8 reasons why you should start using SMS

Mobile technology has come a long way over the last (almost!) 50 years. From the "zero generation" 4lb Motorola that graced the world in the early 70s, to the 5G high-tech smartphones we know and love today. Some trends have come and gone – think back to the days of requesting your friend's "BBM pin" for BlackBerry Messenger, or the sudden and intense hype of renowned game "Flappy Bird". Whereas others have stood the test of time and become staple features in our lives.

Text Messaging is one of those.

First introduced in 1992, SMS (short messaging service) has stood the test of time to become one of the most highly used forms of communication for both personal and business use. Even the rising popularity of messaging apps hasn't stopped SMS. The 2021 State of Texting report shows that an overwhelming majority (63%) of consumers rely on the default texting app on their phone, followed by Facebook Messenger at a much smaller 15% and WhatsApp at 8%.

So why should brands pay attention?

Here are 8 reasons why you should be including SMS in your multi-channel messaging strategy.

Reach a wider demographic

According to *Statista*, there are 3.80 Billion smartphone users in the world today (48%), but 4.88 Billion (62%) with a mobile device - combining both smart and feature phones (feature phones being basic cell devices without apps and OS systems). The demographics of smartphone vs feature phone users too cannot be ignored. Taking the American population for example, 40% of those 65+ rely on a feature phone, as does 26% of the rural population, and 33% of those that did not graduate from high school (*bankmycell*). The simplicity of SMS allows you to reach a larger proportion of your audience.

Craft and share your message with speed

When time is of the essence, you can't afford to wait for your copywriting and design teams to craft the perfect email, just for it to sit in the inbox. Whether it's to promote content or provide time-sensitive information, at 160 characters, an SMS can be put together in no time. Plus, 90% of all text messages are read within the first 90 seconds of receiving them (*OpenMarket*), making mobile messaging the best way to reach your audience quickly.

Deliver the best message for every moment

Texting doesn't have to be traditional. In fact, Mobile Messaging's wide range of options makes it an extremely flexible and creative communication channel. Send text, pictures, video, animated GIFs, gamified offers, or use SMS to conduct surveys and polls and find out what your users are interested in. The world's your oyster. *Dosomething.org* went as far as to create their own interactive SMS game based on "Would you rather?" to educate their teen audience on personal finances!

Personalize your message with ease

Marketing automation has grown very sophisticated these days. With email, for example, you can segment users based on a whole range of data and personalize subject lines by name. Well guess what? You can do the same thing with a text message. Use text messaging to collect data on your users such as name, age, location, and interests. This will allow you to tailor your campaign and marketing needs in the same way you would an email campaign, with the added benefit of knowing that your text messages are much more likely to be opened and read.

Grow your audience

While your website is a powerful tool for collecting opt-ins, driving onsite opt-ins can require new webforms or other site updates. One of the great things about SMS is that new subscribers can opt in with a text. A keyword opt-in allows you to grow your mobile list across social channels, email, physical materials, in-person events – anywhere you can place your keyword! This provides the potential for viral list growth, even on channels that aren't typically effective at list growth. If you have a large social following, these keyword paths can easily turn passive social audiences into engaged mobile subscribers.

Lighten the load on your Contact Center/ Customer Service Department

From update requests to the frustrations of "Where is my order?", common questions that are received by your Contact Center and Customer Service staff can often be avoided by proactively sending customers the information they are likely to need. Reduce effort and inbound calls by sending delivery notifications, appointment times, service messages and personalized offers via SMS.

Quick approval process

While many channels offer effective engagement, some channels take more resources than others. For instance, email requires HTML development and testing, while social media needs eye-catching images and video to stand out among the noise – all of which must pass the approval process. Meanwhile, text messages can be approved quickly. The brevity of a text message makes it easy for all stakeholders to review, and if you're repurposing content from other channels, that content has likely already passed the approval process. Even if your resources are limited, your success doesn't have to be limited too. Mobile messaging can play a key role in your audience engagement, no matter your engagement goals, budget, or free time.

Endless possibilities

The possibilities with SMS are truly endless – sometimes you just need to think a little outside of the box. We know how valuable SMS can be for emergency situations and service messaging, but what about using text to drive app downloads or conversions on your website? Or using it to enhance your internal and external events strategy – driving registrations, engaging delegates on the day through competitions and Q&A, and asking for their feedback post-event?

With its customization options, scalability, and personable quality, text messaging is a great asset in anybody's marketing outreach.

Want to learn more? Speak to a member of our team today.
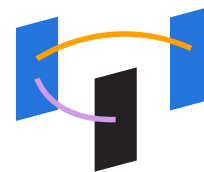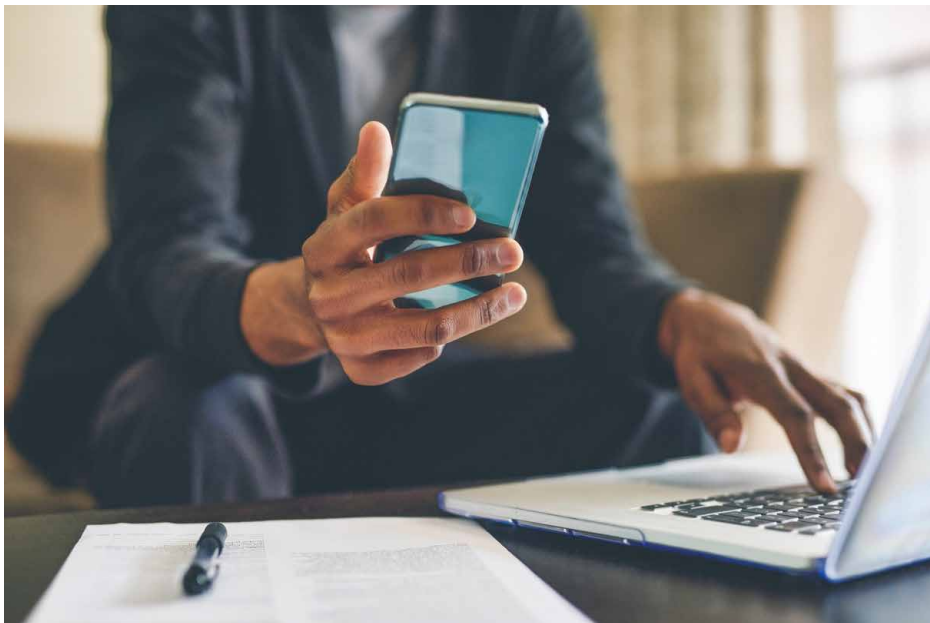
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