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SMS MARKETING GUIDE

Everything you need to know on using SMS to boost your business, improve communication and engage with customers.

Including tips, ideas and success stories.

SMS MARKETING GUIDE
Everything you need to know about SMS marketing to grow your
ecommerce store. Including tips, ideas and how to.

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Hello...

As mobile devices continue to develop and we become more and more reliant on them for both our work and social lives; it's becoming increasingly important to ensure you have mobile included in your marketing mix.

From checking your bank balance or shopping to searching for the best restaurant to eat in. Our mobile phones are now the source of all information and PCs are becoming less and less important. In fact, mobile internet browsing overtook desktop in 2014 meaning mobile marketing is more important than ever.

FireText is a UK-based team of developers, problem solvers, marketers, tinkerers, all working around the clock to offer the most powerful text marketing platform...for you!

Whether you're brand new to SMS marketing or a texting pro, we offer outstanding support and advice to guide you through your campaign.

We are currently working with organisations large and small, across the UK from Black White Denim to Slaters and have seen some fantastic results. So, if you're looking for a cost-effective solution to get personal with your customers and increase loyalty, you've found it.

How many text messages do you receive that you don't open?

Read on for:

- How to make SMS marketing work.
- Seven benefits of using SMS for order notifications.
- How to use SMS for order notifications in eCommerce.
- How to increase customer loyalty with SMS marketing in ecommerce.
- Success Story: PrettyLittleThing.com use SMS to drive traffic to their online store.

The FireText Team

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The Stats

On average, a person looks at their phone **221** times a day

Techmark, 2014

91%
of mobile phone owners use their device for SMS

You know you're communicating with customers in a way they know and love.

Smart Insights, 2013

98%
of SMS messages are opened

You can guarantee your message will be opened and read.

Frost & Sullivan, 2011

94%
of SMS are read within 5 minutes of being received

Perfect for time bound campaigns!

Ofcom, 2012

OVER 62%
of UK adults own a smartphone

And growing...enrich your messages with URL links to online content.

ComScore, 2013

75%
of smartphone users like to receive offers by SMS

Give your customers what they want.

YouGovPLC, 2010

81%
of adults keep their mobile switched on 24/7

Send your campaign with confidence that it will be seen.

Media Ofcom, 2011

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SMS Marketing – how to make it work

SMS marketing is fast, cost-effective and personal – it's no wonder it's becoming increasingly popular with businesses of all sizes, but it's important to use it well.

It's easy and convenient to use your mobile phone for everything you used to use your PC for i.e. email and browsing and with the number of smartphone users increasing this trend is set to continue. Consumers, however are used to receiving email marketing and are becoming immune it, there is no need to read them straight away and therefore they don't prompt an instant response, if at all.

With a 98% open rate, SMS is clearly the most reliable way to ensure your message gets seen on a mobile device. You can be personal and straight to the point in a text message, everyone knows how to read and reply to them and they don't take up too much of their time.

When you send an SMS, you're delivering a message straight to the customer's pocket. Knowing that over 94% of text messages are read within 5 seconds of being received, if you need an instant response you can rely on SMS to deliver.

> At just 160 characters, SMS may be small but is certainly powerful and a versatile tool for every business.

You need to ensure your customers want to receive the messages; if you send an unwanted text you will do your business more harm than good. You can contact customers you've interacted with previously or let your customers opt-in to your mailing list to ensure good quality data – give your customers a reason to opt in – e.g. to receive special offers or join a 'VIP club'.

Likewise, always provide an opt-out. It may hurt your pride if someone decides they'd no longer like to receive your offers, but it will hurt your reputation more if you don't give customers the option. Don't focus on the opt-outs, put your energy into providing irresistible offers to the customers who do want to hear from you.

Later in this guide, we'll give you some examples on how to use SMS to boost your ecommerce store.

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Who's using SMS marketing?

"FireText makes communicating with my highly valued customers so easy. It's great value, simple to use and delivers great results."

BLACK WHITE DENIM.

