

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization  
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date  
13 February 2003 (13.02.2003)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number  
WO 03/013007 A2

(51) International Patent Classification<sup>7</sup>: H04B

(21) International Application Number: PCT/US02/23863

(22) International Filing Date: 26 July 2002 (26.07.2002)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:  
09/916,222 27 July 2001 (27.07.2001) US

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(81) Designated States (national): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU,

CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NO, NZ, OM, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States (regional): ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE, SK, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

**Declaration under Rule 4.17:**

— of inventorship (Rule 4.17(iv)) for US only

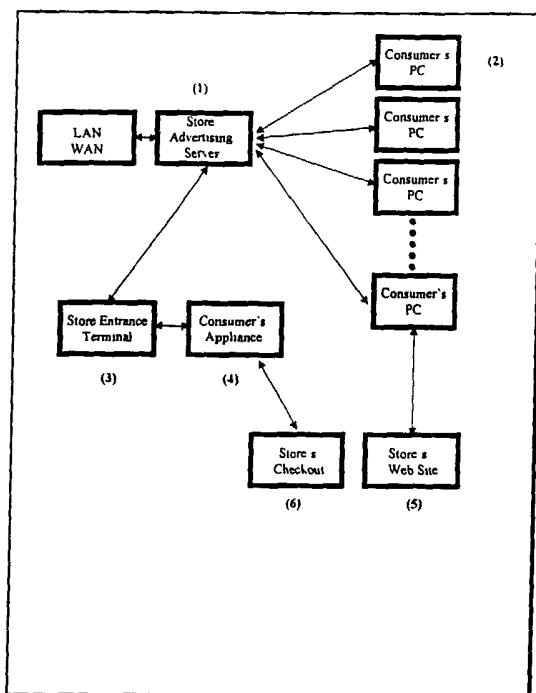
**Published:**

— without international search report and to be republished upon receipt of that report

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(54) Title: SYSTEM AND METHOD OF PROVIDING WIRELESS MARKETING INCENTIVES

Slide 1



(57) Abstract: A wireless incentive marketing system includes a merchant terminal broadcasting electronic signals representing information for use in a separate commercial transaction between a merchant and a consumer, and a consumer receiver accepting the electronic signals representing the information. The electronic signals preferably are broadcast using a standard communications protocol. A method of providing a wireless incentive marketing system includes broadcasting electronic signals representing advertising information, receiving the electronic signals for use in commercial transactions between a merchant and a consumer, transmitting electronic signals representing response information, receiving the electronic signals representing response information, and transmitting electronic signals representing advertising offer information for use in subsequent commercial transactions between the merchant and the consumer to a consumer-defined electronic mailbox provided by the consumer as part of the electronic response signals representing information.

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## System and Method of Providing Wireless Marketing Incentives

### Technical Field

5           In general, the present invention relates to electronic transmission of advertising messages over wireless networks. In particular, the present invention relates to the transmission of interactive advertisements that include an incentive for replying with contact information for the recipient of the advertising.

### 10   Background Art

          Many companies now have a World Wide Web presence. Even traditional companies that originally resisted involvement with e-commerce or Internet promotion now realize that a site on the Web is necessary. Some sites are merely a token presence, and do not provide any interaction for a visitor. Others are designed and produced specifically to increase sales of the goods or services provided by the company. The key to the success of a site, particularly for older companies, is to get consumers to actually go to the Web site. Many people are not aware that these companies have Web sites. Further, most consumers have spent years physically going to the retail locations of these companies, and aren't likely to change their ways without some incentive.

20           Some of these companies still advertise in print media, and provide incentives to come into a physical retail location for goods or services, through the use of coupons or advertised sale items. There may be some mention of the Web site on the flyer, but rarely is an incentive provided. Rather, all the incentives are directed toward getting the consumer into the physical retail location, and the consumer sees no reason to access the Web site.

          Once inside the store, the consumer must seek out the advertised special items, and items for which the coupons can be redeemed at purchase. When consumers redeem coupons, the store can sometimes track the source of the coupon and judge the effectiveness of that advertising on the consumer. However, when a consumer purchases a sale item at a retail location, the company has no way of determining how the consumer heard of the sale, and cannot judge the effectiveness of its different methods of advertising. Advertising over TV, radio, and printed media allow the store or goods

supplier to tell the consumer about what the store has to offer or what products the manufacturer has available. One major drawback with this type of advertising is that it works in only one direction, from the store to the individual. The store does not have the ability to track the effectiveness of this advertising directly. Sometimes advertisers will encourage consumers to refer to a specific advertisement to get a specific discount. Advertisers then collect these statistics and indirectly infer the response to an advertising campaign.

More recently stores have begun to advertise using electronic messaging. This type of advertising includes Web pages, email, and other "pop up" type advertising, such as banners, seen via the Internet. One advantage to this type of advertising is that you can monitor an individual's activity based on his or her clicking on your hyperlink advertisement, or responding to your email. Electronic two-way advertising allows for a direct indication of effectiveness of the advertising campaign. The major drawback to the current method of electronic two-way advertising is that the consumer can only be reached while he or she is at a computer. The consumer surfing the Web may shop over the Web. However determining the connection between activity that takes place over the Internet and the activity that takes place inside the store is difficult. As previously stated, a company's current customers may not even know that the company has an Internet presence, and will not visit the site unless provided some incentive.

Also, even if a consumer's attention is directed to the fact that a company has a Web site, many people are resistant to visit a site unless there is a compelling reason to do so. Even if a consumer's interest is heightened for some reason, most people don't carry a writing instrument and paper, or other means for writing down the URL of the company's Web site. Even if the URL is recorded in some way, or if the company provides a token including the site's URL, many people merely stick this in their pockets and, once the initial interest fades, never visit the site.

