

Viral Marketing Goes Mobile

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Mobile devices, mobile phones and PDA's are one of the last great frontiers of viral advertisement opportunities. However, we have become experts at filtering everything, our air and water, our e-mail and pop-ups, and our mobile devices as well. We are good at filtering.

The very idea of unwanted advertising streaming through our Blackberries is abhorrent. Mobile devices are the ultimate opt-in medium and, therefore, a great way for marketers to connect with users...if that's what the users want. "WANT" is the key word here. How should marketers approach the medium?

There are three main ways to achieve this. They are:

Offer exclusive content. Anyone can offer ring tones. It's the unique content, such as exclusive mobile images of new brand concepts, that drives interest and calls them out in other media like e-mail campaigns, newsletters, websites, etc. So a wireless campaign is most effective when it offers exclusive content for wireless devices.

Make it useful and timely. Think about what would be handy and helpful to have on a mobile device. Last year, for example, Food Network enabled Sprint customers to download shopping lists for their Thanksgiving dinners. There was a lot of "Sprint-envy" going around among non-sprint customers.

Clearly define objectives. Usually, one of two business objectives drives successful mobile experiences: incremental revenue of brand intimacy. On the intimacy factor, a text message usually takes priority over almost any other form of communication. Why? Because we haven't yet been saturated with mobile spam, and this is what causes us to prioritize wireless messaging over voice.

Mobile marketing has been out there for a while but we marketers have new territory to explore. Video offers fantastic opportunities for engagement. Consumers already bypass their filters for highly useful or entertaining content and will do so for rich exclusive, compelling content.