



How to Make and Use **QR Codes** for Your Business



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Introduction

Although QR codes have been around since the [Denso Wave company began using them](#) to track the manufacturing process for their vehicles back in 1994, [modern QR codes](#) didn't come into the mainstream until 2011 when Best Buy and Macy's began using them in-store.

Flash forward a decade and the way we implement and even talk about QR codes has evolved to keep up with ever-changing marketing trends.

In 2021 QR codes are being scanned by millions of smartphone users worldwide due to a few factors. Primarily, the rise of QR code usage stands hand in hand with the rise in smartphones and access to high-speed internet. With [3.8 billion](#) people projected to use smartphones and [90% of the population](#) estimated to have access to high-speed internet in 2021, the growing popularity of QR codes is not slowing down anytime soon.

When you add the access to technology to Apple and Android smartphones' updated QR code scanning capability in the camera app, it comes as no surprise that [11 million](#) households scanned a QR code in 2020 (up from 9.7 million in 2018).



Yes, they are accessible, but why else have QR codes increased so steadily in popularity? The world will be working to determine the exact impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on the many facets of society for years to come, but one is clear already—the rise in QR code usage.

When you stop and think about it, the increase in QR codes due to the COVID-19 pandemic makes perfect sense. QR codes are not only perfectly matched for social distancing due to their removal of shared materials, but they are a hygienic and safe way to share information while organizations can use them to track marketing campaigns.

With that in mind, this guide will cover how to get started with your first foray into creating QR codes.

QR Code Use Cases for Businesses

Many organizations have found success in recent years due to their creative and practical uses of QR codes. Companies have discovered creative ways to provide their customers value while using the opportunity for branding and creating customer loyalty.

Read on for ways to implement QR codes into your next marketing campaign and to see top examples of companies who have successfully added QR codes to their marketing toolboxes.



QR Codes for Product Reviews

In 2020, [90% of shoppers](#) read online reviews before visiting a business. This doesn't mean businesses should fear their online reviews, but instead presents an opportunity for organizations to embrace how they are represented online by their customers.

If you don't give customers a direct outlet to share their reviews on a platform where they will feel heard, you run the risk of angry or frustrated customers taking to social media to share their unfiltered review of your business. To combat this customer impulse, offer your customers a controlled platform on which to review their experience with your product or service. While you can't edit your customer reviews to make them all positive, you can oversee customer review platforms and respond to them diligently in an effort to satisfy all customer needs.

Use a feedback and rating QR code to gently nudge customers into writing product reviews, without any human intervention. Here's a bonus tip, if your online reviews aren't where you would like them to be the problem may be as simple as not enough of your customers are reviewing their experience with your organization. To incentivize your customers into writing positive reviews of your company, offer them an accompanying discount or coupon code when they write a review.

QR Codes for Digital Payments

The meteoric rise of QR codes for digital payments is due in large part to WeChat, a multipurpose messaging, social media, and mobile payment app predominantly used in China.

The contactless payment market is predicted to hit [\\$4.68 trillion by 2027](#), an increase that feels perfectly attainable when you factor that in the first quarter of 2020, the economy from WeChat QR Codes catapulted up by 25.86% regardless of the struggles of the macroenvironment.

In the US, [many turned to QR payments](#) as a safe and easy payment method, with more than 10% of people reporting they used it for the first time during the pandemic, and over a third of existing QR payment users (35%) using them “much more/more.” Retailers are jumping at the chance to use apps and QR codes to accept more payment methods, allowing them to increase their customer base.

While this unpredicted increase was a response to COVID-19 and the hasty ushering in of technological solutions created to efficiently navigate new health and safety guidelines, if the success of WeChat and retailer adoption in the US is any indication of the contactless payment industry as a whole, QR codes are here to stay.



Marketing Uses for QR Codes

Are you looking to spice up your next marketing campaign with a little help from QR codes? Here are a few creative uses for QR codes that you can use to get started:



Use a QR code in place of a **phone number** to call your organization

In-store, place a QR code by the door to allow customers to easily **connect to the store's Wi-Fi**

Use a QR code as a virtual business card to share your contact information with potential future clients

Scan a QR code to automatically **add an event to your virtual calendar**

At a restaurant, use a QR code as a **paperless and contactless menu** for customers

Use a QR code to seamlessly send location coordinates

Use a QR code to **send a preset text or email**

Use a QR code to **follow a profile on any social media** account

Use QR codes to **reveal coupons or discounts**

When you use QR codes for marketing, make sure to include your company's branding on whatever screen your customer lands on. Make it a mobile-friendly page with social links, your branding, and a clear call to action.

