



QR CODES **KILL** KITTENS

How to Alienate Customers, Dishearten Employees,
and Drive Your Business into the Ground

SCOTT STRATTEN



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WILEY

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Introduction

Friends, followers, countrymen, lend me your ears.

I come to praise QR codes, not to bury them.

QR codes are full of potential. The thing is, we're breaking them—before we even get a chance to figure out just how awesome they can be.

Every time you use a QR code for your business because you can, and not because you should, whether your market wants them or not, a kitten dies—a sweet, innocent kitten.

QR codes are the perfect example of a bright and shiny business tool. We see them, and they are quite simply too exciting to ignore.

In case you've picked up this book without knowing what a QR code is, let me run it down for you. A QR code is a kind of bar code (*QR* stands for quick response). To read them, you need to have a smartphone and download a QR code-reading app. Once on your phone, the app will allow you to, in theory, scan the code. If the app works, the code was made correctly, and if you are able to hold your phone steadily over the code for long enough, you will be taken to a website, download link, or destination that is mobile-friendly and therefore easily readable on your phone.

Mobile technology at its best, right?

Wrong.

All of a sudden QR codes are everywhere. We just can't help ourselves. We see QR codes in magazines and on billboards, on bus stops, and on products themselves.

The truth is, QR codes don't usually work. We are using QR codes to show that we're using QR codes.

We ignore the things we should be doing in our businesses to create and place them. We ignore fixing problems. We put aside improving our products, listening to our customers,

and cleaning up the tools we are already using. We ignore basic issues of functionality. We yell, “Squirrel!” and run after them.

QR codes take up our valuable time, and space, and let us ignore what we should be fixing and focusing on in business. QR codes are a selfish “Look at me and how tech savvy I am” marketing tool. More often than not, they are just another hoop we make our would-be customers jump through.

A lot of business books out there are going to tell you what you should be doing. Well, this one is a little different.

QR codes alienate customers, dishearten employees, and drive your business into the ground, not to mention kill kittens.

I am going to show you that QR codes represent what's wrong with business today, for four different reasons:

They don't work.

Nobody likes them.

They are selfish.

They take up valuable time better spent elsewhere.

The book is laid out using these four reasons as chapter headings. QR code misuse sets the tone for each of the four sections, and we expand on each reason using examples from throughout business.

He who hath brought many QR codes home to clients, whose return on investment needs they do not fulfill, I speak to you.^{[1](#)}

Let's do this.

Note

^{[1](#)}. Apologies to Mr. Shakespeare.

Chapter 1

They Don't **Work**



They Missed a Step

Figure Credit: Thanks for sharing [@HaleyCertified](#); used with permission.



I don't know where this QR code takes me when scanned. I wish I did. I tried to follow the "three easy steps," but I feel like one important step is missing.

Step 0.5: Don't put QR code behind giant bar.

The code is unscannable. It's taking up valuable space, looking fancy and modern, and doing absolutely nothing.

This is my main issue with QR codes and so many of the things we try in business—they just don't work.

We need to be thinking about functionality for our customers.

Did you know that 50 percent of people who scan a QR code would never scan one again? You know why? Because it didn't work. It didn't bring value. It made people jump through an unnecessary and all-too-often nonfunctioning hoop.

Stop it.

Crapcha

Sign in to Thinkstock

Please confirm your username and password.

Username:


Password:

Forgot your password? [Click here.](#)

For your security, please type the characters below.
[Try different characters](#)

Sign in

Don't have an account? [Register now](#)

The image shows a reCAPTCHA interface. It features a distorted image of the word "Captcha" in a stylized font. To the right of the image is a small blue icon with a 'C' and a '1'. Below the icon is the text "reCAPTCHA™" and the slogan "stop spam. read books." The entire form is enclosed in a light gray border.

Captchas. Making it impossible to log in since 1997.

Not Working



Kinda like most QR codes, this guy doesn't work either.

When I worked in human resources, I would put ads in the paper for positions requiring three to five years' experience.

Why three to five years?

I honestly have no idea.

The only difference I can see between someone with five years' retail experience and one year is that the person with five years' experience hates people more.

A Kitten Dies . . .

. . . every time someone tweets advice about how to build a massive following—and only has 23 followers.

Anybody Got a Pen?



Anybody got a pen?