By: Michael W Hobach
Blue Eye Group LLC
www.BlueEyeGroup.com

Years ago, marketing a local business mostly involved the use of printed advertising methods, such as newspapers, Yellow pages, flyers, and direct mail. Mixed in with those strategies included TV ads and radio ads, which were more expensive – yet even less targeted than the others.

However, due to the invention of the internet and mobile smartphones, things have changed tremendously when it comes to the most effective ways to generate more local customers.

First, let's discuss the internet.

The worldwide web has allowed just about everyone to create free email accounts, which in a sense, doomed the post office and the concept of a paper communications all together.

Early online advertisers saw this as an easy way to market their products on a massive scale and began to send unfiltered spam mail to any account opened to receiving anonymous messages.

Spam mail failed because it never bothered to distinguish between those who were "interested" and those who were thinking "this product is totally useless to me."

Behavioral marketing developed as a major advertising tool that was more cost-effective than targeting anonymous users. Whenever someone visited a website, a tracker came online and followed the user's movement as they browsed.

Every subsequent time that same unique ISP visited the same website, assuming the tracker had not been deleted, any information gathered would tell advertisers which products would most likely appeal to that user and they would display in place of general ones.

The birth of social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter have generated some smart and tech savvy marketing campaigns that use unique algorithms for targeting consumers who are most likely to purchase a product or service.

For instance, various types of advertising software can match a male in his late teens with a coupon code for the next video game sensation; they can even match a woman who sets her Facebook status to "engaged" directly to a list of wedding dress designer ads.

This is pretty impressive compared to traditional methods that offer no form of targeting features and abilities at all.

In fact, if you're an aggressive profit-oriented local business that progresses forward, instead of holding on to traditional advertising streams, you're probably already expanding your brand through internet marketing.

While this is a good thing, it's only the beginning. Simply creating a shiny new Facebook page or a sleek, professionally designed website only puts you on equal ground with most of your competitors.

If you really want to be the local trendsetter in your industry, you must use strategies that will truly put your company on the pedestal when it comes to using digital technology to generate new customers – as well as long-lasting, loyal, repeat customers.

Introducing Mobile Marketing

Creating a Web 2.0 identity is undoubtedly a necessity in today's consumer market. However, the mainstream popularity of smartphones has opened up a new source of marketing potential; for instance, delivering content and offers via text messages, QR codes, mobile apps, and mobile websites presents a profitable future for any business.

While your competitors are busy creating newer and more elaborate online campaigns, you could be sending your message directly to the palm of your target audience's hands – via their mobile phones.

Imagine a world where the entirety of the Internet could be found in someone's smartphone ready to be accessed like a massive library. Imagine a world where people no longer have to sit at home staring at a computer screen or checking the mail to get the latest product coupons or discounts.

Well, this is no longer an "imagination" – it's a reality. This is the current state of consumer activity today. We are busy, on-the-go people who move fast.

What does this mean for your business? This means that your target audience should not be out of reach simply because they are not in the right place at the right time. When you market directly to their mobile phones, the "time and place" is always "right."

In other words, mobile coupons are an effective way to send interested parties the latest discounts from your brand by setting mobile alerts so they are notified immediately.

As a marketing tool, you can allow your customers to sign-up to your mobile list using text message marketing. This involves the use of a shortcode and a keyword.

They can also sign-up by scanning a Quick Response (QR) code generated by your company.

In both cases, the customer usually gets something immediately for signing-up – this could be valuable, relevant information or some type of instant coupon or discount offer. It should be targeted and specific to what your audience would consider "irresistible" for the best results.

Both of these methods will be discussed later in more detail, but the general purpose of offering mobile coupons is to give you the ability to connect with your customers anytime, anywhere.

When social media platforms became the destination hub for most internet users, tracking tools were no longer as relevant; this is because people freely gave out their demographic information and interests on their Facebook page while Twitter simply asked people to retweet their favorite brands.

