

Mobile Marketing is “Booming”

Posted by Jeff Hasen on March 24, 2009

Expressing surprise at my birthday milestone, a friend said, “You don’t look 50 but you certainly act 50.”

I’m still trying to figure out whether he was paying me a compliment but one thing is certain – I do act like folks my age when it comes to mobile behavior.

According to comScore, males 45-54 use their mobile devices for way more than calling:

- 49% sent a text in last month
- 21% sent a text almost daily
- 36% took a photo
- 9.3% accessed weather info
- 9.2% accessed news
- 19.3% received info on their phone about a product, service or brand

The numbers are close when it comes to females in the same age group. There is some trail-off for males and females age 55-64 but more than 32 percent have sent a text message in the last month.

Marketers are taking note. Takeaways from Mary Furlong’s superb Boomer Summit in Las Vegas last week:

- Experts say it will take 5-8 years for boomers to recover from the recessions. Ouch.
- Mobile marketing is of great interest – organizations from financial services to retirement communities to non-profits to television outlets are seeking to tap into the mobile marketing “boom”.

As we discussed in Las Vegas, one of the biggest myths is that text messaging is a young person’s activity. That was certainly the case in its formative years when shows like *American Idol* first introduced many of us to the concept. In fact in 2003, the average age of a texter was 19 years old. It is now 38.

When it comes to interacting with their children or grandchildren – and even each other, Boomers have turned to the 160-character text message.

And what's the result of the Boomers' jump on the SMS bandwagon? Well, last year, for the first time, the number of texts sent in the U.S. exceeded the number of calls. According to Nielsen Mobile, in Q2 2008, a typical U.S. mobile subscriber was sending or receiving 357 text messages per month, compared to placing or receiving 204 phone calls. It's not that the number of calls went down. The number of text messages went up 450% from 2006.

That presents a dramatic shift that undoubtedly took people by surprise, especially the many businesses out there that are looking to sell products and services and to keep their name top-of-mind with their customers.

For these marketers, here's some advice. Texters are no longer just a group of teens chatting about a new kid in class (translation: n00b) - they are your customers and your prospective customers and they are expecting you.

CYAL8R (see you later)