

Front Lines

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Spotlight On: Text Marketing

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Kate Terrell from Wallace's Garden Center in Bettendorf, Iowa, has been working with a tech business called TapOnIt since 2016 to grow their text database. And over the five-plus years since, they've gathered more than 11,000 people. I connected with Kate and the folks at TapOnIt to bring you more on what Wallace's is doing. What they sent me is too good not to share in its entirety.

We start with a synopsis of the tech from the TapOnIt folks: TapOnIt's technology gives businesses the ability to connect with customers in the most direct way possible, via text. Unlike many text message platforms, TapOnIt allows brands to send multiple images, video or animated GIFs in a single message, instead of just boring, black-and-white texts.

"People are visual," says Katie Castillo-Wilson, Founder/CEO of TapOnIt. "When you have an open rate as high as 99%, it makes sense to include images of whatever message you're trying to convey to guarantee they at least see your brand."

Customers opt-in to get texts from the brands they want to hear from and brands reach the people who are actually interested in engaging with them. Katie adds, "Wallace's was an early adapter to our technology and is a great example of how to add messaging to your marketing mix."

How They Got Started

Wallace's had been printing calendars every year with monthly coupons to keep customers engaged and coming in regularly. Printing was expensive, it was hard to stay top-of-mind with customers after they took the calendar home each month and it wasn't very trackable. Wallace's wanted a way to get in front of their customers more often, learn more about who was shopping with them and use that customer data to their advantage. While their email database was pretty engaged, Kate saw how TapOnIt communicated with consumers via text and inquired about using the technology for her own customer engagement.

How it's Going

"It's pretty amazing that as a single-location garden center, we have grown our database to over 11,000 people," says Kate. "And we continue to see growth each year. Our text club, which we call Garden Party, sends coupons, content, recipes, reminders, events and more. Really anything that goes into an email or on social media sees even higher engagement in a text."

The result? Revenue growth!

- 14x ROI in 2020
- The database has grown consistently by 25% each year
- 15% of 2020 Rev from texting
- Offers were shared on Facebook, Messenger and text more than 2,500 times by people in the text club encouraging others to opt-in to get the offer. Organic sharing accounted for 16% of overall growth.

Says Kate, “TapOnIt calls their sharing feature ‘Word of Thumb.’ It’s better than word of mouth because it is all positive. People share content they love and offers they want to use with people in their circles that likely have an interest in gardening, too.”

For example, in December, Kate sent an offer for a free blooming plant to bring shoppers in and finish the year strong. That offer had almost 600 redemptions, with an average sale of \$60. After the \$6 discount, Wallace’s netted \$32,000 in top-line revenue.

Depending on the size of your business, it can take as little as 10 days to set up a number to text from and to configure the platform for your brand. Curious? Visit taponit.com for more details. **GP**