It opened up an unprecedented social connection between consumers and the products they used. Coupled with the onset of the mobile smartphone boom, advertisers can effectively mobilize their product range directly to the people who actually want to see discounts and coupons.

The relatively recent popularity of smartphones with their fast connections to the internet has fused together smart advertising with interested people. Tech savvy businesses know the importance of maintaining an online social presence in a way that their customers will always feel connected to their brands.

If you're currently in the market for a cost-effective way to increase revenue, while already tapped on social media and traditional advertising streams, mobile coupons are an almost guaranteed solution that will work to help you bring in more customers.

What is a Mobile Coupon?

Mobile coupons are special discount codes, product offers, and other exclusive offers, that are delivered directly to your customers' mobile devices via text messaging.

This means your business can set up mobile alerts so your mobile subscribers are notified about products and services that interest them, which in turn, encourages a sales boost.

The beauty of this kind of marketing campaign is that it is permission-based; meaning the user WANTS to receive your text offer. By signing up for your text marketing list or scanning your QR code, they are giving you permission to communicate with them about your business.

Therefore, you don't waste precious resources by blindly firing at the masses because only the people who are interested in your offers will receive your messages.

Unlike billboards, newspaper ads, and other types of marketing, mobile coupons allow you to send amazing discounts and coupons directly to your audience, which is more likely to generate a response and increase your revenue over time.

With mobile coupons, you can also do extreme targeting with your offers based on the specific products and services you offer, as well as customer buying patterns. So instead of sending all of your mobile customers the same coupon offers, you can segment them based on certain criteria.

For example, let's say you own an awesome clothing store for all styles and age groups. You could create a mobile coupon campaign specifically for a certain clothing line aimed at young women in their early 20s.

So instead of offering the same thing to your entire list, you can target the offer to those who have purchased a particular type of clothing. Simply insert the relevant clothing offer to your target demographic and send it; then, enjoy the results.

Mobile coupons also come in the form of scannable QR codes that can be placed around your business so your customers can easily find exclusive offers while they're shopping. QR codes can also be placed

inside your establishment or even on printed advertisements, such as flyers, business cards, etc. to enhance their effectiveness.

Just to recap, a mobile coupon is:

- A fast and cost-effective way to send discount codes, special offers, services, and more to customers who signed up for your SMS service.

- A specifically targeted marketing campaign tool used to reach the people most likely to buy your product.

- An incredibly fast way to generate more revenue for your business while costing a whole lot less than grabbing a spot on giant billboards, running TV commercials or radio ads, and other costly methods.

- Another convenient way to connect with your core audience and reward them for supporting your business.

Why Mobile Marketing?

Mobile phones are now an inseparable part of human existence and many people would almost go crazy if they went without their smartphones for a day.

Mobile marketers understand the unique bond shared between a person and their smartphone; so it's incredibly easy to advertise on a device that is taken everywhere a person goes without a second thought.

According to some studies, the average day for people with smartphones looks like this:

- Most mobile phone users look at their device within 15 minutes of waking up.

- Most smartphones are used to visit the internet (i.e. while people are at the gym or shopping or ordering a meal at a nice restaurant).

- Most mobile phone users use the device to check their email several times per day.

Perhaps one of the most important facts is that smartphones are always online and they can carry massive amounts of data without the need for ridiculous amounts of storage. This means people can use them to perform a large variety of functions like finding directions to the hottest nightclub, searching online for the best lasagna recipe, messaging friends on their whereabouts, and more.

Its versatile functionality means there are multiple ways to advertise your product that does not feel like a spam message destined for the trash bin.

Many people today send text messages more than they actually talk on their mobile devices. That's because text messaging is a fast and convenient way to communicate. It even has its own shorthand and lingo for moments when writing a full coherent sentence is impossible.

Text marketing also comes in handy at times when speaking on the phone is not possible or is inconvenient. For instance, if you're in a crowded movie theatre or are too busy to hold a phone up to your ear, text messaging is the perfect way to communicate.

