



## **QR Codes: Top 5 Best Practices**

*This best practices white paper is excerpted from “QR Codes: What You Need to Know,” a look at issues related QR codes from the buyer’s and printer’s perspectives.*

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## Marketer's Primer Series: 1:1 (Personalized) Printing

### QR CODES: BEST PRACTICES

Where do QR codes fit in a marketer's toolbox? How are they best used? The answer starts with understanding your audience, what motivates them, and your campaign goals.



In today's world, it's all about spontaneity, instant gratification, mobility, and interactivity. It's easy to envision a world in which all marketing and corporate identity materials, packaging, point-of-purchase, and displays, include QR codes by default just as they include URLs, email addresses, and Twitter IDs.

Like any marketing technology or application, however, QR codes work best when certain best practices are followed.

Let's look at the top five.

#### **1. Create marketing campaigns, not QR code campaigns.**

QR codes may be a great tool for encouraging customers to interact with your marketing content, but they are just that — a tool. As with any tool, sometimes they are the right tool and sometimes they are not. Blend QR codes into a larger marketing campaign as they make sense rather than building a campaign simply for the sake of using QR codes.

#### **2. Make the QR code worth decoding**

Why are people going to the code? Make it worth decoding. Provide unique mobile content. Sweepstakes. Coupons. Music. If you are selling something, send people to review sites. Fan pages. Don't just send them to your home page or generic YouTube video. Use the QR code to achieve a specific marketing goal and make it worth viewers' time to decode it.

#### **3. Optimize for mobile sites**

Ideally, optimize the content to which you are driving them for mobile viewing. While many of today's newer phones make viewing traditional websites easier than ever, not everyone has one of these phones. If the code is part of a specific marketing campaign, send them directly to the content they will expect based on the campaign's call to action.



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You'll also want to follow best practices for creating the codes themselves. Although QR codes can function with some data loss, you want to increase your chances of readability.

- Keep the URL simple (less than 60 characters)
- Ensure that it is more than three-quarters inches square.
- Minimize opportunities for reflection (such as avoiding the use of coated paper).
- Ensure that there is an adequate border around the code to avoid interference from text or images around it

### **4. Include multiple paths to response.**

Sure, you want people to use the codes, but it's important to remember that there may be people who would respond to the campaign . . . just not with the code. If you can bring in another 5%, 10% response (or more) by adding another response mechanism, why not do so? It's not about getting people to respond to a QR campaign. It's about getting them to respond to the campaign period.

### **5. Include instructions for using the code.**

This isn't going to be appropriate for all campaigns, of course, but when appropriate, you may want to include short instructions for using the code and downloading a reader if necessary. Part of success with QR codes is user education. Many people are just learning about QR codes, so make sure that they know what they are and how to use them.

*For a full list of best practices, see "QR Codes: What You Need to Know," part of the Marketer's Primer Series.*

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