

SMS Frequently Asked Questions

Below are questions that businesses often ask before getting started with SMS.

What does “SMS” stand for?

- SMS or “Short Messaging Service” is the official name of what you probably know as texting or messaging.

Why should I incorporate SMS into my cross-channel strategy?

- Consider how quickly you respond to a text message. When your phone beeps alerting you of an incoming text, you almost immediately look at the message, right? On average 98% of text messages are opened and 95% of SMS are opened within the first three minutes.²
- SMS is uniquely positioned to help you drive urgency in your messages. Customers are more likely to immediately open and engage with SMS, meaning you’ll see higher returns in less time. Plus, you can deliver personalized and targeted messages to make your subscribers feel like you’re communicating with them on a 1:1 level during their customer journey.

Do I need an opt-in from customers before sending them an SMS?

- Like email, SMS is permission-based, meaning that your customers are required to provide consent for you to communicate with them via these channels. That may come in the form of an online sign-up form, a weekly email newsletter with opt-in option, or by ticking a box to receive SMS shipping notifications - your customers must provide consent before receiving SMS messages from your brand.

How can I gather SMS opt-ins from my customers and prospects?

- Because SMS is permission-based, you won’t be able to immediately use your email marketing list for SMS. However, you can utilize your existing customer list from your email campaigns to get your SMS marketing off to a great start. Consider asking your customers for their phone numbers and consent by including the ask in an email you’re planning to send out as part of an existing campaign.
 - It’s a good idea to create a value exchange with the ask. For example, “By giving us your phone number, you’ll receive [a discount, exclusive content, etc.]”
- You’ll also want to work in opt-ins for interactions with new customers in their early interactions with you so you’ve got their phone number and permission to text from the start. Consider adding a phone number field to your signup form and any other early interaction points.

¹ [Gartner](#)

² [SMS Comparison USA](#)

Drive engagement with SMS

What are the types of SMS messages that I can send to my customers?

- SMS is a versatile communication channel that can help you reach your audience for a variety of different purposes. Some of the common use cases are:
 - Discounts, coupons, and deals
 - Exclusive offers
 - Early access to products or promotions
 - Appointment reminders
 - Breaking news
 - Alerts for releases
 - Transactional messages

What are transactional and promotional messages?

- A transactional message is an informational update about a customer's ongoing transactions. For example: order confirmations, shipping updates, booking reminders, and one-time passwords. They require implied or express consent, such as when a customer provides their mobile number for verification purposes when booking a hotel and then receives a confirmation text.
- A promotional message aims to create brand awareness, promote a product or service, or generate sales. For example: coupons, discounts, special offers, sweepstakes, and contests. Promotional messages require prior express consent.

How do I choose the right channel for the audience I'm trying to reach?

- A cross-channel approach with SMS, email, web, and mobile will ensure you can reach your audiences using their preferred communication channel, which will lead to a better consumer experience with your brand.
- To decide which channel to use, consider the type of message you're sending:
 - **SMS** is the winner for urgent information or real-time communications
 - **Email** is best for non-urgent communications or info your customers may want to save
 - **Web** is great for in-the-moment messages to spur action when customers are browsing your site
 - **Mobile** is perfect for communicating with customers when they've downloaded or are using your app
- A multitude of cross-channel options available for your messages paired with your customer's known preferences is a recipe for success.



SMS: The perfect addition to your cross-channel mix

Combining the power of SMS with your email, web, and mobile strategy creates additional touchpoints with your audience, drives urgency, and gives you the best chance of increasing engagement and conversion to reach your goals.