

# Spread the mobile love... how to run a seasonal campaign:

## A step-by-step guide to planning a successful mobile campaign for big events

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The calendar is packed with religious holidays, national holidays, as well as sporting and festive events, beloved by consumers and offering tantalizing opportunities for the shrewd mobile marketer.

This February more brands than ever will use mobile to capitalize on Valentine's Day. If you're missing out, don't worry, because our tips, and the campaigns that illustrate them, will help you plan mobile campaigns for the key events in your calendar. And there's always next year.

This guide takes you through the four key stages of planning a seasonal campaign, illustrated with tried-and-tested examples:

- 1 **Picking an event and promotion to suit your brand and customer base**
- 2 **Setting your goals for the campaign**
- 3 **Making the campaign relevant to your customers**
- 4 **Keeping on the straight and narrow**

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# 1 Picking a promotion / event

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## Think inclusive

Select an event that's relevant to a broad range of your customers. The beauty of Valentine's Day is its universal appeal.

Having long-since shed any religious significance, it's the celebration of love, an emotion that spans all religions and geographies.

Take Africa, for example: where Valentine's Day is a highlight for the clients of mobile agency Starfish Mobile.

**“Valentine's Day is much bigger in Africa than Christmas from a content-download and mobile-marketing perspective. As there are a number of religions practiced in Africa, Christmas is not necessarily celebrated as fervently as in America or Europe.”**

Sean Pashley, chief commercial officer, Starfish Mobile.

## Think laterally

Valentine's is a great example, because on the mobile Web, there's no rule that you have to be in the chocolate, greeting cards or flowers business to run a promotion. As long as your offer is relevant, customers will be receptive.

Valentine's campaigns run from the most serious – safe-sex campaign currently running in the UK – to the irreverent: one Australian mobile network operator once ran a viral campaign called Dr. Date that helped people cancel unwanted dates by SMS and provided pointers on faking phone conversations to bail out of a bad date.

## Think gifts

Valentine's, like many other festivals, is all about giving. Tap into this spirit. Mobile consumers love to receive gifts personally, as well as free or discounted gifts they can give to others. Make it an excuse to reward loyal customers and win new ones. Run competitions, offer samples, discounts on gifts, provide tips, reminders, amusement, and free service. Some operators have been known to make SMS free on Valentine's and New Years Eve, but it is more usual to see clever campaigns to promote messaging.

**Tools for Love** was created by BLITZ and Goodby, Silverstein & Partners for US mobile operator Sprint. A slick promotion run last February, it offered customers the chance to tart up their mobile messages with a TXT Romantifier and have their personal love messages delivered in the dulcet tones of Isaac Hayes. Then they could explore Sprint's handsets that made the most suitable Valentine's presents to a sweetheart.



### Tools for Love

Sprint helped customers deliver romantic Valentine's mobile messages, assisted by soul-great Isaac Hayes.

# 1 Picking a promotion / event (continued)

## Think digital

As mobile digital content takes off, it opens a treasure trove of possibilities for marketers. “Virtual” gifts – based on images, video, music, etc. – are becoming increasingly popular. Digital gifts can be made relevant for all brands, assuming all rights are secured: music tracks or ringtones; wallpaper; animations, video and games; and mobile greetings cards (m-cards). All digital content can be branded and mobile users are more than happy to subscribe to get it.

The most obvious example is the Valentine’s m-card – animations, videos and personalized greetings sent as multimedia messages (a big hit with mobile users). In the run up to February 14th, m-card creator, Sharpcards sees a 3000 percent jump in sales, selling both “on deck” through operator portals and direct to consumers.

## Think peer-to-peer

The beauty of a campaign that offers m-cards, ringtones or wallpapers is it’s peer-to-peer. If people like what they receive, the chances are they’ll use the service to send another, giving the promotion life of its own. This viral power is particularly attractive to big brands as it helps reach a demographic that may not be easily reached through traditional media.

To help stress the importance of fresh breath in the run up to Valentine’s Day in the US, Scope mouthwash launched a dual **Catch Kisses** mobile and Web campaign. The mobile site allowed customers to send virtual kisses or wallpapers as a mobile greeting to a lover or friend, with the chance to win a date with a reality TV celebrity.