Other systems currently in place target users of cellular telephones to direct advertising to a consumer who is a customer of a particular telephone service provider. According to these systems, the customer makes a cellular telephone call and agrees to listen to one or more short advertisements in exchange for free connect time for the call. The provider selects these advertisements based on the customer's consumer profile and other demographic information, as well as the time and location of the call. After the

customer has listened to the advertisement, he can choose to listen to more information on the advertised product or service, or proceed with his call. At some point, the call is connected. On completion of the call, the customer may be called back and played a longer informational advertisement that provides the customer with additional information. Alternatively, the customer may be directly connected to a telemarketer for an advertised company that he selected. The profiling done for the advertising and the customer is based on a questionnaire filled out by the customer when he applies for the service.

While this advertising system has great advantages, there is a requirement for a telephone call to be placed in order to use the system, and such a system only targets subscribers to that particular telephone service provider. Further, the profile information is provided by the subscriber based on voluntary information that is not updated. The subscriber may be subjective and incomplete in providing this information, and as her consumer habits change over time, the information may become outdated.

The system also may provide WAP URL downloads. That is, a customer listening to one of the short advertisements is offered the opportunity to get the URL sent to his cellular phone. Internet-ready phones would get a Web page, whereas others would just get a display of the URL itself. However, someone who gets the URL on his telephone may not ever actually visit the Web site, and someone getting an annoying tiny Web page on his phone's display is not likely to spend time (or money) at the site.

Other advertising systems use coupon promotions ("couponing") to attract consumers. Typical e-commerce couponing is a process by which, when ordering from a retail Web site, a coupon number can be entered in an appropriate field for a discount on the order. The "coupon" may have been delivered by e-mail or even in a USPS delivered catalog. Many retailers use this form of couponing as an incentive to visit the Web site. However, for this type of couponing to be implemented, the consumer must already have been targeted. That is, the retailer must already have identified that consumer as a current or potential customer, and must have that consumer's address (physical or e-mail) in order to send the coupon.

Another system currently being used to draw potential consumers to Web sites links a user's television set to a computer, so that advertisements shown during a television broadcast can provide an instant, direct link to an associated Web site via the

computer. This system also includes a scanning device, also connected to the computer, for scanning code patterns in print media and from other surfaces such as product packaging, which also will bring the user to an associated Web site.

5 Like the telephone advertising system, this system requires that users be members of a service, and the members have to actively do something to make use of the system. Further, the system does not work with a stand-alone computer; the computer must be electrically connected for communication with a television in order for the user to take advantage of the system. Unless the household has a LAN, viewing of the Web sites provided by the system must take place at the computer connected to the television. Thus, 10 while the system satisfies its particular purpose, it is quite inconvenient. It is most useful for shut-ins or other users who spend a great deal of time watching television, for whom it is worthwhile to dedicate a computer to the television set up.

There is therefore a need for a method of conducting business that draws consumers to a company's Web site. This method would be particularly advantageous to 15 older, well-established companies if the incentive to go to the Web site is provided when a consumer enters the physical retail location of the company. Part of this method should include a way to have the consumer record the URL of the Web site automatically, with no effort necessary on the part of the consumer. Further, actually getting the consumer to visit the Web site once the consumer is at home must be facilitated, once interest has died 20 down when the initial stimulation has been removed.

In order to implement such a business method, a system is needed that would provide a process for carrying out the business method. Specifically, a technological solution to implementing the method is necessary to effect the method in a practical manner. To this end, an advantageous arrangement of apparatus would facilitate 25 implementation of the method using the system.

#### Disclosure of Invention

It is therefore an objective of at least one embodiment of the present invention to provide a method of encouraging a consumer to participate in an interactive 30 communication.

It is another objective of at least one embodiment of the present invention to provide a method of encouraging a consumer to reply to an advertising solicitation by

providing contact information and permission to send the consumer further marketing solicitations via the contact information.

It is an additional objective of at least one embodiment of the present invention to provide a method of encouraging a consumer at a physical retail location to access a Web-based retail location at a future point in time.

It is also an objective of at least one embodiment of the present invention to provide a process of delivering the URL of the Web-based retail location to the consumer in a transparent manner.

It is also an objective of at least one embodiment of the present invention to provide a process of delivering the URL of the Web-based retail location to the consumer in a passive manner, that is, without requiring the consumer to subscribe to a service or to perform an action in order to be presented with the advertising opportunity.

It is another objective of at least one embodiment of the present invention to provide a process of delivering the URL of the Web-based retail location to the consumer in a passive manner, that is, in a manner that does not require the consumer to seek advertising opportunities, or to perform some other action before an advertising opportunity is provided.

It is an additional objective of at least one embodiment of the present invention to provide a process by which a consumer is automatically contacted electronically at the given contact location after the consumer gives permission to do so in his reply to the initial advertising solicitation.

It is another objective of at least one embodiment of the present invention to provide a process by which the consumer is automatically contacted by means of a portable electronic device that is commonly carried and useful primarily for another purpose.

It is a further objective of at least one embodiment of the present invention to provide a process by which the consumer that is automatically contacted does not have to subscribe to a special service to receive the advertising solicitation.

It is an additional objective of at least one embodiment of the present invention to provide a process by which consumer profiling and demographic information is collected objectively and transparently from a consumer.

It is also an objective of at least one embodiment of the present invention to provide a method of facilitating the use by the consumer of coupons or other redeemable discount tokens at the physical retail location.

5 It is another objective of at least one embodiment of the present invention to provide a process by which consumers are targeted for receiving electronic coupons even though that consumer's identity and physical or e-mail address are not known.

It is a further objective of at least one embodiment of the present invention to provide an apparatus for carrying out the method of the invention.

10 It is an additional objective of at least one embodiment of the present invention to provide a system that utilizes a standard communications protocol so that many disparate apparatus may be integrated to carry out the method of the invention.

