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SN MENA

8.11 HOW TO USE TEXT MESSAGES (SMS) FOR AWARENESS RAISING, PROMOTION AND INFORMATION PURPOSES

HOW TO USE TEXT MESSAGES FOR AWARENESS RAISING, PROMOTION AND INFORMATION PURPOSES

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What Is It Useful For

Reach people directly, best used to announce an event (dates of registration, dates of an on air interview, etc.).

When To Use

Twice before an event: the first time about 4 days before, and the second time on that same day (or the evening) as a reminder.

How Long Does It Take

About 2 weeks should be enough for the whole procedure.

Target audience

Depending on the context, but mainly anyone who carries a mobile phone, which is Lebanon is everyone, so the parents, the students, the training company owners, etc.

In Lebanon, you can break down the SMS target audience by area, gender and age. Maybe in other countries, the databases are more detailed (for example the job position is also available).

Examples

The DSME project used SMS for

a) Raising awareness about the Dual System at the beginning of the registration for the new scholastic year. (sent to 10 000 subscribers in the less privileged areas in Lebanon):

وصلت عالبروف؟ انضمّ هلأ للنظام المزدوج (الثانوية المهنية)
www.dsme-lb.com

Englisch: Did you reach the last complementary year? Join the Dual System (Vocational Secondary) now!:

b) Announcing the date of the broadcasting of the documentary:

ربع ساعة من وقتك لتتعرّف على التعليم المهني المزدوج بحسب النموذج الالماني الناجح، اليوم عل الـ أم تي في "في" الساعة ١٠:٣٠ بعد تاراتاتا

Englisch: 15 min of your time to get to know the Dual System, according to the German successful model, today on MTV at 10h30 after TARATATA.

For both, the sender name was "The Dual System" instead of DSME, as the target audience might not know the abbreviation.
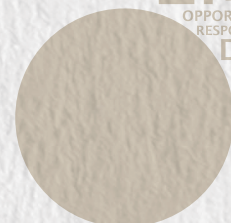
WHAT TO DO

In order to achieve the above mentioned objectives, the following steps should be undertaken:

- Agree on the target audience. Find a bulk SMS provider that is suitable for you.

- Agree on a language for the text message.

- Note that using Arabic plus another language in the same text message will not be readable.

- Enquire about the number of characters you are allowed to have (it also depends on the language you choose – at least in Lebanon).

- Agree on a text; it should be catchy and short.

- Agree on a sender's name (should be something the audience is familiar with so that they are curious to open the message).

- Agree on a time and date to send the SMS.

- Ask to include your number in the SMS sending so that you make sure the right text is being sent at the right time.

WHAT TO OBSERVE

The following lessons learnt should be observed:

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Pros

- Direct marketing tool.

- People cannot really avoid looking at their messages.

- You can be very selective in the areas, so for example you could target people living in the villages where the schools are.

Cons

- The budget for targeting a huge number of people is huge and probably with a low return on investment.

- You can **only** be selective in the areas, so if the area is not one of your target audience criteria, the SMS will not be targeting the audience you desire. At least in Lebanon, this is the only criteria that you can reliably trust (parents buy a phone to their children, or a husband to his wife, and the number will be registered under the buyer's name).

- You are limited by the characters you are allowed to fit into 1 SMS (or else you pay double).