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SMS case study - Viking Cooking School

By Dan Butcher

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**Name and city and state of marketer**

Viking Cooking School, Ridgeland, MS

Name and city and state of agency or marketing services firm

EzTexting.com, New York

Campaign/program name

Viking Cooking School – Ridgeland Mobile

Duration

February 2010 - ongoing

Common short code and keywords used

Consumers were asked to text the keywords VIKING, VIKINGGW or VIKINGMEM to the short code 313131.

Objective

Viking Range Corp., a leading home appliance company, has a cooking school with 16 locations throughout the United States.

Viking Cooking School contacted Ez Texting to implement a couponing program for current and prospective students to boost class enrollment and establish an ongoing dialogue with their customers.

Target audience

More than 70,000 students including kids, moms and dads, business professionals attend the Viking Cooking School each year.

Viking Cooking School's target audience is consumers who love to cook, entertain or who appreciate great food.

For its new SMS initiative, Viking targeted past, current and potential cooking class students.

Strategy

To kick things off, Viking's Ridgeland, MS location piloted the program.

In order to generate sign-ups, the school sent out an email to their existing customer database with a link to Ez Texting's custom Web widget to opt-in and also instructed students to text VIKING to 313131 to join their SMS list.

Call to action

Text VIKING / VIKINGGW / VIKINGMEM to 313131 for weekly cooking tips plus discounts on upcoming classes.

Tactics

Viking's tactics included email blasts to customers, a Web widget located on various Web sites, in-school signage, print advertising, print collateral and word-of-mouth promotion by instructors at the beginning of each cooking class.

Results

Over the past four months, the Ridgeland Viking location has built a list of close to 300 members.

One recent text filled eight class spots, valued at \$79 each--a single text message that cost less than \$15 dollars to send resulted in an additional \$632 dollars in revenue.

Viking Cooking School has since brought two other locations on board, with plans for more in the near future.

Lessons learned

"We have found that our text customers want more than just class promotions," said Vicki Willoughby, manager of public relations and marketing at Viking Cooking School, Ridgeland, MS. "They want discount offers, shopping/cooking tips, Web site links to recipes and upcoming culinary events in the area.

"We have tried to expand from the original concept of promoting classes to include everything culinary," she said.

Strategy quote

"We want to communicate with our customers in a real-time manner," Ms. Willoughby said. "Offering discounts on classes, VIP spots at upcoming events and information they are not able to access on our existing Web site.

"Ez Texting allows us to offer our customers a special service and communicate with them on a frequent basis with information they are interested in receiving," she said.