

SMS Best Practices

Short Message Service



Mitch Daniels School of Business

Table of Contents

- **CONTENT** Copy, Images, A/B Testing
- **SENDING** Sending, Audience, Opt-In Flow, Frequency
- **LAYOUT.** Templates, Examples
- **BENEFITS.** Use Cases
- **PERFORMANCE.** Benchmarks
- **OTHER.** SMS vs. MMS, Industry Regulations, Resources

The background is a light beige color with a complex network of thin, dark beige lines. These lines intersect at various points, creating a grid-like structure. At these intersection points and along the lines, there are small geometric shapes: solid dark beige circles, open dark beige circles, and solid dark beige squares. Some circles are concentric, and some squares are arranged in vertical columns. The overall effect is a subtle, abstract pattern that suggests a technical or architectural drawing.

CONTENT

Copy

LENGTH:

160 characters per text message – keep messages concise and to the point (be concise without sacrificing clarity). Use SMS shorthand sparingly; use common language that everyone will understand.

If you absolutely need to save characters by shortening some of your words, start with the most common text abbreviations and try to keep them to a minimum.

CTAS:

Be clear and tell people what you want them to do.

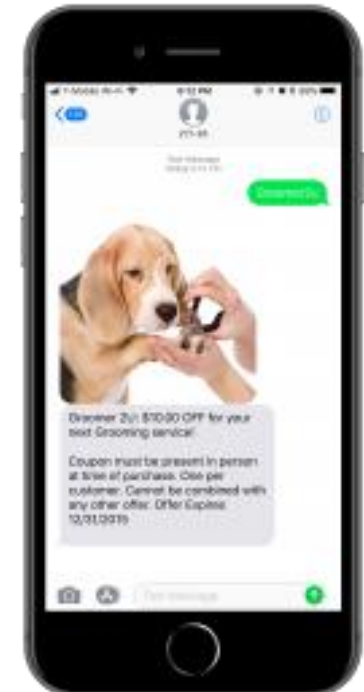
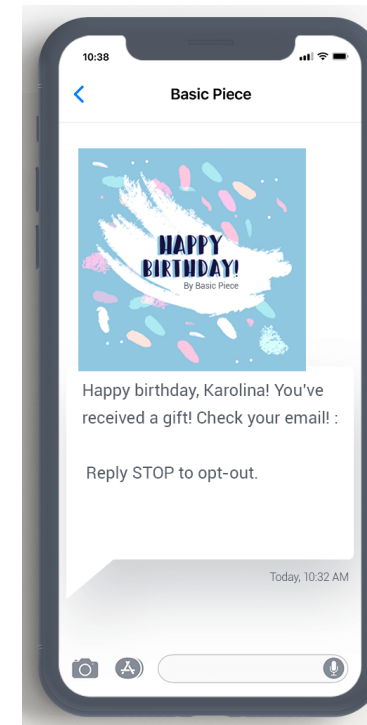
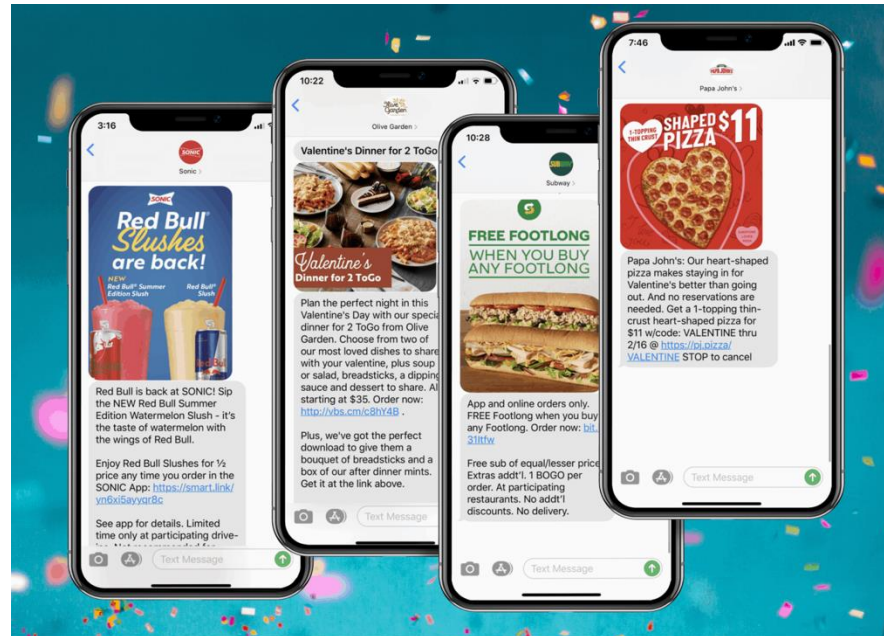
CONTENT VALUE:

Make sure the SMS has value for the user (important announcements, urgent action, event alerts, etc.).

