Mainly used for marketing purposes, QR codes can be displayed on direct mail postcards, brochures, posters, t-shirts, billboards, and electronic media including Web pages, digital screens and even stadium scoreboards.

Getting started:

• To create a QR code for your marketing campaign, there are several websites you can use. Two of the most popular are:
  - Kaywa: QRcode.Kaywa.com
  - Delivr: delivr.com/qr-code-generator

• The first thing you need to do is select your code type. Most QR codes link directly to a Web page, but you can also choose to display a text message or your business contact information that can be quickly added to a person’s mobile phonebook.

• Once you select your code type and enter the required information for what you’d like to display when the code is scanned, click the Generate button.

• Your unique QR code will appear. You then have the option to download or save the code to your computer by right-clicking on the code and selecting the Save Picture As option.

• You can promote your agency using QR codes in a variety of creative ways by working with a local printer or advertising firm.
Helpful tips:

• A QR code reader is required in order for a mobile device to properly scan and read a QR code. Several QR reader applications are available and can be found by searching your phone’s application marketplace (varies depending on type of phone and carrier).

• Black on white QR codes are the easiest for most QR readers to scan, so it’s best to stick with that color combination whenever possible.

• When including QR codes as part of your marketing campaigns, you can either let people know what will be displayed after scanning your QR code, or you can choose to leave that a mystery to entice consumers to scan it out of curiosity.

• If leading consumers to a Web page, make sure the URL is fairly short. To shorten a long URL, use a URL shortening service like bitly: www.bitly.com.

• There are plenty of QR code tracking services available to assist with QR marketing metrics. Type QR code Tracker into any search engine to compare these services and decide if tracking information is important to your campaign. A few popular QR code trackers are BeQRious (www.qrcodetracking.com) and OrangeQR (www.orangeqr.com). Fees vary by provider.

• Advanced Tip: A more sophisticated method for tracking QR codes is to use Google Analytics Campaign Tracking, which involves combining URL parameters into a query string, adding the query string to the end of the URL and then putting the whole extended URL into the QR code. Google Analytics is set up to recognize this query string, extract the data the query strings contain and report it uniquely. In this way, you can transfer specific information from the QR code into the reporting framework of Google Analytics every time the QR code sends a visitor to your website. Search Google Analytics for more information on this tracking method.

Statistics:

• In June 2011, 14 million mobile users in the U.S. scanned a QR code on their mobile device. (comScore)

• Mobile users that scan QR codes are more likely to be male (60.5 percent of code scanning audience), skew toward ages 18-34 (53.4 percent) and have a household income of $100k or above (36.1 percent). (comScore)

Agent testimonials:

“QR codes make it easy for clients and prospects to connect with our agency. Adding a QR code to direct mail postcards and other printed items allows the customer to quickly scan the code with their smart phone and be taken directly to our agency website or Facebook page, without having to type in a long URL. Our website is optimized for mobile browsing, so by posting a QR code on our Facebook page we’re actually integrating our social media, website and QR code marketing strategies together, which is very effective.”

- Claudia McClain, McClain Insurance Services

“We use QR codes to first drive prospects to our Facebook page, and once they become fans of our page, we start marketing to them. The great thing about QR codes is they can be easily tracked. I have a QR code on my car and also on the front door of our Main Street office. We also use QR codes on all of our print advertisements. People are attracted to them because of the unknown.”

- Chris Paradiso, Paradiso Financial & Insurance Services, LLC