

Big Business Has Discovered Mobile Advertising

Marketing to customers via mobile phones has come on in leaps and bounds. Finally the mainstream marketers who promote the largest firms in the world have cottoned onto mobile marketing, which is a sure sign that it has come of age. The development of Short Message Service SMS technology, or text messaging as the technique is more commonly known, has advanced dramatically. This has allowed SMS to dovetail with other computerized technology and making text messages easily distributed and monitored. SMS communications now form part of most major marketing drives.

Mobile marketing had its origins early this century in Europe where businesses started to build lists of mobile phone numbers and send text plugs to offer various products. The service was often abused. This has since become better controlled and refined. Certain protocols are in place in most of the world's leading economies to limit the flood of text messages to private mobile phones.

It is true to say that SMS has entered the mainstream as an advertising medium because of the flexibility it offers to advertisers. While email goes out over the public internet, mobile text messages are distributed via a wireless service. This has given advertisers who are using the system the opportunity to initiate ways to track the sort of advertisements that are going out over their networks. Also there are several agencies concerned with mobile marketing. Two of these are the Interactive Advertising Bureau and the Mobile Marketing Association. MMA. Part of their task has been to set parameters for the industry.

In the beginning mobile marketing was negatively received by the media. This was due to its vulnerability to spam text messages. Admittedly many advertisers blemished the name of the medium. They employed the classic spam techniques, such as buying lists of mobile numbers and sending unwanted messages to tens of thousands of mobile phones. Once regulatory guidelines were put in place, however, mobile marketing matured and became popular with advertisers and acceptable to mobile phone owners. According to the experts, over 100 million SMSs marketing various products are sent to mobiles every month.

Mobile marketing has reached maturity over the past few years. The main reason has been that businesses are devoting a large portion of their direct advertising budgets to this form of advertising. Because companies regard mobile texting as a valuable investment, they are keen not to see the system abused. An important reason for businesses using mobile marketing is that customers are increasingly asked permission to have SMS sent to their phones.

Mobile operators are even putting in place double opt in measures so that consumers are very sure they want to receive text messages. In addition, consumers are able to opt out of the service whenever they wish by SMSing the word STOP to the sender of the message. Advertisers and mobile operators now follow the guidelines that are present in the MMA Consumer Best Practices Guidelines. All mobile marketers in the US are obliged to comply with these guidelines.

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