A system and method for transmitting advertising materials to a consumer as he enters a store allows the consumer to respond to the advertising materials in such a way that the store can identify the individual consumer and track his purchases or activities in  
15 the store. Permissive advertising is facilitated by initiating communications with consumers, gaining their permission to continue the advertisement, and following up with additional electronic messages such as email messages containing weekly specials or other correspondence. This invention utilizes a low power radio transmitter and receiver utilizing a standard communications protocol. A store sets up an advertising station  
20 consisting of a computer capable of formatting messages, and a data transceiver such as a Bluetooth module. The data transceiver sends data to all consumers who have the appropriate receiving hardware such as a Bluetooth enabled mobile phone. The base station sends current advertising specials to the consumer's mobile device when he enters the store. This electronic circular will have information about products at the store and  
25 will have links to the store's Web site, or other method of communicating with the store. Additionally, the consumer will have the ability to respond to the electronic circular. The consumer may key in a response to the electronic circular, and this response may include the consumer's phone number, email address, or other identifying code. At this point, the consumer has responded to the message sent to his mobile device and can then press a key  
30 to have the store server send an e-mail message to his home, or to another designated PC. This e-mail message will include further information and the URL to the store's Web site. Thus begins a crucial permission marketing link between the store and the consumer.

Once the consumer responds to the advertisement, the store has the ability to record that consumer's identification and store it in a database. By referring to this identification, the consumer may receive discounts, and the store will receive a record of the consumer's purchasing habits.

5           According to one aspect of the present invention, a wireless incentive marketing system includes a terminal broadcasting electronic signals representing information redeemable in a separate commercial transaction, and a receiver accepting the electronic signals representing information redeemable in a separate commercial transaction. The terminal may have a fixed location, and may be located in a public  
10 forum. The receiver may have a variable location, and may be a cellular telephone, a portable communication device, or a PDA.

          According to another aspect of the present invention, a wireless incentive marketing system includes a terminal controlled by a first contracting party broadcasting electronic signals representing information redeemable in a separate commercial  
15 transaction, and a receiver controlled by a second contracting party accepting the electronic signals representing information redeemable in a separate commercial transaction. The terminal may have a fixed location, and may be located in a public forum. The receiver may have a variable location, and may be a cellular telephone, a portable communication device, or a PDA.

20           According to another aspect of the present invention, a wireless incentive marketing system includes a terminal controlled by a merchant broadcasting electronic signals representing information redeemable in a separate commercial transaction, and a receiver controlled by a consumer accepting the electronic signals representing information redeemable in a separate commercial transaction. The terminal may have a  
25 fixed location, and may be located in a public forum. The receiver may have a variable location, and may be a cellular telephone, a portable communication device, or a PDA.

          According to another aspect of the present invention, a wireless incentive marketing system includes a terminal controlled by a merchant broadcasting electronic signals representing information redeemable in a separate commercial transaction  
30 between the merchant and a consumer, and a receiver controlled by the consumer accepting the electronic signals representing information redeemable in a separate commercial transaction between the merchant and the consumer. The terminal may have



a fixed location, and may be located in a public forum, such as on the merchant's premises. The receiver may have a variable location, and may be a cellular telephone, a portable communication device, or a PDA.

According to another aspect of the present invention, a wireless incentive marketing system includes a terminal controlled by a merchant broadcasting electronic signals representing information for use in a separate commercial transaction between the merchant and a consumer, and a receiver controlled by the consumer accepting the electronic signals representing information for use in the separate commercial transaction between the merchant and the consumer. The electronic signals preferably are broadcast using a standard protocol, such as that provided by a Bluetooth network. Preferably, at least a portion of the information provides instructions to the consumer for obtaining the merchant's offered discounts. Preferably, at least a portion of the information describes the merchant's products or services or both offered for sale at a discounted price. Preferably, at least a portion of the information provides the merchant's web site URL. Preferably, at least a portion of the information is an offer by the merchant to transmit an electronic coupon to the consumer in exchange for the consumer providing the consumer's electronic mail address to the merchant.

According to another aspect of the invention, a method of providing a wireless incentive marketing system includes at least one merchant transmitter broadcasting electronic signals representing invitation offer information for use in a separate commercial transaction between a merchant and a consumer, a portable device receiving the electronic signals representing invitation offer information for use in the separate commercial transaction between the merchant and the consumer, the consumer performing at least a portion of the separate commercial transaction by transmitting electronic signals representing invitation acceptance information for completing the separate commercial transaction from the portable device to a merchant server, and the merchant server transmitting electronic signals representing advertising offer information for use in subsequent commercial transactions between the merchant and the consumer to a consumer-defined electronic mailbox provided by the consumer as part of the electronic signals representing invitation acceptance information. Preferably, at least a portion of the invitation offer information provides instructions to the consumer for obtaining the merchant's offered discounts. Preferably, at least a

portion of the invitation offer information describes the merchant's products or services or both offered for sale at a discounted price. Preferably, at least a portion of the invitation offer information includes an electronic coupon redeemable by the consumer for the merchant's products or services or both. Preferably, at least a portion of the invitation offer information includes the merchant's web site URL. Preferably, all the at least one merchant transmitter are located on the merchant's premises. Preferably, at least one of the at least one merchant transmitter is located proximate to an entrance to the merchant's premises. Preferably, the broadcasting is accomplished using a low power short range transmitter. Preferably, the transmitter uses the IEEE 802.11b communication standard, the Bluetooth communication standard, or a home radio frequency communication standard. The device may be a cellular telephone, a portable communication device, or a PDA. Preferably, at least a portion of the invitation acceptance information includes an electronic coupon redeemed by the consumer for the merchant's products or services or both. Preferably, at least a portion of the invitation acceptance information includes the consumer's electronic mailbox address. Preferably, at least a portion of the invitation acceptance information includes the consumer's contact information. Preferably, at least a portion of the invitation acceptance information includes the consumer granting permission to the merchant to transmit advertising offer information to the consumer. Preferably, the consumer transmits electronic signals representing invitation acceptance information from the device to the merchant server using an electronic docking port. Preferably, the electronic docking port is located proximate to a the merchant's cash register. Preferably, the method further includes a merchant network transmitting electronic signals representing invitation offer information to the merchant server. Preferably, the merchant network is a local area network, or a wide area network.

