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SMS case study - Carmike Cinemas

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Carmike Cinemas

Client

Carmike Cinemas, Columbus, GA

Media Agency

Charter Communications, St. Louis

Mobile Agency

Ping Mobile, Englewood Cliffs, NJ

Campaign name

Carmike Cinemas Mobile Marketing Campaign

Keywords and short codes used

Text the keyword CARMIKE to 74642

Objectives

Carmike Cinemas' marketing department wanted to find new and innovative ways to reach a broader and younger demographic while differentiating their theaters from competitors, and making the theater-going experience fun again.

Strategy

Carmike Cinemas reached out to Charter Communications to develop a strategy that would enable them to reach their target market and accomplish their objectives.

Charter recommended building a new 30-second spot with a mobile call-to-action to drive engagement of the target market and build an opt-in database to increase sales and cultivate loyalty.

When viewers of the commercial texted CARMIKE to 74642 they received a response which included a list of movies, show-times, links to view trailers and purchase tickets.

After the database reached critical mass, the second phase of the program was developed. It included weekly SMS reminders to view updated movie listings and show times, as well as interactive movie trivia and games that could be played via SMS.

Finally, the third phase of the program included strategically placed mobile calls-to-action at the point of sale in the theater location, which was aimed at measuring mobile user activity and identifying who the most frequent patrons are.

The program was so effective, additional Carmike Cinema theater locations were added, further increasing engagement and sales. The popularity of the CARMIKE keyword (and its viral usage) was leveraged to jumpstart the additional theaters' campaigns.

Results

Over the first year of the campaign, monthly usage increased between 15 and 30 percent, on average, while attaining a very healthy double opt-in rate of over 30 percent.

In an attempt to learn more about the viral affect of the campaign, 30-second spots were discontinued for one month and usage continued to increase. However that increase was reduced to approximately half of the monthly growth average.

Carmike Cinemas continues to promote the mobile program and plans to add more theaters in the future.

Quotes

Dale Hurst, director of marketing at Carmike Cinemas

With Hollywood movies becoming more and more High-Tech our audiences are also doing the same.

People want up-to-date information about movies and show-times quickly and conveniently.

We have found the internet has majorly impacted the way people receive information about movies and show times and mobile marketing has and will continue to have a profound impact on the way people access and receive information as well.

These days almost everyone carries a cell phone and are, therefore, constantly connected. It's up to us as marketers to provide what people want, when they want it.

Matt Miller, marketing coordinator of ad sales at Charter

The success of this mobile campaign is due to the progressive thinking of Carmike Marketing and their constant employment of multi-level promotions.

Harnessing the power of targeted cable advertising paired with mobile calls to action and complimentary POS displays continues to produce strong participation in Dalton, GA, and now in Franklin, TN, one of the highest grossing theatres for Carmike Cinemas.

I am extremely pleased with the continued success of our targeted and creative multi-channel approach, and look forward to finding new and innovative ways to satisfy consumers' needs.

Isaac Naor, Beverly Hills, CA-based regional client services manager at Ping Mobile

I see many clients who preach innovation and employment of cutting-edge technology, but not many truly embrace the tools available to them.

Carmike realizes their patrons always have their mobile devices with them, and that most are not smartphones.

This campaign utilizes the lowest common denominator technology, SMS text messaging (which is compatible with over 98 percent of mobile phones in the U.S.), in a truly profound way, allowing for the largest possible number of respondents to interact-with and benefit-from their system.

Moreover, for those roughly 35 percent of U.S. wireless handsets which can view the mobile Web, Carmike provides trailers, ticket-purchasing availability and much more.

The employment of the multi-channel approach has created a tremendous competitive advantage for Carmike, and I feel fortunate for the opportunity to be involved with such forward-thinking and resourceful team.