

# Caller I.D.

A prepaid cell phone provider offers one of mobile marketing's most personalized loyalty programs yet

**THE OFFICIALS AT BOOST MOBILE** wanted to know who was on their phone lines.

With more than 4 million customers on the Boost cellular network, company executives knew their mobile phones were in use. But because the company specializes in prepaid phones — which don't require the months- and years-long contracts that often contain a wealth of marketing information about users — Boost marketing execs needed to find creative ways to get users to identify themselves.

"All they know is your mobile number," says Jordan Greene, vice president at MindMatics, where he oversees mobile marketing. "It's a big problem to determine who the client base is and how to market to them."

To meet this challenge, MindMatics helped enable the "Boost VIP" loyalty program, in which customers can sign up for exclusive incentives tuned to their self-reported interests, from hip hop to travel. So far nearly 10 percent of Boost's user base has signed up for Boost VIP — and revealed their personal information and various interests to Boost Mobile.

One recent incentive was a contest to win a star-studded weekend trip to Las Vegas. Boost promoted the

contest to its VIP members via e-mail and also through text messages and on its Web site. It also did a trial with direct mail to drive awareness and opt-ins of the program.

As a result, 500 Boost VIP members responded with explanations about why they were a "true VIP." The winner, who mentioned in his entry that he spreads the word about Boost VIP, won a stay at an exclusive hotel and played pool with celebs at the "Celebrity 8-Ball Tournament."

And while Boost is popular among young users, the demographics for participants in Boost VIP range widely, defying the popular stereotype that only teens and young adults make up the audience for mobile marketing messages.

"People assume it's for younger people," says Inna Mirman, Boost Mobile's customer loyalty manager. "But the average age of a Boost VIP customer is 25."

Boost officials are finding that mobile marketing works effectively as part of an integrated program that seizes on various marketing media. For example, customers can sign up for Boost VIP through a traditional or mobile Web site, by text messaging or by calling an 800 number.

And Boost is about to engage in a direct mail campaign for the VIP program. "We want to reach existing customers who don't already know about the VIP program so

they can sign up," says Mirman. "We're sending out a great-looking postcard that talks about the VIP program with a call to action to sign up on their phone or online."

One of the great benefits of direct mail "is that not all people are necessarily e-mail or mobile phone savvy," says Mirman.

"This way, it gets to them directly. With the ability to catch their eye with a creative postcard, we hope that we can entice them to take the next step and sign up for the VIP program.

"As well, with direct mail, not only will the customer see it, but other members in the household may see it, which will help create awareness of the program in general."

As the plan continues to attract users, company officials are hopeful that this integrated plan — using direct mail to drive mobile marketing — will continue to provide them with, well, a boost. **D**

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