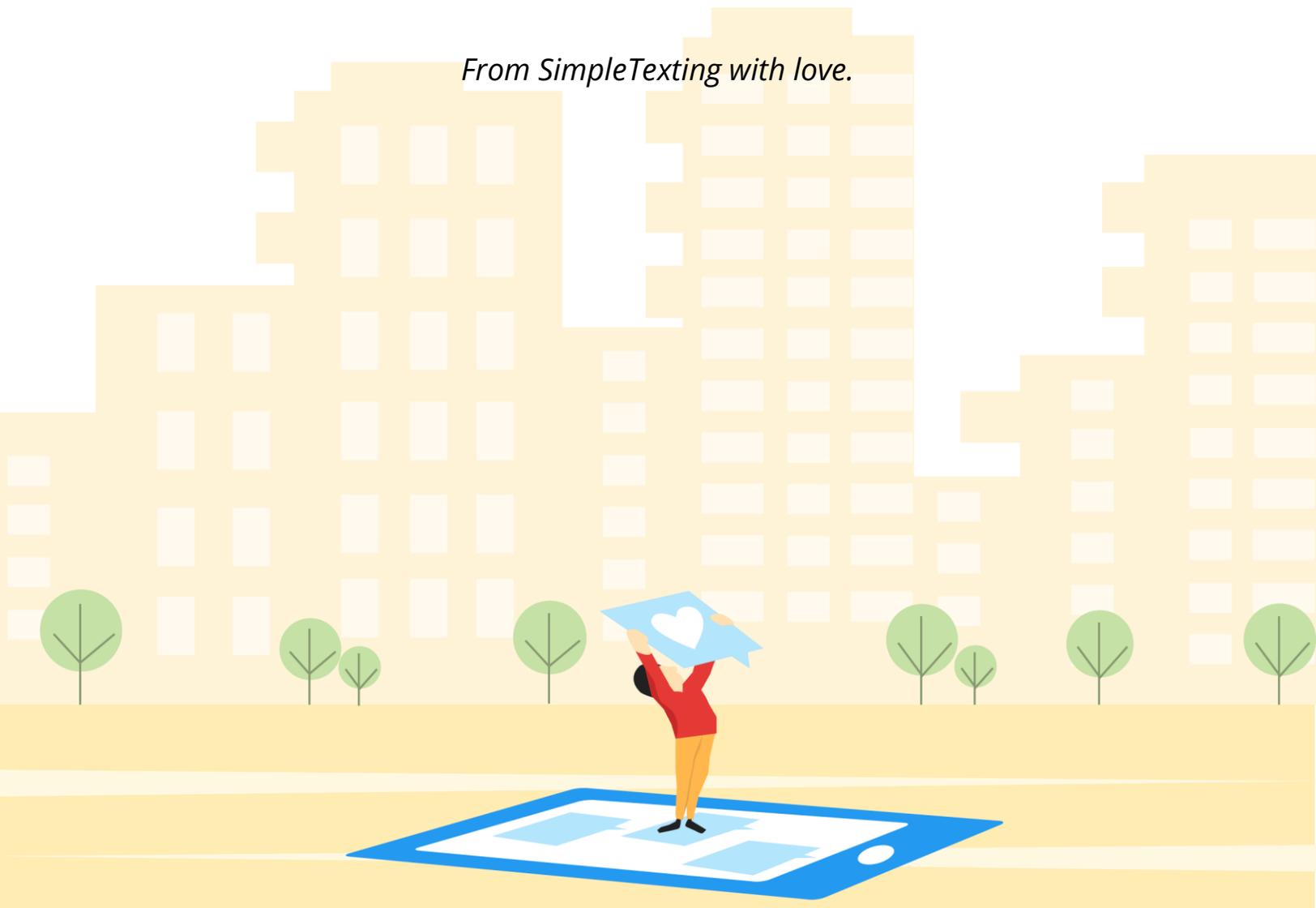


Ultimate SMS Guide

From SimpleTexting with love.





A Guide to Text Message Marketing

Text message marketing is a form of mobile marketing that uses web-based software to deliver promotional and informational messages via text.

You can use text marketing to land your campaigns right smack-dab in front of the people who want to see it.

With text marketing, your message is pretty much guaranteed to get noticed.



Don't believe us? See for yourself.

