

Marketing Munchies Podcast Transcript

Season 2, Episode #6

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Announcer: Welcome to the Marketing Munchies Podcast series hosted by Dr. Bridget Behe. Each week Bridget and her guests will share information, insights, research-based findings, and her 30 years of experience to help your horticultural business connect better with current and future customers. Now, let's join our host, Dr. Bridget Behe.

Dr. Bridget Behe: Hi, and welcome to the Marketing Munchies Podcast. I'm your host, Dr. Bridget Behe. This week I would like to talk about a new twist on an old topic: permission marketing.

I recently spoke at the Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable, Farmers' Market, and Greenhouse Expo and ran into Andy from Andy T's Farm Market in St. Johns, Michigan. Andy was really excited about a new form of marketing that he was engaging in: text-based marketing. Andy had recently opted in to *Sentext* which is one of many vendors who offer text-based marketing, and he was just so excited about the results that he was seeing. He put me in touch with Tim Dunn who is a partner at HD Business Advocacy. He recently came down to Michigan State. We had a really nice visit about text-based marketing.

Now, why do I say it is a new twist on an old form of marketing? As Tim and I were talking, it reminded me of Seth Godin's book *Permission-based Marketing*. I had to look and see when that was printed, and it was back in 1999. Twenty years ago, Seth Godin was advocating for permission-based marketing, which, essentially, is asking customers to opt into customized or specific marketing that would be directed to them. I do not know about you, but I hardly go anywhere without my cell phone, and I am in a bit off a panic if I do not have it with me. It makes text-based marketing a really good option for contemporary communications.

There are a few companies that I opted to get their text-based marketing, and most recently, and I was so excited to find out when my dry cleaner could send me a text when my dry cleaning was ready. What *Sentext* does, and some of the other text-based marketing companies do, is they enable you to collect (with permission) the cellphone numbers of your customers and then send them text-marketing communications.

As Tim and I were chatting, I did some of the math and figured out for his customers and *Sentext* has agents. They really do not have employees. The cost of text-based marketing could vary, but I figured it was about \$2,000 a year for the high end of 5,000 messages that a company could send through this particular vendor. Which, if you think about a \$2,000, how many advertisements or how much time would you really have to put in to recoup that annual investment?

Now, text-based marketing is regulated and, if you look in the news, recently, *Maci's* and *Papa John's* both were fined for misusing the communications (the text messaging). One of the first

things that you should do or that should happen is, you invite customers to opt in. You can put some signage up. What Tim suggests (has been very effective) is to offer a contests where you have a weekly or a monthly drawing for a gift card—maybe it is \$25 for a week or maybe it is \$50 a month. Consumers send a text to the number that you get set up. Then, you are eligible to win that gift card, and you send the individual the text who actually wins the contest.

What this does, is it builds up your database. Then, I think the most exciting thing for me is that you have got a set of consumers, maybe in your loyalty program, maybe not in your loyalty program. What Tim says is he has got a start with a fresh database that he cannot really migrate those in, but be that as it may, you think about the opportunities to send communication materials to your customers. You can talk to them about sales if you have got an inventory item that you are long on or something that is brand new that you are really trying to introduce to the customers. You can talk to them about that.

I thought another interesting marketing use for text-based marketing was to prompt customers to post a review for your business. I thought that was super! We know in this day and age that so many people pay so much attention to reviews that are posted by perfect strangers, and they really do act on those. Or, you could put a link into a webpage that you have got or to a flyer that you want to bring your customers' attention to. I just see this as such a versatile tool. Then, with the opt-in/opt-out feature, your customers, at any time, can choose to no longer get texts from you.

But the really cool part is, how many of us ignore text messages. I mean, we are almost like the Pavlovian dogs: when the text message ding rings, we absolutely take a look at it. This is a form of communication that can be very effective. I think it shows your customers, I think it is a respectful form of marketing, because you are asking permission. You are asking for them to opt-in to this, and then they can opt-out at any time. I think it is an idea worth exploring. I am just so excited that my dry cleaner has text messaging now, because now I will know when my dry cleaning is ready, and I can pick it up and not wonder where that blouse is.

There are lots of vendors out there, but I will give a shout-out to Tim Dunn who is a managing partner at HD Business Advocacy and Bay City, Michigan. If you want to get some more information from him, that is great. If you want to explore that with another vendor, I think that is wonderful too. I think in this day and age, where we do not go anywhere without our cellphones, and we do almost always look at those text messages, that text-based marketing is something that you might consider for this spring. You know, think about exploring that opportunity before spring develops too much, because that is a good opportunity for you to collect the telephone numbers and think about a strategy for communicating with folks after the busy season has passed. I think this is really where we can continue sales after the spring peak and into and throughout the summer, fall, and winter even if you are open. Then, hey, when winter rolls around again next year and people are dreaming of those beautiful sunny days when they can grow vegetables and flowers and herbs outside, you can prime that pump by sending them some text messages about looking forward to things to come.

Thanks again for listening this week. I appreciate it! Hope you join me next week on the Marketing Munchies Podcast.

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Announcer: Thank you for joining us on this week's Marketing Munchies Podcast. For more information or to download the transcript of this podcast, please visit, connect-2-consumer.org. That's C-O-N-N-E-C-T, dash, the number two, dash, C-O-N-S-U-M-E-R, dot, C-O-M.

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