

10 best practices for SMS

With high engagement and open rates, SMS can be one of your most effective marketing channels — if you do it right. These 10 tips will help you get big impact from your short messages.

Use SMS for its timeliness

People open and engage with SMS messages within minutes of receiving them because of how messages appear on mobile screens and their short length. Take advantage of — but don't misuse — this unique strength.

Determine your primary goal

Decide on a singular goal for each offer. If you want to drive traffic instore or online, have your message clearly state where you want customers to use it.

Integrate it into omni-channel campaigns

Create a matrix mapping your different messaging channels and see where SMS is the best fit for a specific customer segment, behavior, event, campaign, or message.

Frequency

Don't over-text your customers and send more messages than they expect. While a safe rule of thumb is 2–4 texts per month, your business might send multiple texts each week or even daily. Figure out the cadence that works best.

Use data to segment and target

Tap into your CRM database to target SMS subscribers based on their location, proximity to events, buying stage, or previous products they've purchased. More personalized and targeted messages increase the chance they'll take action.

Front-load your copy

You have 160 characters for your SMS message but on some mobile devices people might see only the first 40–90 characters. When possible, make sure the first four or five words convey the benefit or call to action.

Don't be spammy

Avoid overusing capitalization, exclamation points, or promotional words. Because SMS is so immediate and almost all messages are seen by recipients, your language doesn't need to be aggressive. Focus less on getting attention and more on getting the recipient to take an action.

Build your SMS database

One huge advantage of SMS is its 100% mobile context. Wherever someone is, if they have a mobile device they can send a text message to opt into your SMS program. Don't be shy: ask them.

Get consent

Any text message campaign has to have consent from your customers. In many countries, you're breaking the law if recipients haven't opted-in. And sending unwanted SMS messages can easily be annoying.

Test, test, test

What works well for one brand and customer base might not be effective for another. So keep testing, learning, and improving to find what works for you and your customer base.

To get more best practices, use cases, and industry resources that can help you maximize ROI from this highly effective marketing tactic, download **The Acoustic Guide to SMS.** →