

Price Chopper, Dole Salad Club's Mobile Effort Tests QR Codes

Prepared by HGX Creative, Written By Richard H. Levey

Thanks to a joint effort from the Price Chopper supermarket chain and Dole Food Co., mobile devices are spurring consumers to eat more salad.

The effort marks the union of two independent marketing pushes at Price Chopper. In September 2010, Dole was planning a mail campaign aimed at active and lapsed members of the chain's loyalty program. The effort was geared toward boosting enrollment in the Dole Salad Mobile Club. At the same time, Price Chopper was considering testing QR codes within its marketing. When scanned by a mobile phone, QR codes serve online content to the phone's screen.

It was a match made, if not in heaven, than in the produce section. When Price Chopper sent out more than 40,000 postcards on Dole's behalf in November, the messages included both a QR code and a short code for texting.



"The QR code is the hero, but for the mobile experience to be accessible by everyone, we had to incorporate a short code," says CarrieAnn Arias, senior manager of shopper marketing at Dole Fresh Vegetables. "Most phones are Web-enabled, but not everyone has a smartphone. [To use a QR code] a consumer has to be able to download an app and have a reader."

The postcards went to individuals within Price Chopper's database who had demonstrated affinity for pre-made salads. Respondents who enrolled in the Dole Salad Mobile Club received a discount coupon and holiday recipes, and were entered to win a \$500 Price Chopper gift card. Separate QR codes were used in online banner ads and on a Facebook page.

Active members in the Price Chopper loyalty program (who constituted a large portion of the test) received slightly different messages and images than lapsed members. The overall theme was similar—during a time of holiday stress, a well-presented pre-made salad took some of the workload off a host. But current participants were required to purchase two packages to activate the coupon, while lapsed members needed to buy only one.

The test's results were still being tabulated as of mid-February. While Arias declined to give specific numbers, she did say that **lapsed loyalty program members redeemed their coupons at higher rates than current ones.** Dole is also evaluating which channel—QR code or SMS—consumers used to enroll, and how they behaved on the site once they logged on.

Arias is a strong believer in the power of direct mail. "Price Chopper does an amazing job of slicing its shopping data to make sure you are talking to the right people with the right message," she says, regarding other joint activities between Dole and Price Chopper. Previous cooperative efforts have yielded double-digit redemption rates, compared with one percent redemption to promotions in free-standing inserts.

The next step for Dole is testing QR codes within a national campaign. In March, the company will disseminate them through both Valassis and News America mail programs.