



# SMS Marketing Best Practices

## Stick to these principles and you'll be fine!

Text or SMS marketing is a fantastic way to bring the market to your customers and to get the word out on your venture. It has been shown to be among the most useful tools that a business can utilize in their marketing strategy, and many businesses are only now realizing its potential reach. However, it's critical that you understand the parameters in place when utilizing something so potentially effective.

Text marketing involves various different laws and regulations, principles and understood practices that you need to be aware of, and we've put them all together into one list so you always know what to be aware of. Stick to these principles and your marketing is sure to go well!

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## Obtain Permission

You need the proper permission from potential subscribers to utilize text marketing messages. Without their permission, you are breaking the law and could potentially incur legal action or penalties, and doing so will also give your business or service a bad name, potentially upsetting customers.

How to get this permission? If those that you are sending the texts to, the subscribers, have already opted in by texting the keyword to your number then you're set, they've given you permission! You need to obtain verbal or written confirmation that you can text someone if you are entering contacts individually or manually importing them into the dashboard.

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## Text During Business Hours

Messages should only be sent during traditional business hours. Customers don't want to be woken up to a text marketing message, or to get them at awkward or late times. The general guidelines of the CTIA and the MMA (Mobile Marketing Association) define these hours as between 8AM and 9PM. Again, the focus should be on satisfying the customers.

One significant benefit of text/ SMS marketing is that you can prompt direct action on the part of the customer, and people don't want to be prompted to action at strange hours.

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## Provide an Option for Removal

It's critical that your subscribers have the option to remove themselves from your text marketing lists. Ultra SMS Script does this automatically, including the potential opt out in your initial auto reply and any outgoing messages.

The "Msg&Data rates may apply" message is joined with "STOP to end" on the auto reply when people subscribe. "STOP to end" is included with all outgoing bulk messages.

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## Monitor Frequency

Don't constantly text your subscribers! There are reasonable limits to how many text marketing messages you can send a customer. It's recommended that you do not exceed 4 texts in a given 30 day period. More than that and you are likely to upset customers and to give your business a bad name.

It's also important to inform your subscribers as to the frequency of the messages you'll be sending. That way there are no surprises, and again there is nothing for them to be upset about.

A good practice is to include this wording to your initial auto reply for those that subscribe to your list: "Up to 4 msg/month". It isn't necessary to put this in every text you send to subscribers, only when they initially sign up.

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## Use Disclaimers, T&C/Privacy Policy and Business Name

The international trade association - CTIA - maintains the interests of the international wireless communications industry, and they strictly require that you include the following message in your initial auto reply to your subscribers: "Msg&Data rates may apply".

This is an important regulation, and thus UltraSMSScript automatically adds this to the auto reply that you formulate so you don't have to worry about getting in trouble. Again, this message must only be included in the first auto reply when the subscriber initially joins your list, and won't be seen on every message.

It's also important to include your business/program name and a link to your Terms & Privacy Policy page on the initial auto-reply after the user subscribes. This won't be needed on every subsequent message that is sent, only on the initial auto-reply.

### **Example of an auto-reply that is compliant:**

Jim's Mobile Rewards: Thanks for joining! Show this text for a free drink.

STOP to end. HELP for help. 4 msgs/month. Msg&data rates may apply. T&C/Privacy @  
<http://mysite.com>

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## **Don't use shorthand**

Avoid using text shorthand wherever possible. Yes, characters in a text message are very sparing and need to be used valuably, but using shorthand too much is simply unprofessional. You want your messages to be accepted with a degree of credibility.

If you think that you need to use shorthand to save space in your texts, make sure that you only use them with words that you know the reader will understand.

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## **Provide Value**

Every marketing message should convey something important. If your customers are kind enough to subscribe to your texts, it's hugely important that you provide them with content that is valuable.

Ensure that you don't continuously send the same messages, or messages that are too similar. You want to provide them with something that is valuable, and part of that is providing something unique that has distinct benefits. If you are simply sending the same messages, or conveying the same content, then people will likely unsubscribe since they aren't getting anything new.