



Text-Only: Missed Messages and Misunderstandings

Text-only messaging spells missed opportunities

Text-only services like to say that everyone texts. Certainly a large percent of the population does... but that's not "everyone." So who isn't texting? The elderly and those who cannot afford data plans—probably some of your own contacts. Would it be OK to just exclude them from your communications?

There's no doubt about it; text messaging is a hit... but it's loaded with misses, too. Why use a communication method that most people use, instead of using the methods that all people use? Here we'll discuss the draw backs of text-only messaging and the advantages of using multiple communication methods to reach your contacts.



Missed Messages

NO ONE IS QUESTIONING THE POPULARITY AND USAGE OF CELL PHONES.

Approximately 87% of adults in the U.S. own a cell phone. Just over 45% of them are smartphones. And although 68% of adults age 65 and older own a cell phone, only 12% own a smartphone. While these numbers show usage, they also reveal the gaps: large populations of people (*your customers? your employees?*) without texting capabilities or text-friendly phones.

Missed messages happen even for those with text messaging capabilities. For some, managing multiple forms of communication is overwhelming. They can't keep up with the bombardment. To cope, they simply give up and ignore all but their preferred method... and it may not always be text messaging. This selective behavior is the personal choice of the message recipient. It's not something that the sender can control.

Yes, text messaging is a popular, highly-valued medium. But usage has been declining in some countries and is leveling off in the U.S., signaling new trends. In November 2012, the New York Times reported that text message volume dipped in the third quarter. Frequent texters are opting to communicate via Internet-based messaging services, like Facebook and iMessage.

If you're relying on text-only messaging, you may have unwittingly chosen to exclude some of your contacts from receiving your messages.

Misinterpretations and Misunderstandings

TEXT MESSAGING IS CONVENIENT AND IS THE PREFERRED COMMUNICATION MEDIUM FOR MANY.

However, text messages are impersonal and present high-risk opportunities for misinterpretations. They lack voice tone and inflection. And they're limited to 130 characters, often robbing the sender of the words needed to clearly communicate their message.

Because of this, text messages take the context out of the conversation and leave your messages subject to the interpretations of your recipients.

Behavioral experts say that most arguments begin with misunderstandings. Some experts say 90%. Most texters can cite at least one misinterpreted text experience of their own. In some cases relationships are damaged. Phone calls and face-to-face conversations are often needed to straighten out the misunderstanding.

If you're considering a text-only service, consider these questions:

- If your text isn't clearly understood, will you receive a massive volume of texts? Of phone calls?
- If your text is misunderstood, how will you clarify your message for your contacts?
- If you are trying to build relationships with your message recipients, why miss the opportunity to warmly connect with them and opt to always send impersonal text messages?

Yes, text messaging is often convenient for senders and recipients, but it's not a substitute for personal interaction. If you're relying on text-only messaging, you're missing opportunities to build and strengthen your relationships.

Multiple Methods

WHEN YOU NEED TO CONNECT, YOUR MESSAGES MUST GET THROUGH.

Using multiple communication methods allows you to send one message and allows your contacts to pick it up using the method they prefer.

You already know that communication plays an important role in the success of any organization. But your audience is varied, and for effective communications, it's not one size fits all. Not everyone texts. Facebook may be big, but that doesn't mean that everyone is on it. Not everyone picks up their email regularly or has access to email. Telephone calls aren't always welcome.

But if you send messages with a service that offers multiple methods—voice messages to cell phones and land lines, text messages to cell phones, email and social media sites—you increase the chances that your messages will get picked up. Some message services allow multiple contact points for each name on your contact list. Consider a service like One Call Now that allows you to send a single message that's delivered across all mediums. Your contacts don't have to be bombarded with multiple messages. They can choose the method(s) they prefer.

If you want to make communications convenient and easy for you and for your recipients, multiple mediums are a sure bet.

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