According to another aspect of the present invention, a method of providing a wireless incentive marketing system includes at least one merchant transmitter broadcasting electronic signals representing advertising information, a portable device receiving the electronic signals representing advertising information for use in commercial transactions between a merchant and a consumer, the portable device transmitting electronic signals representing response information for use in commercial transactions between the merchant and the consumer, a merchant server receiving the

electronic signals representing response information for use in commercial transactions between the merchant and the consumer, and the merchant server transmitting electronic signals representing advertising offer information for use in subsequent commercial transactions between the merchant and the consumer to a consumer-  
5 defined electronic mailbox provided by the consumer as part of the electronic signals representing response information. Preferably, at least a portion of the advertising information is a request to the consumer asking the consumer to opt-in in order to receive further information from the merchant. Preferably, at least a portion of the response information is an answer to the merchant's request to the consumer to opt-in in  
10 order to receive further information from the merchant. Preferably, at least a portion of the advertising information is a request to the consumer asking for the consumer's electronic mailbox address. Preferably, at least a portion of the response information is an answer to the merchant's request to the consumer asking for the consumer's electronic mailbox address. Preferably, all the at least one merchant transmitters are located on  
15 the merchant's premises. Preferably, at least one of the at least one merchant transmitter is located proximate to an entrance to the merchant's premises. Preferably, the broadcasting is accomplished using a low power short range transmitter. Preferably, the transmitter uses the IEEE 802.11b communication standard, the Bluetooth communication standard, or a home RF communication standard. The  
20 device may be a cellular telephone, a portable communication device, or a PDA. Preferably, at least a portion of the response information includes an electronic coupon redeemed by the consumer for the merchant's products or services or both. Preferably, at least a portion of the response information includes the consumer's electronic mailbox address. Preferably, at least a portion of the response information includes the  
25 consumer's contact information. Preferably, at least a portion of the response information includes the consumer granting permission to the merchant to transmit advertising offer information to the consumer. Preferably, the consumer transmits electronic signals representing response information from the device to the merchant server using an electronic docking port. Preferably, the electronic docking port is located  
30 proximate to a the merchant's cash register. Preferably, the method further includes a merchant network transmitting electronic signals representing advertising information

to the merchant server. Preferably, the merchant network is a local area network or a wide area network.

According to another aspect of the present invention, a method of providing a wireless incentive marketing system includes at least one first merchant transmitter  
5 broadcasting electronic signals representing invitation offer information for use in a separate commercial transaction between a merchant and a consumer, at least one second merchant transmitter broadcasting electronic signals representing specific product discount information for use in a separate commercial transaction between a merchant and a consumer, a portable device receiving the electronic signals representing invitation offer  
10 information and specific product discount information for use in the separate commercial transaction between the merchant and the consumer, the consumer performing at least a portion of the separate commercial transaction by transmitting electronic signals representing invitation acceptance information for completing the separate commercial transaction from the portable device to a merchant server, and the merchant server  
15 transmitting electronic signals representing advertising offer information for use in subsequent commercial transactions between the merchant and the consumer to a consumer-defined electronic mailbox provided by the consumer as part of the electronic signals representing invitation acceptance information. Preferably, at least a portion of the invitation offer information provides instructions to the consumer for  
20 obtaining the merchant's offered discounts. Preferably, at least a portion of the invitation offer information describes the merchant's products or services or both offered for sale at a discounted price. Preferably, at least a portion of the invitation offer information includes an electronic coupon redeemable by the consumer for the merchant's products or services or both. Preferably, at least a portion of the invitation  
25 offer information includes the merchant's web site URL. Preferably, all the at least one first merchant transmitter are located on the merchant's premises. Preferably, at least one of the at least one first merchant transmitter is located proximate to an entrance to the merchant's premises. Preferably, all the at least one second merchant transmitter are located on the merchant's premises. Preferably, the broadcasting is  
30 accomplished using a low power short range transmitter. Preferably, the transmitter uses the IEEE 802.11b communication standard, the Bluetooth communication standard, or a home radio frequency communication standard. Preferably, the device

is a cellular telephone, a portable communication device, or a PDA. Preferably, at least a portion of the invitation acceptance information includes an electronic coupon redeemed by the consumer for the merchant's products or services or both. Preferably, at least a portion of the invitation acceptance information includes the consumer's  
5 electronic mailbox address. Preferably, at least a portion of the invitation acceptance information includes the consumer's contact information. Preferably, at least a portion of the invitation acceptance information includes the consumer granting permission to the merchant to transmit advertising offer information to the consumer. Preferably, the consumer transmits electronic signals representing invitation acceptance information from  
10 the device to the merchant server using an electronic docking port. Preferably, the electronic docking port is located proximate to a the merchant's cash register. Preferably, the method further includes a merchant network transmitting electronic signals representing invitation offer information to the merchant server. Preferably, the merchant network is a local area network or a wide area network.

15

#### Brief Description of Drawings

Fig. 1 is a block diagram of the apparatus of the invention.

Fig. 2 is an exemplary layout of a retail outlet, showing advantageous placement locations for different components of the apparatus of the invention.

20 Fig. 3 is a block diagram of an exemplary store advertising terminal component of the apparatus of the invention.

#### Best Mode(s) for Carrying Out the Invention

25 An advantage of the system of the present invention is that it can initiate communications with the consumer at the store (or other retail location or spectator event) and carries that relationship through both the physical shopping (or spectator) experience and activities on the Web. In its preferred embodiment the present invention is implemented through the use of a device that will transmit directly to hardware that the general population already uses, such as a mobile phone.

30 The present invention includes a business method, by which commerce is encouraged. The business method includes providing an incentive to a consumer located at a public forum, to access a Web site that is associated with a marketing entity that is

represented at the public forum. The incentive may include a token, preferably electronic, that is redeemable at the public forum, and that is given in exchange for contact information about the consumer and permission to communicate with the consumer via the contact information. The contact information may include an e-mail address. The  
5 further communication with the consumer may include an e-mail message, which includes the URL of the Web site, and may include a further incentive to visit the Web site. The e-mail message may include a hyperlink directly to the Web site.

