Text Messaging/SMS and Email Marketing: How the Former has an Edge over the Latter?

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In business, marketing can be simply put as any activity, promotion or offering directed towards a customer to persuade him/her to buy a particular product or service. Even though the concept is the same, over the years the mode of marketing has been changing. First, it was word of mouth, then came print marketing, after that telemarketing, then TV ads and now Internet marketing and mobile marketing. The Internet and the mobile phone in the past couple of decades have revolutionised the way marketing is done. The latter does have a few advantages over the former, but overall they both have had a great impact on the end recipient, the customer.

In Internet marketing, the most obvious way to market a product/service is via email. The email id of a potential or existing customer can be willingly taken from them and when promotional offers, discounts and sales come, the company simply sends the customers an email. In mobile marketing, the mode of communication with the customer is text messages also known as SMS. One must realise that though people easily give their email ids, they are more reluctant to give their mobile numbers because they hate the pestering calls from banks and credit card companies. But on the positive note, a person who gives their number is definitely interested in purchasing a particular product or service from that company, as they have shown trust and faith in the company by giving their number.

Studies have concluded that over 90% of all SMS or text messages sent are read by the recipient. This is not the case with emails. Many a times the emails end up in the spam folder and are deleted before even being opened and viewed. The mobile phone is a personal device. People carry it with them at all times. So if a company sends an SMS, the person receives it instantly. Whereas when it comes to emails, one has to connect to the internet and login to the account to see the mail. Yet, this drawback has been eliminated to some extent with the advent of smartphones and 3G and 4G internet services on mobile devices. One thing which is obvious is that there are more people with a mobile phone then there are with a desktop or laptop. Thus, SMS/ text message marketing does reach a larger audience than email marketing.

JCPenney, Macyâ€™s, Belk, etc. are the famous department stores in the US and each have a variety of customer loyalty programs. For example, we all have heard of silver, gold and platinum memberships. Each membership consists of a different group of people. Similarly on the basis of the information, different text messages and SMS can be sent to individual groups via group SMS functionality. With the help of SMS gateway and SMS API and a correct database, the correct SMS deal would be sent to the right people in a particular group using group SMS. Even though bulk emails can also be sent, but still the problem of spam filters, filtering the email will exist, whereas there are no such spam filters on the mobile phone. If a store decides to have an instant sale, the best way to let the shoppers know is to send out immediate group SMS, which everyone will probably see within a few seconds of receiving the text message whereas the emails are not looked at instantly upon delivery. Hence text message/SMS marketing does have a slight edge over internet marketing.

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