

UNDERSTANDING BUSINESS SMS

A Step-by-Step Guide to
Launching your Business
Texting Program



Introduction

Technology has been the driver for positive change for millions of businesses in practically all industries.

From Netflix to Uber, the goal of leveraging technology is to better serve consumers in the mobile era. Providing a faster and easier experience in all aspects of the consumer journey is crucial to business success and customer loyalty.

However, the area of customer service has been slow in adopting technology and social media to better serve customers.

Phone calls, emails and even live chat have limitations as consumers today want to communicate with businesses how they prefer, through text (SMS/MMS) messaging

In this eBook, we will go over:

- The Importance of Business SMS
- Planning Your Business SMS Strategy
- Setting Goals for Your SMS Program
- Choosing the Right SMS Texting Software
- Planning for Launch
- Measuring Success



\$62B

Businesses lose over \$62 BILLION each year due to poor customer service.

Source: New Voice Media

The Importance of Business SMS

The first text message ever sent was in 1992 by a developer named Neil Papworth.

SMS text messaging is not new, but it is for businesses. Since its inception, text messaging was mainly used for friends and family to communicate with each other.

Like emails, texting became more mainstream and businesses saw this as an opportunity to communicate with customers.

Text messaging greatly benefits both businesses and customers in many ways.

BENEFITS FOR BUSINESSES:

- Reduce inbound phone calls
- Serve multiple customers simultaneously
- Respond to customers faster
- Personalize promotions
- Increase customer satisfaction



TEXTING
98% Open Rate



EMAIL
20% Open Rate

BENEFITS FOR CUSTOMERS:

- No waiting on hold
- Faster responses
- Quicker issue resolution
- Request service anytime, anywhere
- Low friction to communicate



80%

of people are currently using
texting for business

Source: eWeek

77%

of consumers aged 18-34 are
likely to have a positive
perception of a company that
offers text capability

Source: Harris Poll

Planning your Business SMS Strategy

Creating a texting program for your business is not as simple as giving customers your mobile phone number and telling them to start texting you. That would be a potential disaster!

To effectively run the program, there are three areas to think about when you are planning the strategy.

WHO?

- The main administrator for your text program.
- People who will be sending and responding to messages.

WHEN?

- The scheduling of employees who will be handling text communications.
- Hours the text line be available to reach a live person.

HOW?

- Ways you will use texting: appointment scheduling, customer service, promotions.
- Will employees use a laptop, tablet or smartphone to text with customers?

Proper planning is extremely important for your text program as mishaps or delays in responses can lead to a negative experience for your customers. Your plan should include these three areas to make sure that proper resources are allocated and the goals are clear to your employees.



23B

23 billion text messages are sent
each day worldwide

Source: SMSeagle

Setting Goals for Your SMS Program

Everything you do in business needs to have a goal in mind that will achieve a quantifiable result. This is also true for business texting.

To ensure that you will see a return on investment (ROI) for your texting program, you will need to set goals. This will ensure that you are focused on activities that will help maximize ROI.

You should have a method of tracking the success of your texting program based on your goals. You may need to work with various departments and use analytics to set benchmarks to ensure you are heading in the right direction.

Some Common Goals for a Texting Program Include:

- Reduce inbound support phone calls
- Quicker service response time
- Increase in repeat business
- Increase upsell opportunities
- Decrease late payments
- Information to keep customers in the loop
- Notifications and account updates
- Build contact list
- Increase coupon redemption
- Increase positive reviews



90%

Texting is the highest rated contact method for customer satisfaction compared to all other ongoing communication channels (Text: 90%; Phone: 77%; Facebook: 66%)

Source: eWeek

Choosing the Right SMS Texting Software

As with any other business technology, you will need to evaluate different providers and pick the one that best fits your needs, both short term and long term.

With so many business texting providers to choose from, how do you choose?

Here are ten essential questions to ask business text messaging providers to ensure you are getting the best solution for your business.

Asking these questions will ensure that you work with a provider that has experience in your industry. Selecting an experienced software provider will help to address any potential issues that arise and provide best practices to help you achieve success. Remember, the software is only half of the story, so make sure you are choosing a provider that will be able to answer any questions you may have in regards to the technology or strategy.

Questions to Ask Business Text Messaging Providers:

1. How long have you been in business?
2. Do you have experience in my industry?
3. Do you offer a free trial?
4. Can you integrate with my CRM, PMS or other internal software?
5. Does your software offer any automation capabilities?
6. Do you have integrations with social messaging apps?
7. What kind of support do you offer?
8. What kind of support do you offer?
9. Is your software scalable?
10. How long does the setup process take?