Joanna Davies
Black White Denim

Pizza Hut

Michael O'Kane
Pizza Hut

"Using FireText is quick and easy, but most importantly cost-effective, we always see a healthy return-on-investment with our SMS campaigns."

"We have used FireText for a number of years to message customers about our warehouse clearance events. Our experience has been fantastic and could not fault their service..."

slaters
MENSWEAR AND FORMAL HIRE

Lee McGowan
Slaters

SPIEZIA
MADE FOR LIFE
100% Organic

Matt Machin
Spiezia Organics

"FireText allows us to offer fantastic customer service & follow up sales generating ROI of 500%+"

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Seven benefits of using SMS for order notifications

Have you given much thought to how you communicate with your customers once they have ordered from you online store?

For many businesses, email is the obvious option; it is cheap, everyone else does it and all of your customers have an email address. But that is exactly the problem – because everyone else uses email, your customer service gets buried meaning that you have no customer service!

According to MailChimp, only 17.35% of ecommerce emails get opened. Ultimately, this means that, if you currently use email for order updates then these communications are potentially reaching less than 1 in 5 customers.

The benefits:

Using SMS texts for customer service is a brilliant way to add customer value post-purchase for these 7 reasons:

1 It gets seen

SMS communications have a staggering open rate of 98%. Sending text messages ensures that your customers stay updated at every stage of the ordering and delivery process.

2 It is instant

At a time when customers have handed over money and they are eagerly waiting for news on their order, there is no better time to use SMS as a communication tool. 90% of texts get read within 5 minutes. Your customers will appreciate the instant updates.

3 It is personal

Mobile phones are very personal devices. Communicating through SMS to provide order updates shows you care and will build deep trust and loyalty.

4 It aligns with changing behaviours

With the growth of mcommerce, more and more consumers are purchasing through their smartphones. So communicating with them through a method that is more smartphone friendly simply makes sense.

5 It doesn't rely on internet access

Some smartphone users turn their internet off in order to save battery. Others simply don't have 3G or 4G signal. SMS overcomes these technological issues.

6 It's different:

SMS makes your brand stand out from the crowd. With so many ecommerce businesses communicating solely through email, SMS is a great way for your customers to acknowledge you.

7 It opens the door for future marketing opportunities:

Once your existing customers have received customer service texts they are more responsive to future promotional texts that add value. For example, you could send a loyalty coupon with an embedded URL code to your online store.

The end result…

SMS gives you a greater ability to keep customers informed in a way that's personal and relevant to them, enabling you to engage with them throughout the order process. This not only leads to increased satisfaction – but also increased sales.

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How to use SMS for order notifications

With a number of handy order stages in online stores, you might be wondering where the best place is to trigger SMS notifications. Ultimately, some of the order stages will be more relevant to your business than others depending on how you run your online store.

Let's take a look at what the order stages mean and how SMS can be used at each stage to add customer value throughout the order process. The following examples are for a skate clothes shop –whilst reading this have a think about how the tone of your messages could match your brand?

Order Creation

Woohoo! You have received a new order through your online store.

> Great choice there Alec! I'll get your order ready and let you know when it's on the way - it won't be long before you can rock out your new look! Cheers, Tim.

Now you have the perfect opportunity to get personal. Start the conversation with your customers by saying thank you.

Order on Hold

This order stage will be relevant if you accept orders on out of stock items.

> Hey Alec, one of your items is currently out of stock but no need to bail – we're on the case and replacements are already on the way! Thanks, Tim.

Let customers know that new stock is on its way. Your prompt and personal text will give them reassurance that new arrivals will arrive soon.

Order Complete

Another successful order is on its way in the post. While you let your happy customers know their order has been despatched, why not get them to follow you on social media? Use a URL link shortener to make sure this fits nicely in the 160 character limit.

> Epic news Alec, your order is on its way! I'm sure you're feeling stoked so, while you wait, why not follow us on Facebook? http://fts.ms/LcsbEd

Order Cancelled

Haven't received a payment? SMS is both a polite and cost-effective way to let customers know that their orders have been cancelled and get them to take action if they are still interested.