The business method may be implemented by the process of the invention, which includes automatically providing a message to a person carrying a portable  
10 communications device when that person enters a particular public forum. The message may include a greeting, and a token that is redeemable at the public forum for a discount on goods or services provided by a marketing entity that is represented at the forum. The token is given to the person in exchange for additional contact information, such as a personal e-mail address, and permission to contact the person at the e-mail address. The  
15 URL of a Web site for the marketing entity is also given in the message, to facilitate the person's visiting the Web site, even if the person denies permission for future contact. If permission is granted, the marketing entity sends an e-mail message to the person at the e-mail address provided by the person. The e-mail message includes the URL of the Web site, and preferably includes a hyperlink directly to the site. The e-mail message may also  
20 include an incentive to visit the site, such as the promise of an additional discount token when the site is visited. That token may be redeemable at the public forum, or when making purchases at the Web site. Redemption of the token may also require registration of the person at the Web site, or information about the person may be gathered by the marketing entity through the use of "cookies".

25 Additional features may be provided by the process of the invention. For example, if the public forum is a retail store, additional tokens in the form of coupons may be electronically provided to the consumer as he or she passes items corresponding to the coupons. Also, a list of items that are on sale may be included in a message sent to the consumer as he or she enters the store. If the public forum is a sporting event such as  
30 a baseball game, unique opportunities to participate in between-inning activities such as sports trivia quizzes may be sent in the form of electronic messages. If the public forum is a trade show at a convention center, additional messaging in the form of presentation

alerts may be provided to the consumer. These additional features provide incentives to the average consumer to bring a portable communications device to the public forum, assuring that the business method of the present invention will be initiated.

This invention also addresses a unique application of existing communications  
5 hardware. Specifically, the apparatus of the invention may use a low power short range transmitter compliant with emerging standards, such as IEEE 802.11b, bluetooth, or home RF. As standards emerge and change, other standards may also be used, as applicable. It is most advantageous to use an open standard for communications between a fixed terminal and a mobile application carried by the consumer to initiate the correspondence  
10 between the store and the consumer.

The apparatus of the present invention includes a base station capable of receiving advertisements and associated data from a central source (e.g., an advertising agency), electronically distributing these advertisements to consumers as they enter the target public forum (e.g., store, convention center, sports arena), and monitoring the response of  
15 the consumer to the advertisements. Some advantages to this system include the ability to transmit advertising or other useful information directly to an individual consumer while he is at a store or other public forum, the ability to monitor a consumer's response, the ability to distribute coupons and other discounts as electronic tokens without the cost associated with printed offers, the ability to establish electronic communications with  
20 customers, and promotion of the use of permissive advertising relationships.

A preferred embodiment of this invention includes a transceiver placed at the entrance of a retail outlet or other public forum such that when a consumer enters the forum, an electronic message is automatically sent to the consumer, preferably using a standard protocol such as that provided by a Bluetooth network. This message would  
25 alert the consumer as to what items are on sale at that forum and how to take advantage of other discounts. If the consumer is interested in receiving more information or wants to allow additional permissive advertising, he or she responds using his or her mobile phone, in this example by using a Bluetooth data link. To entice the consumer to provide his e-mail address to administrators of the advertising, the administrators can offer to send an  
30 electronic coupon to the consumer via e-mail, to be used to get future discounts.

Another use for this system is the distribution of electronic coupons. As the consumer enters the store, the Bluetooth marketing terminal sends a message to the

consumer's mobile phone that he has received an electronic coupon. If the consumer chooses to use the discount, he simply brings his mobile phone to the checkout and sends the coupon information to a receiver at the cash register.

In Fig. 1, a store advertising server (1) receives preformatted messages from the LAN or WAN at the forum. The server sends the messages to the store entrance terminal (3), which in turn sends a message with an attached electronic discount coupon to the consumer's appliance (4) (e.g., mobile phone) as he enters the store. If the consumer wants to use the electronic coupon at the checkout, he responds to the advertising server using his mobile appliance (4). In responding to the server, the consumer provides the store with an e-mail address to which the store can send future discounts. This action gives the store permission to continue permissive marketing via the Internet. The store advertising server then sends e-mail messages about future sales and discounts to the consumer's computer (2), which in turn points the consumer to the store's Web site (5). An additional opportunity to gain the consumer's permission to continue marketing occurs at the store's check out. If the consumer wants to take advantage of discounts, he can use his mobile appliance (4) to communicate with the store's checkout terminal (6).

Fig. 2 shows an exemplary layout of a store utilizing the system of the present invention. Bluetooth terminals are positioned at key locations throughout the store (1-4). At terminal 1, the store sends a message to the consumer as he or she enters. As the consumer shops, additional messages are sent about products and discounts using terminals placed in the aisles (3). When the consumer reaches the checkout terminal, he can decide if he wants to use any of the coupons; if so, he simply provides the coupon data in his mobile appliance to the checkout terminal (2), including his contact information allowing the store to follow up with additional advertising. Terminal 4 controls the store's operations and communicates with an e-mail server for customer follow up.

Fig. 3 shows an exemplary block diagram of a store's advertising terminal of the present invention. This terminal includes a host and a communications module. The host can be a stand-alone computer, networked computer, or microprocessor. The communications module may be an integrated Bluetooth module, or other standard wireless data module capable of receiving data from a microprocessor.



Industrial Applicability

The present invention has been described as a stand-alone system, and can be used as such to provide the advantages of the business method described herein. Further, the process of the invention may be adapted for use with conventional systems, in order to enhance the features of these systems and improve the effectiveness of the advertising performed by these systems, thereby also providing a better method of doing business. For example, the present invention may be adopted for use with the cellular telephone advertising system described previously. The present invention includes no requirement for a telephone call to be placed in order to use the inventive system. Thus, the process of the present invention works with a cell phone user whether or not that user is a customer of the telephone service provider using the advertising system. Thus, the present invention can function as an independent system that provides the telephone service provider with information, such as updated profile information for their customers. When the telephone service customer interacts with system of the present invention in a retail outlet, certain information (identity of the retailer, items purchased, coupons redeemed) can be provided to the telephone service provider (with the customer's permission, obtained at registration) to provide profiling updates that help refine their advertising efforts. If the cellular phone user is not a customer of that telephone service provider, the user can be offered an opportunity to try the telephone service as he's leaving the store. That is, after checking out, the system of the present invention can detect that he's leaving the store, and send him a message offering, for example, a free two-minute call in exchange for listening to an advertisement. The telephone service provider would pay the administrator of the present invention for the benefit of the non-customer advertising revenue it would get, and for the opportunity for exposure to a potential customer. After the call, the system of the present invention can offer more information to the user by e-mail with that person's consent, in the manner described above. This would provide a link to the Web site of the telephone service provider, or even a WAP download for immediate enrollment via the telephone.

