

More business through SMS location alerts

Turning a passion for windsurfing photography into a business is no easy feat. Liz Metcalfe has managed to grow Cape Sessions as a business model majoring on new technologies, adding a new SMS service to better target customers for her digital photographs.

Cape Sessions sells digital images from a website to windsurfers caught in the shutters of Liz Metcalfe's camera. The secret to her success is coupling photographic talent, a web presence, and an SMS location alert service to drive sales.

The business started when windsurfers asked Metcalfe for photographs she had taken of them during a session. "I used to take pictures of windsurfers on the beach for pleasure. Lots of guys used to ask if I could take one of them and a website seemed like the easiest way to view and sell the photographs. From there the idea of taking photographs of anyone sailing at the beach took off and Cape Sessions was born," explains Metcalfe.

Cape Sessions grew as it regularly covered and uploaded photographs of the airs, off-the-tops, and adrenal antics of windsurfers reveling in the waters off Cape Town's south easterly windswept beaches. Digital camera in hand, Metcalfe would seek out windsurfers as they traveled from beach to beach in their search for the eye of the wind.

Further level

In late 2007, Cape Sessions introduced an SMS location alert service to the website, adding further level of professionalism to the look and feel of the business. Windsurfers add their name and cellphone number to a web form to receive these alerts. This innovation in Cape Sessions' business model allows Metcalfe to broadcast to subscribers her location for the next windsurfing shoot.

According to Metcalfe, "although windsurfers go where they think the conditions are good, the SMS location alert service has enabled me to take photographs of windsurfers who want their picture taken on a certain day. Cape Sessions is now able to convert more image views on the website into actual purchases from windsurfers who were sailing during a session I shot at a beach I had selected."

Cape Sessions' has partnered with BulkSMS.com, a Cape Town based messaging company, to provide the SMS location alert service.