Effective Mobile Coupons – Cashing in on Mobile Marketing!

If you're a texter, you know that sometimes 160 characters are just not enough to communicate what you want to say. Spilling over into a second text is no big deal when you are texting with friends and family, but when you are texting a mobile offer to a customer, this is a big no-no! A single text – 160 characters (including spaces) – is what you have to learn to work within to craft effective text offers that consumers will rush to redeem.

When you hear "mobile coupon," do you picture a paper coupon with dotted lines around the edges, ready to be cut out? Most mobile coupons – in reality – are simply texts from businesses with a code to provide at check-out or when ordering food, a product or services that generate the discount promised.

When you write a mobile offer to send out over text, you are sending a mobile coupon. Within the 160 character limit, you have to convey who the message is coming from, what you are offering, the time limit for the offer and the offer code.

For instance, if you manage a pizza parlor, a text offer might go something like this:

> Gianni's Pizza is having a Monday Madness pie sale - $5 for a large 2-topping pizza – good today only 2 pm-10 pm – carryout only – discount code MONDAY5!

That's 153 characters and it's pretty good – it covers all the elements, but it can be improved – consider this instead:

> Gianni's Pizza's Monday Madness pie sale is on. $5 for a large 2-topping pizza. Today from 2-10 pm. Carryout only. Use code MONDAY5 when ordering. 555-555-5555

This refined message is at 159 characters. By stripping out a few words and some punctuation, the text is more targeted and now includes the phone number which would be click-to-call to encourage on-the-spot ordering to take advantage of the time-sensitive offer.

By having the business name up front, you let them know who's communicating with them – this is appreciated and will encourage them to read on and making the offer immediately lets them evaluate whether the offer is relevant for them. Next, giving the terms and limitations encourages them to act immediately if they are interested in the offer. Finally, providing a click-to-call number makes it very tempting for them to click to access the deal straight away. If they close the offer to look for your number, you'll lose people who would otherwise have redeemed the offer.

This model is valid for any small business, whether you own a dry-cleaner, hair salon, yogurt shop or landscaping service. The components of an effective text message are the same, only the content relevant to your business will vary.

Once you start sending out mobile offers, you'll learn which offers generate the highest redemption rates. If you approach your texting strategy like a science experiment, you'll be able to most effectively hone your text writing skills. This means changing only one aspect at a time. For instance, if you send out a mobile coupon, be sure to keep the text to improve upon it.

Even if you get a good redemption rate, you can always tweak for better results. If your offer was a dollars-off coupon, consider trying a percent-off next time or a buy one-get one type of offer to see which type of discount engenders the best response from your customers. Then, you may want to tweak the time period your offer is valid for – same day offers may elicit a better response than a three day window – depending on your business – but you'll never know unless you tweak.

When crafting your text message, brevity is key, but don't use abbreviated lingo unless you have to – for instance "Call to order" is preferable to "Call 2 order." When people scan texts, this can look like a typo or a spam message that can cause them to delete your message.

Mobile coupons are being redeemed at a rate 10 times higher than paper coupons and cost $1/50^{th}$ the price of paper coupons. If you're not using mobile coupons to increase revenues and profits, you're leaving money on the table every day.