> Oops! Sorry to bail Alec but your order with SK8 has been cancelled as we have not received payment. To reopen the order visit us at www.sk8.com

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Order Closed *(Payment Refund)*

Sometimes not everything goes to plan and you need to refund an order. Whatever happens, make sure you demonstrate your excellent customer service with a follow up text, your customers will appreciate clear lines of communication.

Hey Alec, your order has been cancelled and refunded as requested. We hope to see you again soon – keep it real."

Are you a stat-fan? - According to the White House Office of Consumer Affairs, a happy customer who gets their issue resolved is likely to tell 4-6 people about their positive experience.

Final Word

SMS is a fantastic opportunity to move away from stale email order notifications and gives you a greater ability to connect with your customers. Using SMS for order notifications is now being recognised as a hidden gem for building customer loyalty, driving word of mouth and increasing repeat purchases. People have been using SMS to text friends and family for many years and this makes it a very personal channel – get it right and you're quids in!

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How to increase ecommerce customer loyalty with SMS marketing

With mobile phones becoming ever more sophisticated there has been a change in customer behaviour that businesses must

Mobile phones have become, not just a communications device, but a personal hub of information; an essential tool to daily life with calendars, alarms, photographs, social media and much more.

Did you know that 4 in 5 smartphone owners now won't leave the house without their handset?

A need to get personal

This change in customer behaviour has created a need for mobile marketing to be much more personal; particularly when looking to build customer loyalty.

Those companies who fail to deliver mobile marketing at a personal level will be quick to see a poor return on their investment and potentially get labelled as spammers – fortunately at FireText we have all the tools and experience to ensure that doesn't happen to you!

For example, we've added a number of features to our latest Magento extension to help businesses get personal, including order updates at 9 optional stages and 12 customised fields from the customer's name to the order total; even the amount of order discount given.

These features allow you to deliver a personal experience to your customers rather than sending them generic customer service texts.

Acquiring numbers by adding value

The first step to increasing ecommerce customer loyalty through SMS marketing is to give customers a reason to opt-in to receiving texts from your company. If you dive straight in and send unsolicited promotional texts then your customers are likely to get annoyed and unsubscribe.

Initially using SMS for customer service is therefore a fantastic way to start receiving opt-in SMS requests as you are giving customers a reason to provide their number; by adding value through keeping customer greater informed on order progress.

Retaining customers

Once your customers have become accustomed to receiving personalised customer service texts, the door is now open for future promotional campaigns.

Using SMS for promotional campaigns has a few differences to email but the main **commonality is that using data effectively can deliver a very personal offer. - Here at FireText we can advise you on everything SMS such as suggested frequency of promotions.**

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Success Story: PrettyLittleThing.com

You don't need to limit yourself to using SMS for order notifications only; by collecting customers mobile numbers you're starting to build a healthy list for marketing. Try a targeted campaign to these customers just like

PrettyLittleThing.com is an online fast fashion retailer aimed at 16-24 year old women, the brand prides itself in its ability to provide on-trend fashion at affordable prices offering the latest trend-led style to fashion forward females.

We had a chat with Nicki, Marketing Manager from PrettyLittleThing.com, she explained how they use SMS in order to drive traffic to their website and increase their revenues.

The Objective

- To drive traffic to website
- To increase purchases

The Plan

Nicki explained that she was looking for a way to drive traffic to their website and to increase sales. After analysing their data, Nicki found that over 80% of their previous email communications were being viewed on mobile devices and with their targeted demographic being 16-24 year olds (who are always on their phones!) she thought that SMS would allow them to target their customers.

"SMS [has] allowed us to target customers through their mobile phones which our demographic are actively using throughout the day." Nicki says.

They were concerned that they would not be able to monitor results effectively due to customers viewing the SMS message then converting on other devices however UTM tracking and using unique SMS codes has allowed them to track results effectively.

They were looking for a way to contact their customer-base in a fast and effective way that was easy to use and that provided an analysis of their results, Nicki was pleased to report that they found no challenges and they have been very pleased with how fast and easy SMS is proving to be in terms of converting promotional SMS into purchases.

