

Complete Guide to Texting for Businesses



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Introduction

As technology and the tools we use to communicate change, more and more businesses are adopting text messaging as a way to get in touch with their contacts. But navigating the world of text as a business can be tricky. In this guide, we'll take you through the things you need to know before you start sending messages to your customers.

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Texting and Why It Matters For Businesses



Text vs Email and Phone

Texting is one of the most effective ways to communicate with customers. It's conversational, low pressure, and can give a very human element to your brand. In a world where everyone's inboxes get bogged down with spam, text messaging for a business is a great way to cut through the noise.

In a 2019 study by Zipwhip, 74% of consumers polled said that they have zero unread texts in their inbox at any given time. Zero. Quite the contrast to the only 17% who stated they have no unread emails in their inbox.* Think about it – how does your text inbox look compared to your email inbox?



98%

of customers open and read text messages

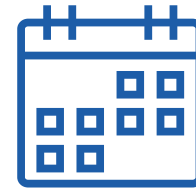
Emails end up in a cluttered box that can be hard for customers to sort through, and phone calls often get missed or don't get answered. However, text messages end up in a box where people are conditioned to address, whether immediately or when they have time. At a minimum, customers will see the message come through. And if your message is compelling, you've got a very good chance of getting through to your customers over this channel.

Texting By The Numbers



60%

of consumers want to be able to respond back to texts they receive



83%

of consumers would like to receive appointment reminders via text



60%

of customers want to text businesses back about support issues



54%

of consumers would like to receive promotions via text message



43%

of consumers said they have proactively texted a business



66%

of consumers would like to receive service notifications via text



Things to Know Before You Get Started

Signpost Pro Tip: What is TCPA?

The Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA) was enacted by congress in 1991 to help protect consumers against certain behaviors widely practiced by telemarketers at that time. Since then, as technologies have changed, so have the definitions of the guidelines within the act. To learn more about TCPA guidelines, [visit fcc.gov](https://www.fcc.gov).

Legal and Compliance

Texting is an amazing tool for getting in touch with your customers. Businesses that use text to reach out to their prospects and customers do need to be aware of TCPA, and comply within the guidelines it lays out. Using text the wrong way could land you in trouble. To minimize risk to you, we've put together this list of things to avoid to guide you in the right direction. However, guidance from experienced legal counsel is best for ensuring full TCPA compliance.

Pitfalls to avoid

Overly promotional messaging

Unless customers opt-in to promotional communications from a business, it is against TCPA rules to send promotional messaging.

Texting without a prior relationship

For texts to be TCPA compliant, they must go to those you've already established prior communication with. For example, texting a cold list of contacts would be against TCPA.

Don't sell out of the blue

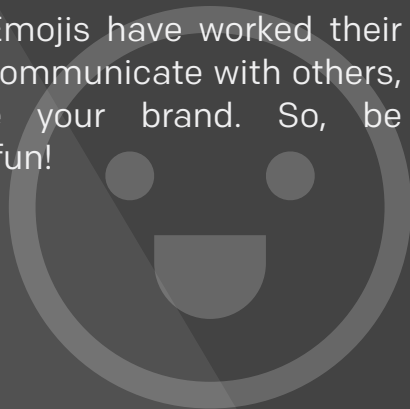
Conversations over text should be relevant, and not include promotional messaging, unless you've gotten permission from the customer to do so.

As a general rule of thumb, your texts to your contacts should include information they'd want to receive – not information that would make someone want to hang up the phone.

Texting Best Practices for Businesses

Signpost Pro Tip: Use Emojis

Text can be boring. Emojis have worked their way into the way we communicate with others, and help humanize your brand. So, be personable, and have fun!



Texting within TCPA guidelines can be great for your business. When using text properly, you'll be able to effectively cut through communication clutter, and get your message to your customers and prospects in a way that feels personal and human. To help get you started, here are some best practices around texting your customers.



Personalization

Make your message personal. Use their name. Talk about specifics to that client. This will help make them feel heard and important.



Send messages from an individual

Put a name to your side of the conversation. Nobody likes to think they're speaking with a company.