Other enhancements to the telephone advertising system can be provided by taking the system a bit farther. For example, the telephone advertisements can conclude with a request for permission to send e-mail to the customer, and that e-mail message would include a Web site link. The advertisement could also include an offer to accept a coupon

that is directly redeemable at a retail outlet in the manner of the present invention, as previously described.

**I claim:**

1. A wireless incentive marketing system comprising:  
a terminal broadcasting electronic signals representing information redeemable in  
5 a separate commercial transaction; and  
a receiver accepting said electronic signals representing information redeemable in  
a separate commercial transaction.
2. The system of claim 1, wherein said terminal has a fixed location.
- 10 3. The system of claim 2, wherein said terminal is located in a public forum.
4. The system of claim 1, wherein said receiver has a variable location.
- 15 5. The system of claim 4, wherein said receiver is a cellular telephone.
6. The system of claim 4, wherein said receiver is a portable  
communication device.
- 20 7. The system of claim 4, wherein said receiver is a PDA.
8. A wireless incentive marketing system comprising:  
a terminal controlled by a first contracting party broadcasting electronic signals  
representing information redeemable in a separate commercial transaction; and  
25 a receiver controlled by a second contracting party accepting said electronic  
signals representing information redeemable in a separate commercial transaction.
9. The system of claim 8, wherein said terminal has a fixed location.
- 30 10. The system of claim 9, wherein said terminal is located in a public forum.
11. The system of claim 8, wherein said receiver has a variable location.

12. The system of claim 11, wherein said receiver is a cellular telephone.
13. The system of claim 11, wherein said receiver is a portable  
5 communication device.
14. The system of claim 11, wherein said receiver is a PDA.
15. A wireless incentive marketing system comprising:  
10 a terminal controlled by a merchant broadcasting electronic signals representing  
information redeemable in a separate commercial transaction; and  
a receiver controlled by a consumer accepting said electronic signals representing  
information redeemable in a separate commercial transaction.
- 15 16. The system of claim 15, wherein said terminal has a fixed location.
17. The system of claim 16, wherein said terminal is located in a public forum.
18. The system of claim 15, wherein said receiver has a variable location.  
20
19. The system of claim 18, wherein said receiver is a cellular telephone.
20. The system of claim 18, wherein said receiver is a portable  
communication device.  
25
21. The system of claim 18, wherein said receiver is a PDA.
22. A wireless incentive marketing system comprising:  
a terminal controlled by a merchant broadcasting electronic signals representing  
30 information redeemable in a separate commercial transaction between said merchant and  
a consumer; and

a receiver controlled by said consumer accepting said electronic signals representing information redeemable in a separate commercial transaction between said merchant and said consumer.

5           23.    The system of claim 22, wherein said terminal has a fixed location.

          24.    The system of claim 23, wherein said terminal is located in a public forum.

          25.    The system of claim 23, wherein said terminal is located on said  
10 merchant's premises.

          26.    The system of claim 22, wherein said receiver has a variable location.

          27.    The system of claim 26, wherein said receiver is a cellular telephone.

15

          28.    The system of claim 26, wherein said receiver is a portable communication device.

          29.    The system of claim 26, wherein said receiver is a PDA.

20

          30.    A wireless incentive marketing system comprising:  
          a terminal controlled by a merchant broadcasting electronic signals representing information for use in a separate commercial transaction between said merchant and a consumer; and

25           a receiver controlled by said consumer accepting said electronic signals representing information for use in said separate commercial transaction between said merchant and said consumer.

          31.    The system of claim 30, wherein said electronic signals are broadcast using  
30 a standard protocol.

32. The system of claim 30, wherein said electronic signals are broadcast using the protocol provided by a Bluetooth network.

33. The system of claim 30, wherein at least a portion of said information provides instructions to said consumer for obtaining said merchant's offered discounts.

34. The system of claim 30, wherein at least a portion of said information describes said merchant's products or services or both offered for sale at a discounted price.

35. The system of claim 30, wherein at least a portion of said information provides said merchant's web site URL.

36. The system of claim 30, wherein at least a portion of said information is an offer by said merchant to transmit an electronic coupon to said consumer in exchange for said consumer providing said consumer's electronic mail address to said merchant.

37. A method of providing a wireless incentive marketing system, the method comprising:

at least one merchant transmitter broadcasting electronic signals representing invitation offer information for use in a separate commercial transaction between a merchant and a consumer;

a portable device receiving said electronic signals representing invitation offer information for use in said separate commercial transaction between said merchant and said consumer;

said consumer performing at least a portion of said separate commercial transaction by transmitting electronic signals representing invitation acceptance information for completing said separate commercial transaction from said portable device to a merchant server; and

said merchant server transmitting electronic signals representing advertising offer information for use in subsequent commercial transactions between said merchant and said consumer to a consumer-defined electronic mailbox provided by

said consumer as part of said electronic signals representing invitation acceptance information.

38. A method as in claim 37, wherein at least a portion of said invitation  
5 offer information provides instructions to said consumer for obtaining said merchant's offered discounts.

39. A method as in claim 37, wherein at least a portion of said invitation  
10 offer information describes said merchant's products or services or both offered for sale at a discounted price.

40. A method as in claim 37, wherein at least a portion of said invitation  
offer information includes an electronic coupon redeemable by said consumer for said  
15 merchant's products or services or both.

41. A method as in claim 37, wherein at least a portion of said invitation  
offer information includes said merchant's web site URL.