The Messages

They regularly send out personalised messages to their customer-base pushing out key promotions they are running on their website with the aim of driving traffic back to the site and increasing conversions.

The Result

With a click through rate above industry standard, Nicki says that PrettyLittleThing.com has seen a healthy uplift in incremental revenue driven from SMS promotions since they started using FireText.

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Effective SMS marketing in action

FT Sports is an online sports equipment retailer and Gareth is a hockey player. With the new hockey season just around the corner, FT Sports have new stock and there is good chance that Gareth is ready to buy new equipment.

Last year, Gareth bought his sports equipment from FT Sports, but there are numerous sports shops that have Gareth's email address and regularly send him promotions. Will Gareth stay loyal or will he shop around?

Fortunately for FT Sports, in the previous season Gareth provided his mobile number and received order updates. FT Sports used their database purchase history to identify that Gareth is interested in hockey; not football, tennis or any other sports.

They then filtered all of the customers that are interested in hockey (like Gareth), and sent them all a personalised text via the FireText SMS platform with a tailored offer.

Hi Gareth, the hockey season starts soon! We have put together some special offers just for you: http://fts.ms/7hTXZ9. Text STOP to 01326 620000 to opt-out.
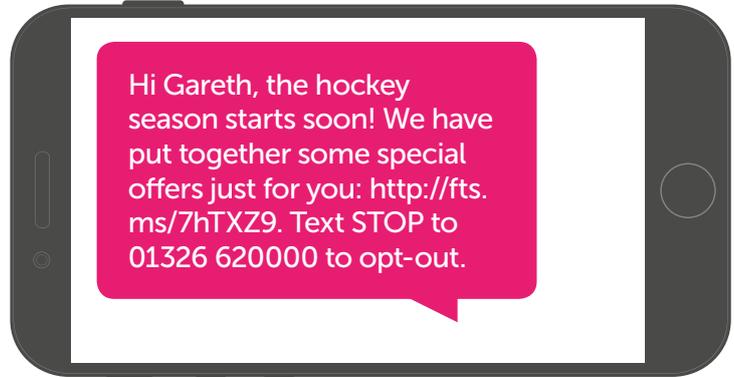
Unlike the frequent year-round bombardment of sports related emails Gareth receives, this communication stands out because it is a personalised text sent through a very personal channel at the right time of the year.

At FireText we recommend you use both email and SMS as communication tools. Emails have a visual advantage whereas SMS campaigns have higher open rates and, more often than not, far higher click through rates. Using both keeps your marketing fresh and also enables your customers to pick their preferred method of communication if they prefer one over the other.

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Last Word...

If you're looking for a way to communicate and engage with customers old and new then you've found it. SMS is simple, fast and gets results by improving customer service and increasing business.

In this guide, we've explored some great uses of SMS for your ecommerce store to get you thinking; these are by no means definitive so please get in touch to discuss how SMS can work for you

Easy online SMS marketing for every type of business...

| Recruitment Agencies | Estate Agents | Retail Shops | Restaurants | Hotels & Guest Houses |
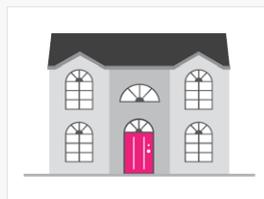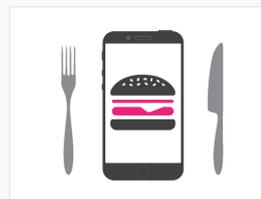
You're in great company...

slaters
MENSWEAR AND FORMAL HIRE

CabinetOffice

VW

Pizza Hut

SURFERS AGAINST SEWAGE

Companion Carevets

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Let's chat

Don't worry if you still have some questions;
at FireText we're always talking SMS.

We'd love to talk to you. You can get in touch on:

Text us
HELLO to 82228

Talk to us
0800 038 55 22

Visit us
firetext.co.uk

Write to us
hello@firetext.co.uk

Join the conversation