
Premium Off-Deck Affiliate Marketing IVR vs. Online Landing/Jump Pages



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C O N F I D E N T I A L

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1 Introduction

Selling premium off-deck content has yet to thrive in any venue other than the online channel. Despite millions spent on print ads and television commercials, high marketing costs have driven most successful off-deck content marketers to the online channel via “online affiliate marketing”. Additionally, the convoluted process of online terms and conditions, confusing signup forms, and multiple jump and landing pages leads to low conversions and limited viral promotion. Finally, getting an affiliate model into the offline world is virtually impossible given the cost to acquire and maintain short codes or keywords across a vast network of affiliates.

Given all of these obstacles to marketing premium off-deck content, the challenge still offers a \$1 Billion opportunity. Why not make the promotion and selling of off-deck premium content as easy as dialing a phone number? Think about it; what if all that was involved in enabling an affiliate to sell your premium off-deck content was to simply give them a Toll Free number they could promote anywhere; online, TV, outdoor, radio? What if, as a consumer, subscribing to your premium service, or acquiring your content, was as easy as dialing a phone number? What if canceling (i.e. “opting out”) a subscription was as easy as dialing that same phone number (a bad word, I know, but we all know the legal liability of making cancellations confusing or difficult)? The following will make the case that Toll Free driven IVR consumer interfaces are the answer to these challenges;

- Affiliates would no longer require “jump page” or “landing page” guidelines that they often ignore or violate anyway. Aside from their Website, affiliates could promote their phone number anywhere from a bathroom wall to a prime time TV ad spot!
- Consumers would no longer need to figure out how to execute the keyword-to-shortcode call-to-action. A Toll Free number immediately conveys a truly “free” way for the consumer to respond to the call-to-action. The audio capabilities of a phone call would even allow the consumer to preview the content prior to the sale, get cross or up sold to other content, listen to an ad, and, most importantly, be forced to listen and agree to terms and conditions prior to purchasing the content.
- Chargebacks and class action lawsuits are plaguing the off deck content industry. Consumers don’t understand their purchases and suffer the confusing recourse of sending opt-out messages via SMS. By providing a Toll Free channel for support and opt-out, content providers are delivering the most pervasive, easy to understand touchpoint for their customers. This is a simple solution and a potent defense against unwanted chargebacks and lawsuits.

2 Jumping and “Crash” Landing

The current method of online premium mobile content distribution is to equip affiliate marketers with unique links they promote on their own Website. Consumers who stumble upon these links are then dropped down to a “jump page” where, should they venture on, continue through a maze of information and additional links.

Take a look at a “jump page”:

The image shows a mobile content subscription page for Acme Mobile Content. The page features a central graphic with a mobile phone and a large blue arrow pointing right. The text on the page includes: "Get Your Ringtone Now! Acme Mobile Content", "Please Select Your Carrier:", and a list of carriers: AT&T, Verizon Wireless, Sprint, CellularOne, and OTHER CARRIERS. A blue starburst graphic indicates a "5 Ringtone Subscription for \$9.99/month". Below the carrier selection is a "SUMMARY TERMS OF SERVICE" section. Callout boxes are connected to various parts of the page:

- 16. Sponsor & Description (points to the Acme Mobile Content logo)
- 2. Carrier compatibility (points to the carrier selection area)
- 21. Only Content Supported Carriers are listed. (points to the carrier selection area)
- 1. Clear and conspicuous advice of charges. (points to the \$9.99/month price)
- 11. Appropriate Logo and Carrier Names (AT&T, Cellular One, VerizonWireless) (points to the carrier logos)
- 3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,12,13,14. All included in this summary T&C's. (Above the fold) (points to the terms of service section)
- 15. Check Box not necessary on this page. (If there are checkboxes they are not pre-populated)
- 17. Use of Free not allowed, 18. No Profanity allowed, 19. Does not promote non binary carriers, 20. Does not contain unapproved carrier endorsements, 19. Text Content not advertised for carriers not supporting Binary, 22. Games not in main offer if VerizonWireless is supported. (points to the terms of service section)

Now examine the “landing page” a consumer will find themselves at if they have the attention span and interest to figure out where to click from the “jump page”:

1. Carrier Compatibility

2. Handset Compatibility

3. Visual Advice of Charges in Bold 50% CA Font size

16. Sponsor ID & Type of Service (only 1 sponsor allowed).

7. Web Clearly says recurring Subscription on MIN and PIN

15. Unchecked Checkboxes.

4. T's & C's link w/o scrolling and no scroll bar within T's & C's.

5. Authorized User A/B)

6. Other Charges May Apply

8. Opt out instructions in Bold

12. Standard Message Charges Apply

9. Games not available on TMO/VZW/Alltel. (if games in main offer than disclaimer must be in main offer too.)

10. 800 number

11. Logo's correct!

14. Billing method

13. Help Instructions on MIN & PIN

17. No use of FREE

23. Product and Sponsor in main offer.

18. No Unapproved Content (profanity nudity etc)

19. Do not Promote Binary to non Binary Carriers (Alltel/Boost/Nextel/etc)

But wait – there’s more! After the consumer muscled their way through these first two pages they then get the pleasure of finally entering a PIN code they receive after entering their Mobile Identification Number (MIN) from the previous page (and we still haven’t converted a sale at this point!).

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It's not a leap of the imagination to deduce that the interactive process illustrated above is very ineffective in converting new content sales while setting the stage for a chronic chargeback problem. In fact, one doesn't need to look far to see that a few well known Web design rules are broken when utilizing this model;

- User's don't read Web pages; In research for the book "Prioritizing Web Usability," it was found that people read only about 10% of the text that they supposedly "agreed" to!
- Sales abandonment increase with the number of pages a consumer is forced to navigate when making a purchase.

Affiliates taking control of the presentation interface of jump pages while maintaining some level of control over the messaging, promoting high conversion rates, bolstering subscriber retention, and preventing charge backs turns into "mission impossible" at this point.

What if the affiliate simply promoted a single phone number? Let's take a look.

3 Dialing for Dollars

What if we could reduce the consumer's process for purchasing off-deck mobile content from an online promotion from at least three clicks to zero? Let's start off by illustration.

The following image presents an alternative to the three page circus detailed above by using phone numbers rather than jump and landing pages. Once the caller dials in they are engaged with an audio menu allowing them to easily complete their purchase from their phone.

12 DIFFERENT CITIES, 12 UNIQUE HOTTIES	
Atlanta - Dalene	404-418-8311
Boston - Sarah	617-849-9013
Chicago - Cheria	312-957-8220
Dallas - Bridgette	214-736-7110
Los Angeles - Yasmin	323-319-4383
Miami - Liza	786-837-7158
New York City - Jaclyn	212-863-9155
Philadelphia - Megan	215-586-4520
Phoenix - Claudia	480-305-0914
San Francisco - Ashton	415-692-6636
Seattle - Oksana	206-438-4040
Washington - Crystal	202-609-7547
TOLL-FREE - Erin	800-710-5899

The image above is from a print promotion CommerceTel executed with Airborne Entertainment and Maxim magazine. The promotion is still live and you are welcome to dial any of the numbers to experience the campaign for yourself.

As another illustration, the following flow diagram visualizes the interactive process of an IVR-driven ringtone campaign:



Either of these off-deck content promotions can be easily promoted from a Website, billboard, radio or TV advertisement underscoring the benefit that by way of using phone numbers to promote the content, we've established a single ubiquitous and easy to understand touch point for consumers to discover and acquire off-deck content.

To further illustrate this point, the following page shows a side-by-side illustration of the process involved in acquiring off-deck mobile content via landing and jump pages versus a simple Toll Free IVR driven campaign:



