

MYTH BUSTERS: THE TRUTH ABOUT SMS ADVERTISING



The ever popular SMS! Yes, popular to consumers, but also becoming popular to advertisers. To be able to use SMS advertising, marketers need to know the audience, know their ways and understand what it is exactly that will attract them to what is being advertised. This is arguably still one of the easiest ways for marketers to reach their audience. Yes it is easy – you can reach thousands of people with one short message. But is it effective? Do people even read the SMS?

A recent study was conducted in order to determine which factors are the most significant predictors of consumers' attitudes towards SMSs. The study was conducted by Michael Humbani, a [Master's](#) student in the [Department of Marketing Management](#), in Gauteng amongst a sample of 304 consumers.

Contrary to previous beliefs, adult consumers in Gauteng are not willing to interact with the company sponsoring an SMS advertisement via their mobile phones. The study reveals that consumers do not switch on the Bluetooth function on their mobile phones in order to receive instant messages when they travel to unfamiliar places. Gauteng consumers are sceptical of incentives used by marketers to entice them to purchase products, such as the offer of financial rewards because they view incentives as having strings attached.

Factors that contribute to SMS attractiveness were identified as message content and personalisation of the SMSs. The study found that the ability of an SMS to provide up-to-date information timeously, and the extent to which those messages are tailor-made to suit individual needs are central to the acceptance of SMS ads. Fear of spamming emerged as an important predictor that potentially inhibit acceptance of SMS advertisements.

The results of this study suggest that managers must refrain from bombarding consumers with unsolicited text messages because such messages will be regarded as spam. Managers must enhance relevance of the message by considering not only consumer preferences and interests, but to also consider user activities, weather, and time and device type. The use of the incentives must be viewed with caution because consumers seemingly do not believe in free offers, and effective segmentation is the key to developing attractive SMSs that result in consumer action.

This research was conducted as part of the fulfilment of the [Master's degree](#) in Marketing Management in 2013 with the [Department of Marketing Management](#) by Michael Humbani under the supervision of [Theuns Kotzé](#).