[Try SimpleTexting free for 14 days. No credit card required.](#)

If you're reading on a Turing-complete computer manufactured after, say, 1983, that's a kickass clickable link up there, and you should be kickass and click it. If you're reading on a piece of paper someone printed out, it's probably just underlined text or something, and you should go back to your computer and try again.



Definitions

First things first! Before we get too involved here, let's go over a few important terms. Hold onto your seats, because there's a list of definitions coming at you fast, and it's going to completely change your world, or something.

SMS—SMS stands for "Short Message Service." This is the global protocol for sending and receiving texts.

MMS—MMS marketing is similar to SMS marketing, but MMS messages have a longer character limit, and they support embedded photos, gifs, audio files, and video files. MMS stands for "Multimedia Messaging Service."

Keyword—A word or phrase a user texts in order to join or interact with a text marketing campaign.

Short code—A 5 or 6 digit phone number like 555888 that a user sends messages to in order to join or interact with a text marketing campaign.

Opt-in only—An approach to marketing that shuns spam and requires you to obtain specific, clear permission from people before sending them messages.

Call to action—A short sentence telling potential customers the right keyword and short code combination required in order to subscribe to a text marketing campaign.

Here's a handy-dandy example of a call to action:



Text PurplePeopleEater to 555888 to receive daily jokes about purple things via text message.

In this example, PurplePeopleEater is the keyword and 555888 is the short code. Anyone who texts PurplePeopleEater to 555888 is opting in to the campaign, which gives you permission to send those daily jokes via SMS and/or MMS messages.

Make sense? Great!

Bogdan: Do you think there's too much text on this page?

Brandt: No.

Bogdan: I actually think people might get overwhelmed and quit reading. I think you should shorten the copy.

Brandt: This is a BOOK. Books have WORDS and you have to READ them.

Bogdan: Well, yeah, but I'm just saying that—

Brandt: If you download a BOOK and then complain about it having too many WORDS, you don't know how READING works and you have no business downloading a BOOK in the FIRST place.

Bogdan: How much coffee have you had today?

Brandt: NOT ENOUGH YET





Why Text Message Marketing Totally Rocks

Your audience won't immediately hate you for contacting them.

In the distracting and spamhappy world of marketing, text messaging is a strictly regulated NO SPAM zone where you can't get away with abusing people's inboxes. Text message marketing is by opt-in only. Before you can send text campaigns, you absolutely, positively must get consent from your recipients. (More on that in a bit.)

No human being is capable of ignoring a text message.

A survey by Frost & Sullivan revealed that over 90% of text messages are read within 3 minutes, compared to 22% for email, 29% for tweets, and 12% for Facebook posts. And 98% of text messages are opened eventually. Why such high rates? Easy: It's because of that "opt-in only" thing we mentioned above.

Everyone and their pet Tamagotchi has a cellphone these days.

95% of adults in the U.S. have cellphones, and 77% of adults have smartphones, according to the Pew Research Center's February 2018 [Mobile Fact Sheet](#). You don't need smartphones to send and receive text messages—just a cellphone will do quite nicely. Which means that these days, your potential audience is basically everyone.



The Section About Compliance

When done right, text campaigns make customers and businesses pretty happy with each other. But when done wrong, text campaigns are just annoying cans of spam for customers, and expensive mistakes for businesses.

This is why we have compliance rules.

So, on that note, let's have a quick look at the Telephone Consumer Protection Act and express written consent.

The Telephone Consumer Protection Act

The Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA) was passed in 1991 and took effect as part of the United States Code the following year. It regulates unsolicited communications like telemarketing calls, robocalls, and text message spam.

Express written consent

The TCPA requires that you get express written consent from your recipients before you add them to your marketing campaigns. Customers can express

consent and opt in to your program by texting in a keyword, submitting a form on your website, or filling out a paper form.

Consent must be clear and conspicuous, so the recipient knows what they're signing up for. It can't be buried in a consent form full of legalese.

If you violate the TCPA by texting people you don't have permission to text, you risk being fined up to \$1,500 per text.

Confirmation texts

After subscribers join your list, you will need to send them an automatic confirmation text. This auto-confirmation text is an opportunity to do the following:

- Thank people for joining your list
- Communicate that the subscription was successful
- Confirm your business name
- Tell recipients how they can opt out

Sample auto-confirmation text:



You've subscribed to Daily Jokes About Purple Things, brought to you by the one and only PurplePeopleEater. Thanks for signing up! Reply STOP to stop.

