



**10 IMPOSSIBLE
TO IGNORE REASONS
TO USE
TEXT MESSAGES TO
MARKET YOUR BUSINESS**

Quick Note

Throughout this guidebook you'll see the term "text message" and "SMS." Just so we're clear, for our purposes here, these terms mean exactly the same thing.

OK, let's talk text message marketing ...

2 Things That Are NEVER Ignored



Left, a cellphone. Right, a human baby. Both command a LOT of our attention.

Can anyone argue with that headline?

Sure, you might silence your ringer at dinner, or let a call go to voicemail once in awhile, but no one ignores their phone—not for long anyway.

Which is why this marketing medium is so incredibly effective. Our phones are, almost literally, extensions of our bodies. Who knows, in the future maybe there won't even be a dividing line. That's a scary thought, but not altogether unlikely, is it?

Anyway, my point is, our phones are with us at all times, and we're as responsive to them as...a mother is to her newborn baby!

Let's dive right into the nitty-gritty of this report: I'm going to run through a list of reasons why your business should strongly consider SMS marketing. Then I'm going to run through a list of specific approaches that have worked for businesses in the past (and still work today). Lastly, I'll run through a list of some commonly asked questions—some of which you might also have.

There's a reason for this list-based format: first of all, I know you're a busy business owner (how's that for a redundant statement?) and this seems like the most direct and efficient way to present the case for SMS. In the end, I hope to drive home one simple point: text message marketing is darn cool, and you should climb aboard the "SMS Express." (Hey, I like the sound of that ...)



10 Impossible-to-Ignore Reasons to Use Text Messages to Market Your Business

Reason #1

SMS is RELEVANT.

Eighty-seven percent of Americans have cell phones, and 73 percent say it's their most-used form of technology.

Think about that! More than computers. More than television. More than a stereo. That's pretty remarkable for such a new technology. In fact, Americans have adopted cell phones faster than any other household appliance.

Fastest route to widespread household adoption

Widespread adoption = 51%-80% U.S. households

1. Cellphone: 20 years
2. Color TV: 21 years
3. Refrigerator: 25 years
4. Electric power: 40 years
5. Stove: 60 years
6. Automobile: 65 years
7. Telephone: 68 years

Source: Asymco

And that's why I included the word "revolution" in the title of this guidebook. Everything about the rise of mobile phones has been revolutionary in terms of speed and scope.

87%

of Americans have mobile phones ...

73%

say it's their no. 1 most-used technology device ...

25%

of all U.S. households have ditched their home phones.

Reason #2

SMS Is ENGAGING.

Let's talk open rates. Consumers have an amazingly high level of engagement when it comes to messages sent to their phones.

How amazing? Ninety-seven percent of all text messages are opened by recipients, and almost all of them—95–98 percent—are read within minutes.

That. Is. Astounding.

Consider that, according to a 2010 study by MailChimp, a popular email marketing software vendor, the highest open rates for email *peak* at about 30 percent. Average open rates for email are closer to 20 percent. Well below SMS open rates.

Reason #3



SMS Is FRESH.

Did you know that 72 percent of the 320 billion emails sent on a daily basis are spam?

Crazy, right? However, when most of us look at our overcrowded inboxes, this stat doesn't seem so outlandish. The world is drowning in email. I have yet to meet a single person who complained about not getting enough email.

Now, to be clear, I'm not saying that email isn't effective as a marketing tool—it certainly IS effective, and I recommend that every business develop and maintain a robust email marketing program. But it's becoming much harder to stand out in people's inbox, and buyers have gotten really good at filtering and tuning out promotional messages.

Not so with SMS. Since this is such a fresh and new channel,

it is that much more potent and effective. The high open rates associated with SMS/text message campaigns are all the proof you need.

Again, I don't want to suggest that you abandon your email efforts and put all of your energy into text message campaigns. Email is still important. A better approach would be to diversify your promotional efforts to include email *AND* SMS. That may seem like a lot of extra work, but it's the cost of doing business in a competitive marketplace in which buyer attention is scarce and increasingly fragmented.



**“Mobile coupons are
10 times more likely to
be redeemed than
traditional coupons.”**

Reason #4

SMS Is AFFORDABLE.

The other benefit of SMS marketing that you might not have known is that it's affordable, and getting more so each day. Take a look at the marketplace for SMS

campaign software: you see new entrants all the time, and prices for these tools are plummeting as the market continues to grow and mature. In fact, I've seen entry-level SMS software packages for as a low as \$25 per month!



Reason #5



SMS Is EASY.

What's more, these new tools make it easier than ever to deploy campaigns that run automatically while you focus on running your business. You don't have to have a PhD or any coding skills to launch a text

message campaign. Setup is as easy as creating a free email account.

