



## 1to1 Magazine

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When young people walk out the door, they usually grab three things—their wallet, keys, and mobile phone. So why stick to traditional media when marketing to them?

The HireU College Career Fair program recently added a mobile component to its marketing strategy when developing its latest event. By interacting with college students and recent grads via the mobile channel, the company has seen more engaged participants, and can capture customer information that previously remained anonymous.

"If we can meet them in a means that they are already familiar with and using often, it works best for everyone," says Hal Fisher, president of Vhibit Software, parent company of HireU.

The company created a multipronged mobile campaign ahead of its career fair in Atlanta last March. Employees passed out flyers to about 20 local colleges and universities that included a text message number and a code. Students who opted in via text received mobile updates about the fair, including participating employers and agenda information. Students could also send their academic information and interests to HireU to set up meetings with employers ahead of the actual job fair.

Fisher says the program was very well received. More than 100 students opted in to the pre-event program, and stayed engaged leading up to the event. The employers gained an advantage by learning about prospective employees in advance. HireU also created a robust customer database it can leverage in the future, since many students are juniors and seniors who may attend future events. And on the corporate side, the outreach initiatives have measurable ROI, Fisher says.

He owes the program's success—a 23 percent conversion rate so far—to reaching students in a platform they want to use, as well as being relevant and giving students control of the interaction. "You really have to meet the new employment generation on a platform they're used to," he says, adding that its previous email marketing strategy just wasn't effective.

"Mobile takes a mass message and turns it into a one-to-one message," says Dan Miller, vice president of mobile solutions for Neighborhood America, which worked with HireU on the initiative. "The messaging better be very good and very relevant. Otherwise, the customer will quickly opt out."

To be successful, companies need to think strategically about how they interact in this channel. "We see brands embracing mobile as a way to deepen relationships with customers when they're on the go," Miller adds. "Online communities like MySpace and YouTube have created an expectation of interaction on the part of customers."

Fisher says he plans to expand the mobile strategy to more career fairs for college students and military personnel, as well as high-school college fairs. He also talks about a larger strategy down the road to combine instant messaging and text in a virtual online job fair. "With this demographic, it's a must."

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