



SMS Marketing 101:

**Marketing that gets
a response**

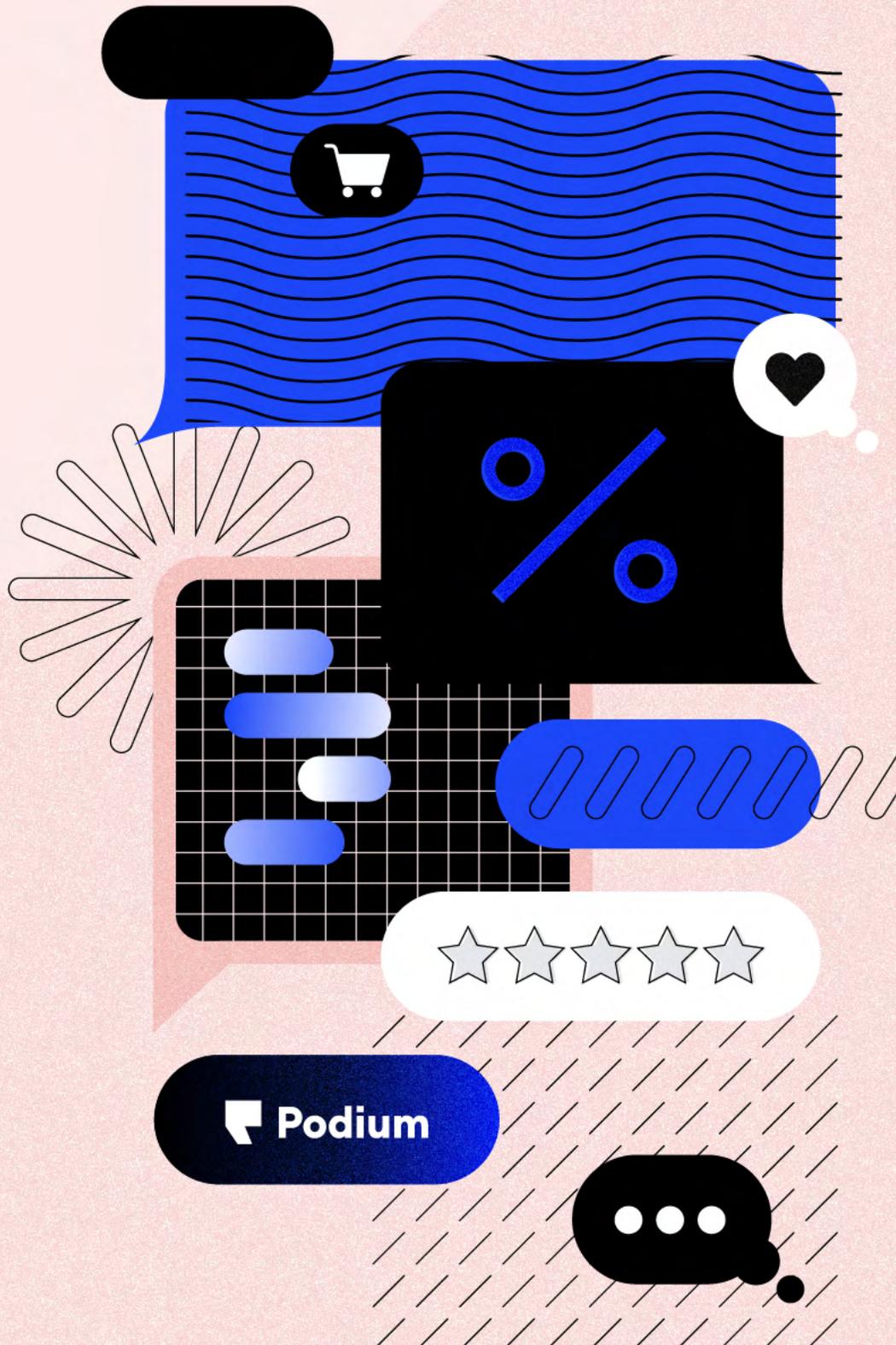


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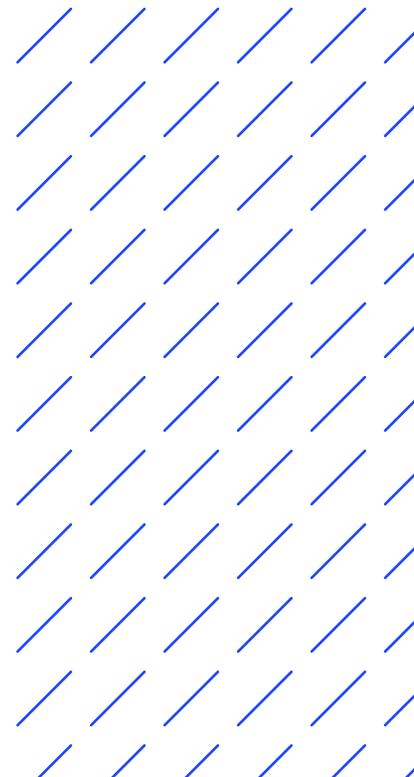
For many local businesses, SMS marketing can feel daunting.