Reason #6

SMS Helps You
Build LASTING
RELATIONSHIPS.

Here's another unique thing about text message marketing: because people retain their phone numbers, you can be more confident in your ability to build a lasting relationship.



Roughly 35 percent of email addresses change on a yearly basis, but with number portability (i.e. the ability to take a number from carrier to carrier), people are ditching their home phones and keeping their cell phone number for life.

Let's consider the ramifications of of this trend:

For one thing, that means you don't have to waste time and money sending messages to a zombie email account that hasn't been accessed in years.

Reason #7

SMS Is DIRECT and IMMEDIATE.

Jared Reitzin of MobileStorm has observed, accurately, that having your customer's phone number is like having your customer's IP address.

It's really quite true, although I think you could go even further ...

Think about the important numbers we have associated with our identity. What are they?

How about these: social security number ... driver's license number ... bank account number ... street address ... and—you guessed it—your cell phone number.

An email address is virtual and impermanent. A cell phone number, however, is something that identifies a person in both a virtual and physical sense, and it's immediate. I mean, here's something to think about: If you have a pet—a dog, for example—you don't put your email address on its collar in case it gets lost. You don't necessarily put your street address either.

You put your cell phone number on it! Because that's the most direct and immediate way to get in touch with you!

... this all may seem like an abstract and sort of “fluffy” idea, but when you really think about it and consider the implications, it's pretty powerful.

Reason #8

SMS Is Easy to
AUTOMATE.

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention this incredible benefit of text message marketing: automation—the ability to deploy campaigns with minimal (if any) effort. This is one of the most appealing things about SMS.

Most SMS platforms allow you to set up autoresponders, so that you can respond to potential customers without lifting a finger.

For example, let's say you're a local property manager, and you want to be able to quickly field inquiries about available rentals. You could pick the keyword “RENT,” and every time someone texts this keyword to your shortcode, you could automatically and instantly respond to that person with your available properties.



Reason #9

SMS Is TRACKABLE.

You can track it.
No more
guesswork. No
more blind faith.



Most (if not all) SMS tools give you detailed insight into how your customers are responding to your messages. You can see who is opening your text messages and look at their responses; you can see which are the most receptive to your campaigns so that you can identify any potential carriers that are blocking your messages; and you can see who's dropped off your list.

Since it's so easy to measure the results of your SMS campaigns, that means you can always improve the cost-efficiency of your marketing, which ultimately means you can lower the cost of acquiring new customers!

Reason #10

SMS Gets DELIVERED.

According to research from ReturnPath, 20 percent of permission-based email is still not making it to the inbox, with 3 percent of going to the “junk” or “bulk” folder, and another 16 percent just goes missing—vanishes into the ether.

I say this not to bag on email, but to draw a contrast with text message marketing, which has virtually no deliverability issues. Every message, with only a few rare exceptions, gets delivered to the recipient, making it the de facto “certified mail” of digital communications.

The result is that every message you send has the chance to convert—i.e. has the chance to do its job!

7 Surefire Ways to Use SMS to Increase Sales

1. Appointment reminders

The possibilities for SMS are still being explored. There's still a wide-open frontier to explore.

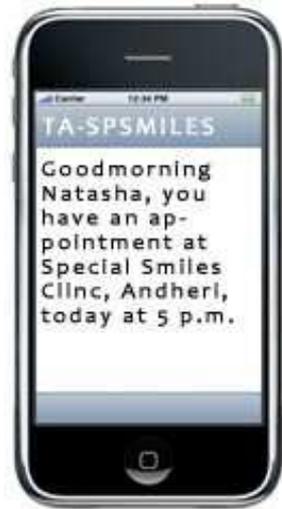
One great feature of text-message marketing that has emerged recently is the ability to send appointment reminders. Some early studies have shown that this can cut no-shows by HALF!

Those of you who run service-oriented businesses know how big a deal this is from a money-saving standpoint. We're talking MAJOR savings—money that can be funneled into your business's products, employees, and marketing efforts.

It sounds crazy, but even churches are using SMS to increase engagement and drive up attendance on Sunday morning!

Bottom line:

- SMS reminders can reduce no-shows by 50% or more—which means you...
- Save a TON of money—and put it back into your business (or into your pocket)



2. Coupons

Let's talk about a very specific, empirically proven reason to use text-message marketing:

Coupons.

Just when coupons were about to take their last wheezing breath, new technologies have swooped in to reinvent this old-fashioned marketing tool.

You can use SMS to send coupon-based campaigns to drive repeat business, to help spread the word about a new product or service, to piggyback on an event or season, to reward your most loyal customers—the list goes on and on.

And get this: according to a 2010 study commissioned by Borrell Associates, mobile coupons are 10 times more likely to be redeemed than traditional coupons.