42. A method as in claim 37, wherein all said at least one merchant  
20 transmitter are located on the merchant's premises.

43. A method as in claim 37, wherein at least one of said at least one  
merchant transmitter is located proximate to an entrance to the merchant's premises.

44. A method as in claim 37, wherein said broadcasting is accomplished  
25 using a low power short range transmitter.

45. A method as in claim 44, wherein said transmitter uses the IEEE  
30 802.11b communication standard.

46. A method as in claim 44, wherein said transmitter uses the Bluetooth  
communication standard.

47. A method as in claim 44, wherein said transmitter uses a home radio frequency communication standard.

5 48. A method as in claim 37, wherein said device is a cellular telephone.

49. A method as in claim 37, wherein said device is a portable communication device.

10 50. A method as in claim 37, wherein said device is a PDA.

51. A method as in claim 37, wherein at least a portion of said invitation acceptance information includes an electronic coupon redeemed by said consumer for said merchant's products or services or both.

15

52. A method as in claim 37, wherein at least a portion of said invitation acceptance information includes said consumer's electronic mailbox address.

20 53. A method as in claim 37, wherein at least a portion of said invitation acceptance information includes said consumer's contact information.

54. A method as in claim 37, wherein at least a portion of said invitation acceptance information includes said consumer granting permission to said merchant to transmit advertising offer information to said consumer.

25

55. A method as in claim 37, wherein said consumer transmits electronic signals representing invitation acceptance information from said device to said merchant server using an electronic docking port.

30 56. A method as in claim 37, wherein said electronic docking port is located proximate to a said merchant's cash register.



57. A method as in claim 37 further comprising a merchant network transmitting electronic signals representing invitation offer information to said merchant server.

5 58. A method as in claim 57, wherein said merchant network is a local area network.

59. A method as in claim 57, wherein said merchant network is a wide area network.

10

60. A method of providing a wireless incentive marketing system, the method comprising:

at least one merchant transmitter broadcasting electronic signals representing advertising information;

15

a portable device receiving said electronic signals representing advertising information for use in commercial transactions between a merchant and a consumer;

said portable device transmitting electronic signals representing response information for use in commercial transactions between said merchant and said consumer;

20

a merchant server receiving said electronic signals representing response information for use in commercial transactions between said merchant and said consumer; and

25

said merchant server transmitting electronic signals representing advertising offer information for use in subsequent commercial transactions between said merchant and said consumer to a consumer-defined electronic mailbox provided by said consumer as part of said electronic signals representing response information.

61. A method as in claim 60, wherein at least a portion of said advertising information is a request to said consumer asking said consumer to opt-in in order to receive further information from said merchant.

30

62. A method as in claim 61, wherein at least a portion of said response information is an answer to said merchant's request to said consumer to opt-in in order to receive further information from said merchant.

5 63. A method as in claim 60, wherein at least a portion of said advertising information is a request to said consumer asking for said consumer's electronic mailbox address.

64. A method as in claim 63, wherein at least a portion of said response  
10 information is an answer to said merchant's request to said consumer asking for said consumer's electronic mailbox address.

65. A method as in claim 60, wherein all said at least one merchant transmitters are located on the merchant's premises.

15

66. A method as in claim 60, wherein at least one of said at least one merchant transmitter is located proximate to an entrance to the merchant's premises.

67. A method as in claim 60, wherein said broadcasting is accomplished  
20 using a low power short range transmitter.

68. A method as in claim 67, wherein said transmitter uses the IEEE 802.11b communication standard.

25 69. A method as in claim 67, wherein said transmitter uses the Bluetooth communication standard.

70. A method as in claim 67, wherein said transmitter uses a home RF communication standard.

30

71. A method as in claim 60, wherein said device uses the IEEE 802.11b communication standard.

72. A method as in claim 60, wherein said device uses the Bluetooth communication standard.

5 73. A method as in claim 60, wherein said device uses a home radio frequency communication standard.

74. A method as in claim 60, wherein said device is a cellular telephone.

10 75. A method as in claim 60, wherein said device is a portable communication device.

76. A method as in claim 60, wherein said device is a PDA.

15 77. A method as in claim 60, wherein at least a portion of said response information includes an electronic coupon redeemed by said consumer for said merchant's products or services or both.

20 78. A method as in claim 60, wherein at least a portion of said response information includes said consumer's electronic mailbox address.

79. A method as in claim 60, wherein at least a portion of said response information includes said consumer's contact information.

25 80. A method as in claim 60, wherein at least a portion of said response information includes said consumer granting permission to said merchant to transmit advertising offer information to said consumer.

30 81. A method as in claim 60, wherein said consumer transmits electronic signals representing response information from said device to said merchant server using an electronic docking port.

82. A method as in claim 60, wherein said electronic docking port is located proximate to a said merchant's cash register.

5 83. A method as in claim 60 further comprising a merchant network transmitting electronic signals representing advertising information to said merchant server.

84. A method as in claim 83, wherein said merchant network is a local area  
10 network.

85. A method as in claim 83, wherein said merchant network is a wide area network.

15 86. A method of providing a wireless incentive marketing system, the method comprising:

at least one first merchant transmitter broadcasting electronic signals representing invitation offer information for use in a separate commercial transaction between a merchant and a consumer;

20 at least one second merchant transmitter broadcasting electronic signals representing specific product discount information for use in a separate commercial transaction between a merchant and a consumer;

a portable device receiving said electronic signals representing invitation offer information and specific product discount information for use in said separate commercial  
25 transaction between said merchant and said consumer;

said consumer performing at least a portion of said separate commercial transaction by transmitting electronic signals representing invitation acceptance information for completing said separate commercial transaction from said portable device to a merchant server; and

30 said merchant server transmitting electronic signals representing advertising offer information for use in subsequent commercial transactions between said merchant and said consumer to a consumer-defined electronic mailbox provided by

said consumer as part of said electronic signals representing invitation acceptance information.

87. A method as in claim 86, wherein at least a portion of said invitation offer information provides instructions to said consumer for obtaining said merchant's offered discounts.