Getting the required prior consent (“opt-in”) from your customers isn’t easy, text software seems complicated, and promotions can frustrate customers. Only 12% of local businesses use SMS in their marketing strategy, even though it gets up to a 98% open rate.

However, done *correctly*, SMS marketing can actually **strengthen relationships** by inviting responses. With well-timed messages and relevant content, it feels more intimate than other marketing messages and encourages continued engagement in a way only text can. The key is knowing how to message the right way.

And that’s exactly what we’re going to show you. In this ebook, you’ll learn the secrets to successful SMS marketing and how to run an effective campaign as a local business.

IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER: This ebook is for informational purposes only. It is not intended as a legal advice or a comprehensive summary of the law. You are encouraged to retain your own legal counsel to review this ebook and assess your unique text messaging business scenario. In addition, a business can do many things, including use of the Podium system outside its intended use, which can give rise to liabilities beyond those addressed in this ebook.



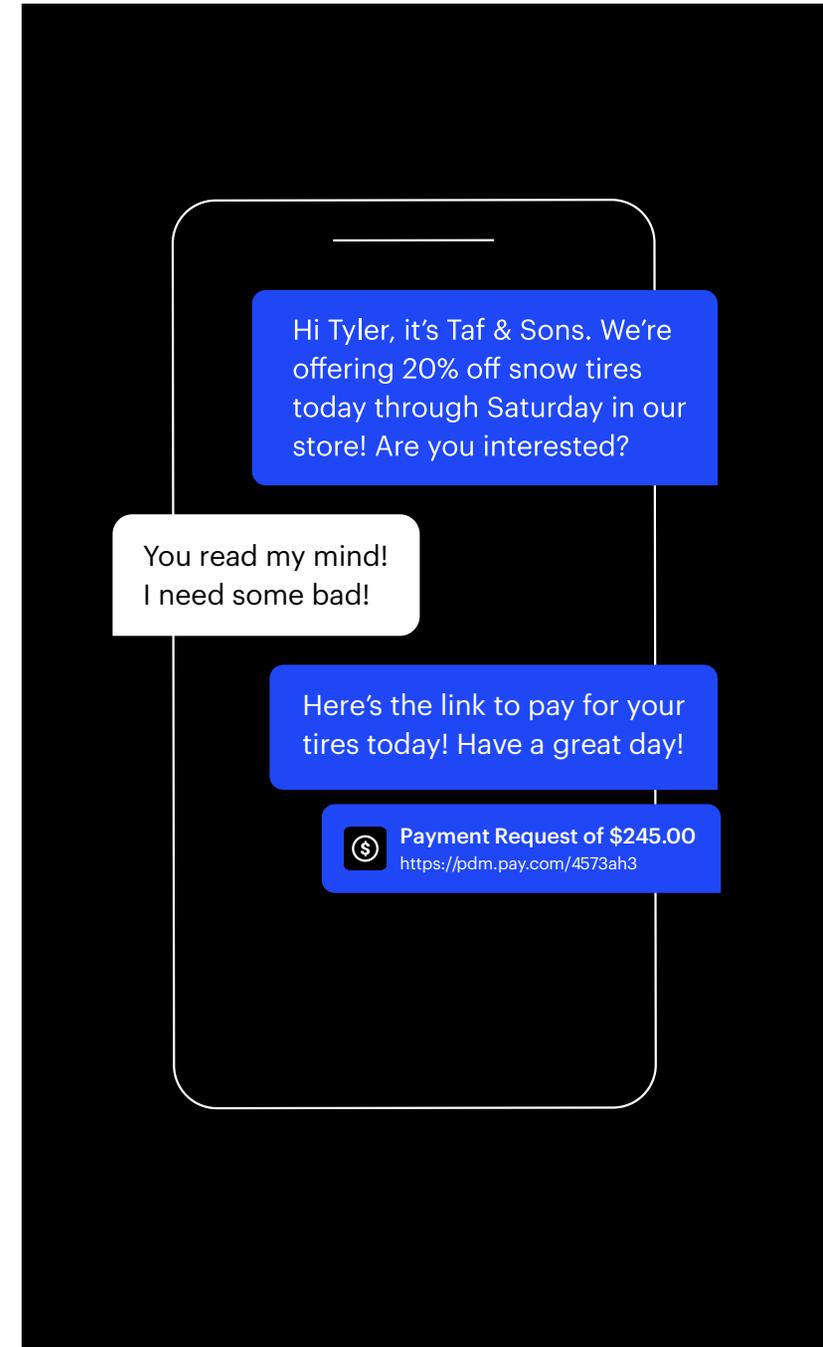
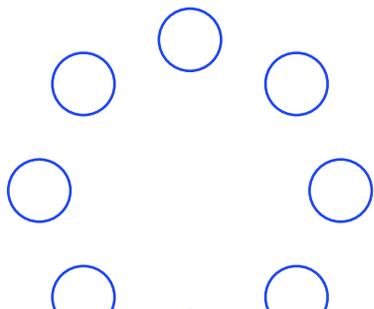


Why SMS Marketing Matters



What is SMS Marketing?