Auto-confirmation texts are required as part of the keyword setup process at SimpleTexting. That way, you won't forget.

Hooray for not having to remember things!

Compliance texts

You'll also need to send out a compliance text with the following information:

Opt-out language—You must include the keyword a customer can use to unsubscribe from your text marketing list. This usually takes the form “Reply STOP to stop” (like in the confirmation text above)

Help language—Customers should be able to get help by texting the appropriate keyword (usually “HELP”) to receive additional ways of contacting the business.

Message frequency—Include the approximate number of messages the customer should expect to receive.

Message and data rates—Even though unlimited texting is becoming more common, many users may not have unlimited texting or data, so you must inform your subscribers that these charges may be incurred.

Here's what a compliance text looks like:



*555888: PurplePeopleEater Alerts! Msg&data rates may apply. 1msg/day.
Reply HELP for help, STOP to cancel.*

SimpleTexting automatically sends all this information in a separate compliance text after a subscriber opts in. Most text marketing companies would take your hard-earned nickels and dimes in exchange for such

automatic and astonishingly awesome service, but we aren't most other text marketing companies.



Bogdan: So, it's free?

Brandt: That is correct.

Bogdan: Really?

Brandt: Yes.

Bogdan: The automatic compliance text is free?

Brandt: Yes, the automatic compliance text is free.

Bogdan: The automatic compliance text is FREE!

Brandt: Mmmhmm.

Bogdan: So cool.

Brandt: Yep.

Bogdan: Oh! I just realized something.

Brandt: What's that?

Bogdan: Well, since I don't have to pay for compliance texts, now I've got all these hard-earned nickels and dimes lying around...

Brandt: Yeah? So?

Bogdan: This means I can finally afford to buy that pet Tamagotchi I've been wanting!

Brandt: Oh! SWEET

Bogdan: I think I'll name it SimpleTamagotchi.

Brandt: LOL



Text Marketing Campaign Types

Broadcasting

Send your customers relevant business information like announcements, discount offers, or limited-time promotions. You can also broadcast non-marketing information like hot tips, advice, or daily jokes about purple things.

When customers interact with broadcast campaigns, they expect to receive ongoing messages, so keep the text blasts consistent. Otherwise, your customers might forget about you or lose interest in being a subscriber.

Appointment reminders

Remind people about their upcoming appointments with a simple text message. You can also prompt clients to confirm, cancel, or reschedule in order to cut down on no-shows.

Data collection

Use data collection to ask your customers for personal information.

These campaigns can serve to fill out missing customer data, which helps you send more personalized and targeted texts in future campaigns.

Text-2-Vote

Get new customers by inviting people to vote on something. If you plan to add these voters to your regular text blasts, be sure to make that point crystal clear up front.

User polling

Send a question to your subscribers to get feedback or gauge their opinion on a new product or service.

Text-2-Win

Let customers text an SMS short code to enter a contest. Again, customers wouldn't normally expect to receive ongoing updates after enrolling in a contest, so be sure to include a disclaimer if you plan to contact them again.



General Text Marketing Tips

Brandt: Read these tips and weep tears of joy!

Bogdan: Are they really all that good?

Brandt: Yes.

Bogdan: You're going to delete these fake conversations before we publish, right?

Brandt: Yes.



How to build a list

Keywords and short codes

Texting a keyword to a short code is the most common way for people to opt in to a campaign. You can advertise your keyword and short code in a store window, online, on a large banner behind a small airplane, or on some other marketing collateral. Just be creative and put your announcement where lots of people will see it. "Text YourAdHere to 555888 for a chance to win advertising space on this large banner!" You get the idea.

Web forms

With web forms, customers enter their phone numbers into a form on a website to join your text marketing list. If your website drives most of your business, a web opt-in form could be the most effective way to drive sign-ups.

Importing contacts

Some businesses already have an existing list of subscribers who've given consent. If you're one of those businesses, you don't have to start all over (at least not with SimpleTexting). It's just a matter of importing your information to your account.

Paper forms

Paper ain't going nowhere anytime soon. For some businesses, it might make sense to invite people to subscribe to your campaign by filling out a paper form. This could be as simple as including a sign-up sheet next to your cash register for when people are checking out.

How to write good

Maintain your brand voice.

What's your brand voice like? Is it refined and professional? Then your texting voice should be, too. Conversational? Then keep your texts conversational. If your brand is directed at teens and young adults, then textese *might* be appropriate—but just be careful you don't come off as fawning or insincere here.

