

Mobile Advertising is for Adults, Too

insight

Jason Hoffman | March 2006



I recently found myself in a quandary regarding mobile advertising. As many of us have found, **mobile marketing** is about to turn a corner: we now have video accessibility, people can search for local information and they can shop. The issue is: why are advertisers still marketing only to teens via cell phones?

Over half the population now uses a mobile phone as their primary phone line; even two years ago this was not the case. According to M:Media data, 39 percent of all SMS text users are adults 35+ in the U.S. alone. M:Media also reports that 69 percent of all mobile news subscribers are over 25 years old. That adds up to nearly nine million users and growing fast!

So why are we only marketing to the younger demographic audience? The answer may simply be that marketers don't believe their targets are using the applications; others may think that there will be a lack of response or a negative connotation to their message. But in fact, mobile marketing is a strong way to reach your target audience and it is more controlled than one may think. The [Mobile Marketing Association](#) has a code of conduct and best practices that detail the expressed use of proper etiquette in regards to mobile marketing. This is a good resource to use as a base to build campaigns. Marketing to mobile users is just like creating co-registration or an opt-in database, with a major difference being that the only way consumers will see the message is if they opt in to receive it.

There are a few different ways to grow your list of mobile subscribers. Of these, one of the most cost effective would be to add an opt-in within your website's email registration page, asking people if they would like to receive text messages via their cell phones. The website opt-in method provides you with individuals who are already interested in your product or services, therefore making them significantly more relevant. All that you need to do is give a reason to sign up and then follow through with an actual text message.

A second method to increasing your database is to add the opt-in to a rich media campaign. Rich media can provide you with the opportunity to grow email and cell phone databases, purchase products and interact with a brand or service. There are cost-effective solutions out there for rich media campaigns. If you already have a rich media campaign running or are looking to add it to your existing media plan, make sure your creative allows for a field for an opt-in and cell phone number. The opt-in and cell phone number will need to go to a text message database where a message can be sent out to confirm the accuracy of the number.

The third method to increasing your database is similar to purchasing a site's email database. In other words, you can piggyback on to other subscriber services. There are networks that are emerging within the industry. These networks provide advertisers with opportunities to target individuals based on age, geography and other demographics, and send them text messages. As with email, these messages should contain terminology stating that individuals signed up to receive text messages from advertisers via their service. Additionally, request that users text back to subscribe to receive additional information or incentives, then you can message to them when you want, on your terms.

No matter what method you choose to grow your database you will need a database manager to maintain and direct all messages. There are services available that will provide you with professionals who will develop and maintain your database list and also send out additional messages. The most important point to remember -- you need a strong message or offer.

Ways to Increase your Mobile Subscriber Database:

1. **Add an opt-in within your website's email registration page**
2. **Add an opt-in to a rich media campaign**
3. **Piggyback on other subscriber services**

But before you get started sending a message you need a reason to send it. What needs to be figured out during this process is why you want to send a text message instead of an email message. There are two major reasons why you should send a text message instead of an email: 1) Your product or service is relevant to mobile phone users or 2) your product or service is targeting individuals when they may be away from their computer.

Let's focus on the latter. Suppose you are a retail advertiser; you may want to send a special sale to subscribers within a specific geographic market at a specific time. Or you may be a restaurant owner and could provide opt-in subscribers with a message about stopping off on the way home to get dinner for the family. With these examples you can even provide coupons that can then be measured for redemption as a metric of success. The main idea, whether in email or texting, is that *you need to send the right message to the right people.*

In order to send the appropriate message you need to work on targeting. As of now targeting is limited based on zip codes, user demographics and time of day. In the future we may see such additional targeting options such as behavior and search targeting.

All in all, mobile marketing is taking off -- there are new opportunities to reach beyond the teen target while still providing success metrics and benchmarks for future campaigns. It is all dependent on your targets' knowledge that they will receive a message and the relevance of the message itself.

About the Author



Jason Hoffmann is media supervisor in the New York office of Avenue A | Razorfish. Hoffman has been a part of the interactive industry since 1997 and has been running interactive and integrated media campaigns for over eight years. Hoffman has worked on a multitude of projects for top companies including AstraZeneca, Verizon Wireless, Sears.com, Hasbro, Wrigley Gum and Universal Pictures. Along with strong negotiation skills and a fundamental understanding of interactive media planning and buying, he is providing expansion within the interactive arena via emerging media campaign executions, including VOD and mobile marketing.

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