

CALLING FOR PROFITS

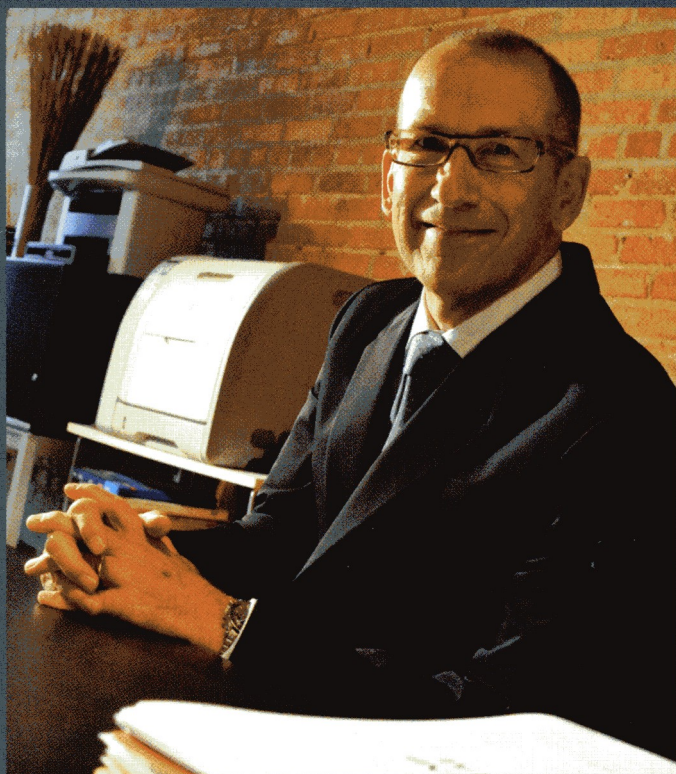
Technology, a powerful weapon in any retailer's profit arsenal, is taking on a new and commanding form: mobile phones. "Mobile is the big thing," says James Dion, president of Dionco Inc., a Chicago-based retail consulting firm. "You can't ignore the sheer number of smart phones out there, and the number has increased as a result of the Christmas season. This gives the consumer huge amounts of information, and the retailer a huge amount of opportunities." How can your marketing promotions tap into this market? Take these two tools for a test run:



QR codes. These small dotted squares are found on everything from advertisements, brochures and web pages to in-store displays. "Customers who take pictures of quick response (QR) codes with their smart phones are taken to websites with product information, coupons or special offers," says Dion.

Shopkick. Here, customer targeting reaches the micro level. This technology emits a high frequency signal that identifies the exact location of a customer in your store, and then offers relevant coupons and sales information.

The bottom line? Technology is great; enthusiasm is better. "Hard as it is, stay optimistic," says Dion. "When the customer comes through the door make sure your people have smiles on their faces. Then the customer will feel good about buying." — P.M.P.



Retail consultant James Dion recommends investigating new technologies to stay current with sales trends, including QR Codes (top), which automatically direct customers to a predetermined website and can be printed on a variety of promotional materials.