

How to grow and retain your SMS marketing opt-ins

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SMS is a unique marketing channel in that every single person you reach out to via that channel must first give their express permission for you to do so. This presents both a challenge and an opportunity. It can be difficult to grow your database of numbers when customers have to take action in order to get on that database and it can be difficult to retain their permission when every text must include directions for opting-out. On the other hand, these regulations on text message marketing also ensure that the people you're texting (and you are paying per text) are only those who want to receive them and are therefore more likely to act on them. Still, you want to grow your database and retain your opt-ins as much as possible, the following tips can help you accomplish this.

Offer real value

People won't give you unrestricted access to reach them via text unless they perceive real value in doing so. The occasional 10% off coupon won't be sufficient for the vast majority of customers. Value also doesn't have to mean deals and discounts. Appointment reminders, shipping notifications, and advanced notice of restocked items are additional ways you can use text messaging to make life more convenient for those who opt in.

Integrate SMS with other channels

Registering a shortcode and keyword makes it as easy as possible for customers to opt in since all they have to do is text something like "SIGNUP" to a five- or six-digit number. It also makes it easier for you to advertise your SMS channel for customers. You can very quickly provide customers with instructions for opting in on your website, on banner ads in store, near the point-of-sales in your store, and across various social media platforms and other digital and print channels.

Don't be annoying

It takes a lot of work to build your SMS database and almost no time at all to lose it. Smartphone users can be an impatient group and the moment they perceive that opting-in is more of a burden than it's worth, they'll reply to a text, "STOP," and you are no longer allowed to text them. Texting too often or at inconvenient times such as weekends, holidays, or too early in the morning or late at night will result in more opt-outs. Also, if every single text is a promotional message, they may feel that you're taking advantage of the relationship you've established to constantly push products/services on them. Promotional content should be no more than half of the texts you send.

Stay compliant with regulations

As already established, SMS is a highly regulated marketing channel and the regulations are updated from time to time. While most bulk SMS marketing platforms will ensure you're staying compliant and stay on top of new regulations, it's still a good idea to keep up on them as well since an infraction can result in a fine and repeated infractions could even lead to a lawsuit.

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