SMS marketing is the practice of using text to convert leads and keep customers engaged. As a rule of thumb, messages are usually 160 characters or less. While there are multiple ways to utilize this channel, this ebook will focus on using text to communicate promotions, updates (changed business hours, status updates), and events to your customer base.



Why Does it Matter?

As a consumer yourself, you're probably aware of just how much consumers are inundated with marketing materials every day. This has consequences, which include desensitization. Research has shown that consumers aren't as receptive to traditional marketing methods as they used to be.

- Average open rate for emails: 18%

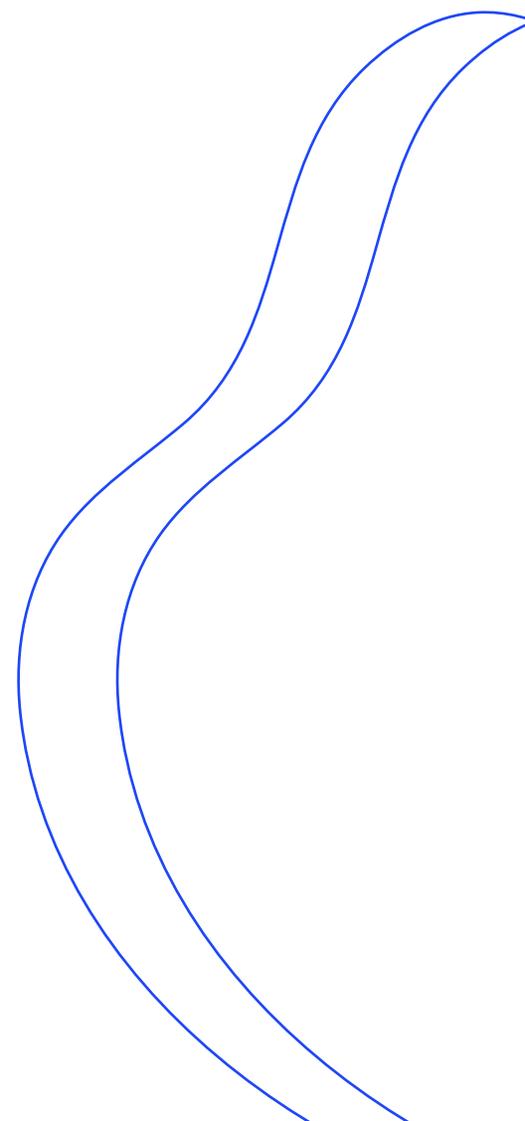
Engagement is low:

- Average click-through rate: 2.6%
- Average click-to-open rate: 14.1%

With our catalyzed digital transformation, consumers expect a modern customer experience with communication that meets them **where they are**. They expect convenience, personalization, and humanlike connection. That means **texting**.

Text has an open rate of up to 98%, and on average 95% of messages are opened within 3 min.

- Text has a **209% higher response rate** than phone, email, or Facebook
- **40.5% of consumers** say they are likely to switch to a different business because they offer text messaging to communicate
- **65.6% of consumers** think texting makes working with a local business more convenient
- **75% of consumers** are OK with receiving SMS messages from brands (after they've opted in)
- Consumers are **twice as likely (1.8x)** to prefer texting to any other communication method
- Consumers redeem SMS-delivered coupons **10 times more** than other types of coupons

