

(SMS) Text Message Marketing for Local Businesses

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The Rise of Mobile Marketing

Businesses are always trying to find affordable marketing solutions that will reach their target audience quickly and easily. They also want effective methods that will generate a quick response and ultimately increase sales.

However, this can be a difficult task in today's economy. Advertising costs are up. Consumer spending is down. Although many small businesses still have not ventured into this territory, one of the most powerful marketing tools available is Text Message marketing.

Text Message marketing is a very personal way to send direct marketing messages to a large number of subscribers at the same time. Not only that, but it has proven to be one of the most cost-effective forms of digital age marketing available today.

Mobile phones have massively flooded the market in recent year with consumers buying new smart phones as fast as the manufacturers can produce them.

Even more astonishing is the number of people who are using their mobile devices to access the internet. In fact, Mobile internet usage is expected to exceed desktop internet usage within the next few years.

Have you noticed how many people are glued to their mobile devices? We're doing everything from shopping to socializing on our mobile phones. Most people have theirs within arm's reach at all times – including while they are asleep.

In addition to that, studies have shown that approximately 90% of consumers read their text messages within minutes. What other types of marketing can offer that rate of deliverability?

None; this is exactly why Text Marketing is more likely to generate an immediate response over traditional advertising methods.

There are an estimated 5.9 billion mobile phone subscriptions worldwide², meaning that as many as 85% of the current population of the world has a cell phone that can receive text messages.

With as many as 45%² of consumers comparing prices online before making a purchase it makes sense to use SMS messaging as another means of promoting your business.

If it is used intelligently and combined with a more extensive marketing campaign, SMS marketing can add real value to your advertising expenditure because it has great immediacy, reach, and cost effectiveness.

In this report, we will discuss exactly what Text Message Marketing is, as well as how your business can increase your bottom line with this cutting-edge tool.

How SMS Text Marketing Works and the Benefits

SMS is an acronym for "Short Message Service" and is better known as the familiar "text message" function that most of us have come to use regularly since it was first introduced in the 1980s.

Even when mobile phones are not in use, they are sending and receiving information through wireless signals and cell phone towers. When a text messages is sent, it has to go through one of these towers and then the SMS center, which transmits the message to its final destination.

With trillions of text messages being sent over the past few years, consumers have adapted to this method extremely well. Not only have they adapted to it, but they are somewhat "addicted" to it.

In fact, some studies show that most text message users prefer to communicate via text messaging instead of talking on the phone.

SMS Text Message Marketing for Local Businesses

However, the use of SMS as a marketing tool by small businesses has been relatively low. Those businesses that choose to ignore Text Message Marketing are missing out on an excellent promotional opportunity that can help them steadily increase profits.

The convenience and effectiveness of Text Marketing has made it a very useful instrument for those businesses that have embraced it. It simply makes staying in touch with your target market much easier, which ultimately translates into sales.

The use of Text Message Marketing is very straightforward; it is a simple case of sending out your company's latest marketing message to your list of mobile phone numbers.

There are several ways to collect a list of numbers to use in your Text Marketing campaigns. It is best to avoid the less creditable means, such as buying them in bulk. Instead, just ask your existing customers give you their mobile details and many will happily do so.

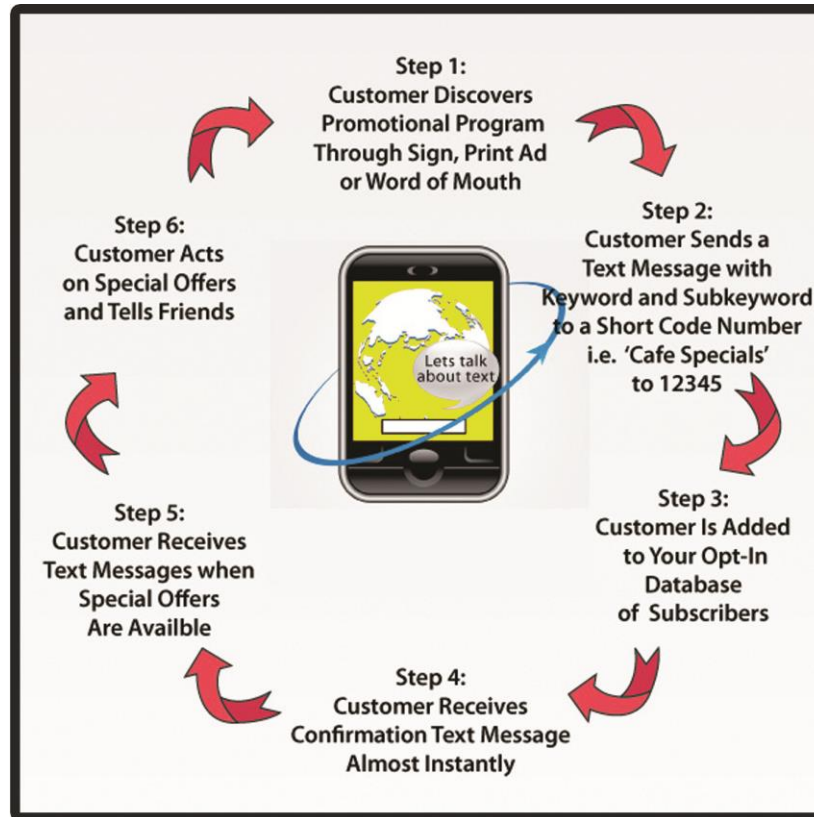
For instance, to get new subscribers, a pizzeria could have flyers that read, "Text 'PIZZA NOW' to 99999 for FREE Appetizer with purchase of Medium Pizza."

