MULTI-FUNCTIONAL PREPAID TELEPHONE CARD

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ABSTRACT

A multi-functional phone card has a front side with a means for winning a prize and a primary advertising message and a back side with a plurality of advertising messages. Also disclosed is a multi-functional phone card having a front side with a means for winning a prize and a plurality of advertising messages and a back side with at least one advertising message. Additionally disclosed is a method of advertising to the Hispanic community, the method including placing a primary advertiser on the front of a phone card along with a scratch-off area, placing on the back of the phone card a plurality of advertising messages from a plurality of advertisers, and providing the phone cards in locations frequented by Hispanic consumers.
FIGURE 1

$5

EL PREMIO

RASPA

Y GANA

SIEMPRE LO GANA CON EL PREMIO

$5

EL PREMIO

100

MIN
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPANY 1</th>
<th>COMPANY 2</th>
<th>COMPANY 3</th>
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**BACK OF PHONE CARD USED TO CALL**

**FIGURE 2**
MULTI-FUNCTIONAL PREPAID TELEPHONE CARD

BACKGROUND

[0001] Advertising is necessary to acquaint the public with the name of a company and the products or services it provides. Most advertising is a high-risk and expensive effort. For example, it may cost a small merchant $50,000 to $40,000 to do a three-month television campaign, whose success is difficult to assess. And some of the risks include effectiveness of the marketing message, reach of the target market and measurement of the success of the marketing campaign.

[0002] Prepaid telephone cards, or phone cards, are very popular in the Hispanic community. It has been projected that by 2010, the phone card industry will collect ten billion dollars per year. Phone cards are now sold through virtually every distribution channel, including convenience stores, corner cafes and even vending machines. Major users of the phone card are immigrants from Mexico and Central America. On the average they purchase one phone card per week. Currently there is only one company on the card. When a product is directed toward these Hispanic groups, they are highly receptive and loyal.

[0003] What is needed is to bring advertisements directly to this growing group of consumers with the maximum repeat exposures and a way to monitor the advertising effectiveness.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0004] The phone card has been under-utilized. Herein is disclosed an improved phone card and method of advertising. One embodiment of the invention provides a multi-functional phone card. This card has a front (FIG. 1) and a back (FIG. 2). The front carries the message of a primary advertiser and a chance to win a prize, for example, by scratching off an area. The primary advertiser receives a high degree of exposure as the consumer will often see the front of the card and the advertisement is large. The phone card often is named for the front advertiser. And when the consumer wins a prize, the consumer is happy and even more receptive to the advertising messages. In addition to scratching an area to win a prize, other methods of rewarding consumers can be used, such as a multi-digit number to match with a weekly number displayed at the seller’s establishment. In one embodiment, the front of the phone card (FIG. 1) is intended to offer a large prize, such as a Ford F150 truck.

[0005] The back of the phone card (FIG. 2) has the secondary advertisers. Although they have less space on the card than the primary advertiser, their exposure also occurs each time the card is used. In addition, they too can provide incentives to consumers to visit their establishment(s) for free or discounted items, for example a $500.00 coupon towards the down payment on a new vehicle purchase. The phone card is more successful because it is purchased weekly, but the same advertisers have at least three-month contracts. Thus, the consumer receives repetitive impressions to the same primary and secondary advertisers over a period of time. It is an adage of advertising that repetition is critical to successful campaigns, and repetitions are what this multi-functional phone card provides.

[0006] To effectively market to consumers, the secondary advertisers will preferably not simultaneously compete (e.g., two furniture stores), although competitors can have serial contracts. The back of the card has multiple advertisers: preferably a plurality of advertisements, preferably at least two, more preferably 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, or 10 advertisers. The main limitation on the number of advertisers is the ease of reading the messages and of incorporating an offer to the consumer, another reward to encourage repeat business. Examples of advertisers include but are not limited to large grocers, convenience stores, furniture stores, restaurants, hair salons, internet service providers and long distance carriers.

[0007] Measurement of the effectiveness of the advertising message is incorporated into the phone card by including coupons and other incentives for the consumers to visit the advertisers or otherwise use their services. For example, the offer of a free gift brings consumers to that establishment, thus indicating the degree of advertising effectiveness.

[0008] This method of advertising is very economical for the secondary advertiser. For a fraction of the cost of the front of the phone card, the secondary advertiser nevertheless receives about the same frequency of impressions. Thus, a secondary advertiser who cannot afford to purchase one side of the phone card effectively shares the cost of the other side with other secondary advertisers. Because of the almost daily use of the phone card for an advertising period of three months, the advertiser has a chance to become a household name.

[0009] Almost as important as the attributes of the multi-functional phone card is a kick-off marketing campaign, preferably at the beginning of the sale of the multi-functional phone cards, and more preferably at the beginning of each three-month (or other duration) marketing period. Because of the predominantly Hispanic use of phone cards, advertisements run on Spanish-language TV stations such as Univision and Telefutura, as well as on Spanish-speaking radio stations. The radio stations also can be hired to perform remote broadcasts at Hispanic-preferred markets and Hispanic community events. Preferably, radio station remote broadcasts take place at the primary and/or secondary advertisers’ establishments.

[0010] Other variations are possible, such as multiple, secondary advertisers around the price area on the front of the card and a primary advertiser on the back of the card. The advertising contract need not be limited to three month periods; it may be less (e.g., one or two months) or more (e.g., 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 months, and a year or even longer).

1. A multi-functional phone card comprising
   a front side with a means for winning a prize and a primary advertising message; and
   a back side with a plurality of advertising messages.
2. The phone card of claim 1, wherein the means for winning a prize is a scratch-off area.
3. The phone card of claim 1, wherein the plurality of advertising messages consists of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, or 10 advertising messages.
4. A multi-functional phone card comprising
   a front side with a means for winning a prize and a plurality of advertising messages; and
   a back side with at least one advertising message.
5. A method of advertising to the Hispanic community, the method comprising
   placing a primary advertiser on the front of a phone card along with a scratch-off area;
   placing on the back of the phone card a plurality of advertising messages from a plurality of advertisers;
   and
   providing the phone cards in locations frequented by Hispanic consumers.