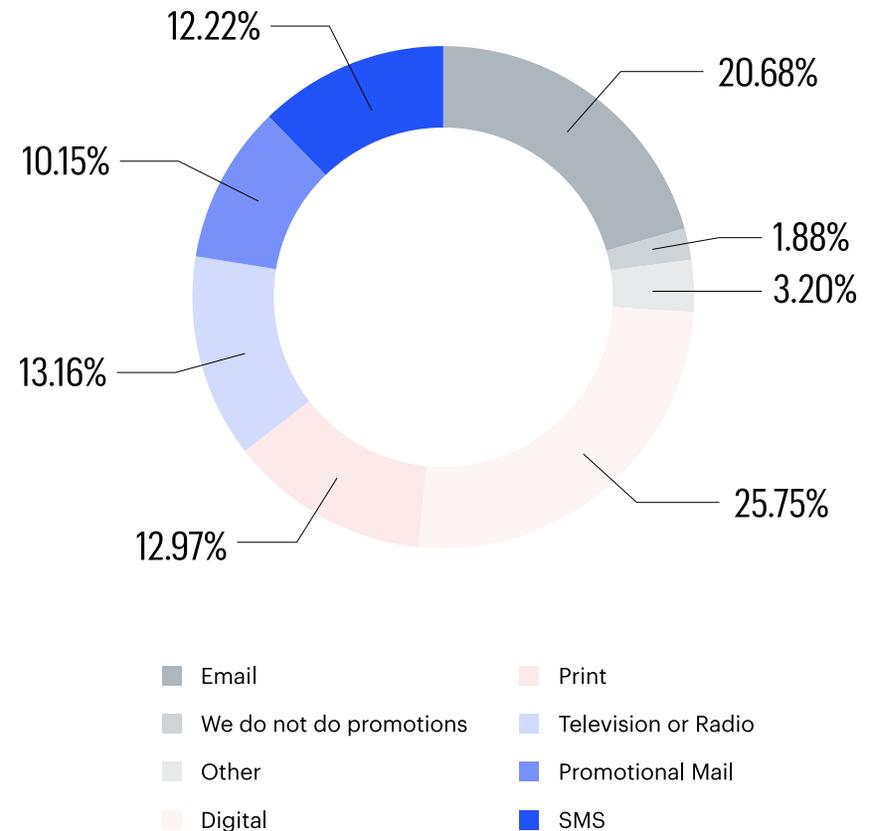


According to Podium's research, SMS marketing is traditionally underutilized by local businesses.

However, it:

- Reaches customers where they want to be reached (*source*).
- Adds convenience that customers would change patronage to find (*source*).
- Is the most effective communication channel available to local businesses (*source*).

Businesses reported using the following channels to reach customers with campaigns/promotions.



It is also one of the most cost-effective marketing campaigns you can run as a local business. Compared to digital campaigns, SMS campaigns are extremely low-cost to run, allowing you to drive new leads and increase customer lifetime value at very little cost. Recent data also shows that providing options such as text directly increases a local business's revenue.

Channel	Average Cost Per Send/Cost Per Click
→ SMS via Podium (CPS)	\$0.10
Google Ads (CPC)	\$1-2
Facebook (CPC)	\$0.97
Instagram (CPC)	\$3.56
YouTube (CPC)	\$3.21
LinkedIn (CPC)	\$5.26
Twitter (CPC)	\$0.38

*Source: [Webfx](#)

Like email campaigning, SMS marketing is trackable and provides valuable insights into customer behavior. But unlike email campaigning, it reaches customers where they want to be reached **instantly**.



What You Need to Be Aware Of



First Things First: Staying Compliant

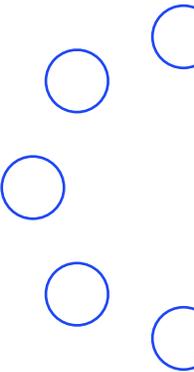
Before getting started, you need to be aware of a few things. Text is more intimate—even more invasive—than other forms of communication. Text messages appear directly on a person’s phone whether they are at home, work, asleep, awake, on a date with friends, or sharing a personal moment with family. Because of this, local businesses have an obligation to use messaging ethically, which means following applicable rules and regulations.

First, some myth busting:

SMS marketing always gets businesses in trouble. **False.**

SMS marketing laws are too complicated to understand. **False.**

SMS marketing is spam. **False.**

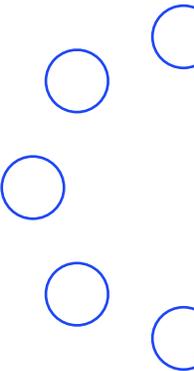




The truth is, SMS marketing in a compliant way comes down to being transparent and only messaging people who have “opted-in,” that is, provided prior express consent to the sender. In the United States, this involves abiding by the rules set out by the Telephone Consumer Protection Act and other similar regulations. The Telephone Consumer Protection Act, or TCPA, was put in place to protect customers from spam, including unwanted calls and texts. Other countries have similar protections in place.

Spamming customers is poor practice and carries repercussions. Not only does it severely damage customer relationships and trust, but it can also result in hefty fines. Campaigns above a 3% unsubscribe rate also put your textable phone number at risk with carriers. It’s crucial that you only message contacts who have opted-in to receive promotional messages from your business.

SMS marketing in a compliant way isn’t complicated—you just need to know what to watch out for and put your customers first.





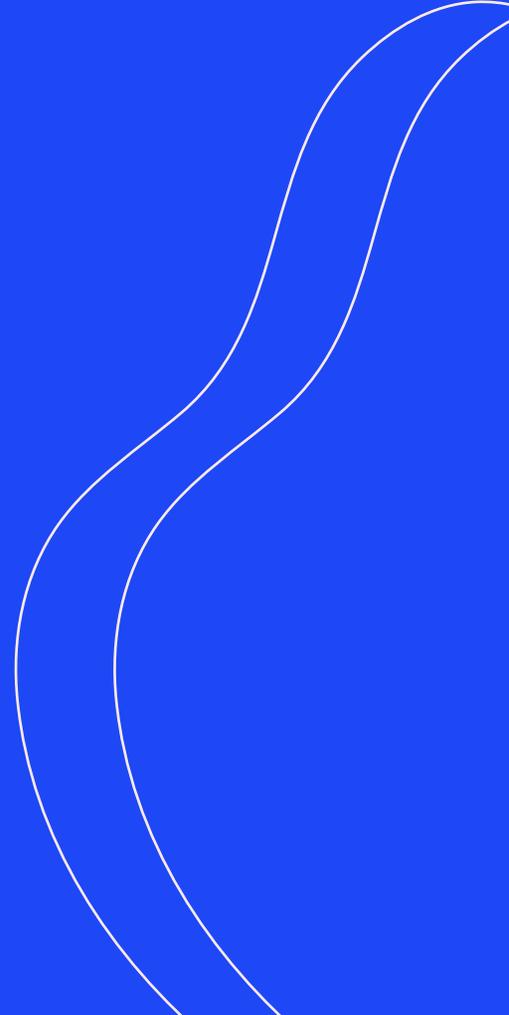
Some things to keep in mind:

