buy tickets for different representations (One Touch Info, 2008).



Source: www.mfun.ro, 2008

Figure 4. The ad2go application Mobile Cinema

**Mobile Fotbal** is build up for all football fans. Users can instantly see the results of games, being able to follow all the goals, all the red and yellow cards, all offside phases and all important games form the Premier League in Romania, Spain, Italy, England and Germany. Furthermore, the application was introduced as a partnership application between Mfun and Bergenbier. So besides the informational potential of the application, it also offers a way of making advertising for a company as Bergenbier.

Since each application has a build in advertising space, it was always considered to have a launch partner, which can financially support the advertising for the Mfun application itself. A very good collaboration in this case was the partnership between Mfun and Bergenbier. Mobile Fotbal was launched in August 2007, with

## Management & Marketing

Bergenbier as an exclusive partner. Bergenbier – part of InBev Romania SA – seized the opportunity of mobile marketing and enjoyed the partnership.



Figure 5. The ad2go application mobile football with Bergenbier advertising

The application was slightly changed due to the partnership between these two companies. Bergenbier received a special area in the application, where the company offered information for the users. After three months, Mobile Fotbal already gathered 3.817 users, most of them men aged between 25-35 years.

The launch news of Mobile Marketing was published in more than 30 magazines and newspapers, amongst which Capital, Connect, CHIP and TVMania. The articles were published by well-known Romanian journalists, in different kind of magazines and newspapers, covering economic, technology and business areas. From August 2007 until January 2008, Bergenbier had more than 275,000 full-screen ads and 600,000 banners displayed. The number of users grew exponentially, so that the cost per displayed ad decreased accordingly (Mobile Fotbal application, One Touch Info, 2008).

Bergenbier sensed the extreme efficiency of the partnership and, being a very innovative and modern company, they decided to extend the partnership for one year. Bergenbier considered the low cost of the ads displaying and the number of displayed ads and concluded that mobile marketing was extremely efficient in their case (One Touch Info, 2008).

With **Mobile Ghid TV** the user can track all the available TV programs, as this application contains all programs for 40 different TV stations. The user can access information about TV programs and time tables on his mobile phone. The update process can be made anytime and everywhere, for a period of three days. The application offers various utilities, such as the possibility to select a TV channel as „favorite”, a search function to easily find the desired program/channel, as well as user-friendly interface.

The **Lifestyle application** contains the following possibilities: Master Calorie, Carb Master, Master Fitness. For instance the Carb Master application was build for those who love sports and fitness programs. The application contains a list of all the sport types one can play and the calories that are burned with every type of sport. This is a very useful application for all the people who want to stay on a diet, or those who wish to have a healthier way of life.



Source: [www.mfun.ro](http://www.mfun.ro), 2008

Figure 6. The ad2go application carb master

Besides this mfun.ro has also an application for sending mobile cards and an extra application which contains a Cocktail Wizard, Lista de vinuri (a vine list), Mstil and Gift Finder ([www.mfun.ro](http://www.mfun.ro), 2010). Even the launch of the company One Touch Info and its products was done with the help of a mobile invitation. So, with the email invitation for the press conference, the company sent also a link, where the journalists could download a mobile invitation (M-Invitation) on their mobile phones. The M-invitation was a mini-application, compatible with all the phones on the Romanian market (it was a Java application) and it contained all the necessary details regarding the press conference: intention of the event, time and place of press conference. The email invitation was just a teaser that included only some information. The “gaps” were filled by the mobile invitation. The company One Touch Info could follow the exact download numbers of the M-invitation on mobile phones, in order to provide the necessary information for those who were not keen on downloading the application on their mobile phones. Thus the download-rate was impressive: 70% of the people who have received the email have downloaded the mobile version. The used method was innovative, easy and fun for the journalists (One Touch Info, 2008).

The download process for each application is exactly the same and it requires some personal data as well as data about the mobile phone one is using (that is for fitting the applications for every available screen of mobile phones).

Ad2go is the first mobile marketing company from Romania, which offers complete solution for the introduction and use of this advertising medium in the communications mix. In addition, ad2go is one of the first companies which offer free applications, so they have also proven experience in the production and creation of such products. Their products and services are of very high quality, and are a default in the mobile marketing (Mobile Marketing Association). These free applications are also compatible with a very large number of mobile phone models on the Romanian market and besides this ad2go has the ability to adept the applications to the new requirements of the market. This, the rapid delivery to users or customers and the good media network can be seen as the strengths of the company.

Since it is a young company on the Romanian market and has therefore a low awareness among advertising agencies, ad2go has a small number of employees and it is unknown in some regions of Romania.

