

Text RESPECT

For some time, SMS has been, quoting the inimitable Aretha Franklin, saying “all I’m asking for is just a little respect.” Well, a funny happened on the way to Motown, or in this case the economic meltdown. SMS is getting what the Queen of Soul has been demanding for more than 40 years – it’s due.

There is a simple reason why SMS is living a better life. I have touched upon it in past posts. Marketers are being asked to do more with much less, and according to the Association of National Advertisers, the challenge is worse than we thought. From a new study by the ANA, more than one-third of respondents plan to reduce budgets by more than 20 percent. That is nearly double the figure they gave us in August 2008.

With budgets plummeting, marketers who previously had overlooked SMS are starting to wise up. What they are finding is that SMS is not just more economical and measureable than many other marketing options but it also has the potential to connect brands with significant portions of the more than 150 million who text on a regular basis.

Here’s how the Twelve Oaks Mall succeeded during the recent holiday season:

Based in Detroit, the mall was looking for a cost-effective way to raise its brand awareness and drive sales. The mall teamed with TV station WDIV on a text campaign designed to give one viewer the chance to win a shopping spree on Black Friday. During three hours of mentions during the Thanksgiving-related programming, entries were received from 25,309 people.

“I can’t tell you how many people, both customers and our stores, commented that they heard the spots and texted in when prompted,” says Peggy Hayes, Marketing and Sponsorship Director, Twelve Oaks. “I would venture to say that this single three-hour opportunity generated among the highest responses of any medium that we utilized during the holiday season.”

Peggy loved the measurability that comes with a text campaign and the right platform. For other campaigns, such as those we have seen from brands like Guinness, marketers can include multiple key words and then compare one media component against one another. In the case of one specific Guinness campaign, they created a keyword for their on-premise ad (in a bar or liquor store) and another for their off-premise ads (on the bottle/packaging). At the completion of the campaign, the marketing team was then able to see how each performed, compare them with each other and make changes to future campaigns to generate even better results.

I understand that SMS has its limitations and is hardly the end-all. We view it as the foundation of solid mobile marketing efforts. You want reach? Start with text and then build an integrated campaign with mobile elements that might include WAP, mobile advertising and more.

Done right, the build will gain respect in short order.