The promotion exceeded expectations. The mobile site attracted 300 percent more visitors, with 450 percent more kisses being sent, than industry standards had led Scope to forecast. This all helped to lift sales of Scope mouthwash over the season.

Kevin Buss, interactive marketing manager for Procter & Gamble oral care, attributes the success of the campaign in part the heightened receptiveness of the mobile audience around Valentine’s Day and the viral nature of mobile promotions.

Adverts on popular mobile sites helped publicize the campaign, but the mobile portal of Sprint, proved a particularly good driver of traffic. iLoop Mobile ran the mobile Web portion of the Scope campaign, working with Brand in Hand, SMG/MediaVest and imc2, among others.



### Catch Kisses

Send virtual kisses or wallpapers from the Scope mouthwash sponsored mobile site.

## 2 Define your goals

Brands cite numerous reasons for mobile-marketing campaigns: broadening consumer awareness of company, product, service or message; driving traffic to the mobile or Web site; rewarding loyal customers; increasing opt-ins for future mobile campaigns. Clearly defined goals will help you better measure the success of your campaign.

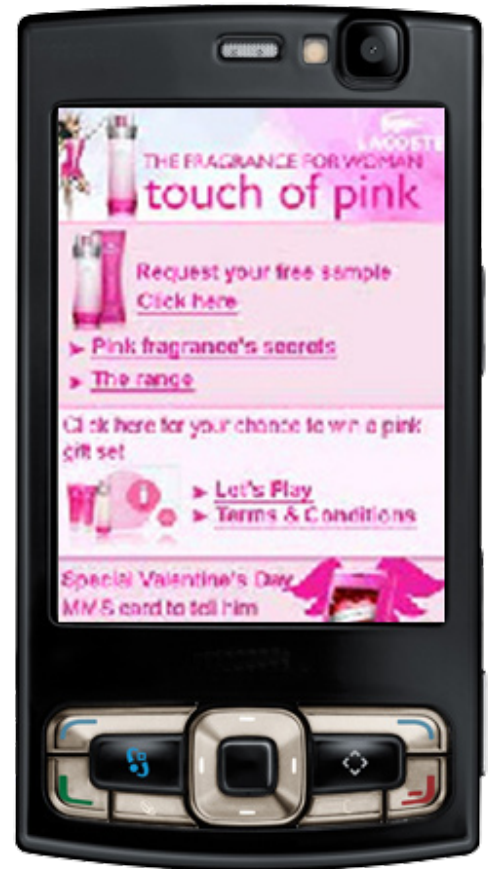
### Think brand

The goal of the **Lacoste Touch of Pink** campaign, last year, was to raise awareness of its perfume and collect opt-in contacts. The campaign centered on a purpose-built all-pink mobile site, complete with a competition to win a boxed set, register for a free sample, wallpaper downloads and the opportunity to send someone a Valentine's love message by MMS.

A banner-advert and text campaign was timed to drive traffic to the mobile site in the run up to Valentine's Day. Over 55,000 people visited the site in the space of a month, 10,000 ordered the free sample or entered the competition - a conversion rate of 18 percent. The text campaign (which included a direct link to the mobile site) generated a click rate of nearly 12 percent.

In a follow-up of 10,000 participants, 94 percent opted-in to receiving perfume advertisements on their mobile phone and 74 percent said they were considering buying the fragrance.

The campaign was run for Procter & Gamble by Phonevalley, Starcom, MediaVest and MediaCom.



### Lacoste Touch of Pink

55,000 people visited the mobile site to enter the competition, order a perfume sample and/or send an m-card.

## 2 Define your goals (continued)

### Get your message across

Valentine's Day isn't reserved for roses, perfume and chocolate, as illustrated by one of the most innovative mobile campaigns this year. In a bid to cut teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, the UK government has taken its "Want Respect? Use a Condom" message mobile.

Thmbnls is the UK's first made-for-mobile interactive drama. Starting on January 9th, it follows the lives of six teenagers in 22 weekly 60-second episodes. Storylines subtly convey the safe-sex message. Viewers are encouraged to text in to enter the debate by SMS on the issues raised and influence the storyline.

Advertising, on the main mobile portals and online, encourages teens to sign up to Thmbnls.mobi or online at [Thmbnls.co.uk](http://Thmbnls.co.uk). Subscribers are texted with a link to the latest episode each Friday – which is totally free to download. Each episode is followed up with a SMS, perhaps from one of the characters asking a provocative question about the show.

