



BUSINESS SMS GUIDE

Business SMS Guide

The following document highlights the many ways businesses can benefit from incorporating SMS into their communication strategy, both with employees and customers.

SMS is one of the most reliable forms of communication available as well as being one of the cheapest and greenest.

This document covers the following general sectors of business:

- **Administration and Business Management**

- **Customer Services and Relationship Management**

- **Marketing Products and Sales**

- **Financial Services**

- **Leisure and Tourism**

- **Logistics**

- **Information and Communication Technology**

Administration and Business Management



Coordinating Staff

SMS can be used as a method of coordinating team members, especially those who are operating in the field, such as salespeople on the road or those who are out on visits.

Who uses it: SMEs, Street Teams, Charities, Housing Associations, Transport, Haulage, Logistics Companies

Notifications & Reminders

Appointment reminders by text are a great way to reduce missed appointments for anything from medical appointments, to meetings to consultations. Subscribers receive a reminder a few hours before the scheduled event and can reply to confirm, reschedule or cancel.

Who uses it: Medical, SMEs, Consultants, Solicitors

Debt Collection

Using SMS as a means of debt collection or invoice reminders has seen response rates of 40% compared to the 9% response rate seen from making calls.

Who uses it: Debt Collection Agencies, SMEs, Utilities, Solicitors, Retail

Fund Raising

SMS is a cheap and ethical way for charities and organisations to communicate with their supporters, notifying them of upcoming events or keeping them informed of what work they have been doing - this makes the supporters feel more connected to the cause and more likely to contribute in the form of volunteering and donating.

Who uses it: Charities, Schools, Clubs & Societies, Political Parties, Not-For-Profit Organisations

Absenteeism and Truancy Reporting

Educational institutions of all types can benefit from reporting on absentees, whether to parents of schoolchildren or sponsors of those in higher learning. Automated text messages can be sent to those not present at registration, parents can then respond acknowledging it as either authorised or not.

Who uses it: Schools, Universities, Colleges, Conference Holders, SMEs

Organisational Alerts

A cheap and effective way to disseminate news among a targeted group of individuals is SMS; this gets the information directly into their hands for just a few pence.

Who uses it: Clubs / Societies, Charities, Large Corporations, Niche News Groups

Recruitment

Subscribers can be sent information and messages persuading them to sign up for a specific body or service. As well as this recruitment companies can send out job information to prospective employees direct into their hands.

Who uses it: Temp Agencies, Recruitment Agencies, Job Centres, Charities, Service Providers, Clubs & Societies

Reporting

A sales force can receive real time information on their individual targets as well as review deadlines directly into the palms of their hands by SMS.

Who uses it: Street Teams, Call Centres, Retail

Case Updates

On any ongoing activity involving progression your people need to be kept up to date with what is happening. SMS is a great way to keep people informed of how a case is progressing through important milestones.

Who uses it: Solicitors, Accountants, Banks, Estate Agents

Out of Office Alerts

You can use SMS as a quick, simple and cheap way to receive notifications while out of the office concerning missed calls, questions and any issues that need your attention.

Who uses it: SMEs

Customer Services and Relationship Management



Extended Office Hours

Publishing a 'Textline' as a means of contact out of normal hours means customers can report problems, ask questions and request a call back the following day.

Who uses it: SMEs, Hospitals, Housing Associations, Schools

Feedback

Studies show that people are much more inclined to tell you what they really think if they think they are doing so anonymously. This is easily achieved by giving customers the option to send you feedback via text message.

Who uses it: SMEs, Marketing Consultants, B2C

Result Notifications

Time critical information is sent direct to a recipient's hand up to 10 times quicker than more traditional methods of information dissemination.

Who uses it: Hospitals, Medical Practices, Colleges, Universities, MOT Centres

Profile Competitions

By offering a prize, you can request that consumers text in to simply register an entry or answer a specific question accompanied by their name, postcode and house number to build a complete prospect profile.

Who uses it: Retail, Consumer Brands

Seasonal Greetings

Broadcast Christmas, New Year and Birthday messages to your clients enhancing your relationship with them, all for a fraction of the cost of a physical card.

Who uses it: Retail, SMEs

Schedule Information

Subscribers receive notification of an upcoming event of which they need to take note, this can even be self-posted. Notifications of meeting schedules, visits, training sessions and get togethers are all popular uses.

Who uses it: SMEs, Charities, Clubs & Societies, Educational Institutions

Questions

Publish your 'Textline' as a means of people texting in to ask questions of the 'experts', whether it be requests for tips or general enquiries it builds customer relations and gathers valuable data.

Who uses it: IT Departments, Government, Health, Retail, Educational Institutions

Reminders

Send reminders for anything from scheduled meetings or appointments to payments and invoices.

