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Recruitment Advertising Goes Mobile in Chicagoland
QuickText is the Chicago (Ill.) Tribune's newest segment in recruitment

By Jennifer Streisand

Commuters on Chicago's "L" transit system can make good use of their time by inquiring about the jobs they want on their cell phones. The Chicago (Ill.) Tribune Media Group's new QuickText enables job seekers to find a job that seems appealing in the newspaper, type a corresponding WEB ID into their cell phones and then get back an intelligently formatted job listing on their cell phones. If the job seeker is still interested in finding out more or applying for the job, he or she has the necessary information to follow through at a later time, usually via e-mail or going to the employer's Web site.

"People aren't necessarily going to have a computer sitting right there on the subway, but they will have their mobile phones," said Kurt Mueller, senior manager of product development for Chicago Tribune Interactive. "With commuters, the demographic is one aspect, but the environment in which they are reading is another."

One of the main goals of QuickText is to make looking for a job even faster and more efficient than it has become already through the Internet and e-mail. Mobile is the next phase of this evolution. Now, job seekers can get recruitment ads anywhere at any time.

Response from job seekers has been robust since QuickText launched on July 29, 2008, as a brand new dimension in recruitment advertising for newspaper companies.

"We have been getting several hundred texts a week, and it's going up," said Ellen Glassberg, director of recruitment advertising at the Chicago Tribune. "Our advertisers are also very happy with the ability to text job seekers."

An important facet of the QuickText program is the readership of the Chicago Tribune's free daily youth newspaper RedEye, which is extremely successful, noted Glassberg.

"We know that the demographic of those reading RedEye is heavily using text messaging, which is one of the reasons we wanted to launch our text product," she explained. "We thought it would be a smart thing

to do based on the readership of RedEye."

For readers, scanning RedEye for help-wanted ads has become easier since the newspaper launched its QuickFind pages in January 2008. The ads are organized so that readers can scan up and down to find what jobs are available. Each job description has a corresponding WEB ID number. Now readers can text the WEB ID number on their mobile devices or go online to get a more detailed description of the job.

QuickFind appears in RedEye on Mondays and the Tribune's business section Tuesdays, and recruitment ads appear on Sundays in the Tribune's CareerBuilder section.

Readers have to see either the Tribune or RedEye to get the corresponding WEB ID number to text for more information about the ad.

"QuickText and QuickFind are products that bridge the gap between the print and the mobile or print and online," noted Glassberg. "QuickText is definitely a product that works with print."

One of the ways that the Tribune has been able to quantify the success of QuickText is that a large majority of the texting happens on Mondays when the QuickFind recruitment ads appear in RedEye.

While RedEye is very popular with its target audience of readers who are 18-34, the newspaper has a strong following among readers who aren't necessarily in that age group, said Mueller. And older people can text too.

"If you go on any of the Chicago Transit Authority trains or busses, you'll see a lot of people 'out of the demographic' using QuickText, so I don't know if we can pinpoint the ages of people who are using the program," he added.

Because the delivery of the ads is integrated (using a combination of print, mobile and online), employers buy ads in bundle.

"Every ad is textable because it's all about the job seeker, and you can't have this ad be textable and that ad not be," explained Glassberg.

The Chicago Tribune plans to roll out similar text

options in the auto and real estate categories, said Mueller. The programs will use a similar functionality by asking readers to key in a WEB ID.

Prior to QuickText, the Chicago Tribune Media Group had been using mobile to stimulate reader interest and interaction with the newspapers regarding retail ads and editorial content.

"Every day on page two of RedEye there is content interplay between consumers and our editorial group," he said.

Between the content areas and QuickText, the Tribune is seeing results with mobile.

"Just general enthusiasm for the new dimension," Mueller said. "It's still pretty early to quantify all of the benefits, but we definitely know people are using it."

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