89%

of consumers want to use text messaging to communicate with businesses

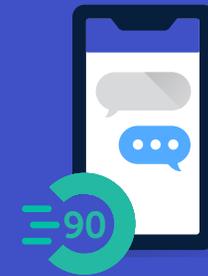
Source: Twilio

Planning for Launch

Before you launch your texting program, test the process and workflow with internal employees as well as friends and family to ensure that your customers get the best experience possible when engaging your business via text messaging.

SMS Text Program Pre-launch Checklist

- Are you receiving text messages?
- How fast are response times?
- Do you have enough resources to handle a large message volume?
- Are you able to respond to messages via mobile phone or tablet when you're away from the computer?
- Are auto-responders working correctly?
- Are the integrations to your CRM passing information from the texting software correctly?
- Are the automation workflows working as they should?
- Do you have keywords set up to automate simple requests such as business hours?
- Are messages coming in from Facebook Messenger or other integrated social messaging apps?
- Do you have a customer opt-in strategy in place?



The average response time for a text is only 90 seconds

Source: Twilio

Launching Your SMS Texting Program

Here comes the exciting part! After you take all the necessary steps to get your texting program ready, it's time to announce it to the world and your customers.

To get customers to engage with your texting program, they must know about it. There are many ways you can promote your texting program to get customers to start texting you.

Once you get the word out, you're on your way to better customer engagement. Keep in mind that your texting program success will rely heavily on the people who are taking on this responsibility.

Whether it's front desk agents or contact center representatives, make sure you align messaging across channels to ensure consistency in tone and voice.

Ways to Promote your Texting Program:

-  Website
-  Email
-  Marketing Materials
-  Social Media
-  Mobile App
-  Adwords Message Extensions



75%

of people have suggested that they'd be happy to receive an offer via SMS

Source: Campaign Monitor

Measuring Success

There are different ways to measure success for your texting program depending on the goals you've set. It's crucial to track message activity and review metrics regularly to ensure you're working towards your goals.

Ways to measure the success of your texting program based on common goals.

GOAL: Reduce inbound support phone calls

Success Metric: If your texting program is working well to communicate with customers, you should see your call center volume decrease over time. If not, it means that customers are not getting problems solved via text and should be investigated further.

GOAL: Quicker service response time vs. email

Success Metric: Your text messaging provider should be able to track the average response times to see how long it usually takes for your employees to respond to messages. Compare response times for text messages with emails or other communication channels to gauge speed.

GOAL: Increase in positive reviews

Success Metric: When sending out surveys through texting, you can quickly get a response and see if your customers are happy with their experience with your business. If not, you can quickly address the issue before they post a negative review on Yelp or TripAdvisor. If you're seeing an increase in stars and positive reviews, you're on the right track.

Real Results from Zingle Customers:

50%

Zingle deflects at least 50% of the increase in call volume caused by COVID-19.

VETNCARE

60%

of leads replied to welcome messages and scheduled a trial class via text.

RUSH CYCLE

100%

five-star TripAdvisor reviews in the last four months

THE HOTEL AT AUBURN UNIVERSITY

Takeaways

Utilizing text messaging has many benefits for both your business and customers. To be successful, you need to have a strategic plan in place and don't forget to reference this eBook as a guide to create your texting program.

Things to Keep in Mind for Launching your SMS Program:

CHOOSING THE RIGHT SOFTWARE:

Select the right SMS software to support text communications and better manage messages across departments and platforms. (Integrations: CRM, PMS, Twitter, Facebook Messenger, Line, WhatsApp, web chat, email).

Plan your text communication strategy and set goals based on how you will be using text messaging to communicate with customers.

LAUNCHING:

Launch your text program to your customers by promoting your text number everywhere your customers can see your brand.

ANALYZING:

Track performance that aligns with your goals to ensure you are meeting specific business objectives like increasing customer satisfaction, improving operational efficiency or driving more revenue.



About Medallia Zingle

Medallia Zingle empowers businesses to engage, support and respond to customers in more meaningful and impactful ways. Zingle's customer engagement platform combines artificial intelligence and machine learning with workflow automation and mobile messaging, allowing brands to easily deliver exceptional customer experiences in real time. Leading brands across different verticals, including hospitality, food & beverage, retail, and more, use Zingle to increase efficiency, improve operations and delight their customers. Zingle is a division of Medallia, the pioneer and market leader in experience management. Find out more at zingle.com.

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