



# Using QR Codes For Marketing

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[QR Codes](#) are similar to the standard bar codes that currently appear on all types of consumer products, except QR codes can contain much more information than traditional barcodes. They are starting to gain use with marketers in the United States. Major U.S. businesses that have begun using QR codes in advertising and promotions include Best Buy, Ralph Lauren, and Pepsi.

## How Do QR Codes Work?

A QR Code works by simply scanning the code with a mobile device that is equipped with a camera and QR Code reader application. These applications can be downloaded for free on popular smartphone platforms such as iPhone and Android.

Once the QR Code is scanned using the device's camera it is translated into actionable information, such as a text message or mobile web page.

[Create your own QR code here.](#)

## How Can QR Codes be used for Marketing?

There are a number of practical ways QR codes can be used for marketing and promotions in a variety of settings. QR Codes can be integrated into just about any type of printed materials, including:

- Conference/Event Displays
- Print Advertisements
- Business Cards
- Brochures, Posters, and Flyers
- Postcards and Mailers

## **What Can a QR Code Do?**

Once a QR code is scanned the encoded information can be used to automatically trigger a range of actions on the user's device, including:

- View a Mobile Website or Landing Page
- Dial Telephone Number
- Send a Text Message
- Send an Email
- View a Message or Special Offer
- Download Contact Details (VCARD)
- View a Google Maps Location
- View a Social Media Profile

## **What Types of Organizations Can Use QR Codes?**

Just about any type of organization can use QR Codes in their marketing materials. Whether you're a retail business, a nonprofit organization, a membership association, or an educational institution, if a portion of your target audience uses smartphones then a QR Code can be a great way to differentiate yourself and reach people in new ways.

## **What Are Some Examples of How QR Codes Can Be Used?**

There are numerous ways that QR Codes can be used to strategically bridge offline and online media. Here are but a few examples:

- A consultant's business card contains a QR code that links to a landing page with enthusiastic client testimonials, or a VCard to download contact info.
- A public education poster about substance abuse provides a QR code that links to a mobile website with a self-assessment quiz and community support resources.
- A local business displays a QR code with a link to their Google Places page with customer reviews and coupons.
- A retail store displays a QR Code next to in-store products to view product demonstrations and reviews.

- An advertisement for a nonprofit organization includes a QR code that links to a volunteer and donation page.
- A restaurant includes a QR code on a takeout menu, which links to a mobile restaurant website for online reservations, orders, and interactive directions.
- A home-repair product includes a link to a how-to video with installation instructions.
- A campaign sign for a political candidate contains a QR code that links to an audio file with a message from the candidate, or a mobile landing page with the candidate's bio, campaign platform, and opportunities to volunteer or contribute.
- A vendor at a conference places a QR code on their display booth so that attendees can conveniently scan and save the vendor's information as they pass by.
- A realtor places a QR Code on For Sale sign in front of a residential property, which provides additional home specifications, interior photos, and Google Maps location for later reference.
- A promotional poster for a movie contains a QR Code with a link to a video of the trailer and form to opt-in to notifications when the film is released.

## What Are Some Other Advantages of Using QR Codes?

- **User Convenience** – QR Codes provide a convenient one-step process for directing users to a website, phone number, directions, promotions or other information.
- **Environmentally-Friendly** – QR Codes can make more efficient use of printed materials and reduce waste.
- **Cost-Effective** – QR Codes cost nothing to produce; their use is only limited by your marketing strategy.
- **Versatile** – QR Codes can be integrated with a wide range of marketing materials for just about any purpose, including print collateral, outdoor display and direct mail.
- **Device Independent** – QR codes, as well as the landing pages they link to, can be viewed on all popular smartphone models and do not require special development for different platforms (e.g. iPhone vs. Android), as is the case with apps.
- **Measurable** - Actions triggered via QR Codes can be traced with web analytics or other tools for marketing campaign measurement.
- **Competitive Differentiation** – Because QR Codes are still relatively new to the U. S., those who are among the first to employ them in their outreach campaigns will set themselves apart as leaders in strategic marketing.

## Key Considerations for Proper Use of QR Codes in Marketing Campaigns

In order to utilize QR codes strategically in communications there are a few key considerations to take into account:

- **Context and Content** - the QR code should direct the user to targeted content that complements the printed material where the code is located. Simply pointing a QR code at your website's homepage isn't likely to convert into action.
- **Instruction/Call to Action** - unless you're in Japan, there's a good chance that your target users may need a cue to entice them to scan the QR code. It may also be helpful to provide some information about what users can expect to find after scanning code (e.g. "scan this code for a special offer...").
- **Mobile Landing Page** - it's a safe bet that the person who scans the code will be on a handheld device. Therefore, you'll want to ensure that you direct users to a mobile-friendly landing page for an optimal user experience. Sending users to a website formatted for desktop viewing won't be helpful, and won't make a good impression.
- **Tracking & Reporting** - if you're going to use QR codes in marketing campaigns it's important to be able to track the number of scans over time, capture geographic data and other information. A QR code tracking and reporting system can help you do this effectively.