

Published: October 28 2008

3 winning mobile campaign tactics

By Mark Emery

Connecting with a mobile audience requires a new marketing paradigm. Here are the types of campaigns that resonate with consumers.

Today's consumer is exposed to 5,000 marketing messages every day. As advertising trends chase content distribution innovation, consumers are perpetually seeking new ways to interact with their world, *minus* your expensive advertising impressions. Kids do it already.

Don Tapscott, author of "The Rise of the Net Generation: Growing Up Digital," suggests that what makes this generation different from its predecessors is not just its demographic muscle, but the fact that this is the first peer group to grow up surrounded by digital media. Put another way, this generation is the first to wrest controls away from media outlets and dictate the way the world interacts with them. Today's kids are inherently mobile, and they think of such technology as the first screen, not the third one. According to a Proctor & Gamble mobile strategist, online and mobile marketing saw the highest growth in use of mobile data in 2006. And, according to the Mobile Marketing Association, teen wireless usage significantly increased between 2006 and 2007 thanks to advances in mobile device capabilities, which allow for more accessible mobile content and data consumption.

Using mobile to engage this generation requires huge shifts in the way marketers think. Mobile marketing companies are helping brands leverage mobile penetration to interact with consumers in thoughtful ways. The difference between those who do it well and those who don't is a realization that mobile should be used to cultivate and shepherd a brand, not force feed it.

There are three types of campaigns most likely to attract this mobile generation: promotional campaigns, loyalty campaigns and transactional campaigns. Promotional campaigns use mobile as a participation mechanism, rewarding consumers with valuable offers in exchange for participating. The key here is to make the offer engaging and exclusive to mobile. One example of how a brand can implement a promotional campaign is Starbucks, which initiated a marketing campaign surrounding National Coffee Break Day. Starbucks wanted to increase store traffic on National Coffee Break Day, so as part of its marketing strategy,



the company distributed reminders on the day of the promotion via mobile devices to all of its consumers.

Loyalty marketing programs are also well-suited for extension into mobile. The good ones leverage what is truly unique about mobile devices -- the fact they are always on and available -- without asking consumers to do anything they could or should do on a wired computer. For example, Foot Locker used mobile marketing to send its customers mobile coupons and notifications of celebrity shoe sales and promotions. This campaign allowed the company to create brand loyalty through on-demand mobile discounts and drive store traffic during new product launches.

Another example of a successful loyalty mobile campaign -- this time targeting a younger demographic -- was implemented by bebe. By simply adding a mobile opt-in component to its direct mailers and web-based loyalty program, bebe developed a mobile database of tens of thousands of consumers who receive special mobile discounts, content and VIP access to events.

On the other hand, transactional mobile campaigns reward consumers with ringtones and other downloadable content. TNA Wrestling on Spike TV used transaction-based mobile marketing to increase revenue with mobile subscription services. The company also used SMS for trivia and pools to increase viewership and brand awareness. Through this marketing campaign, premium SMS monthly consumers received text messages from some of the TNA wrestlers, as well as TNA wallpapers, ringtones, videos and news alerts.

Until recently, agencies have idled on mobile, waiting for the medium to become ubiquitous -- and with good cause. In the past, mobile marketing has been handcuffed due to competing network technologies, limited device functionality and costly services. With today's devices -- which are more capable, cheaper to own and operate on high-speed data networks -- those limitations have been eliminated. Now brands and their agency partners can interact with consumers on a variety of mobile platforms, including SMS, MMS, WAP and downloads. Good mobile marketing companies insulate brands from the technologies and allow brands and agencies to focus on the consumer experience. Today's mobile generation wouldn't settle for anything less.

