

BUSINESS & MONEY

NEWS TO USE CUTTING COSTS ON PRESCRIPTION DRUGS WITHOUT RISKING YOUR HEALTH

SECTION EDITOR ANNE VASQUEZ, 954-356-4670, alvasquez@sun-sentinel.com

NEWS TO USE 3 • INVEST

THE HELP TEAM

Reb wro till r

Let's start with a big received your tax rebate. The question is: How correct, and what can I'm hearing from pl were due \$600 and got One day last week, I swer, or at least to learn want to go toe to toe w That's when my gut going to turn into a prc heard the IRS would b more returns, due to th First we had the Str about two weeks ago c promised date (You ca ey). Now we have this. I got on the phone a waiting for an answer. The IRS rebate hotli time I've tried it, the re with calls and that this I also called my loca

■ BRACKLEY CONTINUES ON 21

LEARN 
Get the most out of you haven't received it yet a

YOUR AD HERE

Cell phones are marketers' target

BY ARLENE SATCHELL
STAFF WRITER

Businesses are targeting your cell phone as an advertising and marketing tool.

With more than 255 million people with cell phones nationwide, South Florida for-profit and nonprofit companies are beginning to harness the power of the mobile phone to drive sales and build brand and customer loyalty.

For example, when Miami Dolphins defensive end Jason Taylor became a contestant on ABC's *Dancing with the Stars*, executives at the Jason Taylor Foundation in Sunrise

wanted to mobilize fans nationwide.

They worked with Boca Raton's 3Cinteractive to launch a text message campaign in March, sending behind-the-scenes updates and voting reminders from Taylor each week he performed. Fans had to text "JT" and use a special code to opt in for Taylor's messages about his dance performances. The football star-turned-dancer remained in the contest until last week's finale, finishing second and connecting with a legion of fans via cell phone.

"We've had fantastic response,"

■ CELL PHONES CONTINUES ON 20



Mobile marketing on rise

■ CELL PHONES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1D

said Seth Levit, spokesman for Taylor's foundation.

At 1 Touch Marketing, a Boca Raton firm, interest in its mobile marketing programs has peaked in the past six months.

More companies are adopting text messaging to complement existing print or broadcast advertising and marketing programs, President Dan Lansman said.

To be sure, companies understand they have to be careful with their approach with mobile phone marketing. They know they have to separate themselves from unsolicited sales pitches that are now reaching people's cell phones. In virtually all cases, wireless marketers say mobile ads should only be sent to consumers who want them. The Mobile Marketing Association in Denver, a trade group, has set guidelines to help businesses decide how and when to best use marketing via mobile phones.

Mobile phone marketing messages can include Web site or Web page links, display advertisements, digital coupons and click-to-call numbers that customers dial to connect to promotions. Last year, \$708 million was spent nationally on mobile marketing — text messages, display ads and Web searches — and that's expected to grow to \$2.2 billion by 2012, according to New York-based JupiterResearch.

Marketers want to attract consumers who live a digital lifestyle. Reaching them, wherever they might be, is a rich opportunity, said Neil Strother, Jupiter's mobile analyst.

Although in its infancy in the nation and South Florida, mobile phone marketing is getting a response.

In January, Davie resident Cary Schiffres and partners launched **Coupster**, an opt-in mobile coupon service that sends discounts to subscribers' cell phones.

With most people never leaving home without their cell phones, digital coupons are easily accessible and less apt to be forgotten or misplaced, Schiffres said.

Mobile coupons also have

U.S. WIRELESS FACTS, 2007

255.4 MILLION
wireless subscribers

84%
of Americans have mobile phones

48.1 BILLION
text messages sent in December

363 BILLION
total text messages sent
SOURCE: CTIA — THE WIRELESS ASSOCIATION

higher redemption rates: 5 percent to 15 percent, compared with 1 percent or less for print coupons, according to JupiterResearch.

For \$4.99 a month, subscribers can select discounts from about 450 South Florida local merchants and request the paperless coupons be sent to their wireless phone.

Fort Lauderdale-based chain Dryclean USA signed on with Coupster because print coupons and ads weren't boosting business. Vice President Jose Rodriguez thought coupons sent to customers' cell phones were worth trying.

With Coupster, Dryclean USA customers receive up to 50 percent off select services at any of its 58 South Florida stores.

For people like Davie resident Harry Rose, who's never used paper coupons, the digital coupons sent to his cell phone by Coupster worked for him.

Rose uses the mobile coupons to cut dry cleaning and restaurant bills.

For businesses that have to wait for customers to come to them, advertising on the cell phone is a way to reach them unobtrusively, said Deborah Popkin of Instant Sales Solution in Coral Springs.

For \$99 a month, John The Baker Italian restaurant in Cooper City sends customers discounts and special offers via text message.

Restaurant owner John Scinicariello said he gets 20 percent response from the 300

MOBILE MARKETING

8%
of all advertisers will explore mobile coupons or promotions by 2009, up from 2% in 2007

26%
growth forecast, \$708 million to \$2.2 billion (2007 to 2012)

30%
of consumers would opt-in for mobile coupons
SOURCE: JUPITERRESEARCH

text messages he typically sends.

In June, Cash Register Ads of Hollywood will run contest giveaways on the back of cash register receipts to build customer databases for two local grocers: Doris Italian Market and Bakery, with six stores in Broward and Palm Beach counties, and Milam's Markets, with four locations in Miami-Dade County.

Shoppers will be able to mail or text responses and opt in for future promotional offers at home or via cell phone.

"Persons who opt in see value in receiving direct messages, especially when you offer an incentive," owner Scott Meyers said.

Organizers of sporting events also see potential in mobile marketing.

In March 2007, Miami Beach's Red Fish Media worked with IMG and then-sponsor Starbucks to create a text message trivia challenge around the Sony Ericsson Open tennis tournament.

Starbucks customers in 300 Florida locations could text answers to questions for a chance to win tournament tickets.

"Mobile improves the consumer experience with an interactive element, which in turn increases revenues and brand loyalty," Red Fish President Matt McKenna said.

Arlene Satchell can be reached at asatchell@sun-sentinel.com or 954-356-4209.

IRS letter rebate ca

■ BRACKEY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1D

steered me to the letter taxpayers are getting that explains the calculation the IRS made to figure your rebate. This is a good explanation, quite complete, and based on each individual's facts and situation. But if you don't have your rebate, you likely don't have the letter either, because the two are supposed to be mailed out at about the same time. It's called Notice CP1378.

My next call was to the IRS "taxpayer advocate" hotline, 877-477-4778.

An IRS representative transferred me to the "individual income tax" line, then back to the rebate hotline, where a recording told me (once again) this was not a good time to call.

(Aren't you glad you're reading this, rather than hanging on the phone line hoping for an answer?)

I called the taxpayer advocate line back and someone put me through to customer service. Twenty minutes later, an IRS employee who identified herself only as Ms. Ramsey picked up.

Ms. Ramsey then said that much information was put out in the media that perhaps led people to believe they should get \$600 when they were really entitled to \$300.

(Blaming the media is certainly a way to get my attention, but it's not a good answer.

No co
storie
An
spoke
interv
W
to my
you w
You
year.
If y
think
can le
your r
that'll
will b
make
The
appea
IRS sy
man s
So,
your l
If y
amou
you d
Gr
amou
Go
the rel
Co
The
why
or \$1
It coul
offset
such a
taxes
ments
taken
the sar
bate.
It co
incom
thresh

Read up. Speak o
Sun-Sentinel

CD & D