Once people subscribe, the pizzeria can start sending them occasional offers right to their mobile phone with a quick text message that reads something like, "Get \$5 Off Any Large Pizza – Offer Available Today Only."

Messages like this allow businesses to generate more foot traffic on their slower days with just the click of a button.

Text Message Marketing Flow

Here's a Diagram that Shows How a Text Marketing Campaign Generally Goes



Because SMS messages are limited to around 160 characters (depending upon which carrier you are using) it is essential to keep your message short and to the point.

There are a variety of powerful text marketing strategies that work for almost any type of business. However, every business has different needs, so it's best to closely examine your needs before jumping into a text marketing campaign.

Main Benefits of Text Marketing

- Enables Personalized Communication with Customers – you can market to customers on a one-on-one basis giving them the feel of individualized attention.
- Your Marketing Messages are Welcome – text marketing is a permission-based method where only those who opted-in to your list will receive your messages.
- Higher Redemption Rates – the average SMS marketing offer has a redemption rate of 20%.
- Total Reach – consumers always have their mobile phones no matter where they are, so you can potentially reach hundreds or even thousands of your subscribers right away.
- High Open Rates – most of your subscribers will read your message within minutes of sending it out.
- Cost Effective – the low costs of text marketing makes its ROI unmatched by any other form of marketing.
- Speed – text messages can be setup and sent out instantly, allowing you to drive same day traffic with ease.
- Flexibility – you can send out text messages on demand 24/7; there are no limits to when you send out your messages.

Making Text Marketing Work for Your Business

All marketing plans hope to achieve at least one of three objectives:

1. To generate new customers and to penetrate new markets
2. To continue to service existing customers
3. To increase revenue in the business

SMS marketing strategies can be developed to deal with each of these goals. Of course, building a list of mobile subscribers for this kind of marketing requires a bit of time and effort.

A great way to start is to have some type of giveaway that requires people to leave their numbers so they can redeem their freebie. This could be a simple coupon for one of your products or services.

Some businesses believe that consumers do not want to receive promotions on their mobile devices, but this is far from the truth. Mobile users in general love to receive incentives on their mobile devices. In fact, this is simply a natural extension of their daily lives.

Text message marketing is considered “permission-based,” which means once someone opts-in to your list, you have permission to send them promotions.

Something as simple as a discount to “SMS customers only” could cause a traffic surge and ultimately boost sales. Not only that, but promotions such as this improve customer satisfaction as they feel “special” for being offered such a great deal that is not offered to the general public.

SMS text messages are considered to be more “personal” than other forms of digital marketing, so you have to respect people’s privacy and not abuse it by sending a constant stream of unwanted messages.

It is extremely important to strike a good balance between effective advertising and annoying spam.

Because text message marketing is so direct, it is always best to give people plenty of opportunity to opt out if they choose to. However, if you are using

this tool correctly and are not spamming your list with offers every day, most of them will be happy to stay on your list.

SMS should be used for more than just sending offers and discounts. Mix things up by actually building a relationship with your list. To do so, send some messages that are non-promotional, such as useful tips and information.

You can also send messages that help your customers get to know your business better. Anything along these lines will strengthen your customer relationships and should lead to increased sales over time.

Another reason SMS text marketing is so effective is that it keeps your business name and message right in front of your customers. This way, when they need a product or service that your company offers, they will think of you first.

Various Ways to Use Text Message Marketing

Different types of business will obviously use SMS marketing in different ways to get the most benefit from it.