TEN TIMES.

That's pretty remarkable, is it not? A lot of people think coupons are old fashioned, but the data say otherwise!

The other great thing about coupons? You can determine return on investment instantly! You can see how much revenue is generated thanks to a particular coupon or find out the percentage of sales growth thanks to a certain campaign.

Which brings up one of the very best things about SMS in general

...



3. Voting and Contests

As I mentioned earlier, the potential applications of text message marketing are still being explored, and it seems that the only limit is our imagination.

Recently, businesses and marketers have embraced voting and contests as a way to engage buyers in a fun way that builds goodwill and raises customer awareness. You see very similar approaches in social media. Contests are great ways to build rapport with your audience while also subtly marketing your products and services.

Makers of SMS marketing software have noticed the increasing popularity of SMS contests, and several have developed easy-to-use tools that allow businesses to launch keyword contests and polls with very little effort.



4. Keyword + Shortcode Campaigns

Chances are pretty good that you've seen a keyword/short code campaign on a billboard or in the daily paper, or maybe on a menu in a restaurant.

So, let's look at the two components of this kind of campaign, which has proven very effective.

Keywords are what consumers text to a short code to join your SMS marketing list. A keyword is a single word, usually ranging from a couple of letters to a dozen. Keywords can be longer depending on the SMS marketing service provider your business uses, but you want to keep things concise for your customers.



Short codes are five or six digit phone numbers that can send and receive text messages. Short codes work on all major wireless carriers (and dozens of smaller ones too).

Once you have your keyword and short code, then you put it everywhere potential subscribers can see it! In your direct mail campaigns; on your business card; on Twitter and Facebook and your website; on flyers, table tents, menus, stickers, and print ads; in your e-newsletter and blog; on a billboard or brochure; on your car even! Anywhere and everywhere.

5. Greetings

Mobile e-greetings: this is another way that businesses are leveraging to SMS marketing to great success.

Sending a greeting or birthday card may seem like an innocuous thing that would not have much of an impact, but in my experience, every business that takes the time to send mobile greetings is invariably impressed with the results. It's a simple gesture that goes so far in building loyalty, maintaining top-of-mind awareness, and encouraging repeat business in a low-key way.

And since most software vendors allow for very granular list segmenting, you can really get creative. For example, you can segment your campaigns by implementing targets such as “males ages 21 to 34” or “New York females” to narrow your reach and hit only those selected subscribers.

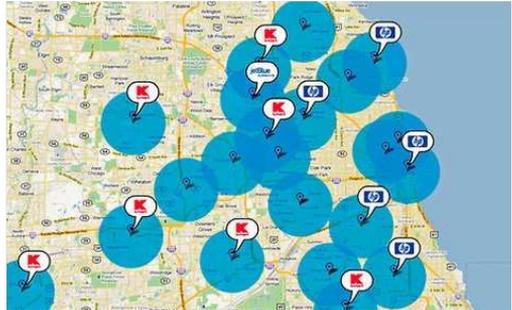


6. Geotargeting

So, earlier I mentioned how cell phones straddle the virtual and physical worlds.

The ability to send geo-targeted coupons—i.e. coupons that deploy only when the recipient is in a designated geographic radius—is a great example of this ...

Imagine you're the owner of a pizza joint: you could send out a special offer for a large pizza that would reach only the people are in your area searching for a lunch spot.



That's pretty amazing!

7. Text to join

If you have a business with a passionate customer base, you're lucky, because you can probably grow your mailing list without having to dangle tons of carrots in the form of discounts and offers.

Many lucky businesses are able to grow their audience with just a simple, no-frills call to action: "Join our mailing list." SMS provides a frictionless way for your fans and die-hard customers to sign up to receive your news, offers, events, etc.

FAQs

Is text message marketing even legal?

Yes! I wouldn't be telling about it otherwise, right? Text message marketing, when done ethically and within the law, is strictly opt-in and permission-based. That's not to say that there aren't abusers out there, however.

Text message spam is a violation of the FCC's Telephone Consumer Protection Act and carries steep fines—as much as \$500 per text message. Not only that, but wireless carriers will quickly pull the plug on suspected spammers. That's why getting permission and consistently providing value is so important in SMS marketing.

How do I not come across as spammy?

This is an important question. It's a bit of a paradox: what makes SMS such a powerful channel is also what makes it such a delicate one ... you have to be smart and strategic about how you use text message marketing. After all, when people give you their phone number, they're putting their trust in you ... they're giving you pretty direct access.

So I think it's really important to start by giving your customers something and consistently provide value thereafter. If you look at the available data, most people opt-out of promotional messages because the messages weren't relevant to them, or the frequency was too high. If you want to maintain a lasting relationship and cultivate loyalty, you have to be generous with your offers and thoughtful with your campaigns. SMS is really more about long-term relationship building than the quick hit. SMS can be incredibly lucrative—we wouldn't be talking about it otherwise—but things can backfire if you get greedy with it.