Valentine's Day, with its high focus on sex and relationships, will be given February free promotional material is available with a special Valentine's episode on February 13th.

**"The personal nature of mobile communications enables us to blur the advertiser-to-consumer barrier, to enable the viewers to identify with the characters. It also offers opportunities for real interaction and personalization,"**

Emma Cowan, interactive services, Central Office of Information.

The campaign is run for the Department for Children, Schools and Families, by the Central Office of Information, creative agency 20:20 London and Incentivated (which negotiated the "zero-rated" data deals with the UK carriers).



### Thmbnls.mobi

A made-for-mobile interactive drama to help teens get the safe-sex message.

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## 2 Define your goals (continued)

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### Drive sales through personal discounts

In times of recession, particularly, consumers love discounts. The advantage of mobile is that it makes the offer personal and there are a myriad ways to do this, including m-coupons or vouchers, issued from the brands mobile site or through one of many third-party coupon specialists.

Consumers are taking a real shine to m-coupons. According to analysts comScore in the US alone, 12 million people, or 5.2 percent of mobile subscribers, now receive at least one mobile coupon per month. That's up 66 percent on last year.

Brands are getting wise to this demand. It's too early to release details of this year's promotions, but Ericsson reports:

**“We are also beginning to see customers running campaigns using vouchering systems based on MMS, WAP or Java to offer discounts or free goods and this is likely to be a major growth area in 2009.”**

Niclas Granholm, manager, Ericsson IPX Global Messaging

### Build your mobile opt-in subscribers

The ideal promotion targets / rewards existing customers while building the opt-in list for future campaigns. There is considerable overlap between customers interested in a Valentine's and Mother's Day promotions, or Christmas and Easter, say.

Brands use many techniques to grow their list of mobile subscribers organically. If the advantage is clear – e.g. sign up to receive monthly discount coupons or the chance to win – consumers will subscribe through the mobile or Web site. Add short-codes – and/or quick-response codes for the more advanced – to bill-board, magazine, online etc adverts, so users can opt in to receive text alerts and a link to your mobile site.

Target a mobile-Web-friendly audience, by running promotions with established campaigners such as MNO or, for example, with mobile social-networking sites. comScore points out that on a monthly basis 21 million people accesses a social-networking site using their mobile phone. Tie-in promotions with sites such as Flirtomatic (if available) look particularly attractive.

Both Lacoste and 1-800-FLOWERS well illustrate how Valentine's campaigns can be used to maximize mobile subscriber acquisition.

### 3 Make it relevant

The golden rule of any mobile campaign is: make it relevant. An ill-targeted message may not only fall on deaf ears, it may even alienate the recipient.

#### Give customers what they want

Consumers love to give presents and there's no better excuse than seasonal celebrations.

When it comes to seasonal campaigns, few do it better than Flirtomatic. This is why the site is a pin-up for mobi-marketing guru and author [Tomi Ahonen](#).

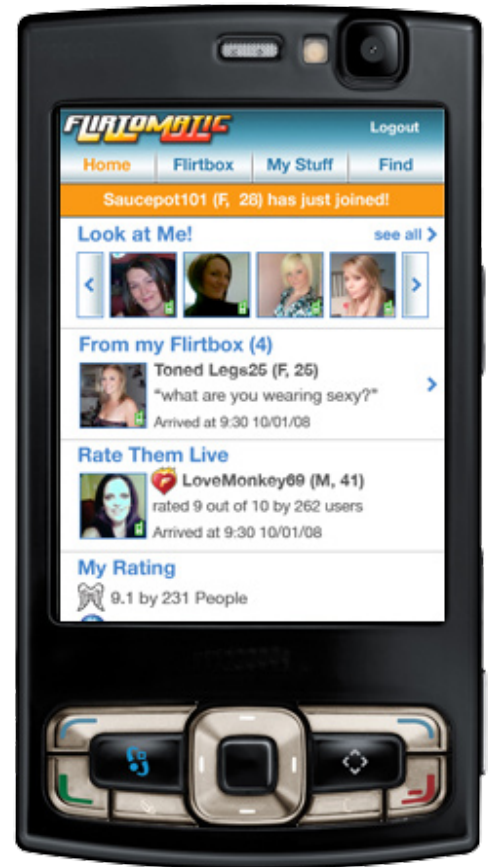
**Flirtomatic** is a social-networking-style site, started in the UK, where people flirt for fun. Flirtomatic doesn't need to charge a subscription fee, because its income comes from selling virtual gifts that users send to each other: one million virtual gifts per annum. Users can be PC or mobile-based, but 80 percent of gifts are purchased by mobile.