Keep it conversational

Don't talk to them - speak with them as you would in person. Ask questions. Keep them engaged.

Texting Best Practices for Businesses

Signpost Pro Tip: Be mindful of the time

Your customers and prospects have lives. It's important to realize that although you try to text back ASAP, that's your job. Others may not be able to get back to you right away if they're busy. Text when you believe it fits into their schedule, and when they can, they'll get back to you.



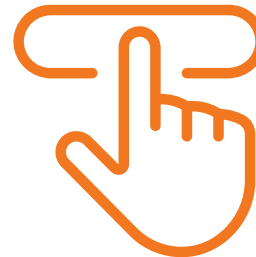
The shorter, the better

Be straight, and to the point. Your client's time is valuable, so respect it.



Reply quickly

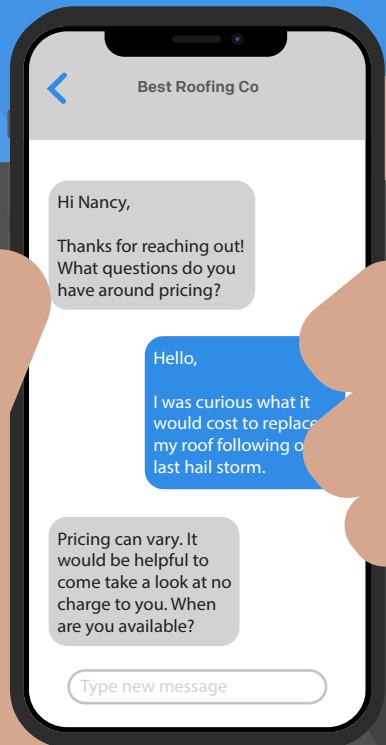
Strike while the iron's hot. Reply as soon as possible to ensure your highest chances of engagement. If you don't have the answer they're wanting, let them know you're at least looking into it for them.



Use a CTA

Using Calls-to-Action helps you know when a customer has engaged with your message. Use a 'Reply' CTA to increase your chance at high engagement.

Top 5 Business Use Cases for Text



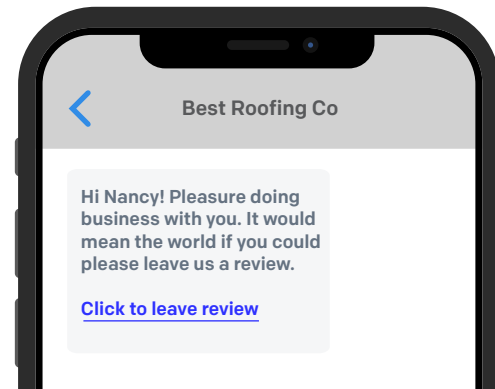
Send images or video for a quote

Have clients send you a pic or a video of what it is they'd like a quote on. This is an easy, painless for prospects to get an idea of what a job may cost – without the need for you to go out to their home.



Get a review

Your customers love your work, but don't always take the time to leave you a review. Make it easy by texting them a link to give you a review when you complete the job. That's one of the best ways to help your business grow!



Top 5 Business Use Cases for Text

Signpost Pro Tip: Offers and promotions

Text can be a great way to get offers or promotions in front of your audience. However, TCPA guidelines must be followed, and your contact must have opted-in to receive this type of communication.

Status updates

Letting your customers know you're on the way, or how their project is coming along is a great way to engage with them. It's personal, it's informative, and it's greatly appreciated by your customers!

Follow-ups

Texting is a great way to keep the conversation going, even if it slowed down. Sending a quick text on a channel your customers use can help pick up where you left off, in a way that's almost sure to get through to them.

Thank you message

A little thanks goes a long way. Ending things on a high note helps to better ensure your customers will take action if you follow up later with a review or referral request. Plus, it's great for you brand to let your customers know you appreciate them! 😊

Top 3 Text Types Customers Like to Get



75%

updates on shipping tracking for products



65%

status confirmations



46%

scheduling reminders



About Signpost

Thousands of businesses partner with Signpost to manage communications with prospects and customers for the entire lifecycle of the relationship – from lead, to job, to repeat business. Learn more at signpost.com



* Source: Zipwhip

** Source: G2