

Case study

Mobile marketing

Verbatim:

'The beauty for the marketer is that you get an interested consumer right when they are interested.'

The image shows the cover of the September issue of ELLEgirl magazine. The cover features a photo of Rachel Bilson and several headlines: "OUR BIGGEST ISSUE EVER!", "SPECIAL PRICE \$1.99!", "DARE TO BE 267 WAYS TO LOOK HOT!", "Get the perfect back-to-school makeover", "HOLLYWOOD STYLE SPECIAL starring Mary-Kate Olsen, Jessica Simpson, Hilary Duff, Lindsay Lohan...", and "GO TO ELLEGIRL.COM". Overlaid on the cover is an interactive advertisement titled "ELLEgirl's INSTANT WIN SEPTEMBER!". The ad includes a calendar for the month of September with numbered days, instructions on how to play (text message to 422777), and a list of prizes for each day, such as a trip to London, a Target gift card, and a mobile phone. The ad also features images of a mobile phone and a calendar.

Ellegirl adds value for advertisers and readers by featuring interactive ads.

A real call to action

Teen mag ads grab readers by the phone

By ALLISON ENRIGHT
Staff Writer

Teen girls don't pass triangle-folded notes in class anymore. They text-message their circle on their mobile phones. Some—with (overly?) generous parents willing to fork over cash for an Internet-enabled camera phone—snap pictures of the oh-so-hot football quarterback at his locker and share them with like-minded friends, or post them to their face-page, typically a free, journal-style Web site that is shared among friends or to the world.

Sure, teen girls still stress about the SATs and zits, but they also possess a level of buying power unknown to generations past, spending about \$81 a week. Many, then, can go and buy the latest jeans and save the lusting thoughts for the quarterback.

Because of teens' spending power, projected to be \$159 billion in 2005 by Northbrook, Ill.-based Teenage Research Unlimited, teens are becoming increasingly attractive to marketers. Marketers, in turn, are finding ways to communicate to them in ways that tag their product, service or client as cool.

ELLEgirl, the teen fashion magazine published by New York-based Hachette Filipacchi Media U.S. Inc., in 2005 began using mobile visual search technology to develop promotions that would link the magazine's teen readers—average age 17—more solidly to the advertisers in the magazine via readers' mobile phones. By connecting the two media, ELLEgirl upped the recognition factor and recall rates of its advertisers' static print advertisements, and, perhaps more importantly, permitted teens to interact with mar-

eters' brands on demand.

"If you have any teen girls in your life, it is all about the cell phone," says Deborah Burns, vice president and publisher of ELLEgirl. With 75% of 15- to 17-year-olds carrying cell phones, according to a Gfk NOP mKids Study, and using them as a vital part of their social lives, it is logical to try to speak to them there. "For our audience in particular we really have to stay on the cutting edge of what's next. We are always open here to anything that smacks of new technology," she says.

ELLEgirl worked with Lexington, Mass.-based Mobot Inc., the visual search firm that created and administers the technology, to get readers to interact with the magazine and its advertisers through the promotion called ELLEgirl Gets Wired. The Mobot technology makes it possible for an image, of any resolution, angle or var-

ied distance, sent by a camera phone to an address or phone number to be recognized through a digital mapping program. After a two-issue soft launch that introduced the concept to readers and encouraged them to register for the promotion online, ELLEgirl ran its first "mobotized" advertisement in August 2005.

"L'Oreal wanted to be first, and we activated the Mobot technology with them with a custom-created spread that showed the cell phone and combined two L'Oreal Paris brands with an opportunity to enter a sweepstakes to win a trip to Paris," Burns says. After sending the photo, entrants would receive a one-time message back acknowledging their entry, which also contained beauty tips.

"Mobot speaks to their mobile lifestyle," says Lauren Bigelow, vice president of marketing and product management at Mobot. "They can connect the moment they have an impulse and get an instant response. The beauty for the marketer is that you get an interested consumer right when they are interested," she says. "It's not an intrusive contact. It is putting the control in the consumers' hand about when to interact with the marketer."