In the run up to February 14th, Flirtomatic will unveil new virtual gifts – designed in-house and by Sharpcards – to join last year's smash hits, the animated Valentine's kiss and rose. Content is promoted by allowing members to send one present – say a kiss – for free each day.

Valentine's promotion have been so successful in the past – February accounts for 18-20 percent of gift sales – that Flirtomatic is tempted to branch out into real-world gifts, possibly roses or chocolates this year. It will be interesting to see a) who the partners will be; and b) how successful it will prove.

**“Our subscribers are very seasonally responsive. You'd expect Valentine's Day to be big, Christmas too (though the shape of the opportunity is not what you imagine), but Easter, Halloween and so on are all very responsive too. Last year we ran a Leap Year promotion – you know that women can propose to a man on February 29th? Three days before, we put up an engagement ring for women to send to men. We sold 14,000 of them.”**

Mark Curtis, chief executive officer, Flirtomatic



#### Flirtomatic

Mobile subscribers go mad for virtual Valentine's gifts such as animated roses and kisses.

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## 3 Make it relevant (continued)

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### Service with a smile

Everyone loves a freebie. Consumers are much more receptive to mobile marketing that comes wrapped in a gift, whether digital content or a useful text.

To help promote and drive sales through its mobile site, US florist, 1-800-FLOWERS ran a promotion last February with AT&T to promote its mobile site and build its mobile-subscription list.

The Cupid goes wireless campaign embodied four common elements of mobile-marketing campaigns.

The 1-800-FLOWERS mobile site was promoted both on the AT&T mobile portal and through text marketing to the MNO's opt-in subscribers, with an invitation to enter a competition to win a US\$50 gift voucher.

On the mobile site subscribers were offered a free m-card to send to a loved one. One example was a teddy-bear holding a bunch of flowers, audibly conveying a personalized greeting.

Customers were also encouraged to sign up to alerts. In the run up to each occasion, Valentine's, Mother's Day etc, 1-800-FLOWERS, subscribers now receive a text reminding them to stay 'out of the doghouse' by buying a gift. On receipt, 24 percent of subscribers click through to the mobile site.

### Keep it simple

It is in the interest of both marketer and customer to make the campaign as straight-forward as possible, where possible using a viral element.

Moblog is a blogging site (based in the UK), where people send in photos and comments from their phones. It ran a competition – giving away mobile phones for the best submissions – encouraging people to post their most romantic pictures to a Valentine's blog and the opposite to an anti-Valentine's blog. The competition was so successful that it was picked up by a London newspaper, which ran a double-page picture story, introducing a million people to mobile blogging – a concept that was relatively unknown back in 2006.

Click to see [Valentines Blog](#).



#### **1800flowers.mobi**

Subscribers receive an alert on their mobile in time for Valentine's and Mother's day to help keep them out of the doghouse.

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## 4 Keep it honest

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As smartphones become more affordable for consumers, in particular the youth market, data prices fall, and digital content continues to blossom, mobile-marketing around events will become increasingly attractive for all brands. But there are three important caveats.

### **Respect the rules of decency**

There's always a fear with romantic promotions that they might go too far. If the campaign involves user-generated content, take care that they are not lewd.

### **Respect the customer's privacy**

This is particularly relevant to the collection and administration of subscriber information and use of SMS marketing. Anything other than an opt-in system is likely to land you in hot water.

### **Respect copyright ownership**

Unless you create digital content from scratch, you must ensure that you have secured the rights to distribute it. While any brand is able to piggy-back on Valentine's Day, you should be careful with sporting events. Ericsson IPX witnessed a number of campaigns around the Beijing Olympics pulled at the last minute due to copyright issues.

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# Thanks to

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**Mark Curtis**, chief executive office, Flirtomatic

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