



## ***Capture Real Time Event Performance Input from Customers, Prospects and Staff Using Simple Tools***

Gathering feedback from both customers and prospects, as well as from event staff, is essential in any event marketing program.

Recently, Constellation created apps for a client that provides instant updates on how visitors are reacting to a special innovation showcase. We also created apps for the staff to provide feedback on visitors and to document important meetings. A significant advantage of this type of feedback is that it requires no equipment beyond the text capable cell phones everyone is already carrying and the information collected is in “real time”. Using SMS programming and a short code (think American Idol voting style), it is possible to gather real, instant input from a variety of people. The SMS applications can be sent to the user using a variety of formats and responses can be as simple as texting back a simple letter or a pre-coded string of text that translates to participant ratings.

There are multiple advantages to utilizing SMS applications for event measurement. Some of the more significant advantages are:

- 1. Information can be collected in “real time”-** SMS surveys allow for information to be instantly transmitted from a mobile device to the application.
- 2. The user can be reached anywhere, at any time-** SMS surveys do not have the same limitations that traditional survey techniques have. The respondents to the surveys do not have to connect to a kiosk or speak to someone. The SMS surveys can be completed while a visitor or staff member is on a plane or walking back to his or her hotel room. According to a 2011 survey by MobiThinking, 87% of the world’s population now subscribes to a mobile device. This means that the chances of a visitor to your exhibit or event not having a mobile device are extremely limited.
- 3. The feedback is available instantly-** Current SMS technologies allow for participant feedback to be instantly transmitted to a database. This allows for information from an event to be collected and distributed with very little wait time. Making adjustments on the fly or after a nightly debrief is a very attractive advantage made possible by hearing directly from your visitors and staff about how well your communication event is working. This is extremely valuable when an effective and engaging staff is needed to create the best possible result at an event.

So, how exactly do SMS applications work? Let’s consider a few examples. You work for SmartCo. Your company chairperson just gave the keynote address at a major industry conference. You ask the audience via the microphone,



presentation screen and/or using printed cards, to text “Smartco” to short code 12345 on their smartphone. They immediately receive a message thanking them for participating and a request for their input on three to four questions on the importance of the keynote content. The first question pops up and asks for a reply by simply texting a single letter. For example, the first question may read, “How valuable was the content of this keynote address to your job? Text V– Very Valuable, S- Somewhat Valuable, N– Not So Valuable”. The participant sends the letter and another question appears. Upon answering the last question, the participant receives a thank you screen that may contain a link to your company’s mobile optimized landing page, a link that directs them to a request for contact input, or any other mechanism you might employ.

The applications may be easily tailored with relevant information and can include incentives for participation. Using printed cards along with other promotion tools with this process can create a more meaningful marketing touch. Utilizing a prize drawing, for example, will increase response and draw people back to your exhibit. You can even remain in touch with people after the event.

On the other side of the fence, staff can use a more condensed version of this type of data input to provide feedback on visitors or gather competitive intelligence, etc. Staff members can simply text a keyword followed by their observations or a string of data, such as a lead format, to a short code address. This data accumulates during the event and is instantly accessible or can be summarized at the end of the day. Several of our clients may have three, four or more keyword/short code apps running at one event.

Collecting input using this method requires very careful planning and design on several levels. The first consideration is that short message service (SMS) is limited in the number of characters that may be used, so words must be precise and to the point. Programming these applications takes a creative approach, much like crafting a tweet on twitter. The second element to remember is that participants cannot be confused about how to respond and must not perceive a risk for responding. The third major consideration is that visitors expect privacy and the Mobile Marketing Association has protocols that dictate how SMS applications may be used to better respect participants communication channels. The final consideration is to reflect on how SMS applications can link to valuable resources and establish goal conversion milestones. These capabilities make the applications valuable for not only data gathering, but also for campaign activation.

In summary, there are a variety of benefits to using SMS technologies at trade shows and events to gather visitor and staff feedback. Standard Messaging Service (SMS) applications are a new, creative option for measuring staff and visitor feedback at marketing events.



If you are interested in learning more about SMS applications and the event measurement services Constellation offers, please contact us at +1.770391.0015 or [inquiry@constellationcc.com](mailto:inquiry@constellationcc.com).

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