Why bother coming up with a catchy slogan or celebrity endorser when new-age digital advertising has changed from 30 second television commercials to three second text messaging protocols?

Your customer-base constantly evolves with the technology they use; and right now, almost no one can be caught without a smartphone.

With mobile marketing expertise guiding you towards better days, you can expect a stronger response from your marketing efforts because:

- Consumers today actually WANT to receive special offers on their mobile devices. Imagine your customers not having to search for your business because you've already sent a hot coupon offer straight to their phones.

- You can easily analyze the sales growth from your mobile coupons because you're only sending them to a select number of customers. You can track how many use the coupon and compare it to overall trends.

- Smartphones are quickly becoming the next mass medium. Due to the fact that desktop and laptop computer usage

require a certain level of stability, mobile phones have an edge because they offer the world in a tiny handheld device.

- Advertising campaigns using text messages are almost always read within minutes when they arrive on a smartphone. You can't get that much coverage when television commercials can be skipped and radio stations can be changed during commercials.

How do Mobile Coupons Work?

1. Get your customers and potential customers to opt in to your mobile list.

Generally speaking, there are two popular ways to set up mobile coupons to attract more local customers to your business:

(1) SMS (Short Messaging System) text messaging campaigns that periodically send out coupons to your mobile subscribers.

(2) QR scannable codes that encourage users to take part in your marketing campaign by snapping pictures with messages hidden in the barcodes.

Although it's not a requirement, creating a mobile loyalty club is a great way to jump-start your mobile coupon campaigns. This method focuses on making your subscribers feel special by giving them unique offers just for being a member of your club.

2. Select your shortcode and unique keyword. Alternatively, develop a QR code.

As an opt-in program, interested consumers must sign up for the service using a special number string called a shortcode. Most people are familiar with this sequence because it's used for practically every mobile marketing campaign and usually consists of five or six numbers specified by the carrier.

You then decide on a unique keyword related to your business that users must text along with the shortcode. This double entry system ensures the people wanting to sign up for your service are serious about receiving coupons from you.

3. Aggressively market your new mobile campaign.

Without a marketing campaign for your new text marketing initiative, no one will know how to join your mobile list. Therefore, getting new subscribers on an on-going basis is critical to the success of your mobile coupon program.

You can promote your mobile campaign various ways, including your current marketing methods in order to accelerate your efforts.

Promote your keyword using a strong call-to-action (example, "Text 'Food' to 12345 to get 50% off your next meal!") and put it on your website, postcards, flyers, customer receipts, direct mail, and more.

4. Create your response to those who sign up. You can even start sending out coupons.

When people successfully sign up for your service, you need something to send back to them automatically, such as an instant special offer or discount.

This type of direct response offer makes it enticing for consumers to opt-in. Whether it's a 50% off discount code on computer parts or a buy one, get one free meal deal, you should be prepared to send a quick "thank you" to customers and immediately show them the benefits of signing up.

5. Start sending out your mobile coupons and make them easily redeemable.

Once you have a strong list of local smartphone users who want to receive your messages, develop a schedule that periodically sends out your coupons and ensure they can be easily redeemed without any hassles.

Always make your offers extremely valuable for your target audience to get the best response rates. Be sure to send your messages during times that best fit your type of business; otherwise, your redemption rates will suffer.

Fully train your staff on your new mobile marketing campaign so they can do their parts to ensure its success. They should be knowledgeable

about how to get more of your customers to join your list, as well as the proper procedures to follow when customers come in to redeem your mobile offers.

Benefits of Using Mobile Coupons

Besides the growing popularity of mobile phone usage, there are several other advantages for using mobile coupons as a marketing strategy compared to traditional paper coupons and other advertising methods.

With mobile coupons in your marketing arsenal, you can expect:

- Increased sales from local customers who want to do business locally. By adding them to your mobile list, they will be instantly notified about your special offers and coupons. In fact, approximately 95% of text messages are opened within minutes.