Images

DESIGN: Can use photos and gifs, but use sparingly (this is only with MMS). If used, make sure it adds value to the message. See the slide on SMS vs. MMS for more information.

EXAMPLES:



A/B Testing

COMPONENTS TO TEST:

- **TYPES OF MESSAGING**

- SMS vs. MMS

- **DIFFERENT TEXT LENGTHS**

- Shorter vs. longer

- **SEND TIMES**

- Morning vs. Afternoon vs. Evening

- **SEND DAYS**

- Weekdays vs. Weekends

The background is a light beige color with a complex network of thin, light brown lines. These lines intersect at various points, creating a grid-like structure with some diagonal and curved paths. Scattered throughout the background are small geometric shapes: solid brown circles, open circles, and small squares. Some of these shapes are clustered together, while others are isolated. A prominent feature is a large, solid black horizontal rectangle in the center, which contains the word 'SENDING' in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

SENDING

Sending

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND FOR SMS SENDING:

- Clearly identify who the message is from in every text.
- Provide the opportunity to unsubscribe.
- Refrain from asking for data over text – it seems scammy.
- SMS works best when integrated with email, social media and other marketing tools.
 - Automating SMS messages in Marketing journeys can be a great way to diversify the messaging.
- Email is so widely used that audiences have come to expect it. SMS, on the other hand, is used less frequently — therefore a great way to capture attention when and where you want it, but don't abuse the personal nature of the messaging.

Audience

GET PERMISSION:

Make sure the people you are messaging have opted in for SMS messaging. Consider using a double opt in strategy.

PERSONALIZATION:

SMS is a very personal way of sending messages – keep that in mind and incorporate personalization when appropriate.

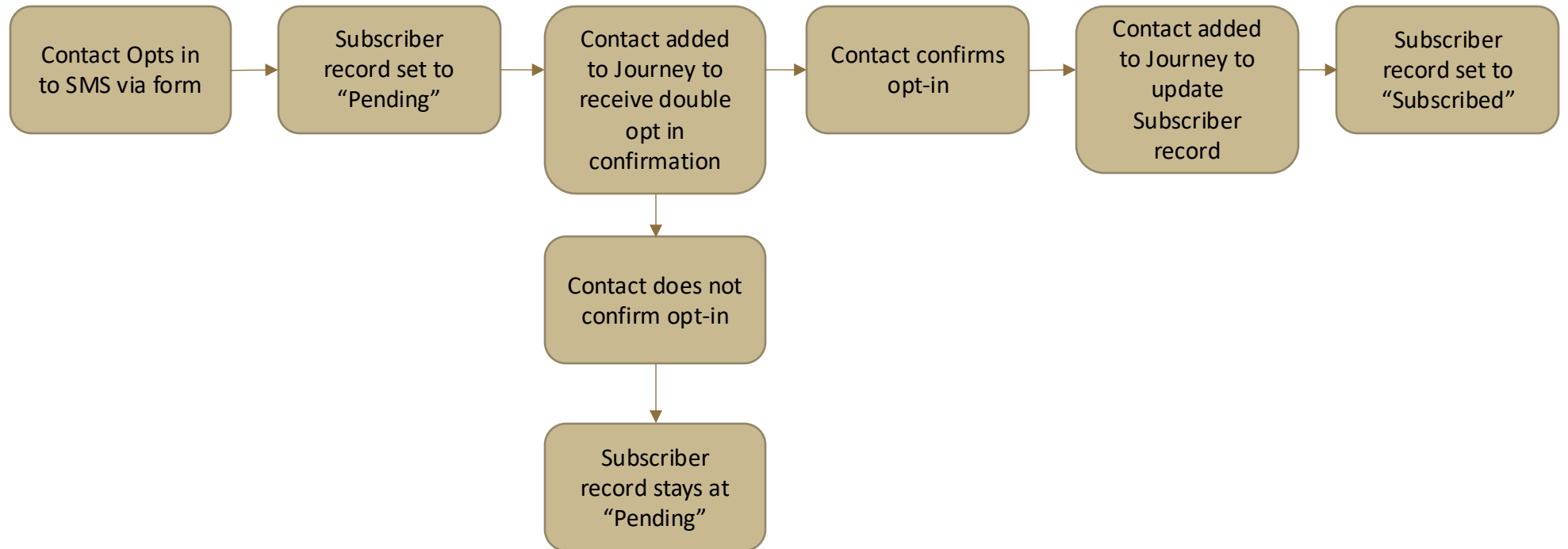
BUILDING AN AUDIENCE:

Advertise your text marketing program through social media, email and website – provide the keyword or short code.

Create a memorable keyword that can be easily remembered.

Give a possible incentive to subscribe.

Opt-In Flow (Using Double Opt-In)



Frequency

- 2-6 messages per month is a good frequency to aim for – make sure you set expectations with users on how often you will text them.
- Pay attention to the timing of messages with SMS – you don't want people to get texts super early in the morning or very late at night.
- Don't over do it with SMS – keep it for specific messages, and be consistent.

Restrictions

There are very specific guidelines in regards to what is allowed to be sent from the registered SMS numbers. You must ensure that the content of messages do not fall into forbidden categories:

- High-risk financial services
- Third-party lead generation
- Debt collection and forgiveness
- Multi-level marketing
- Gambling

Review more details on forbidden categories [HERE](#).

Sending SMS messages with forbidden category content may result in:

- Message filtering
- Temporary or permanent phone number blocking
- Temporary or permanent blocking of your 10DLC campaign
- Liability for non-compliance fees imposed by service providers or applicable law

The background is a light beige color with a complex network of thin, light brown lines. These lines intersect at various points, creating a grid-like structure. Scattered throughout the background are small geometric shapes: solid brown circles, open circles, and small squares. Some of these shapes are connected by lines, while others are isolated. The overall effect is that of a technical drawing or a conceptual diagram.

LAYOUT

Templates

For our SMS messages that trigger through a Marketing Cloud journey, we set up templates in Salesforce that send through Mogli. Within these template we are able to use specific merge fields defined by Mogli to bring in content dynamically.

Name

DSB - Contact Journey SMS 1_Residential

Text

Hi {{Merge_Primary_Contact_First_Name__c}}, this is the Daniels School Team. The first step on your graduate path is starting your app:
<https://purdue.university/4l7TGTZ> Please contact {{Merge_Owner_First_Name__c}}
{{Merge_Owner_LastName__c}} if you need any assistance or have questions.

Name

DSB - Contact Journey SMS 2 - MS Marketing

Text

Hi {{Merge_Primary_Contact_First_Name__c}}, this is Purdue's Daniels School Team reminding you to start your application & submit by the deadline. Please contact {{Merge_Owner_First_Name__c}}
{{Merge_Owner_LastName__c}} if you need any assistance or have questions
<https://purdue.university/3TzmkS9>

Examples

Hello Steven, I'm Taylor from ABC Career College. If you would like to learn more about our courses or want to book a meeting, please let me know.

Reply "STOP" at any time to opt-out of SMS communications.

Hello George!
Since you've expressed interest in our Education program, we thought you may be interested in our upcoming event, Careers for Future Teachers, on June 30 at 4pm. You can register for the event with this link: <https://bit.ly/3nNc5aw>
Thanks,
ABC School

The background is a solid light beige color. It features a complex network of thin, light brown lines that intersect at various points. These intersections are marked with small circles and squares, some of which are solid and others are hollow. The lines and shapes are distributed across the entire frame, creating a subtle, abstract pattern that resembles a technical drawing or a network diagram.

BENEFITS

Benefits

- Quickly reaches users in a way that is more immediate.
- Have very high open rates.
- Tend to be short, sweet, and to the point.
- You might be able to reach people you can't through email or other channels.
- Cost effective with a strong ROI.
- Easily integrated with user journeys and marketing communications.
- Less creation and implementation time needed as compared to email.

