



## **Marketing Tip:** QR Codes 101

What's that black-and-white puzzle-looking square on the back of your hamburger wrapper? And there's another one on that movie poster . . . what is that thing?

It's called a QR code and if you haven't seen one yet, you will. Quick Response (QR) codes are beginning to pop up all over marketing materials for big name brands like Google and Starbucks and they can drive customers straight to your bank.

A QR code is an image that a consumer uses to access a specified URL. Once a user has downloaded the necessary app to his smart phone, he can then use his phone to scan the code and be automatically linked to a specific URL to learn more information, benefit from a special discount or redeem a limited offer.

QR code generators create the actual code. All you have to do is tell them what URL you want the code to point to. Go to the generator's website, input your desired URL, and click on "generate code." They provide you with the image to include in your print or online marketing materials.

**The Benefits:** The primary benefit of this technology is its immediacy. If a prospect sees your ad and wants to learn more, they don't have to manually input a URL or write down a specific website address. They simply scan the code and are linked immediately.

QR codes are free to generate and don't cost any more to print than other images in your ad. They are both interactive and trackable and, because codes can be any size, you can embed them in anything from printed ads to digital signs and even billboards.

**The Challenge:** The only real drawback is that QR codes are still new to the marketplace. Those outside of early technology adopters might not know what it is or what to do with it. But this also provides a huge opportunity for your bank to take advantage of this technology and jump ahead of the curve!

**Start Small.** Imbed a QR code in your marketing materials and see how your audience responds. Maybe offer a special deal for those who take advantage of the code by linking to a coupon that offers to deposit \$25 into any new checking account opened by a certain date.

Think about where the customer will see the code. Is it in a newspaper ad or could it be on their statement stuffer, where you are explaining the benefits of e-statements or remote capture? Think about who will be reading the code and how they will likely interact with your message.

The bottom line: not everyone will utilize – or even notice – a QR code in your marketing materials and advertisements. Consider your audience and make sure you include more than one way for customers to access your information. Maybe the first few times, you should include an explanation of what it is and instructions on how to use it!