Lead with the important stuff.

Text messages are short, so you have to grab your customer's attention quickly. The sale, offer, or announcement should be clear within the first few words. Abbreviations are okay, but if you do need to use them, ask yourself: "Is there a better way to write this?"

Research what others are doing.

Check online for examples of what other companies in your industry have been up to in the text marketing space. You might be surprised at how much is already out there, just waiting for you to discover it and repurpose it for your own company in a way that does not involve plagiarism. (Seriously, don't plagiarize. It's not cool.)

Need some ideas for what to write? [Check out our SMS Templates page.](#)

How to time things right

Take the typical workday into account.

Most people work something like 9am–5pm. That means 7:30am–9am and 5pm–6:30pm are typically spent in rush hour. If your message is appropriate to send during work hours, 10am–2pm is ideal. If your message is best received during leisure time, then 7pm–9pm might be more appropriate.

Consider your target audience.

Think about your customers. Are they mostly students, parents, or working professionals? After that, you can start to nail down the best time of day to send them updates. When do they need my product? When are they most

likely to be thinking about what I sell? Answer these questions, and you'll have a better idea of when to text.

Line it up with your business cycle.

Once you've got a good time range, narrow it down by your traffic needs. If you have certain days that are slow, text customers that morning in order to boost business.

Block off certain hours of the day.

Most people would be really annoyed to have a text wake them up in the middle of the night. That's why you should add time controls to your text marketing campaign to prevent customers from unsubscribing after a poorly timed text.

How to test and track campaigns

Set up some A/B testing.

Conduct controlled tests to see what formats for texts are most effective. Split your list in half, send one half one text, and send the other half the other text. Then, compare redemption rates to see if the difference is significant. If possible, conduct multiple tests over time to see if the results hold up.

Monitor your campaign analytics.

Keywords and shortlinks are trackable, so it's possible to measure things like delivery rates, open rates, response rates, sales, and more. With this sort of data, you can tweak your text campaigns for continued engagement, growth, and success.

How to integrate with other marketing channels

Email

If you already have an email list, many of your subscribers might want to join your text marketing list, too—so why not add a call to action about texting in your next email? Consider implementing a web form so that customers can subscribe by clicking on a link right in the email. After the first announcement, each email should include a short call to action, perhaps near where you put links to your social media accounts.

Social media

There's a good chance that your social media followers are active texters and would be interested in your text communications. As with email, you should consider using your social media accounts to spread the word about texting to your existing audience.

Advertising

If you're already spending money on paid advertising, why not try to increase its effectiveness as much as you can? A simple on-screen notice or brief mention of your keyword and short code should be sufficient to drive sign-ups.

Signage

For most businesses with physical locations, point of sale signage is among the most effective ways to prompt people to sign up to your text marketing

campaigns. Your keyword and short code are brief enough to fit on menus, flyers, placards, and any other form of in-store or event signage.

Bogdan: You can't say "write good." "Good" is an adjective, not an adverb.

Brandt: Not when I'm writing. I used it as an adverb, so that makes it an adverb now.

Bogdan: But—

Brandt: ROLL THE PRESSES! Why haven't we started printing the new dictionaries yet?





Industry-Specific Text Marketing Tips

Next up! Tips and ideas for 5 different industries—restaurants, churches, retail, real estate, and schools.

If you're looking for a different industry, check the [Industry Guides](#) page on our website.

Restaurants [↗](#)

What to text

Mobile coupons—Bring people in with coupons for a free item or a discount.

Limited-time discounts—Drive sales during slow periods with limited-time discounts.

Weekly specials—Keep your subscribers up to date with the latest specials.

Events—Notify customers about events like live music, happy hours, or trivia night.

Sweepstakes—Encourage new sign-ups with a reward, such as a free meal or a coupon.

Polls—Drive engagement by letting customers choose your next flavor or special.

Free gifts—Offer a free appetizer, dessert, or drink in exchange for a sign-up.

Where to advertise

While you've got customers sitting and waiting around in your restaurant, you might as well give them opportunities to notice your campaign.

Consider mentioning it on:

- Menus
- Receipts
- Table tents
- Placemats
- Window signs
- Cash registers
- Restroom signage (*You know it! How's it going, empty wall space above urinal?*)

Pro tips

Train your servers to offer customers a special deal, after the meal but before the check:

"Hey, would you be interested in a free dessert tonight, plus free text coupons for the future?"