Use Cases

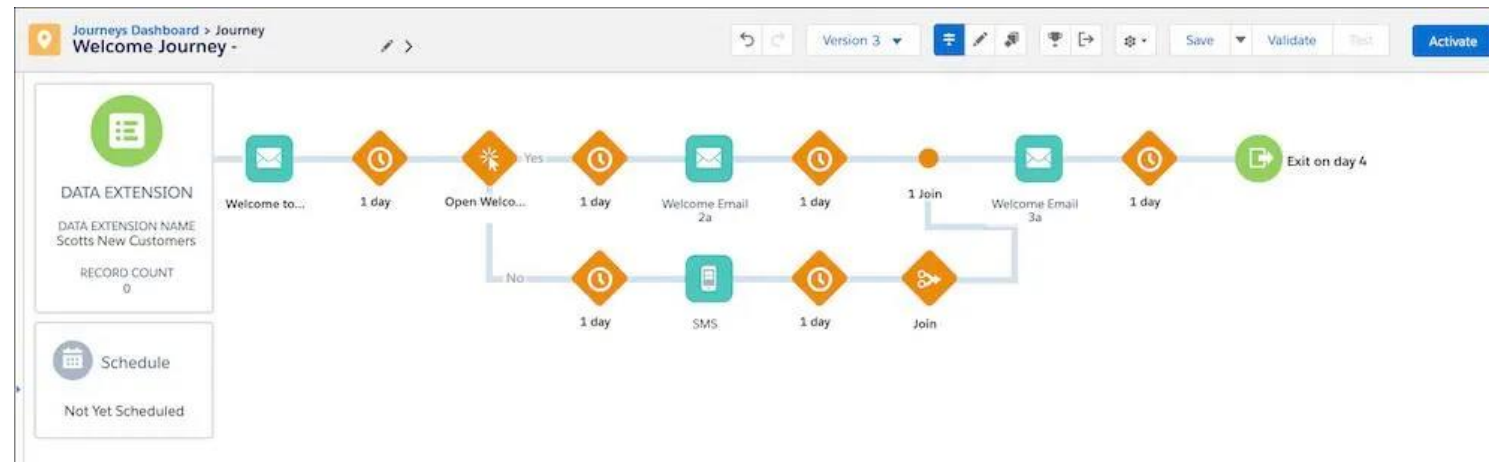
MORE IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

Signing up for a webinar or event, application actions, schedule a call with a recruiter, etc.

REMINDERS

Upcoming webinar or event, orientation, register for classes, application deadlines, scheduled recruiter calls, etc.

PART OF A USER JOURNEY



The background is a light beige color with a complex network of thin, dark beige lines. These lines intersect at various points, creating a grid-like structure with some diagonal and curved paths. Scattered throughout the background are small geometric shapes: solid dark beige circles, open dark beige circles, and small dark beige squares. Some of these shapes are clustered together, while others are isolated. A prominent feature is a large, solid black horizontal rectangle in the center of the image, which contains the word "OTHER" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

OTHER

SMS vs. MMS

- A text message of up to 160 characters without an attached file is known as an SMS, while a text that includes a file—like a picture or video—becomes an MMS.
- MMS also has a 1600 character limit – which is much larger than what SMS allows.
- Associated cost with MMS is generally higher than SMS.
- Files that are supported in an MMS include:
 - GIF, PNG, JPG/JPEG, MP3, and MP4



Industry Regulations

- To comply with industry regulations, you must include the following information:
 - How often you plan to text contacts (Ex. You may receive up to 4msgs/month.)
 - Msg & Data rates may apply.
 - It is required to include "**Message and data rates may apply**" in your initial opt-in language. This disclaimer simply tells subscribers that joining your SMS program and receiving future messages will count towards whatever text / data allotments their cellular plan has.
 - A link to your terms and conditions as well as your privacy policy.
 - Information about how to unsubscribe (Ex. Reply STOP to end or HELP for help).
- In the U.S., the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA) requires businesses to get *prior* consent in order to send text messages to customers for marketing purposes. And while this isn't the only rule you need to follow to stay in compliance, it's the first one you should focus on.
- Before you send any text messages to customers, you must be aware of the FCC's strict guidelines on message transmission and customer consent. The important point is that text message marketing is not something you set up on a whim and spam would-be customers.

Resources

SMS RELATED RESOURCES THAT MIGHT BE HELPFUL:

- CTIA Short Code Monitoring Handbook - <https://www.wmcglobal.com/us-resources>
 - The CTIA is an international nonprofit trade association that represents the wireless communications industry. They're the source of many SMS marketing best practices and also govern most short code texting.
- <https://www.slicktext.com/sms-marketing-guide/>

Thank you

For any questions, please contact Kelsey Smith at smithkh@purdue.edu.



Mitch Daniels School of Business