

## How to direct consumer attention to the small screen

Posted by Jeff Hasen on March 10, 2009

**Mobile has quickly become the go-to platform to reach consumers where they're already most engaged. Here's how some brands used mobile promotions to build large user databases.**

You may not have the marketing dollars to spend on an event such as Super Bowl Sunday but you can play the same game the big spenders are playing. Think of the elements of a Super Bowl ad -- compelling creative for a captive, interested audience -- and take them on the road. Any existing event with an audience -- a concert, a sporting event, a trade show -- can offer the opportunity to reach individuals with compelling content, through a highly personalized medium: the mobile phone.

Consider concerts -- they occur year-round and cause a firestorm of blogging and Twittering -- not to mention the sheer enthusiasm and loyalty of concert-goers that just can't be beat. Alt-hipster icon Beck was an early adopter of engaging his fans through mobile devices -- during his 2005 tour, in the period between the opener's set and Beck's headlining slot, the JumboTrons urged fans to text photos and messages that would be displayed on the board. Fans opted into the process, got a chance to see themselves on screen, and Beck had a large mobile database.

In-event advertising has evolved quickly to provide users and marketers alike with what they need. If you've been to an NBA game in the past 20 years, you probably were part of a "high points" promotion -- if your team scores 130 points (or, during the offense-challenged 1990s, 110 points), everyone gets a free chalupa the next day at a local taqueria. Now, there's some brand awareness that's being built for the taqueria, certainly; but what are the odds that more than a few of the fans will (1) still have their ticket stub and (2) remember to bring it to work the next day?

With mobile, all that changes. The same taqueria can offer up the same program to participants who send a text message to a short code displayed when the magic number is hit. They can sweeten the offer with a drawing for upgraded tickets at a future game. And they can send a reminder and a mobile coupon right around lunchtime the next day.

People are much more likely to volunteer their information via text message when they're experiencing full-on sports fever -- and act on a reminder 24 hours later -- rather than remembering to dig out a folded ticket stub at noon the next day at work. Mobile works to build loyalty for the league, the team and the restaurant -- particularly when fans opt in to receive future messages and offers.

Concerts and their associated sponsors -- brands and broadcasters -- are now taking full advantage of this trend as well. Take for example Los Angeles radio station 102.7 KIIS FM. When the station sought to promote its annual blowout concert, Wango Tango, it turned to mobile marketing. KIIS asked listeners on-air to text the word "wango" to a shortcode; in return, the listeners received a text message from KIIS with information on a contest they could enter to win free tickets to the concert. More than 20,000 people responded to the mobile call-for-action. During the actual concert, attendees could also text to win seat upgrades, or text a shout-out to their friends that would be displayed across the screens by the bottom of the stage.

The real financial benefit, however, was that KIIS was able to sell advertisements via mobile to reach the enthusiastic crowd that was texting back and forth. Ultimately, Wango Tango attendees were given a much richer brand experience with KIIS thanks to the mobile campaign. By being able to communicate directly with brand ambassadors on a one-to-one level, they were truly connected to KIIS and its sponsors.

The power of mobile marketing is indelibly linked to the level of comfort people have with their cell phones. They carry them around all day, they choose to use them, and will look at any messages they receive, even if it's only for a moment. By choosing to respond to an ad by text, they're actively participating in a discussion with your brand. TV commercials assault viewers who don't have a choice but to fast-forward or sit through them and internet ads take up bandwidth and block paragraphs of the article they're reading. With mobile, you are quickly and effectively interacting with engaged users.

So how do you execute a mobile campaign at an event? It's simple, really. Think about ways to engage the audience. Shout-outs are popular for passing the time until live action begins. You can give away product through calls to action via text. Or you can offer an upgrade to the front row. You can even poll the group on whether the home team will win or the artist will play his or her newest hit first or last. The possibilities are numerous.

Ultimately, mobile ads provide a service or tangible benefit to consumers. The potential exists to create "must-see" mobile content that could eventually rival big event TV ads - they're playful, engaging and uncomplicated. They're everything you want your brand to be.