Who uses it: Doctors, Dentists, Solicitors, Hairdressers, SMEs

Updates

Broadcast to subscribers time sensitive information, such as possible downtime of services.

Who uses it: IT Departments, Logistical Companies, Local Council, SMEs

Deaf and Hearing Impaired

If you have a large number of customers who are deaf or hearing impaired, a 'Textline' is an ideal way for them to contact you requesting services or simply for general correspondence.

Who uses it: Charities, Medical, Clubs & Societies, Educational Institutions

Customer Complaints

Customers have the option to text in registering a complaint about a service or individual person without having to ring up and speak to a real person.

Who uses it: SMEs, Educational Institutions, Housing Associations, Local Councils

Account Information

Customers can text in from a registered number to request information on their accounts.

Who uses it: Solicitors, Accountants, Banks, Letting Agents, Utilities, SMEs

Surveys

Combined with another medium such as print or radio, a survey can be run by asking people to text in their answers to your textline, collecting information and data. Alternatively, if you have the data you can text your customers or prospects requesting that they text back their response.

Who uses it: SMEs, Educational Institutions, Housing Associations, Local Councils

Collections

Notify customers when something is ready for collection.

Who uses it: Repair Outlets, Photo Developers, Dry Cleaners, MOT Centres, Takeaways, Retail

Customer Satisfaction

Customer are sent a text message asking them to rate or comment on a service or product they recently received where they would have given their mobile number as a means of contact.

Who uses it: Retailers, SMEs, Consumer Products, Delivery Companies

Campaign Updates

Subscribers receive up to the minute information on the progression of campaigns.

Who uses it: Political Parties, Fund Raisers

Marketing, Products and Sales



Promotional Sales

Alert customers of upcoming sales and new product launches.

Who uses it: High St. Retail, Online Retail, Consumer Products, Travel Agents

PR and Marketing Campaigns

Customers subscribe to receiving useful information such as weather alerts, health tips, media releases & public transport in conjunction with specific sponsors.

Who uses it: Retailers, Ski Villages, Pharmacies, Media & Entertainment Companies, Holiday Resorts

Store Locator

Customers can text in to request information on their nearest store of a particular chain.

Who uses it: Retail, Supermarket, Restaurant & Entertainment Chains

Competitions – ‘Text to Win’

Customers text in their entry to be entered into a prize draw for something of interest. The result is generating awareness of the brand or product as well as access to an opt-in mailing list of a potentially niche group.

Who uses it: Car Dealerships, Travel Agents, Retail, Entertainment, Consumer Products

Newsletter Promotion

Text prospects with details of your broadcast, and invite them to reply for free with their postal / email address which then adds them to your mailing list.

Who uses it: SMEs, Clubs & Societies, Retail, Consumer Products

Stock Check

Customers text in a product number or item name to check its stock at their local store.

Who uses it: Retail, Supermarkets, Consumer Products

Quotes

Potential customers text in with details and in return they get a quote on the price of a product or service.

Who uses it: Insurance Brokers, Travel Agents, Estate Agents, Repair Outlets, Price Comparison Sites, Contractors

Viral Marketing

Create a gimmick that encourages the passing on of information or a message between pre-constructed social networks via SMS.

Who uses it: Consumer Products, PR Companies, Media, Entertainment Companies

Product Verification

Potential customers can text in to various organisations to verify the authenticity of a product; this is done through serial or registration numbers. Electronic products, such as games and software can also be activated this way by sending a password back.

Who uses it: Software Distributors, Car Dealerships, Electronics Retailers, Jewellers

Bookings and Orders

Customers text in requests for reservations or deliveries, and receive confirmation details in return (cost, time etc.).

Who uses it: Takeaways, Restaurants, Taxi Firms, Car Hire Companies

Access Codes

Customers receive access codes to material online direct to their phone.

Who uses it: Premium Websites, Publishers, Online TV / Radio, Resource Specialists, Software Companies

Event Details

Customers subscribe to receiving information about upcoming events at a particular venue, or of a particular act.

Who uses it: Entertainers, Theatres, Cinemas, Pubs, Bars, Nightclubs

Prepay Coupons and Vouchers

Customers receive codes to their mobile phone that are redeemable in store. Ideal for gift vouchers.

Who uses it: Online Retail, High St Retail, Entertainment Venues

Product Information

Customers text in a keyword or code to a number and receive specific information about said product direct to their phone. Useful for product reviews, dietary information and price comparison.

Who uses it: Libraries, Retail, Consumer Products

Product Launches

Broadcast product information and launch dates to interested prospects to create awareness and drive initial sales.

Who uses it: Retail, Consumer Products, Entertainment & Media Companies, Promoters

Discount Coupons and Vouchers

Potential customers text in with a code to receive a discount code for a particular product or service, redeemable at point of purchase.

