

Getting Started With Text Messaging Advertising



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There are only two questions business owners ask about any marketing or advertising program: "What is it?" and "What can it do for me?" All other questions merely address one of those two.

For today's business owner, the "newest" and most cost effective marketing tool is "text message advertising." So, let's answer the questions.

What is it?

Text Messaging Advertising or Short Message Service (SMS) is limited to 160 characters, which is both good and bad. It can be bad in that you can't exactly text all the details about something, but it's good in that it keeps you on point and nearly guarantees your message will be read. Texting facts state about 95% of all text messages received are read within the first 3 to 5 minutes. Compared this to newspaper, email, direct mail, or any other way to get a message out, this is a much more efficient way to get your message delivered and read.

What can it do for me?

SMS text messaging advertising can increase the number of new customers you have, and increase the repeat business you get from existing customers.

Let's use a restaurant as an example. You go into the restaurant, and are informed either by something on the table, or by the waiter, that if you text NEW MCCARTHYS to 41513, you will receive a free drink. (In this example, "NEW MCCARTHYS" is a keyword, and "41513" is a shortcode.) You take out your cell phone, send the text, and a few seconds later receive a text message back that you will receive the free drink by showing the message to the cashier.

Forward two weeks. It's Tuesday morning, and you are wondering what you are going to do for lunch. Your phone beeps, and you see you have a new message. It says, "Between 11 and 1 TODAY, get a free dessert with any entree at McCarthy's. Show this message to cashier to redeem." Decision made.

It doesn't have to be a restaurant. Retail stores can have a sale exclusively for subscribers. Sports teams sell more tickets with special promotions. Golf courses can promote an early evening special. Youth groups can let everyone know that summer camp fees are due tomorrow. The list is literally endless.

If you see a use for SMS in your business-- there are a few things you need to know before you start.

1. **Be legal.** Right now, the SMS field is not plagued by spam the way email is. Estimates show that over 90% of all emails are either sent straight to spam or are not read. It's hard to find an email from anyone except a close friend that doesn't contain some kind of sales pitch and link in it. In spite of strict anti-spam laws, there are still companies that mine for email addresses and then sell them as legitimate.

If you use SMS texting to advertise, be sure you get the customers information legitimately, and always give them a way to stop. Don't send a message to anyone who has not first given you their permission to send them offers, and don't send them anything after they say they'd like to stop.

[SMS Message Pros](#) helps do this for you and keeps you in compliance.

2. **Set your goals for the program.** Decide what you want your messaging program to do for you. If you are a politician that wants to send out a "get out and vote today," your goals will be entirely different than if you want people to get a message to come into your store when they are close by.

3. **Continue with traditional marketing methods.** Text message marketing is not yet the be-all and end-all. You will still need to continue with at least some of your traditional methods. Including your keyword

and short code in your other advertising will increase your responses. As your text messaging data base grows, your other advertising venues can decline.

4. **GIVE.** People don't willingly give out their cell phone numbers to strangers, and if you are going to capture a phone number, you need to make sure they get value for it. "Free" is the operative word. Customers need to feel like they are getting something special, and not just a text that gives them something everyone else also is getting. Be creative. You only need that customer to text you once to be entered onto your list so think about- what is that customer worth to you over the next week, month or year and make it worth his or her while to give you their number.

5. **Be respectful. (Show restraint).** Two to four messages a month will probably be more effective than bombarding them every day or so. Too much, and your customer will opt-out.

Also, don't be cute with your audience. "Was gr8 2 c u" may work when a teen is texting a teen, but not for business. In all of your messages, show respect for your clientele. Short, sweet and to the point.

The opportunity is in front of you. The possibilities are endless. Text message marketing is here to stay, whether you use it for your business or not.

To see if text messaging advertising is right for your business contact Ted Fabis for a Free no obligation consultation at 800 580-1448 or <http://www.smsmessagepros.com>