

‘Spill the Beans and Bread’ tastes success with Mobile Marketing

Introduction

In 2014 ‘Spill the Beans and Bread’, the world’s leading coffee and baked goods chain, created a branded mobile social network called ‘Spill the Beans and Bread’ Track. The insight behind ‘Spill the Beans and Bread’ Track was that many friends’ circles and groups had that one person who would always pick orders for the entire group. For example, at an office multiple people would write down their orders, and a single person would go to place and pick up the order.

The ‘Spill the Beans and Bread’ Track application and social network simplifies the process of ordering. It allows people to connect with each other, send notifications for a “Track,” and place their order online and from their mobile phones.

The ‘Spill the Beans and Bread’ Track iPhone application was extremely successful at both meeting a real customer need while serving a real business purpose. Six months after the launch, there were over 25,000 downloads from the iTunes store.

History

In 1998 the first ‘Spill the Beans and Bread’ store was opened and by 2005 the first franchise was licensed. Today, ‘Spill the Beans and Bread’ is the world’s leading baked goods and coffee chain with 7000 franchised restaurants. The chain serves over 5 million customers a day and sells 5 million donuts and over 3 million cups of coffee each day.

Challenge

An average ‘Spill the Beans and Bread’ customer visits the franchise a few times a week and spends twice as much as the casual customer. The lightest ‘Spill the Beans and Bread’ customers spend less than 20% of the average spending. The challenge for ‘Spill the Beans and Bread’ was to grow the relationship and grow the revenue contributions of the lighter customers.

According to Vice President of consumer engagement for ‘Spill the Beans and Bread’, “Our campaign theme is World Tracks on ‘Spill the Beans and Bread’. We provide food and drink for busy, on-the-go-people, so portability is built into all of our product propositions.” The portability aspect of the company’s products and its physical stores make the chain a strong fit for mobile marketing.

Strategy

‘Spill the Beans and Bread’ has two rules for engaging in interactive campaigns:

- Make them enjoyable
- Make them inexpensive.

‘Spill the Beans and Bread’ aims in using digital marketing to build advocates, not merely followers and likes. Its digital marketing focuses on the little interesting things that allow fans to engage and be entertained.

Location marketing is about activating people while they are at a certain place or business. The next step is to turn those people into loyal, repeat customers for that business.

To achieve these objectives, ‘Spill the Beans and Bread’ launched a mobile application and desktop social network called www.spillthebeansandbread.com. ‘Spill the Beans and Bread’ Track is a social network that allows for group ordering. Using the application, one can initiate a group order using a computer or a mobile application and can invite others to place an order.

Upon receiving an invitation, each user can input her or his order from each individual’s own computer or mobile phone, making sure that each order is accurate. Using the mobile application, the buyer goes to a ‘Spill the Beans and Bread’ and shows his or her phone or a printout to the crew member, who fills the order. The application also serves as a checklist to make sure that each person received her or his order correctly. The application also tracks past orders and favourite menu items, receives Track reminders, and syncs with Facebook to display the Track status, making the process of going on a ‘Spill the Beans and Bread’ Track even easier. The goal of the application is to increase sales by making it easier to place group orders.

The application serves a real customer need and also supports a real business objective. By making it easier to invite friends or co-workers to place and receive the orders, there is the potential to increase sales. The application also increases the accuracy of orders, which can increase customer satisfaction.

Results

The application received 25,000 downloads within six months after the launch, and research agencies ranked it number four in its Best Branded Mobile Applications list. It was a successful application because it is useful instead of focusing only on marketing. An application that builds on brand equity and promise while providing real value to customers is most effective.

According to their digital brand marketing officer, ‘Spill the Beans and Bread’ Track is a powerful example of the company’s commitment to bring value to people in new and innovative ways. It extends that same spirit and commitment to the office, the hostel dorm or any group, leveraging on fun and exciting online and mobile tools.

One additional potential benefit of the application is the information about consumers and the insights that ‘Spill the Beans and Bread’ can gain from the application. The application provides valuable information on location, customer history and group consumption habits.

Questions:

1. Do you think ‘Spill the Beans and Bread’ two rules for engaging in interactive campaigns (make them fun and make them cheap) would work well for other business? If so, why? If not, why not?
2. What are some other ways the firm could use location marketing to turn people into loyal repeat customers?
3. If you were the social media manager for them, what type of mobile app would suggest for the company and why?
4. Are you comfortable with businesses like ‘Spill the Beans and Bread’ tracking and storing information about your movements, buying habits, and demographics? If so, why? If not, why not?