Collect customers' business cards in a fishbowl by your register:

"Leave your business card for a chance to win 100 free pizzas in our Text-2-Win sweepstakes!"

Churches

What to text

Daily Scripture—Text Bible verses that are relevant to the week’s sermon and keep people inspired every day.

Schedule alerts—Sending timely texts about schedule changes means no one will be left in the dark, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Need to cancel Sunday school due to weather? Text alerts let you reach the multitude in minutes.

Event reminders—No doubt your church has lots going on every day of the week! Get more of your congregants to turn out to church events with friendly reminders.

Suggestion requests—Looking for feedback on something? Send a text, ask for input, and reap the responses.

Volunteer requests—Getting volunteers on board is a lot easier with SMS. Just send a quick text message!

Prayer requests—If you need to let everyone know about an important prayer request, that’s easy, too.

Where to advertise

- Put up signs with a call to action on bulletin boards, handouts, and the community calendar.
- Mention the campaign on your church website, email blasts, and social media channels.

- You can even include a mention of your text message list at the end of the sermon, [like Eagle Brook Church did](#).

Other texting ideas

- Reach out to first-time visitors.
- Offer discipleship to new church members.
- Send out a preview for an upcoming sermon.
- Share a link to notes for the weekly Bible study.
- Communicate with fellow pastors and church leaders.
- Provide updates on mission trips.
- Let people know where their donations are going.
- Wish members a happy birthday.

Retail

What to text

Bring customers back into the store with exclusive text coupons.

Draw customers in by notifying them of new arrivals.

Let customers know when their product is ready with custom text reminders.

Promote sales events with well-timed texts.

Where to advertise

- Store window—Create an eye-catching sign to let passersby know about your campaign.
- Cash register—Place a small sign on your register about discounts to bring in subscribers looking to save.

- Receipts—Put a concise note on your receipts to advertise your text services.
- Website—Promote your text offers on the landing page of your website.
- In-store signs—Let loyal customers know how to stay connected.

Offer types

Pricing-based offers—Any price reduction. (*“Take 10% off when you use this coupon code at checkout.”*)

Time-sensitive offers—Applies for a limited amount of time. (*“All items in store are 90% off for the next 90 minutes! Ready, set, GO!!”*)

Product-based offers—Applies only to a specific product. (*“Take 20% off anything in our menswear line with this coupon code.”*)

Location-based offers—Applies only at a specific branch or location. (*“Use this coupon code to take 15% off your purchase at our Draugr branch!”*)

Real Estate

There’s only so much information you can fit on a For Sale sign outside the property. Asking customers to remember long URLs isn’t feasible. Here’s a better option: On your sign, display a keyword to text for information about the property. Each property gets a designated keyword, of course.

Bonus—when potential buyers text for info, you get more leads!

Things to include on your sign

- Price
- Address

- Size
- Bed/Bath count
- MLS listing
- Your contact info
- Shortlink to Google Maps location
- Shortlink to website/photos

Schools

What to text

Cancellations—Send a text to let students know about a cancellation or rescheduling.

Event reminders—Improve student and staff participation by sending reminders about school events.

Emergency alerts—Notify students and parents about emergency situations to ensure their safety and security.

How to get sign-ups

Registration—Collect cellphone numbers on school registration forms. It's a simple way to get everyone into your system before the first day of school. Once you have their numbers, you can start sending important reminders grouped by activity list.

Colleges—Have students provide their numbers while creating their email accounts. Easily import their numbers into your texting platform.

K-12 schools—Bring up your texting system on the first day and at parent-teacher conferences. Consider sending a letter home to parents as well.



The Last Page

Contact Us

1815 Purdy Avenue, Miami Beach, FL 33139

support@simpletexting.net | simpletexting.com

Brandt: Hey, you made it to the last page!



Bogdan: Thanks for reading our text message marketing guide! We hope you were able to learn a few things and take away a few tips and tricks to help you succeed.

Brandt: Got any questions for us? Just give us a shout—we're happy to help out!

Bogdan: What? No dude, we do content, not customer support, remember?

Brandt: And don't forget to try SimpleTexting free for 14 days!

Bogdan: It wouldn't be one of us. It would probably be Sean, or maybe Other Sean.

Brandt: TRY US FREE!

Bogdan: You've got to stop drinking so much coffee.



One more thing...

[Try SimpleTexting free for 14 days.](#) No credit card required.