### **4.2. Analysis of opportunities and threats of the mobile marketing applications in Romania**

On the Romanian market, there is no strong rivalry in this industry, as the domain is very new. There is a high potential of growth for this field, because mobile marketing offers a very innovative environment where new products and services can be found. Besides Ad2go, who was a pioneer in this field, other two competitors entered the market. The competitors are Urbee, which provides a single application, about leisure activities in Bucharest as theater, concerts, clubs and other (Urbee, 2008) and Mobione, who offers some similar services (Mobione, 2008).

The industry is very attractive for new competitors, because mobile marketing is a future trend that more and more people will adopt. Mobile phones are a part of our lives and people tend to use them more intense and longer - not only for their actual function, but also for the fact that mobile phones become more like small personal computers. To enter on this market, a company must have good knowledge about the guidelines about the use of mobile marketing and of course a lot of IT knowledge (Internet, data transfer, etc.).

The substitutes for the mobile marketing applications are the online marketing and other types of internet advertising. The increased use of the internet on the mobile phone might also be threat for the mobile marketing applications. Internet and e-mail are just as fast and with comparable prices. Or you can always go to the classic advertising that address to a larger number of people. For small businesses, it is more difficult and inefficient to use mobile marketing as a marketing tool, but for large companies that want to offer something special to their customers, mobile marketing is the perfect mean to address these customers.

The mobile marketing companies have two types of customers. On one hand there are the final consumers who can download and use the applications. On the other

hand there are the companies who want to use these channels for advertising. The success of the mobile marketing depends on the way the final consumers accept and are willing to use these applications. Depending on the number of final consumers, the companies will also use these channel to advertise their products.

Java applications are the big trend at the moment. After 2004 all mobile phones have a Java application which offers a great possibility of development for mobile marketing. In Romania, there are currently a small number of competitors for Java applications (One Touch Info, 2008), but a very large number of potential customers and users. And more than that, the Romanian market also has a very large number of mobile phone users. The threats mostly come from software developers that have found great interest in the development of Java applications with built-in advertising space. But it also appears that more and more companies can offer this kind of products and services or want to do so. Moreover, there is a big threat, because the Romanian patent system does not protect well in terms of patents and licenses.

The small number of competitors offers ad2go a large market potential, since there are so many mobile phone users.

## **5. Conclusions**

2006 was the year when Mobile Marketing wrote history, because it was the year when the highest number of companies has decided to implement a mobile marketing component to increase advertising and sales. These decisions attracted a lot of attention from marketers and managers. This new marketing form is a natural development stage, being a consequence of the development of technology and the consumer behavior. The new generations of consumers have very high brand awareness, they act on international markets through the internet and their opinion can have a great effect on people in different parts of the world.

The benefits of mobile marketing speak for themselves: mobile marketing is very personal, immediate, offers one-on-one communication, does not depend on time and space, and promises to accurately and clearly target the consumers. Nevertheless, mobile marketing can not stand alone, but must be the center point in a marketing campaign. It is not “magical”, but has to be included in the communication mix along with other, more traditional marketing forms, in order to reach the needed volume of audience. The key to successful implementation of a mobile element is “integration”. Mobile marketing adds more value to an existing campaign, but this marketing form can not and will not replace traditional marketing and traditional communication tools and channels, but it will strengthen it to obtain better results. A brand that wants to be where its consumers are can not ignore mobile marketing. As for any other good campaign, mobile marketing needs a concept and a good implementation – especially for this communication channel – so it can reach the customers and the set objectives. Although mobile marketing may not be appropriate for every company or product – as

well as television or radio advertising is not a good choice for all products – many companies have been given an incredible benefit from implementing this form of marketing in their communication mix. Besides this, as Mobile Marketing had a very big start all over the world, we can observe that the traditional means of communication increased their interactivity.

The development of mobile marketing and the increasing trend of implementing this new marketing form in the communication mix of different companies clearly shows that mobile marketing is the marketing form of the future. With the daily development of technology and the new ways of communication and recreation, companies have a very good premise to advertise their own products and brands. In a developed world, where people work less and have more fun, being mostly motivated by “shopping” (Ridderstrale, Nordstrom, 2007), a company has to be very keen in trying to be different from other companies in the same sector. Companies that are using mobile marketing can try more than companies using traditional marketing forms, their different ideas and mix through the mobile marketing, with very low costs and a great impact on the consumer. A company can be young, provocative, innovative, bold and creative, qualities that customers will love about mobile marketing and the company using it.

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