Television



Radio



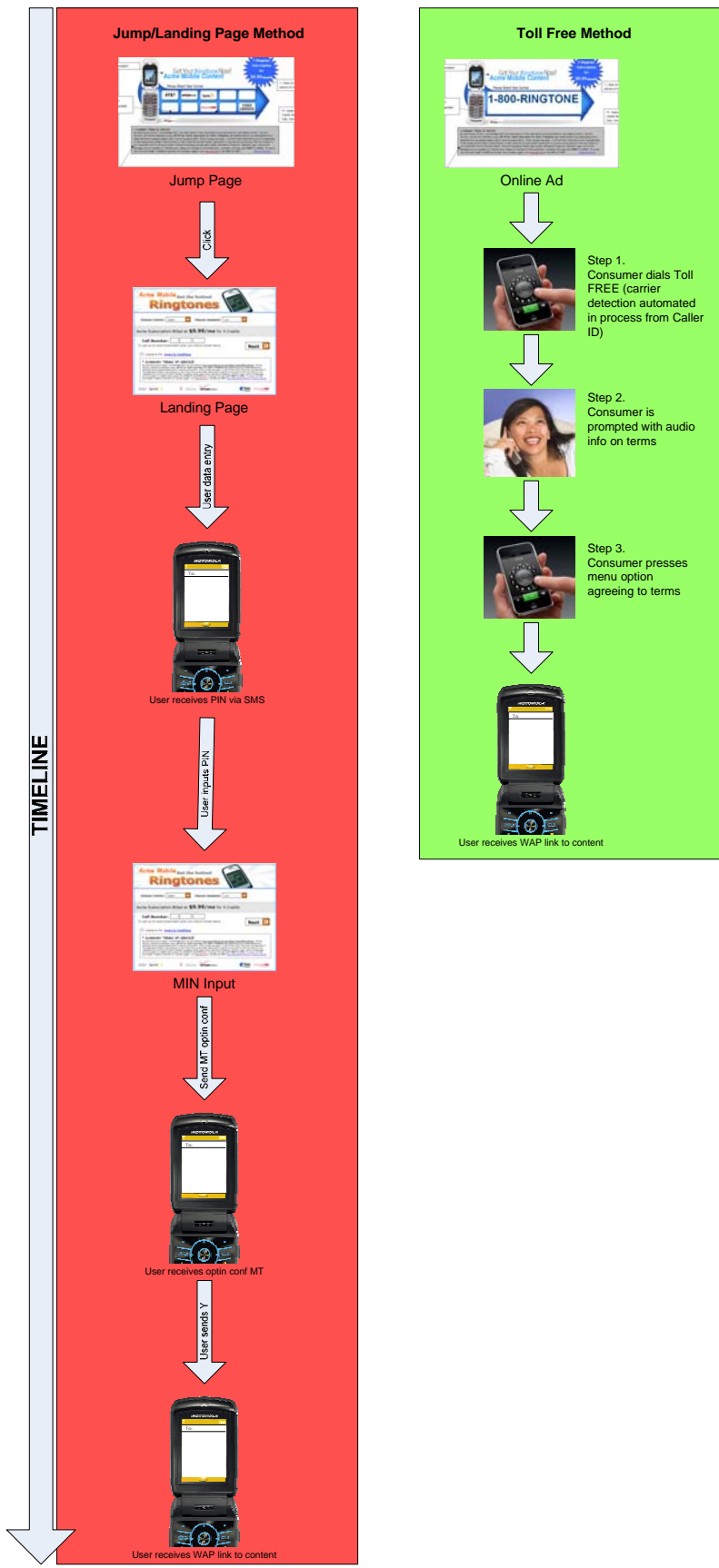
Print



Online



Outdoor



A few points to emphasize from the diagram on the previous page:

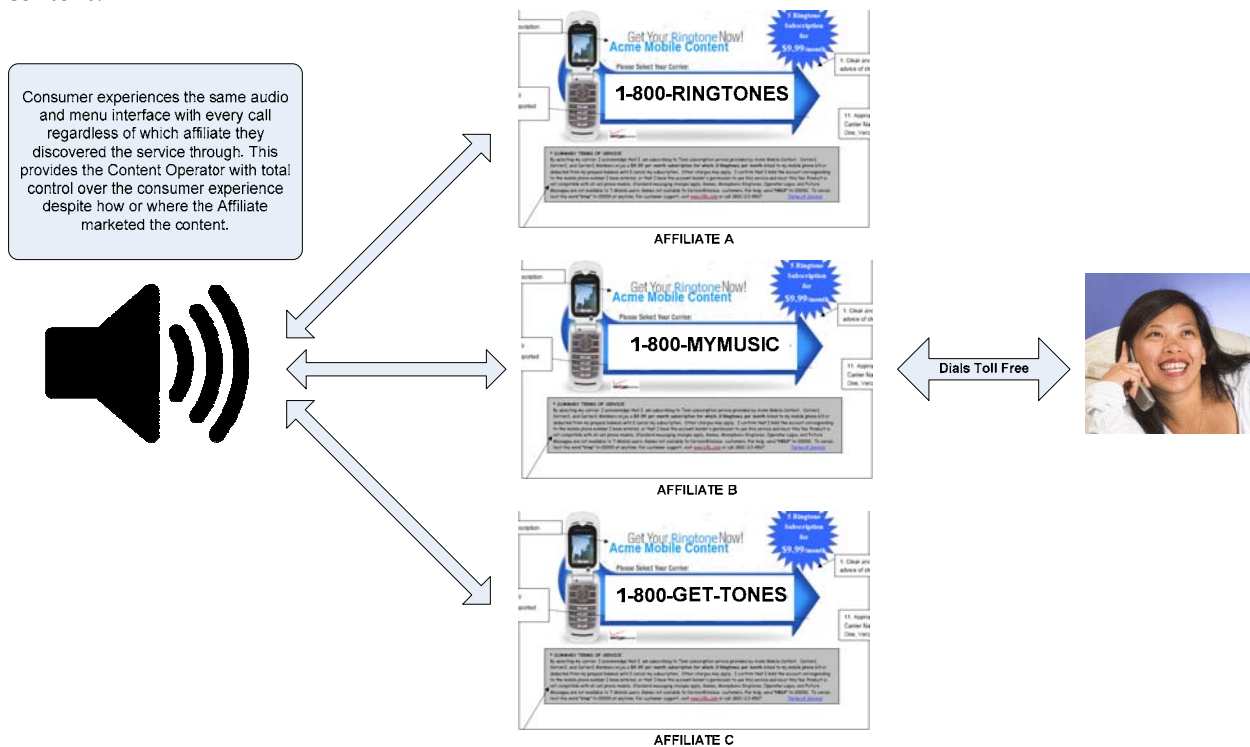
- While consumers can breeze past Terms and Conditions information via text on a Web page, they are unable to skip this crucial information when traversing the IVR audio menu. This is a critical step in combating chargebacks.
- Purchasing content via an online form still requires SMS interactivity to complete the opt-in process despite the risk that, in the end, the consumer will not activate the content link and thus not legitimize the sale by way of actually consuming the purchased content. The Toll Free method ensures that the entire opt-in process is executed through a truly **FREE** process to the consumer; if they ultimately receive the link, yet never activate it, then there is little liability to the content owner as the end user never incurred any SMS fees during the process other than the link to the content.
- Automated carrier detection allows the IVR interface to gracefully manage callers based on their specific carrier. This allows Content Operators to tailor the caller's experience based on specific carrier requirements. For example, Verizon might require a different opt-in flow than AT&T.