- Make sure you have proper consent from each recipient of the message
- Mention your business's name
- Alert the customer about possible messaging fees
- Mention frequency of monthly messages
- Include the option to opt-out of all future texts
- Honor those opt outs





Best Practices

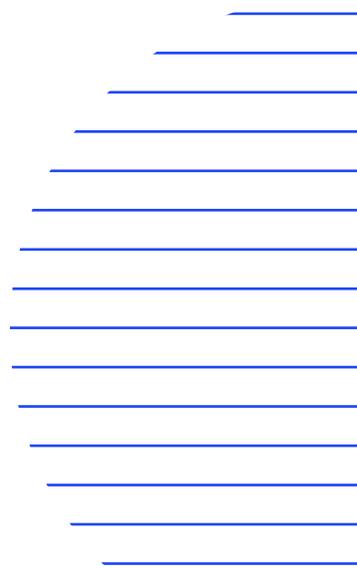


Use SMS Marketing to Convert, Not Hurt

Now that we've talked about staying compliant, let's talk about how to be effective.

As a local business, you want to use SMS marketing to engage new customers, increase customer lifetime value, and drive more revenue. You **don't** want to annoy customers, damage your brand, or contribute to consumer burnout.

The real goal is to give your texts the feel and value of one-to-one interactions. There are a few key practices you can keep in mind to achieve this.



The Dos and Don'ts of SMS

DO _____

✔ Use conversational language.

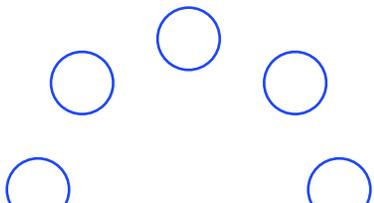
One of the biggest turn offs with marketing messages is that businesses sound like they're shouting, "BUY NOW!" "OFFER ENDS TODAY!" To appeal to your customers, keep messages light-hearted, short, and conversational—just like you're talking to a friend. And yes, you can include emojis to keep the conversation personal and informal! 😊😍😘

✔ Send during business hours.

If your customer receives a promo at 4:00 am, they won't be happy. Send texts during the hours people are regularly working to respect your customers' privacy and increase humanlike feel. Keep in mind that sales and events promotions are most effective when they're last-minute impulses. If you have an event on Wednesday night, consider sending the message as late as Wednesday afternoon.

✔ Use simple messages.

Remember, your messages should be 160 characters or less. Try not to use any complex messaging that could be misinterpreted or misunderstood. If you're sharing information about an event or a promotion, include the date(s) so your audience has all the information they need.



✔ Provide value.

The key to successful SMS campaigns is providing actual value. Employ unique content that is specific and relevant to the demographics you're targeting. Don't send a 20-year-old college student in Chicago a promo for carpet cleaning at your Boise location. *Do* send a 40-year-old male in Arizona a promo for tennis gear similar to what he has bought previously at your Phoenix location a month after his purchase.

✔ Include a CTA.

If you miss the CTA, you miss the point of SMS marketing. Messages should include a direct call to action such as "check this out!" "stop by!" or "leave a review!"

✔ Include a link.

Don't let your links eat up the valuable space in your messages. You can use link shorteners or purchase an SMS Marketing system that includes shortened links so customers can engage with you conveniently.

✔ Respond in real time.

A seven-hour delay in response time doesn't feel like a real conversation—it feels like a bot. Try to respond as quickly as possible to avoid disengagement and increase connectivity.

✔ Track performance.

It's crucial to keep an eye on how your campaigns are performing and monitor how your audience is responding to your messages. If you aren't getting much engagement after your first few promotions, revisit this ebook to see if there's anything you can tweak.

✔ Address customers by name.

Just because it's not 1:1 doesn't mean it shouldn't sound like it. Use your messaging system to address each customer by name. Using someone's name in business conversation is crucial for human sound and feel.



DON'T

✘ **Send too frequently.**

Inundating your customers with messages leads to frustration and “STOP!” replies. (Often this has to do more with the content of your messages than how often you send them. If your campaigns have high value, you’re less likely to have a problem.)

