



## Radio 2020

### Mobile Marketing a Slam Dunk for Sports Radio!

Yes, that's right; it is once more time for me to take a look at developments in the mobile arena. It's no secret that the ubiquitous cell phone (or smart phone) is the new frontier for the radio industry. The efforts to embrace it and maximize its impact are many and varied. As a matter of fact there are companies who exist solely for the purpose of leveraging this new means of reaching consumers, one of which is HipCricket.

HipCricket specializes in mobile platforms and text message promotions and has been working extensively with radio since their founding in 2004. As a matter of fact, the CEO of the company, Ivan Braiker, is the former head of Belo Broadcasting's radio division as well as being a former radio station owner and operator. You may have seen him speak at various NAB and RAB events. I discovered while speaking on the phone with them that they did the clever mobile website for the NAB Show a few weeks ago in Las Vegas. The web site is a cell phone image and you play with the phone to display news, videos, and other content.

I spoke briefly with Jeff Hasen; the company's CMO, yesterday and got him to fill me in a bit about HipCricket's work with the radio industry. I was pleased to discover that they work with over 200 radio stations in the U.S. in addition to working with our friends over at the NAB.

As Mr. Hasen put it, "Radio has lost its way and needs to become interactive in order to survive and thrive. It is very simple to regain its magic by communicating with listeners the way they communicate with each other." In other words, not only using text messages to communicate, but also adhering to a purely permission-based style of communication. Users need to opt in before they receive anything, an approach I applaud. In my field, social media, this is key. People want to pick and choose how they receive company info and have little patience for the traditional sales pitch.

While there are many who do not understand this approach, HipCricket has proven that it works. They have been able to leverage amazing results from "SPAM free" marketing. Case in point: The Ticket (sports radio out of Dallas, Texas) has experienced astounding improvements in cumulative audience (or "cume") due to HipCricket.

The Ticket was signing up an average of 75 new listeners per month to its text club database, a figure that was insufficient to them. To increase activity, the programming team updated all of its recorded promos with an invitation to join their text club, and pushed it heavily on air and on its website.

In the first two months, the station opted in 2,615 new members. Also, the Ticket sent a text push to its entire database encouraging listeners to tune in for a major announcement. PPM [Portable People Meter] data showed that the station's cume

doubled in each of the three quarter hours that Cowboys programming push messages were sent to the station's text club.

(Source: HipCricket)

The power of interactivity in action. It's amazing to see both programming and sales benefits of such an extensive nature during a time when numbers worries are on everyone's minds. It demonstrates something I have often spoken of, the power of real time. Jeff Caitlin, the Program Director at 1310 The Ticket in Dallas provides a great real world example:

"In a PPM world, getting as many listeners as possible to all tune in at the same time is critical. Enter push text messaging for breaking news. On October 14th in Dallas Fort Worth there were 3 breaking sports stories in one day and we sent text message alerts to our database for each one. In every case, our cume spiked in the quarter hour immediately after the text message was sent. Tune ins equal cume, time spent listening and higher AQH shares."

I'll be doing an email interview with some of the key players over at Hip Cricket in the next week or two. I hope they'll tell us about their online work with radio stations, including the "Air Window" which allows DJs to interact real time with listeners without the bother of busy signals!

Stay tuned!