

Build a 'Net, Then Text

By allowing and encouraging your patrons to use their smart phones on-premise via your free Wi-Fi hotspots and top-of-the-line broadband service, you're putting a powerful tool in the hands of those customers and potential regulars. The more they have those phones at the ready, the more likely they are to receive and respond to text messages.

"We want to harness the Internet and WiFi technology and build it in to create an interactive environment via text," says Robert Greenawalt, President of TextBoom (www.textboom.com), a marketing and promotions vehicle designed to help club owners build their client data base and keep them informed of upcoming events. TextBoom technology makes it easy for owners to use templates and automatic messaging to send patrons text messages.

"We found that a lot of owners are trying to get more diverse with their text marketing, and we're trying to push them in the right direction," says Greenawalt. "We're trying to help club owners enhance their list and pull more people in. Mobile marketing is so instantaneous. From a consumer point of view, it's almost spontaneous: 'It's four o'clock, what are we going to do for happy hour?' Suddenly they get a text that says



Club X is having these specials, they mention that to a few friends, and now it's viral. So what may have gone out to one person may become a group of two or three or four or ten people showing up."

TextBoom has developed various approaches to text marketing, such as the Birthday Club, which sends customers an automatic message on their birthday, saying 'Happy Birthday from Club, enjoy a free drink on us tonight.' Greenawalt also suggests owners use contests to increase opt-in numbers to their texting lists. "Put a jar on your bar, fill it with anything—peanuts, jellybeans, bottle caps. Patrons text a guess as to how many jellybeans are in the jar, with a prize going to the person who comes the closest. You give away a minimal prize, but you get back a ton of opt-in text numbers. Run the contest for 30 days, so anybody that guesses will be in your system. And that can be a lot of people over that amount of time."