✘ **Use slang.**

While slang (dang, freakin’, lit) certainly increases casual feel, it risks unprofessionalism and misunderstandings with your customers. You should also avoid wordplay, superfluous words, and anything that could be misleading.

✘ **Forget to identify yourself.**

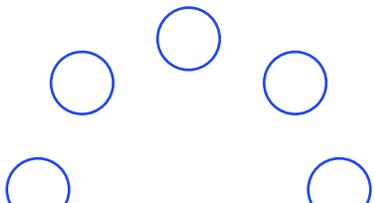
Figure out how to do this creatively with each successive message so it doesn’t get old. You might try versions such as, “This is Stella at Oak & Table!” “We’re so excited that you loved your Oak & Table dining set.” “Hoping to see you at Oak & Table soon!”

✘ **Ignore opt-in and opt-out rules.**

We emphasized it once, and we’ll do it again. Incompliance undermines trust and damages your reputation. Only message customers who have opted-in, and make sure to respect their decisions. Because you want strong relationships and happy customers, messaging in a compliant way is in your best interest.

✘ **Sound like a mass text.**

As we mentioned, your message may be going out to 700 people, but it should sound like it’s going to one. Let’s talk personalization.



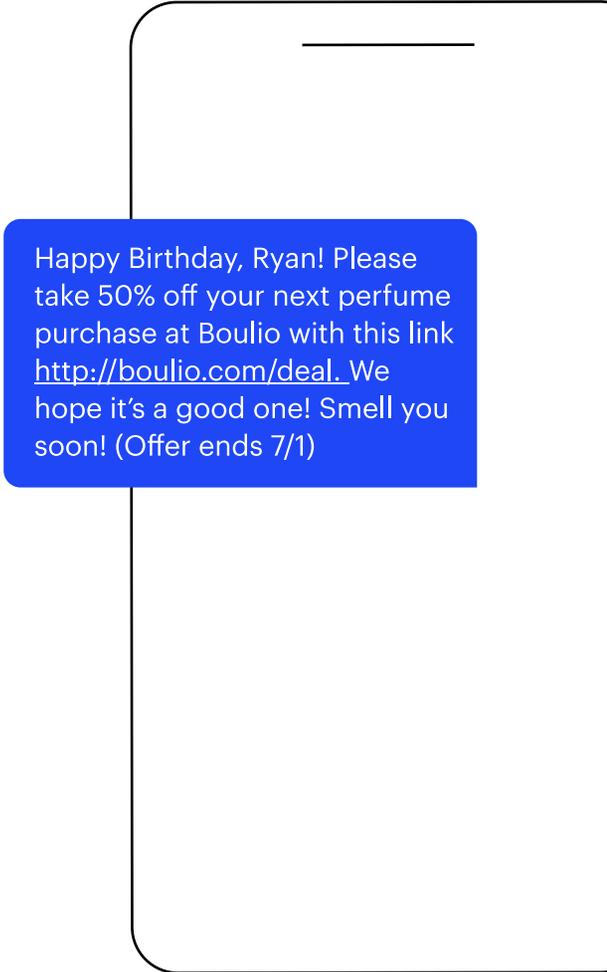
Personalization: How to Market Like a Human

Today's consumers crave personalization in their brand interactions. They want to feel like a real person at your business is contacting them and **only them**. If you want your threads to feel like individual interactions, it's critical to make your SMS marketing messages as personal as possible.

You can do this by including personal details in your messages and marketing according to those details. For example, Ryan wants to be sent a promo message with a special discount relevant to her last purchase on her birthday, addressed specifically to her.

When sending messages, businesses should anticipate customer wants and needs by considering the following components:

- Name
- Date of birth
- Location
- Last purchase
- Previous feedback
- Website journey
- Seasons and holidays

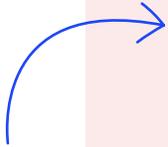


Happy Birthday, Ryan! Please take 50% off your next perfume purchase at Boulio with this link <http://boulio.com/deal>. We hope it's a good one! Smell you soon! (Offer ends 7/1)

Maximizing Your Opt-Ins

Many businesses find maximizing their marketable SMS list to be the hardest part of SMS marketing. But it doesn't have to be. There are a number of touchpoints along your customer journey where collecting an opt-in is natural and even expected. If you take advantage of them, the list will build itself.

Remember, it's important to receive opt-ins at **multiple** entry points so you are consistently growing your contact list and your ability to nurture those contacts into transactions.



Ideas to turn interactions into opt-ins:

- Webchat
- Reviews
- Payments

You can use these touch points to direct customers to your website opt-in form.