Who uses it: Retail, Nightclubs, Ticket Outlets, Entertainment Venues

Financial Services



Credit Checks

Credit Checks and company account information can be accessed by out of office staff by texting in names or account numbers and specifying what information users would like by using our API.

Who uses it: Sales Departments, Financial Departments

Purchases

By registering with a company for a virtual account, which can either be pre-paid or invoiced customers can place orders and make payment by text, perfect for important orders or services.

Who uses it: Retail, Wholesalers, Suppliers

Account Alerts

Subscribers receive alerts by SMS when their account reaches a certain threshold; this limits issues such as over-usage. Replies can even be sent with instructions on how to proceed, such as halting a service or that the subscriber will be making payment etc.

Who uses it: Banks, Retail, Subscription Services

Leisure and Tourism



Hotel Communications

In many Hotels around the globe guests can now check in or out by SMS as well as issue instructions such as 'Make-up room' and even order room service. In return, the hotel gets mobile contacts and can send urgent messages to guests while they are out of the building as well as promotional messages for the hotel bar & restaurant.

Who uses it: Hotels, Holiday Resorts

Reservations

Reservations by SMS while abroad are fast becoming a reality, with many Networks abolishing roaming charges tourists are becoming more able to use their mobile phones whilst travelling.

Who uses it: Restaurants, Sites of Interest, Hotels, Holiday Resorts

Tourist Information

Many holiday destinations are now publishing a 'Textline' with promotional materials for tourists to text in to ask questions ranging from travel information to directions to places of interest and personal emergencies including health issues.

Who uses it: Tourism Centres, Hotels, Holiday Resorts, Sites of Interest, Health Organisations

Logistics



Order Tracking

On many websites you can track the progress of your order by signing in if you have an account. Giving customers the option to receive such updates via text is a cheap and easy way to gather mobile information as well as improve brand image.

Who uses it: High St. Retail, Online Retailers

Availability Alerts

A common practice these days is to receive alerts, by email, about the availability of stock, but also growing is the ability to receive such alerts by text, especially for those who need to know urgently or simply don't have access to email.

Who uses it: Online Retailers, High St Retail

Fleet Management

Those who own fleets of vehicles, whether HGVs or Taxis, need to be able to coordinate quickly and effectively with their assets - SMS allows managers to send important information such as job details and further instructions directly to drivers within seconds.

Who uses it: Delivery Companies, HGVs, Taxi Firms, Limousine Service

Information and Communication Technology



Email Alerts

Using the SMTP protocol you can have details of emails delivered to your mobile phone via SMS making sure you never miss an important message.

Who uses it: SMEs

Equipment Failure

Some systems in place are maintained externally, such as many alarm and security systems. Text alerts can be set up in case of failure to go directly to the engineer who needs to come and fix the problem, and even have yourself 'copied' in on the transmission. This is proven to decrease response times dramatically.

Who uses it: Contracted Engineers, Repair Services

Password Confirmations

When someone forgets their password to a system they can request for it to be sent to the mobile phone registered to that account as an SMS - this provides customers with a piece of mind about forgetting sensitive information.

Who uses it: SMEs, Online Subscriptions, Online Retail

System Alerts

As with hardware, certain software systems need constant monitoring to maintain them, this is yet another instance where SMS can provide a quick and cheap method of notification should something go wrong.

Who uses it: SMEs

Malfunction Notification

When something goes wrong it can cost you money and reputation, so you need to keep informed about it as soon as possible to keep downtime to a minimum. Using our API this can be built in to notify you automatically as soon as something goes wrong.

Who uses it: Industrial Complexes, Server Monitoring, SMEs

Environmental Monitoring

There are several instances, both technological and industrial where environments have to be carefully monitored and maintained, there are a wide range of monitoring systems available, but not many with SMS capabilities - any email enabled system can be used to send SMS using our simple SMTP API.

Who uses it: Industrial Complexes, Technology Centres, Server Monitoring

Automation

SMS can be used, via our API, to control equipment remotely. This is mainly used when there is reason, perhaps environmental, to alter a predefined schedule that equipment is set to follow.

Who uses it: Councils, Industrial Estates, Sports Grounds

What to do next...

- If you don't yet have a FASTSMS account and would like a no obligation trial of the FASTSMS system we will happily give you **10 FREE CREDITS** to start you off.

You can apply online for this free trial by visiting:

www.FASTSMS.co.uk/information

If you are ready to open an account now you can do so from as little as **£4.90 for 100 credits** by visiting:

<http://login.fastsms.co.uk/newaccount.php>

Alternatively, contact us for more information:

Phone: 0800 954 5305

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