



Specialized:

Impactful SMS Messaging When It's Needed Most

Specialized, a trailblazer in riding since 1974, manufactures bikes and accessories that focus on the rider's need for functional and technically advanced products that provide a performance benefit. Their new ANGi-equipped helmets take safety to a whole new level - by automatically texting for help when they sense a potential crash!

The helmet is paired with a mobile app, Ride, that allows you to maintain a list of emergency contacts as well as contacts with whom you want to share ride information. If the helmet senses an impact, it sends an email and an SMS notification to your emergency contacts alerting them that you've crashed and sends them your last known location.



Managing Multi-Byte Character Sets

The urgency of these alerts is very high, so the reliability of messaging system is critically important. And for the message to have impact, it has to be short and to the point — in any of the 19 supported languages. With customers all around the globe, Specialized needed to make sure that they could provide as much safety information as possible in the SMS and not waste characters on URLs. Clark Ritchie, Senior Software Engineer, explains, “Internationalization in SMS is very tricky, especially when dealing with multi-byte character set languages such as Korean and Japanese that limit you to 70 characters. It is a tiny message. In order to convey a lot of information in that message, every character counts.”

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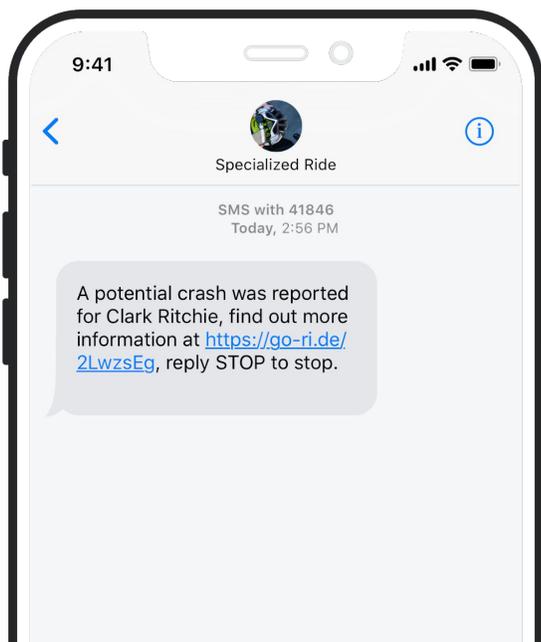
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Continually Building Brand

Specialized turned to Bitly's proven API to shorten and brand these unique links sent via SMS. The links use their custom domain, "go-ri.de," as it embodies Specialized's brand and makes it more obvious to the recipient of the SMS that it is a trusted link. Ritchie states, "It's about looking professional and more polished. Word wraps look awful, especially with UUIDs [universally unique identifiers]. With the shorter URL, it simply looks better and we're able to use a custom domain that fits with our brand."

Getting Bitly and leveraging the company's best-in-class API was super quick. "It was so straight forward; it took no time at all. It probably took me longer to buy the domain than to get it configured and in use via the Bitly platform," says Ritchie.

Specialized is now looking to expand their use of Bitly. Their mobile app has a Group Rides feature where you can not only join a ride but can also share the ride. If you share the ride, it sends a message with a link to the ride information. Today, it is a very long URL. Ritchie comments, "If people are sharing via SMS or on social, it looks much better to send a short link to make it more professional as well as save characters. Using our custom domain gives us an extra opportunity to continue to build our brand as these links are shared within the riding community."



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