THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF QR CODES

The reference guide book
To be efficient a QR Code campaign has to be structured and organized. In order to do so you will be introduced to 10 rules through this guide. They will give you the necessary knowledge to correctly use QR Codes.

You will then be able to design your marketing campaigns while being confident in the added value of the operation and the impact on your consumers.

In this guide Unitag also details good and bad examples of QR Code campaigns so that you make the best choices and avoid common mistakes. After which you will have all the necessary assets to make your QR Code event successful.

Follow the guide!
Summary

QR Code presentation

10 rules about QR Codes

I. Choose your QR Code type
II. Customize your QR Code
III. Use contrasting colors
IV. Adapt the size of your QR Code
V. Choose the correct printing support
VI. Optimize your QR Code’s visibility
VII. Ensure that you are in an area with WiFi / Data service
VIII. Explain how to use your QR Code
IX. Offer some added value
X. Make your QR Code leads to a mobile website
PRESENTATION
What is a QR Code?

A QR Code? This is that small square, often black-and-white, that one can found more and more frequently on advertisements. It can contain various kinds of useful information for consumers. For example, it can redirect a user’s smartphone to a web page in order to let him purchase the advertised product. Or to let him download a coupon, or even make his smartphone add to its calendar the event pictured.

To summarize, QR Codes can extend the information present on a physical support and give a digital dimension to the marketing campaign that you are conducting. Its impact on consumers is strongly increased.

Furthermore the visual aspect of QR Codes is evolving and becoming attractive. For they are used as communication tools, QR Codes must be appealing and colorful to draw the attention of your consumers and get them to scan.

Customize your QR Codes!

Unitag’s will and purpose for its generator and this guide is to provide professionals with attractive and colorful QR Codes. That is why we allow strong QR Code customizations. Colors, logo overlay, fancy shapes,.. will help you customize this new marketing tool and integrate your corporate visual identity. Even more important customizations can be made by a graphic designer. However you will have to follow a set rules explained later on throughout this guide.
How to read QR Codes?

QR Codes are read by so-called “reading applications”, which are basically barcode scanners. There are dozens of them that you can directly download on your smartphone. But pay attention to the fact that readers are differently efficient at reading QR Codes! That is why we recommend the i-nigma reader for higher performance.

Some other applications:

- Flashcode
  Another common application (iPhone and Android)

- i-nigma
  (iPhone, Android and Blackberry)

Reading - or scanning - a QR Code is then a very easy three-step process, as detailed in the opposite diagram. The user has to open its reading application and aim at the QR Code with the smartphone’s digital camera. It is then recognized by the application which carries out the associated action - generally opening a web page.
THE 10 COMMANDMENTS
Choose your QR Code type

Before creating the QR Code you want to publish, you have to choose which type of information will have to be encoded in it. Different types of information can indeed be encoded and lead to different actions.

QR Codes can encode the following actions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Icon</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>🌐</td>
<td>A website URL to which the user will be directed and where he will see the content made available for him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>📧</td>
<td>An email or a text-message ready to be sent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>📞</td>
<td>A business card which can be directly stored in your smartphone’s contact list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>📅</td>
<td>An event that can be automatically added to your calendar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>📞</td>
<td>A phone number recognized by your Smartphone for dialing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>📜</td>
<td>A simple text to display.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⚡️</td>
<td>Wi-Fi access point’s credentials to initiate a connection from your smartphone.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Customize your QR Code

Choosing the correct type is the first step for creating your QR Code. You can then customize it. To do so, changing the colors, the size or overlaying a logo are just so many possible modifications. Personalizing your product is a considerable advantage and you can differentiate yourself and draw the attention of consumers with an original QR Code. You will hence increase the visual impact of your advertisement.
Use contrasting colors

Customize your QR Code with different colors is an advantage, provided that it remains readable! No matter what set of colors you apply, the background color has to CONTRAST with the QR Code’s colors.

Good contrast

Light background contrasts with the bright color of QR Code.

Bad contrast

There is no distinction between the QR Code and the background.

Negative QR Code

Dark background contrasts with the light color of QR Code: this is called a negative QR Code.

Besides, some reading applications do not succeed with negative QR Codes - that is to say bright colors on a dark background. So be careful at this step because if the contrast is not strong enough or if the colors are not bright enough, reading may fail and your QR Code would be left useless.
IV Adapt the size of your QR Code

Do not print your QR Code on a in a small size for it might not be readable. You should beware of this fact and compute the right size according of these two factors:

**QR Code’s minimal size**
The QR Code can be printed at any sizes however you ought not to print it under 3cm per 3cm (1,2 inch). The following formula gives the ideal size and according to the distance of scan:

\[
\text{Size of your QR Code} = \frac{\text{Distance from the code to the scanner}}{10}
\]

Pay attention: All Smartphones do not have the same camera quality. You must think about them when you choose the distance of scan.

**The distance of scan in the QR Code environment**
The size of your QR Code thus depends of its environment. You must know whether your QR Code will be printed on a product packaging or a large poster. Because between these two options the size of your code will be really different.

For example if you decide to print your code on a advertising poster the QR Code will be scanned from 3 meters away so it shall be 33 centimeters per 33 centimeters.

Anyway the best way to ensure that your QR Code has the good size is to scan using different smartphones and different scanners.

The size of a QR Code must be proportional to distance between the smartphone and the code itself.
Choose the correct printing support

T-shirts, mugs, posters and even toilet paper, printing options for QR Codes are diverse and original! However the printing support may affect the readability of QR Codes. For instance the printing surface must be flat to allow QR Codes to be read. Try also to avoid printing on reflective or easily distorted surfaces.

Optimize your QR Code’s visibility

Besides the chosen printing support you will have to think about the environment on which QR Codes will be displayed. They have to be at the same time READABLE and VISIBLE by the customers. Try to avoid QR Codes displayed too low on a poster, on a dark place or even on a moving support. Also, it will be more efficient to publish the QR Codes on environments where consumers will be able to take their smartphone out to scan them.
**VII**

Ensure that you are in an area with WiFi / Data service

If you are in an area without WiFi / Data service, your QR Code might not be of any use. Indeed if your QR Code redirect the user to a web page the latter needs an access to a quality web network. You must be careful regarding where it is set up. Test yourself if possible.

**VIII**

Explain how to use your QR Code

Not everybody knows what QR Codes are made for and how they are read. It is important to print along a QR Code an explanation on what a QR Code is and most important how to scan it.
Offer some added value

Customers are inclined to scan your QR Code because they expect to take advantage out of it. Couponing, exclusive information, direct marketing are good examples of what QR Codes are good for, they must deliver attractive content. Thus you must indicate what kind of benefits the customer will get from scanning your QR Code.

Make your QR Code leads to a MOBILE website

If your QR Code redirects onto a website it must be MOBILE compatible. Indeed classical websites are poorly displayed on smartphones and one has to keep zooming in and out to read its content. In case you do not have a mobile website Unitag grants the possibility to use its mobile page generator called U.me.
Do not forget the golden rule: try and try again scanning your QR Code before printing it!
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