- Increased customer loyalty and referrals. Your customers will think of your business the next time they're looking for your type of product or service. Why? Because you have established a personal communication channel with them on their mobile devices. Mobile coupons keep your existing customers coming back for more; and they're easily sharable with family and friends.

- Permission-based targeted marketing. Behavioral marketing was a big deal when Google started dominating the internet because it showed computer users relevant ads that presumably interested them. It's now incredibly easier for businesses to market their brands because those who sign up to their mobile list actually want their messages.

- A cost-effective solution to traditional advertising methods, such as paper coupons, flyers, direct mail and others. Rather than paying for the paper, the printing, and the distribution, you can send out a single message that costs less than a cup of coffee to every single person on your contact list.

- An easy way to track sales progress. Depending on what type of mobile messaging you choose to use, you can match a specific mobile coupon code to a specific customer to determine what campaigns are working. You can also measure how much each transaction averages out to using coupons, the demographics of

the customer, and even the time of day most people redeem their mobile coupons.

- A speedy delivery of content. If you know an upcoming long weekend could benefit from an awesome sale, why not simply send a text message to your eager mobile customer base and boost sales right away?

- A noticeable advantage over competitors. Sure, you may be using social media platforms to open a line of communication to your customers; but at this time in technical civilization, that's considered "the norm." However, very few businesses have adopted mobile coupons as a marketing tool.   Now is the time to get in and claim your mobile market share before your competitors do.

Mobile Coupon Tips

- Use an Autoresponder
  - Entice consumers to opt-in to your mobile list with a coupon offer; set up your Autoresponder so they receive their coupon immediately

- Make Your Offers Time-Sensitive
  - Increase the responsiveness of your offers by putting a redemption time limit on them; this will make your audience respond quickly

- Choose the Right Time to Send Offers
  - Send your offers at times when your audience is more likely to redeem them; for instance, a night clubs should send them at night, while a barber shop should send them during the day

- Actively Promote Your Mobile Coupon Campaign
  - Tell the world about your mobile coupon campaign; tell in-store consumers about it, as well as online consumers to get the best results

- Do Not Spam Your Customers
  - Your customers want to receive your offers, but they do not want to be bombarded with offers every single day; spamming your list will cause them to unsubscribe

- Provide High Value Offers
  - o Figure out what your customers like… and then give it to them at a great deal to keep them coming back to your business

- Keep it Simple
  - o Make sure your coupons are easy to understand and easy to redeem for the best results

Different Types of Mobile Coupon Offers

- Cents Off or Dollars Off

  Example: Receive $2.00 off of your next purchase!

- Buy One, Get One Free

  Example: Buy one meal, receive another one for FREE!

- Multiple Purchase Discount

  Example: Receive $20 off when you buy any two pairs of jeans!

Mobile coupons are the future of targeted marketing campaigns because:

- They're more convenient, more cost-effective, and receive much higher redemption rates than paper coupons and other advertising methods
- They're more precise than simple social media outreach programs
- They're read more than other advertising materials like direct mail, emails, etc.
- They're faster than any other competitive content delivery system

When you use mobile coupons, you know that every unique phone number added to your list is another potential local customer who has expressed some type of interest in what you're selling.

Are you starting to see how this can open you to up another revenue stream that could potentially boost your profits and revenue in very little time?

When you combine the increasing addiction consumers have to mobile devices and the ability for businesses to send mobile offers directly to those devices, the final result should be an excellent return on investment.

What other marketing effort can claim that much power without costing a fortune to make it happen?

Hopefully, after reading this report, you've learned exactly why mobile coupons can potentially help you bring more local customers through the doors.

If you have further questions, or would like to get started with your very own mobile marketing campaign, contact me at 414-731-0450 for a free consultation.

I will explain exactly how your business can utilize the power of text message marketing and QR codes to build and grow an effective mobile coupon campaign.

Michael W Hobach

414-731-0450

mhobach@blueeyegroup.com

www.blueeyegroup.com