- Social Media Posts
- Events
- Home Page Invites
- Email Footer
- Appointment Follow Up



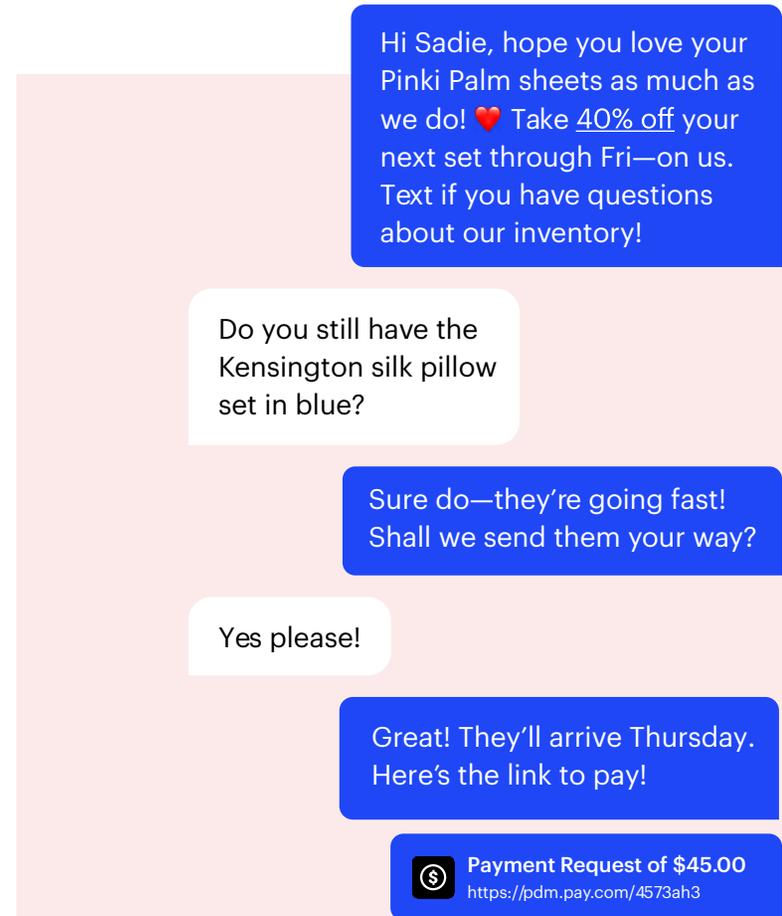
What Good Looks Like



What “Good Enough to Get a Response” Looks Like

There are hundreds of valuable use cases for SMS marketing. As a retailer, you might use text to build loyalty with 5 star review customers by offering an exclusive VIP discount. In home services, you might re-engage customers who asked for a quote via webchat recently but didn’t follow through.

Almost any use case can be extremely effective if done **well**. The key is to utilize your business’s unique strengths and creativity while keeping best practices and compliance front of mind. To that end, let’s take a look at **what good looks like**.



Pinki Palm does a nice job including an expiration date, personalizing their message, and encouraging specific questions that lead to a transaction. Their textable payment links make their conversations even more worthwhile for their customers.



Belon Auto: Hi Sunny, it's been 2 months since your last oil change. Here's 20% off if you come in before this Friday, June 5th! Hope to see you soon!

Can I come in tomorrow afternoon?

Sure! Can we put you down for 2:30?

Yup!

Belon Auto does well sending a relevant promo at the right time, making this message a useful one for Sunny and encouraging an appointment. Better yet, Belon Auto has this promotion saved to send during slow weeks to boost traffic with a clear end date when it's most advantageous for them.

Hey Rachel, it's Sam's Cycling. Celebrate our 8 year anniversary by taking 20% off your purchase. Visit <http://www.tc.pdm.com/123>. Feel free to text any questions!

Are the bikes included?

Sure are! Are you looking at one in particular?

Sam's Cycling addresses Rachel by name and identifies themselves immediately. They also take their anniversary as an opportunity to benefit Rachel and encourage conversation with "feel free to text any questions!"



FARMON TAX SERVICES: April 15th is almost here. Join us tonight for an info session on preparing your taxes as a new home buyer at our Main St. location. Show this message for a free drink.

Thx! Will you be doing this again?

Yes, we do free financial planning sessions every month. You can see the calendar on our website!

Farmon Tax leans into last-minute impulses well with this message, peaking interest with a relevant event and free drink. They do a nice job of engaging their client by sending her directly to their website.

Happy 4th, Cameron! We're offering \$40 off your next purchase when you refer a friend to LB Carpeting. Text any questions!

Sweet, can I refer my grandparents?

Of course, we'd love to have them!

LB Carpeting uses SMS marketing to employ an effective referral campaign, encouraging response with their appealing promotion and inclusive feel.