QR Code Success Stories

Burger King

During the initial worldwide lockdown of the COVID-19 pandemic, [Burger King used QR codes](#) as the backbone of a marketing campaign. The campaign consisted of three Burger King commercials advertising a free Whopper sandwich when you use the Burger King app. To direct viewers to the app, each commercial included a floating QR code that when scanned redirected users to the Burger King app where they could download their free Whopper coupon.



Source: [Pinterest](#)

Carlsberg

During the summer of 2020, the international brewer [Carlsberg](#) successfully executed their own prize giveaway with the help of QR codes on the receipts of select beers. Their simple “Buy, Scan & Win” campaign gave fans of the beer the opportunity to win a limited number of signed Liverpool FC jerseys, a special-edition Carlsberg glass with the Liverpool FC crest, and a collection of other prizes. Participants simply had to prove their Carlsberg purchase by scanning a QR code to be immediately eligible to win.



Source: [Visualead](#)

Starbucks

One business that went all in on [incorporating QR codes](#) is Starbucks. The international coffee seller incorporated QR codes in a range of forms, including in magazine ads, on widely distributed flyers in major cities, and as a form of cashless mobile payment. By integrating so many forms of QR codes into their campaign, Starbucks is reinventing the way their customers interact with their brand online. When Starbucks QR codes are scanned, users are redirected to a mobile-optimized page where they can learn more about the latest Starbucks news and get updated on all the new products.



Source: [Starbucks](#)

The Hundred Thousand Dollar Puzzle

YouTuber David Dobrik [used QR codes in combination with a lottery](#). He sold puzzles to his fans with a unique QR code as the final image. By completing the puzzle within the allotted time frame and scanning the unique QR code it revealed, Dobrik's fans were guaranteed to win at least \$0.25. He sold 17,000 puzzles in the first hour and distributed \$250K in prizes.



Source: [Tubefilter](#)

How to Make a QR Code for Your Business

Now that you have decided to incorporate QR codes into your next marketing campaign, it's time to create them! Follow these steps to create and design your custom QR code.

1 Find a QR Code Generator

There are many out there, but the key is finding the right one for your needs. Some things to look for when choosing a QR code generator are whether you can track and analyze performance, if it allows you to design a code that is unique to your brand, and if it is compatible with common QR code readers. [Kaywa](#) is a solid option that's easy to use and has a few handy features: it allows you to download in multiple file formats, and makes it easy to change your destination link at any time.



2 Create, Design, and Link It Up

The fun part of creating QR codes is customizing the design of the codes to your brand. Want your code to look like your logo? Go for it. Want it to reflect your website's design scheme? No problem.

But after that's said and done, the most important thing to consider is your end goal. What do you want to accomplish when someone actually uses your QR code? If you're at an event, for example, you might want to distribute business cards with a code on them that automatically links to your contact info. On the other hand, you may be gunning for more leads, so perhaps you should link to a landing page on your website to download the awesome presentation you just gave. Keep your end goal in mind when creating QR codes, and just like any call-to-action, make it worthwhile for the scanner.

3

Test It

In all the excitement of creating your first QR code, don't forget to check to see if the QR code "reads" correctly, and be sure to try more than just one reader. A good place to start is the free app [Google Lens](#), which can scan QR codes. Another great free tool is [QR Code Reader](#), which automatically takes you to whatever it "reads." Both are easy to use and well worth the quick test before launching any QR code (especially if you're new at it). You can also use the camera app on your iPhone or Android phone and simply tap on the QR code while viewing it with the camera.

4

Track and Analyze

Just like any marketing campaign, you should track and analyze how much traffic comes from each specific code, and how well that traffic converts (if conversions are something you're interested in improving). Are people scanning your code but not redeeming their offer once they get to your land-ing page? Or are they not even compelled enough to scan your QR code? Knowing this will help you troubleshoot and adjust your poorly performing QR codes to more closely mirror those that work well - or to adjust the assets and campaigns surrounding those codes, if that's where the problem is occurring.

Closing

In 2021 and beyond, QR codes are more versatile than ever. QR code scanning is no longer reserved for internal use, but has evolved to meet the new standard for inbound marketing. Thanks to smartphone evolution, high-speed internet, and the creative minds of marketers, QR codes have taken on a life of their own in the modern world.

But remember, simply creating a QR code isn't enough to get it scanned by your customers. Don't be afraid to think out of the box when it comes to optimizing your QR codes and tailoring your marketing strategy to the ever-changing modern consumer.



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