

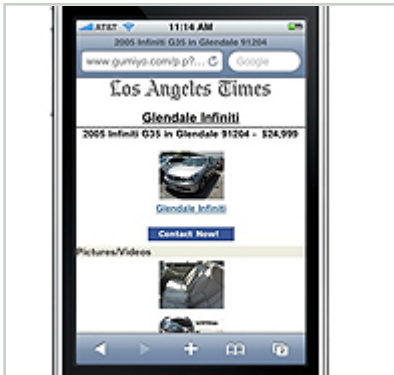
Mobile Marketer™

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L.A. Times launches mobile marketing initiative

By Dan Butcher

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An ad for a Glendale, AZ Infiniti dealer on L.A. Times' mobile platform

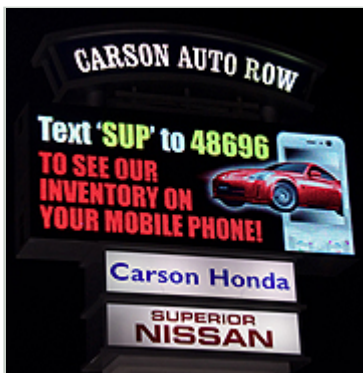
Tribune Co.'s Los Angeles Times is turning to mobile to increase revenue and create new value for its automotive and real estate advertisers.

The newspaper tapped mobile marketing and technology provider Gumiyo Inc. for the mobile marketing initiative, which connects consumers with the Los Angeles Times' classified print and online automotive and real estate advertising via mobile.

"The L.A. Times has taken our platform and privately labeled it to power LAT Mobile, their mobile advertising solution," said Richard Abronson, cofounder/vice president of marketing for Gumiyo, Woodland Hills, CA. "They needed a new revenue stream, a new way to empower their print and online advertising business.

"The strategy was not to make this a cost center, a value-add for readers that costs money for the L.A. Times to produce," he said. "It is a true revenue generator for them, as they can now upsell a mobile component to their print and online advertisers."

Gumiyo claims that the mobile platform will generate incremental revenue for the newspaper from the start.



A Nissan and Honda dealership's mobile call-to-action

"They're packaging it with their print ads, and it works really well with what they're doing on Cars.com," Mr. Abronson said. "They're attracting print advertisers and bringing them something new, new value.

"This is a way to unify all of the advertising that the L. A. Times has out there," he said. "They have print and online businesses, so this unifies those pieces together with mobile calls-to-action in print and online ads."

The new service lets in-market [car shoppers](#) and [home buyers](#) use text messages and the mobile Web to access detailed advertiser listings, photos and videos and view them on almost any mobile handset.

The platform also enables car shoppers to access complete, on-demand Carfax Vehicle History Reports.

The goal of the Los Angeles Times' mobile initiative is to turn traditional classified advertising into interactive media by giving consumers a way to directly engage the publication's dealers, agents or brokers listings anytime via mobile, while also letting advertisers reach buyers via mobile.

The [Los Angeles Times](#) and Latimes.com reach more than 40 percent of households -- 1.3 million -- in its designated marketing area.

Latimes.com and its Internet marketing partner Cars.com receive more than 3 million unique visitors each month looking to purchase a new or used car.

The publisher wants to combine a rich-media, interactive user experience with local, time-sensitive ads.

The Los Angeles Times aims to increase revenue by offering its advertisers the opportunity to extend their reach to mobile consumers.

The Los Angeles Times mobile marketing initiative is powered by Gumiyo's Mobile Ready platform, a mobile marketing service that integrates with traditional and online advertising.

Textable keywords, unique to each dealership, agent or brokerage, are incorporated into the auto retailer or broker's print advertisements, classified and online listings.

Consumers use the keywords to send text messages to receive additional vehicle or property information.

The system automatically replies to the buyer with a text message that includes basic information and a link to the advertiser's rich-media mobile Web site.

The Los Angeles Times claims that its mobile initiative gives homebuyers instant access to details on homes they are interested in buying, keeping them engaged and stimulating fast leads for the listing agent.

Dealers and real estate agents can subscribe to the mobile marketing service for a monthly fee that includes unique keywords, custom outgoing text messages and a branded mobile Web site.

Mobile Web pages for properties and vehicles are generated automatically from existing inventory data that include complete descriptions, photos, videos, vehicle and home reviews and Carfax reports for automotive listings.

Advertisers can also build custom mobile campaigns for various aspects of their businesses, including service specials or open-house events.

Dealerships and brokers that sign up for the new program can launch a mobile campaign in less than a week, according to Gumiyo.

The Los Angeles Times claims to be the largest metropolitan daily newspaper in the country with a daily readership of 2 million and 3 million on Sundays.

The Times has been covering Southern California for 127 years and reaches a combined print and interactive local weekly audience of 4.5 million.

The print version of the newspaper will soon be filled with mobile calls-to-action.

Latimes.com now draws 10 million unique visitors monthly.

The mobile initiatives will eventually be integrated into the Los Angeles Times' wired Web site.

The Los Angeles Times Media Group portfolio of products also includes LA, Los Angeles Times Magazine; [The Envelope](#); [Metromix](#); Times Community Newspapers; [Hoy](#); and California Community News.

The company has an overall reach of approximately 5.3 million, or 40 percent of all adults in the Southern California marketplace.

It is part of the Tribune Co., a media company with businesses in publishing, the Internet and broadcasting. Tribune also owns the Chicago Tribune newspaper and the Chicago Cubs team.

Tribune Co. recently filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection from its creditors, making it one of a growing number of struggling media companies.

The Gumiyo Mobile Ready Platform is a turnkey service enabling businesses such as the Los Angeles Times to launch a mobile presence, merchandise inventory and listings to mobile phones and run mobile marketing campaigns.

The Gumiyo private-label platform powers a number of offerings in the retail, automotive, real estate and printed publications industries. Gumiyo can enable text-to-win campaigns, mobile coupons and SMS alerts.

For example, consumers can sign up for text-message alerts for when a specific make, model and year from a specific automaker is posted.

"For Tribune, everything's up in the air a little bit, and this company has involvement in other media besides newspapers," Mr. Abronson said. "They can now make traditional media interactive with the SMS-based mobile call to action.

"It's also a way of justifying the advertising spend to the advertisers in real estate, automotive and retail, which are all questioning their ad budgets and trimming," he said. "The mobile component justifies that ad spend for advertiser, because mobile campaigns are more measurable.

"The mobile call-to-action makes print ads more powerful, so it's a lot easier for L.A. Times sales reps to justify to advertisers why they should have a marketing solution that includes mobile."