

Almost any phone purchased in the last three years should be capable of sending and receiving text messages. Further, roughly 88 million U.S. wireless subscribers use data services here, sending more than 73 billion text messages each month. Here's one way marketers can leverage an SMS campaign: Put an SMS "short code" on any communication piece the consumer sees or hears, be it a print ad, outdoor, TV, radio, and so on. Something like, "To enter to win our sweepstakes, text "ENTER TO WIN" now. The interested consumer replies texts the appropriate words. The consumer then receives a text-based reply on his phone, possibly with further instructions or an invitation to continue the dialogue. Direct Connect Media has set up campaigns for major retailers and Text messaging in this manner is a great example of an interactive ad format that engages the consumer in an entertaining manner. It speaks to people on their own terms; they can play as long as they like and quit when they're ready. It delivers value, whether pure entertainment or the potential to win something. Text messaging is both simple and compelling. It leverages the unique platform of mobile devices in a much more relevant way than the old-school vision of wireless advertising. Hershey's, for example, recently ran a promotion where purchasers could text their UPC code numbers to enter a sweepstakes for a trip to the X Games. That's a great way to connect with a you audience. Your thumbs might cramp from so much texting, but SMS seems like it can get people talking to and interacting with a brand. And THAT's a WIN 4 U and UR Brand!

DID U KNOW ?



"Asked about the power of advertising in research surveys, most agree that it works, but not on them."

Eric Clark

Growth On New Fronts

The fastest-growing category of SMS advertising since August 2007 is food, at a rate of 53 percent, followed by clothing/fashion at 38 percent and restaurants at 37 percent. Advertisements for restaurants and food also boast the highest level of response, with 16 percent of those receiving an advert for a restaurant responding and 13 percent of those receiving an offer for food, such as grocery coupons, responding. Meanwhile, the number of consumers responding to an offer for a mobile product or service is at at four percent. "While the majority of SMS adverts are still for mobile products and services, the mix is beginning to shift toward consumer goods and services," observed Alistair Hill, analyst, comScore. "Mobile advertisers are beginning to show a higher level of sophistication in their targeting efforts, as the targeting criterion is no longer 'has mobile phone' but is based on knowledge of consumers' tastes and behaviors. Clearly, consumers are responding as the quantity and the quality of SMS ads increases."

The Universal Way to Reach Your Clients

Text messaging is the perfect mobile advertising vehicle because it doesn't rely on web browsers on the phone. In fact, every phone can receive such text ads and the possibilities here are limitless...For example, ads can link to a short code or web address. While it is difficult to know for sure, one imagines that an advertisement sent as part of a text message while a customer is near a retail location is of tremendous value -- worth far more than an ad on a PC browser. Google has certainly made similar comments about the potential for mobile ads. Think of the ad on a mobile phone as something similar to the impulse item rack at the grocery store. You may not have realized you needed that pack of gum, super-dieters guide or anything else that food retailers place on the shelves -- but when you see it, you buy it.

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