Toll Free IVR clearly yields a simpler experience to the consumer but, more importantly, a much more effective affiliate marketing model is created in the process!

4 Affiliate Marketing via Toll Free IVR

Affiliates are critical to marketing anything online. Whether you're selling books or ringtones, Affiliate Marketers will promote your products and services free of charge for a small slice of the action. As we've seen with the jump page process, a simple and consistent online sales process for mobile content is challenging. This issue is amplified when trying to establish this process across a vast network of Affiliate Marketers. The current model of online Affiliate marketing is to provide custom links or "widgets" to Affiliate Marketers for installation and placement on their Web pages. This process is cumbersome and complicated and, again, is simply proliferating the same multi-page, multi-click, SMS shuffle that consumer's experience when discovering and acquiring mobile content direct from the Content Owner's Website.

What if Affiliate Marketer's simply advertised their own custom Toll Free number to promote off-deck content?



The illustration above shows a much simpler process for the Affiliate Marketer and the consumer discovering the content offering. There are several benefits from this model:

- The jump/landing page combination is now reduced to a single, simple call-to-action.
- Consumers calling the Toll Free number have their MIN and Carrier automatically identified by the IVR system.
- The original Content Owner has total control over the audio experience so that Affiliate Marketers can't inject confusion into the experience with their own landing pages.
- The Affiliate Marketer is only responsible for a simple phone number rather than complex URLs.
- Affiliate impressions, sales, and conversions are easily tracked through the Affiliate's unique Toll Free Number.

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- The consumer cannot skip over, or skim through terms and conditions as the IVR requires they listen to this critical step and acknowledge acceptance prior to proceeding to a purchase.
 - Changes to subscription models, terms and conditions, pricing, etc., are all easily done via a simple edit to a single audio file rather than editing multiple online jump and landing pages.
 - Affiliate reach now extends beyond online as Toll Free numbers can be promoted anywhere.
 - A Content Operator's Affiliate Program is now consolidated to a single, multi-channel medium as opposed to operating multiple online and offline programs; offline and online Affiliate Marketer's are now unified via one system – phone numbers!

5 Conclusion: Turning Callers into Dollars

Promoting off-deck mobile content online is a crucial channel to any successful content campaign, but the current model is broken. High chargeback rates, high subscriber attrition rates, low conversion rates, and a complex consumer experience all add up to a massive opportunity that's being underserved. It's hard to argue against the premise that a truly FREE, pervasive, and easy to understand consumer touchpoint won't improve subscriber retention, reduce chargeback rates, increase conversions, and ultimately yield a higher number of satisfied customers. Add to that an easy to understand, highly controlled, and pervasive Affiliate system and Content Owners benefit from a highly optimized ecosystem by which to maximize content sales – Toll Free numbers are a perfect solution to turn this opportunity into a prosperous reality!