



## Personalize Your Loyalty Program With Mobile Marketing

by Alan R. Sultan

With the economy languishing, organizations of all types are looking for ways to hang on to existing customers. Casinos are no exception as they battle other forms of leisure for consumers' shrinking discretionary income. To keep guests coming back, casinos must stay top-of-mind and continually prove that they're a top entertainment choice. A loyalty program that reflects positive guest experiences and your knowledge of them can help your casino retain revenues even in this down economy.

But today, guests expect your loyalty program to be about more than just free plays and comp cards. They expect it to be intelligent – to drive the right message at the right time and place for them to take advantage of it. And no marketing channel can offer that better than intelligent mobile marketing.

### An Extension of the Host Staff

What kind of service do your guests expect your casino host to provide? Most likely, the answer is “personalized.” Outside of the dealers, casino hosts are perhaps the most visible and accessible casino employees. They cultivate relationships with every level of player, from a first-time visitor up to the highest of high rollers. A successful casino host also develops relationships with guests when they aren't on the property. By working closely with marketing managers, hosts can determine the best channels to communicate with all levels of guests in a customized and relevant manner.

In today's permission-based marketing world, your guests expect to receive offers that are personalized to their interests, playing history and guest status – essentially, to be marketed as intimately as they are treated by their host. But with those rising expectations comes rising costs. Targeted direct mail and online marketing campaigns are getting more expensive as printing, mailing and other media costs increase and response rates are not what they used to be. No technology offers a faster, more personalized and versatile marketing and communication platform than the mobile phone.

### Personalize the Message

Mobile marketing is a different animal than direct mail or other traditional media. If a direct mail campaign falls flat, you've lost the production costs but not the opportunity to reapproach these recipients in the future. In the mobile medium one-size-fits-all communications are seen as intrusive spam. Do you think a recent retiree on a fixed income wants

to receive a lucrative free-play offer on their mobile device?

Your mobile marketing program should operate on the same guest scoring principles that drive the rest of your loyalty program, driving the right offers to the right guests based on their importance to your business. An occasional penny slot player is most likely not a Tier 1 guest; they shouldn't receive an offer of free tickets for a concert by an A-list performer just because they're in your mobile rewards program.

Your guests view their mobile devices as more personal than their television or mailbox. If your message isn't compelling and customized, you run the risk of killing your core value proposition and losing this important medium forever.

### Developing Killer Content

The key to mobile marketing is relevance. You need to know what guests like and dislike. The content you create to deliver your targeted messages must reflect the tastes of your guests. To help you identify and develop killer mobile content, here are a few steps to consider.

**Make it Compelling** – Put yourself in your guests' shoes and consider the type of content they would want to receive on their mobile devices. Demographic and lifestage data are important to consider. For example, younger, more tech-savvy guests may respond better to videos than simple text messages. An experienced mobile marketing solutions provider can help you develop multiple types of content for a single campaign, ensuring each guest gets the right content.

**Consider Business Objectives** – Look around your casino. There are opportunities everywhere to improve your business with intelligent mobile marketing. Empty seats at shows and restaurants and lagging action at certain gaming tables are just a couple examples of business problems that can be layered with the right content to create persuasive, customized mobile marketing offers.

**Segmentation Reigns Supreme** – If you have a targeted direct mail or e-mail marketing campaign in full swing, then you have all the data you need to segment your mobile offers for maximum response and create content that's relevant to every type of customer your store identifies. Even if you don't have sufficient data, there are solutions providers that can fill the gaps. For example, The Acxiom Corporation can provide lifestage, household and financial data in real time. When combined with the location of

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mobile users and your current offers, this data ensures users get offers they are interested in while maximizing the revenue opportunity of the interaction.

**Test Early, Test Often** – Testing in the mobile marketing world generates instantaneous feedback. Mix and match specific offers, discount levels, segments, and even the creative elements themselves to see which ones pull the best.

**Create an Emotional Attachment** – Repeated studies have shown that the most effective loyalty programs are those that create an emotional attachment from guests that extends far beyond rewards, perks and comps. With an personalized mobile component, your loyalty program can leverage the advantages of time and place when guests are on your property to create personalized offers that truly stand out. For example, your casino determines a loyalty program member has

spent several hours at a high-limit blackjack table. This guest could receive an offer on their mobile device for a substantial discount at your best restaurant – no rush, the coupon is good for the next 12 hours. The message could even include a secondary, free-play offer if they try a different game after they've finished their meal.

Congratulations, you've just created an emotional bond with a high-level guest by sending an offer that's relevant not only to their interests, but at a time and place when they will actually use it. That guest is sure to remember that offer, even if she doesn't use it. It's a win-win for guest and property – and that's what intelligent mobile marketing is all about! ♣

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