Retailers may use it as a way to send out a list of this week's specials, while Restaurants may use it to offer a limited time "buy one get one free" deal.

Hair salons may use it as a way to send mobile coupons for their services, while Attorneys may use it to send out helpful legal tips to their prospects.

Real Estate agents may use it to let their prospects know when new homes hit the market that fit their criteria, while Personal Trainers may use it as a way to send out fitness advice and healthy eating tips.

As you can see, direct marketing isn't the only way companies can use SMS text messaging. Depending on the type of business, there are numerous

ways to get foot traffic through your doors with simple text message marketing.

Various Ways to Use Text Message Marketing:

- Newsletter Sign-up – using short codes, people can sign-up to your list to receive your mobile newsletters going forward.
- Coupons/Discounts – customers will receive the offer on their mobile phone and in order to redeem it, they have to show it to your staff when they come into your establishment (or whatever redemption method makes the most sense for your type of business).
- Communicate with staff – it is a very fast, convenient, easy, and reliable way to tell your employees important information.
- Customer Surveys and Polls – getting feedback from your customers has never been easier than sending a quick text message.
- Appointment Reminders – service businesses are utilizing this service to send quick reminders to their customers about their upcoming appointments. Not only does this cut down on lost revenue for the business, but their customers love the convenience of receiving appointment reminders right on their mobile phones.
- Service Reminders – businesses such as Oil Change shops can use text marketing to remind their customers when it is time for an oil change.
- Thank You Messages – let your customers know how much you care by sending them a simple “Thank You” text message. This small measure can improve your customer loyalty quite a bit as people like to do business with companies that care.

These are just a few ways that your company can use Text Marketing. But selecting how you will use this method is the most crucial piece of the puzzle.

Get this right and you will reap the rewards of consistent new business as well as repeat business. Get this wrong and you will end up wasting a lot of hard-earned time and money.

If you are unsure about the methods that would be most effective for your type of business, it is best to hire an Internet Marketing Consultant who can help.

SMS Marketing and Your Competition

Due to the fact that most small businesses still are not using SMS Text Message Marketing, it is very likely that your competitors are not very far ahead of you in this area.

However, many businesses are becoming more and more familiar with it every day. Big corporations are starting to use SMS to touch base with their customers on a wide-scale as they see how this tool can boost their bottom line.

Do you know if your competitors are running SMS Text Marketing campaigns?

If so, do you know HOW they're running their campaigns?

Knowing how your competitors are implementing Text Marketing is a good place to start if you want to break into this market. To do so, simply sign-up to receive their mobile promotions so you can see what types of offers they are making.

Once you are armed with this information, you can start to implement campaigns that are even better – cornering your share of the local market.

You may find that many of your competitors haven't even thought of using SMS Text Messages. If that is the case, you will have an open playing field

for promotions in your niche – making it even easier to dominate your local market.

You can also take a look at the different types of SMS campaigns the larger corporations in your niche are using. These companies are spending a great deal of money on their marketing promotions. So you know their campaigns are created and run by highly-skilled, professionally trained marketers.

So why not steal some of their ideas? (Not literally “steal” – but learn from their techniques to create your own)

Once you master the science of an effective SMS Text Marketing campaign, beating your competitors will become a lot easier. Due to the fact that Text Messages are “immediate” and go out to your customers in a matter of seconds, it’s a great way to get the edge on your competition.

For instance, let’s say one of your competitors puts out a special offer that severely undercuts your prices. With Text Marketing, you can quickly create a promotion that’s even better and have it in the hands of your customers within minutes with just a few clicks of the mouse.

The ability to react immediately to changes in the market makes SMS Text Message Marketing a powerful tool that small businesses should strongly consider if they want any chance of beating their competitors.

While it is possible to set up your own SMS Text Marketing campaigns, it is also a very inexpensive service to have professionally implemented by online marketing firms like Blue Eye Group LLC.

With internet and mobile marketing being so important to businesses now, leaving SMS out of the picture could be a huge mistake.

The continued growth of mobile devices means that it is going to be crucial for you to market your business directly to these mobile consumers.

Businesses that realize this and take action will be the first to reap the great rewards that SMS Text Message Marketing has to offer.

If you are looking for a way to connect with your mobile audience and capitalize on the enormous growth of mobile technology, this could be your answer.

I specialize in helping local businesses here in Southeastern Wisconsin create customized SMS Text Marketing campaigns. Contact me at 414-731-0450 for a free, no-obligation consultation if you would like some help getting started.

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