



Mobile Marketing Is Here. Can You Hear Me Now?

March 24, 2008

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ADOTAS EXCLUSIVE - For marketers, creating a genuine dialogue with consumers via mobile is now a reality. This can be attributed to several key factors. First, more and more mobile subscribers are moving to flat-rate data plans and embracing mobile messaging. Second, the maturation of wireless devices such as Apple's iPhone and the Nokia N95 are doing their part to change the consumer mobile experience. Taking these factors into account, the question now is how soon before marketers tap into the mobile phone to connect customers to the brands they care about the most? The answer is now!

Predictions around the rise of the mobile marketing space have come fast and furious. eMarketer states that the U.S. mobile advertising market, which was \$1 billion in 2007, will grow to \$5 billion in 2011. While these numbers are impressive, what the experts seem confused about is when the mobile marketing revolution will begin. Instead the pundits are focusing on "what's to come," not what is happening now. This is a mistake. Truth is, there is a great deal happening present day. Marketers should not sit and wait for a formal invitation before making their move.

One example of how mobile marketing is already providing real results for many brands is their use of SMS (AKA text messaging), which allows for the sending of short 160 character messages to and from a mobile phone. 160 characters might not seem like much but when they are highly targeted AND personalized to each individual user, the message can be quite powerful. According to a January 2007 CTIA Report, 96% of all active cell phones in the U.S. can be reached using text-messaging (more than 220 million users). In fact, text messaging is the fastest growing communication channel in history worldwide and already has twice the reach of the Internet (Computer Industry Almanac 2006). These figures cannot be ignored and they are not; currently 89 percent of major brands have stated that they are planning to market via mobile phone text messaging by 2008.

While the majority of major brands prepare to "dip their toes" in the mobile marketing waters, they will find that they are not alone. To date many marketers have already realized that the ubiquitous reach of SMS and the ability to deliver a targeted message to the consumer (pending their permission of course), makes it an incredibly valuable marketing channel. Whether promoting products/services, providing incentives to act (i.e. Reply now for a chance to win a free sandwich!) or driving customer loyalty and retention, mobile marketing gives brands an alternative to stagnant marketing channels that have not been delivering the needed value.

Take for example, Guinness. This well known brand was looking to increase membership for the Guinness "Toast," an annual event that takes place across the globe. Realizing the power of mobile, Guinness added mobile to the campaign, allowing consumers to join the TOAST, whether at home, work or at the local pub. By connecting through their mobile device, customers would be given the chance to become a member of the program and receive a free Guinness ringtone. The program also helped quickly drive significant traffic to TheGreatGuinnessToast.com website, further growing membership.

The experts are right when they say that mobile marketing will gain huge momentum in the years to come. The point they seem to be missing is that the movement is taking place now and consumers are responding with open arms. Whether it's a mobile web site, mobile ads, or text messaging, many

marketers are already embracing the mobile channel to engage with consumers through content they care about most. Just ask the folks at Guinness. Is your brand ready now?

Steve Siegel is currently the vice president of brand solutions at Hipcricket, a pioneering mobile marketing company that creates measurable, real-time, one-to-one relationships between advertisers and their customers and prospects. Over his career, Siegel has developed successful mobile marketing programs for operators, media companies, marketers and agencies, including Dunkin Donuts, The History Channel, McDonalds, Snapple, Verizon Wireless, Viacom, Mediacom and Ogilvy. In each instance he played an integral role in helping to drive significant gains in new market revenue.

Before joining Hipcricket, Siegel served as the vice president of mobile marketing & solutions at Enpocket (now Nokia Ad Solutions). Prior to this engagement he held senior sales and management positions at Responsys (an email service provider), Engage Media, and Mediacom/Beyond Interactive. Siegel began his advertising career at Backer Spielvogel Bates (now Zenithmedia) managing television/radio media and promotions for clients such as Miller Brewing Co, Wendys, and Hyundai Motors.

Siegel holds a BA from University of Michigan- Ann Arbor and currently lives in New Jersey with his wife and three sons.