88. A method as in claim 86, wherein at least a portion of said invitation offer information describes said merchant's products or services or both offered for sale at a discounted price.

89. A method as in claim 86, wherein at least a portion of said invitation offer information includes an electronic coupon redeemable by said consumer for said merchant's products or services or both.

15

90. A method as in claim 86, wherein at least a portion of said invitation offer information includes said merchant's web site URL.

91. A method as in claim 86, wherein all said at least one first merchant transmitter are located on the merchant's premises.

20

92. A method as in claim 86, wherein at least one of said at least one first merchant transmitter is located proximate to an entrance to the merchant's premises.

93. A method as in claim 86, wherein all said at least one second merchant transmitter are located on the merchant's premises.

25

94. A method as in claim 86, wherein said broadcasting is accomplished using a low power short range transmitter.

30

95. A method as in claim 94, wherein said transmitter uses the IEEE 802.11b communication standard.

96. A method as in claim 94, wherein said transmitter uses the Bluetooth communication standard.

5 97. A method as in claim 94, wherein said transmitter uses a home radio frequency communication standard.

98. A method as in claim 86, wherein said device is a cellular telephone.

10 99. A method as in claim 86, wherein said device is a portable communication device.

100. A method as in claim 86, wherein said device is a PDA.

15 101. A method as in claim 86, wherein at least a portion of said invitation acceptance information includes an electronic coupon redeemed by said consumer for said merchant's products or services or both.

20 102. A method as in claim 86, wherein at least a portion of said invitation acceptance information includes said consumer's electronic mailbox address.

103. A method as in claim 86, wherein at least a portion of said invitation acceptance information includes said consumer's contact information.

25 104. A method as in claim 86, wherein at least a portion of said invitation acceptance information includes said consumer granting permission to said merchant to transmit advertising offer information to said consumer.

30 105. A method as in claim 86, wherein said consumer transmits electronic signals representing invitation acceptance information from said device to said merchant server using an electronic docking port.

106. A method as in claim 86, wherein said electronic docking port is located proximate to a said merchant's cash register.

5 107. A method as in claim 86 further comprising a merchant network transmitting electronic signals representing invitation offer information to said merchant server.

10 108. A method as in claim 107, wherein said merchant network is a local area network.

109. A method as in claim 107, wherein said merchant network is a wide area network.

Slide 1

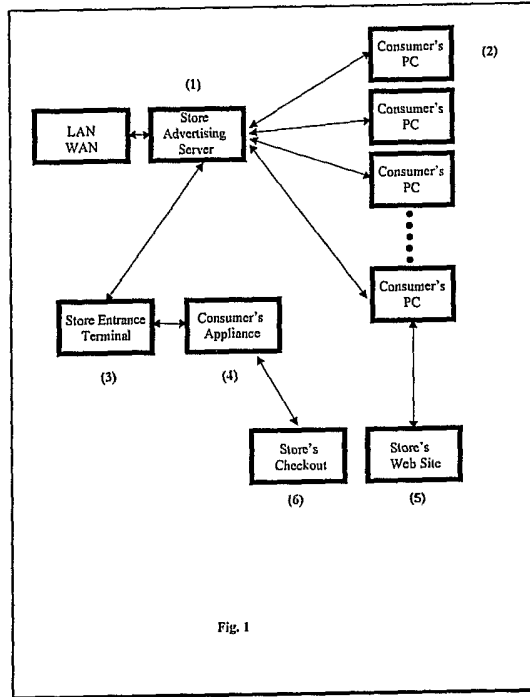


Fig. 1



Slide 2

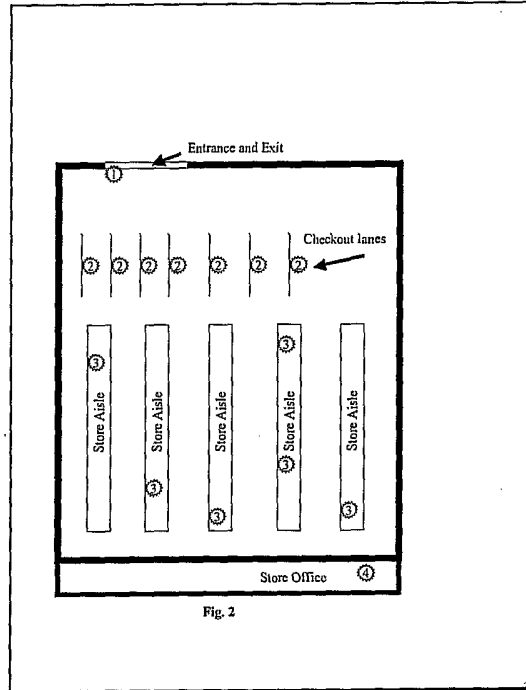


Fig. 2

Slide 3

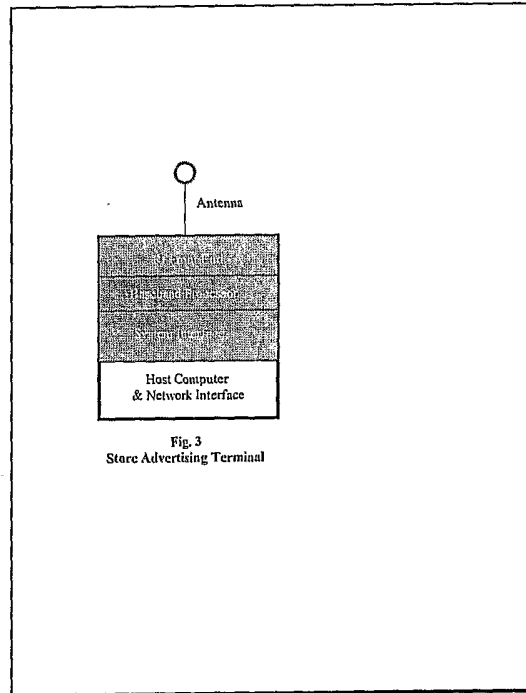


Fig. 3  
Store Advertising Terminal