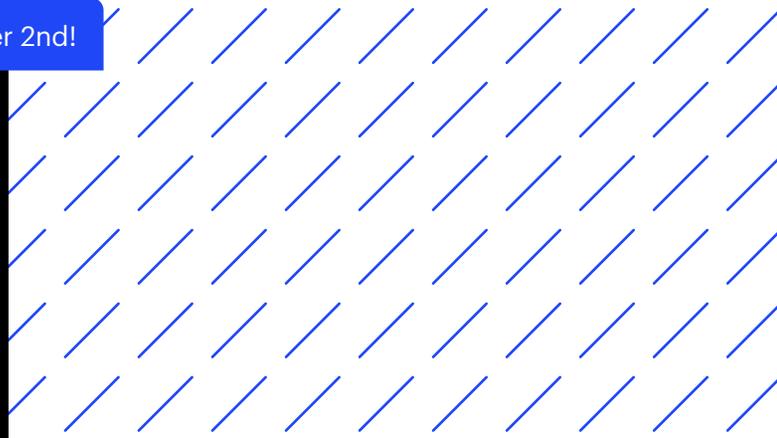
Hi Jack! This is Aly with Kegan Insurance! Our webinar for your new home and auto policy will begin this evening at 6:00 MST. Use code 7221 for a chance to win 6 months free!

Sweet! Btw, when is my policy renewal?

October 2nd!

Kegan Insurance masters human feel by telling Jack the specific employee who is texting him and offering relevant info along with a promo to encourage attendance. It's clear Kegan Insurance has established a reputation of responsiveness as Jack feels confident that he will receive a response to his individual question.

Good looks different in every scenario. The most important thing is that your messages demonstrate thorough understanding of your customers, anticipate and meet their needs, and respect their choices and privacy.

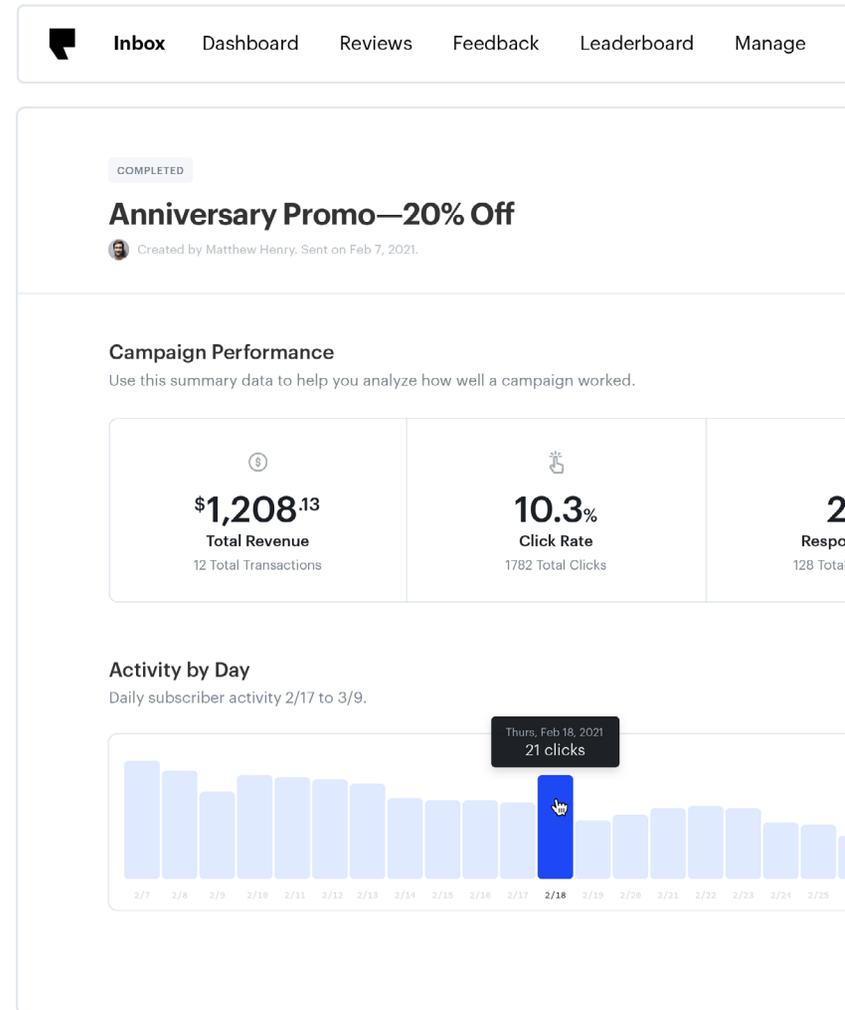


Market Like a Pro With Podium Campaigns

Not all SMS marketing tools are made equally. With Podium Campaigns, local businesses are able to build and manage an opt-in list, use targeted offers to engage their customers via messaging, and report on engagement efforts.

Podium Campaigns:

- Is purpose-built for local business SMS Campaigns, providing exactly what you need to simply build, send, and report on promotional activity.
- Maximizes opt-in opps, allowing every customer interaction to be an on-ramp for you to grow an engaged, compliant SMS database.
- Provides a comprehensive customer conversation platform, powering a convenient, complete thread with each customer in a single inbox.



Podium Campaigns helps you facilitate valuable interactions with your customers. It allows you to strengthen, instead of hurt, relationships through its conversational feel while raising your bottom line. And it puts your customers first, every time.

[Learn how Podium Campaigns can revolutionize the way you do business by watching this demo.](#) ↗