The program with ELLEgirl sends a response to the readers on a one-text-message-per-entry basis; the data collected from the entry is not used for ongoing marketing messages. Mobot works on any camera-enabled phone and with any wireless carrier and requires no download to operate.

After the L'Oreal ad tested successfully, the magazine moved quickly to create a month-long instant-win promotion for its September issue, which is the publication's biggest issue of the year with its fall fashions and back-to-school items. The issue included a two-page spread with a calendar detailing the 30 giveaways that would occur, one each day, and instructions on how to enter. "What we wanted to do was make the issue even more spectacular for our advertisers by building in the Mobot platform. The idea was for readers to keep the issue and refer back to it in the month to win whatever was offered," Burns says. Giveaways included products or samples from such companies as Maybelline, Virgin Mobile, Neutrogena and Target.

The Mobot team received the photos directly. "(The promotion) really captured the readers' imagination and engaged them," says Bigelow, who noted anecdotal evidence of increased reader engagement. She says the team could tell participants really went through the magazine, hunting for the particular ads

See ELLE / Facing page

ELLE / From preceding page

Appeal of interactive print ads growing

and marked them with stickers or bent pages to indicate participation, which they could see in the photos. A survey conducted by Stamford, Conn.-based InsightExpress LLC after the month-long promotion was complete found that, on average, each participant entered 22 times in the month and that participation increased 228% from the first 10 days of the month to the last 10 days. Nearly all those who responded to the survey—96%—said they were likely or extremely likely to participate in a similar promotion in the future.

The survey also recorded significantly higher recognition and favorability rates among those who participated in the promotion over those who did not. Purchase intent was 14% higher, recall rates averaged 15% higher, and advertiser favorability ratings averaged 18% higher for those who participated.

“What was intriguing about Mobot was that they finally found a way to use something ubiquitous, the cell phone, for interaction, and to take a static print page and allow you to drill down and interact,” Burns says.

The appeal for this enhanced interaction with a print advertisement is growing among the magazine’s advertisers, too. Burns says the goal from the business side is to get advertisers involved and build programs that will increase incremental ad pages in the magazine. “This technology allows us to build marketing platforms that include interaction as an element. It seems like it has taken off because advertisers are calling to participate. It isn’t often when

the phone rings and advertisers inquire about getting involved,” she says. ELLEgirl has a year-long agreement with Mobot to continue its promotional programs.

Bigelow says the technology Mobot uses can be applied to many types of images, not just flat print images. “A lot of different images in the world can be made interactive,”

she says, suggesting, for example, that an image taken of the Boston Red Sox logo could feasibly link phone users to the latest scores and statistics. The logo image could come from a myriad of sources, from a T-shirt or baseball cap to a poster on the side of a bus.

The eventual goal of this kind of interaction with brands and mobile phones is to link mobile behavior with purchase behavior, moving some purchases now made online, for example, to be made via the mobile phone. Vikrant Gandhi, a mobile industry analyst with San Antonio-based research firm Frost & Sullivan, says that the time for what he calls “m-commerce” is not too far off for this segment. “Brands building on marketing and promotions like this are the first stage. When (advertisers) send info back (in the future) there will be the option to purchase and it will give the prices and delivery options. The brand content will contain merchandising content,” he says.

With the teen segment being rather flush with cash—47% believe they will spend more in 2006 than in 2005—combined with their early-adoption patterns for new technologies, marketers can expect any

movement toward mobile commerce to commence with them. For now, getting a brand message to technology-driven teens is an important goal for marketers.

“The beauty of having the readers take a

picture of an ad is that they then have a copy of that ad stored on this very personal device,” Bigelow says. “For a brand marketer, it’s like putting a brand directly in the reader’s hand.” ■

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