

## Lawyer Gets Clients Using Text Messages for Law Firm Marketing

**By Larry Bodine**, a business development advisor with Apollo Business Development. He has helped law firms nationwide attract new clients and generate new business by using strategy, business development training and individual attorney coaching. See [www.ApolloBusinessDevelopment.com](http://www.ApolloBusinessDevelopment.com). He can be reached at 630.942.0977 and Lbodine [at] LawMarketing [dot] com.



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"SMS advertising," or marketing to individuals by sending them text messages, is all the rage in corporate advertising. [Ed Bernstein](#), a tech-savvy marketing-oriented lawyer in Las Vegas, is sitting atop a huge technology wave by letting potential clients text him at 24000. He promotes the number in TV ads and his website, urging people who have just been in auto accidents to text him for help.

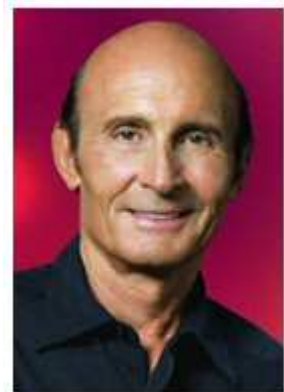
For 2009, total US mobile advertising was \$2.6 billion, and \$2.3 billion of that was for text messaging. But in 2010 mobile advertising is forecast to grow 45%, according to TechCrunch.com, with \$43.2 billion devoted to SMS advertising. (SMS stands for Short Message Service, which allows a cell phone user to send a 160-character message -- 20 more characters than Twitter! -- to other cell phone users.)

Edward M. Bernstein, Esq., is one of the most recognizable community leaders, politicians and public figures in Nevada, being the first lawyer to advertise locally on billboards, to advertise in Spanish and hosting the 30-minute [Ed Bernstein TV talk show](#) at 4 PM on local NBC affiliates for 15 years.

Visit his [website](#) and you'll hear a video where he says he's been helping people who were hurt or injured for more than 30 years. If you've been injured in an accident you can now reach him by phone (800.525.HURT), computer or text message. Reportedly he's worked on his text message advertising for a year at an expense of \$50,000, because he had to sign separate agreements with all the cell phone carriers to use his numerical text address.

When you text 24000 (easy to remember, isn't it?) you'll get an instant response, giving you 5 options for your reply:

1. \*SPK to speak to a live rep
2. \*ESP para espanol
3. \*ASK to ask a question
4. \*APP to schedule an appointment
5. \*TIP for accident scene advice.



Edward Bernstein

## A brilliant campaign

What is brilliant about his campaign is that he is trying to reach a younger audience, the "Net Generation" born after 1997, who grew up texting. As it turns out, younger people also account for most of the traffic accidents nationwide. SMS advertising hits his target market spot on.

The campaign succeeds in most of the crucial areas of SMS advertising:

- **It's a novel approach.** The publicity and attention go the first person to use a new marketing approach. While many law firms have figured out LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter, marketing with text messages is brand new to the legal profession.
- **It's local.** People respond well to local names and brands they are familiar with, and are less likely to respond to ads from nameless distant corporations.
- **It's interactive.** People get an instant response, and get five suggested options on how to reply.
- **It's from a known source.** People walk up to Ed to say hello in stores, on the street and everywhere he goes. You can't live in Vegas and not know about Ed.
- **It's a rational appeal.** New research shows that texters respond better to rational appeals -- practical information on whom to call when you need help -- as opposed to emotional appeals, like satisfying a sensory need, according to the [Journal of Interactive Advertising](#).
- **The only flaw is that the text message offers no incentive.** This could be because he simply ran out of characters in his reply message. Research shows that SMS ads led to more purchases when they contained a coupon or discount.

In practice for 33 years, Bernstein has handled some of the city's biggest cases. He's involved in a massive tort concerning hygiene at a local endoscopy clinic, and he represented plaintiffs injured in the MGM Grand and Las Vegas Hilton fires in the early 1980s and the 1988 Pacific Engineering & Production Company of Nevada plant explosion in Henderson.

"We're large enough to go toe to toe with big drug companies, but small enough that we still offer personal service. Accessibility and service are very important to us. We were creating customer service campaigns in the early '80s, before businesses in general had done that. We always try to be innovative," he told the Las Vegas Review-Journal.

What's his view on lawyer advertising? "Advertising should be dignified, but I also believe you have a First Amendment right to express truthfully what it is you want to express about your products. You can't legislate taste. There are some attorneys' ads I might find distasteful, but I certainly think they're entitled to run those ads," he told the Review-Journal.