

Marketers turn to SMS for mobile marketing

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Brands such as Ford, Virgin Money, Dell, Tabcorp and Foxtel will be among the first to cash in on a new mobile marketing application.

Telecom companies, brands and mobile marketing company TXT4, have collaborated to action a six-month pilot called the Communications Alliance, where consumers will be able to interact with a brand via SMS messages to a 13 number at the cost of a local call.

And the brands' expectations will be high, as they have been told the pilot will make advertising more accountable, and increase lead generation by 50% to 150%.

Antony North, TXT4's regional director, said he is excited about the prospects of mobile marketing in Australia, following its success in the UK. "This pilot will address two fundamental issues within marketing, accountability and providing a channel for serious mobile marketing," he said. "SMS messages have the potential to finally fix the response gap between advertising and conversion rates," North added.

Irish Cotter, from Cancer Institute NSW, which will also be part of the trial, said she was looking forward to the opportunity to explore the possibilities of

Call or SMS 'QUIT'

1 3 QUIT

SMS service not available on Vodafone or 3 networks
Standard call and SMS charges apply

cancer
institute
NSW

Opportunities light up: The Cancer Institute is hoping for a good response to its mobile marketing trial.

mobile marketing, using the 13 QUIT number on its new anti-smoking campaign. "We're really keen to explore options that will increase the response of our advertising. We already have a telephone quitline set up, which uses a lot of resources, so a text option will hopefully use less resources and increase the response of the advertising as people are able to text immediately... At the very least we want to increase the response and

make it more convenient for people to quit," she said.

Accountability is one of the main attractions for marketers, with North saying that effectiveness can be tracked down to the minute consumers view the ad. This is because different advertising media, such as print, TV or radio use different key words, but the same 13 number.

North went on to claim that the good news is SMS marketing has already

proven to work. "In general we see a typical increase in lead generation of 50% to 150% from our clients in the UK," he said.

John Edwards, who established Motorola's Asia-Pacific business, and is a director for TXT4, said mobile marketing is one of the most valuable avenues available to an advertiser. "The mobile number is the most valuable asset you can get from someone. People may move house several times, they change email address all the time, but they usually keep the same mobile number," he said.

And while North said mobile marketing has progressed in the UK, it is yet to be taken seriously on the other side of the globe.

"When you look at the top 200 advertisers in Australia no-one really looks at mobile, and those that do only allocate tiny amounts of their budget and space. It is not taken seriously in Australia by the other marketing channels yet," he said.

In the UK, TXT4's clients include Ford, Nikon, American Express and Halifax. North said his company deals with 40% of all automobiles, all government advertising, and many from within the financial services sector.