Lastly, the Mobile Marketing Association offers these best practices, and I strongly recommend that every business follow them to a tee. That means...

Stating specifically what the subscriber is opting in to (i.e. “To receive our weekly specials and alerts ...”).

Stating up front that “Msg&Data rates may apply.”

Providing a resource for help, such as a website or phone number where subscribers can reference all terms and conditions must be included in the advertisement.

Providing instructions on opting-out of the SMS campaign (i.e. “To opt-out, text STOP”).

How often can I send messages?

Well, it really depends. But there are two general guidelines to follow when planning how often to send SMS campaigns to your subscribers.

1 - Is each SMS campaign valuable? Each SMS campaign you send must be seen as valuable. If the campaign isn't of value, subscribers will be more likely to leave your campaign.

2 - Can a subscriber buy that often? If subscribers are only likely to make a purchase from you once a month, it will be overkill to send them an SMS campaign every week. Look at the frequency of your customer visits and use that as a guideline for how often you send your SMS campaigns.

Additionally, it's always a good idea to be clear upfront about how frequently you plan to send messages. You never want your audience to feel overwhelmed or surprised at the frequency of your messages.

What else do I need to know to be successful?

To reiterate, SMS is about building relationships over time. It's not about the quick hit. It's about being creative, showing some generosity, providing value, being restrained and strategic.

And while SMS isn't difficult necessarily, I highly suggest that you approach it with care and thought before you send your first campaign ...

What kind of industries are having success with text message marketing?

There are so many different ones, and a few might surprise you.

- Restaurants
- Bars and nightclubs
- Retail businesses of every size and shape
- Political groups
- Churches
- Nonprofit organizations
- Spas, health clubs & salons
- Lawyers and other professional services
- Insurance companies
- Hospitals, dentists
- Realtors
- Musicians & night clubs
- Local sports teams ...

I mean, the list goes on and on. I can't think of a single B2C company that would not benefit from text message marketing.

How can I integrate SMS marketing with my traditional marketing efforts?

SMS definitely works best when it's used in concert with other efforts. The data show that people are more likely to buy when they get messages from multiple channels. So I highly encourage you to see SMS as another prong in your marketing plan, not an isolated, stand-alone thing. I tell businesses to think about the resources they already have at their disposal and weave SMS into the mix.

Do I need text message marketing software?

Short answer: yes. There are a lot of great vendors out there, and as I mentioned earlier, new ones are cropping up every day, pushing costs down for businesses and marketers.

In conclusion ...

OK, reader, thanks for your patience and attention! I just want to reiterate that SMS is an incredible way to reach your market and engage your customers, to stay top of mind and encourage repeat business. If you've read this far, the chances are good that you're serious about using SMS for your business.

With mobile phone ownership at an all time high, you can be sure that text message marketing is here to stay, and it will only grow in importance in the coming years. I strongly believe that now is the best time to get involved and capitalize on this trend.

If you need any help making SMS work for your business, please don't hesitate to contact us!

Wayne Coakley, CEO
614-642-0808
866-243-2324



To get an idea of what I can do for your business,
SCAN this image or Text "DEMO" to 614-664-8999



13 Text/SMS Statistics That Will Blow Your Mind

1. OMG! New Mobile Obsession: U.S. Teens Triple Data Usage: [Nielsen](#)
The number of messages exchanged monthly (SMS and MMS) hit 3,417 per teen in Q3 2011, averaging seven messages per waking hour.
2. Nielsen also said that in Q3 2011, teens increased their mobile data consumption by 256 percent over the prior year.
3. On average, SMS (text) messages are read within four minutes. ([source](#))
4. Today, 87 percent of Americans have mobile phones. It's their #1 most-used technology device, with 73 percent saying so vs. only 58 percent saying it's their desktop PC. ([source](#))
5. 25 percent of all U.S. households have ditched their landlines for the joys of only one bill from a carrier. ([source](#))
6. 95 - 98% of text messages are read within minutes of receipt.* ([source](#))
7. 86% of consumers send or receive a text message every week. ([source](#))
8. 30% of consumers interact with a brand via text message. ([source](#))
9. 2.12 trillion text messages are sent every year! (Summer 2011) ([source](#))
10. There are over 320 Million wireless subscribers in the US (Summer 2011). ([source](#))
11. Nearly 30% of US households no longer own a landline (Summer 2011). ([source](#))
12. Text messaging is still the largest mobile marketing channel by revenue (2011). ([source](#))
13. Mobile coupons are ten times more likely to be redeemed than traditional coupons. ([source](#))

