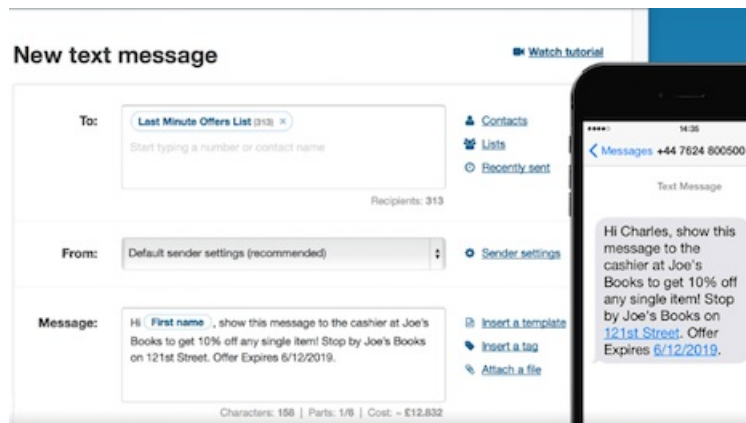


COLUMNS

How text marketing can help court and maintain customer loyalty

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On message

By [Alexa Lemzy](#)

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While mobile applications are having their heyday, text messaging is quietly waiting for marketers to re-imagine its value. And they surely will, because texting has some undeniable benefits that make it a favorite among consumers.

Customers are attracted to the simplicity of SMS. Seventy percent of consumers forgo subscribing to a loyalty program because of the time and inconvenience of registration. But 72 percent of consumers affirm that they would be more likely to sign up for a loyalty club through a text message.

With that in mind, let us break down some of texting's benefits in courting and maintaining customer loyalty:

SMS is universal

To entice customers, you have to be able to reach them first. That is one area where SMS comes out on top.

While some marketing channels such as email, social media and mobile applications require an Internet connection, texting merely requires a mobile. Here is why this matters:

SMS works without an Internet connection, increasing the ability of businesses to reach clients no matter where they are

There is no need to download an app to receive SMS messages, making it a simpler process for clients with smartphones and offering accessibility to clients with mobile phones

Texting is popular

On average, 97 percent of U.S. consumers send a text message at least once a day. Of course, some demographic groups text more than others with millennials averaging 67 texts a day.

When compared with other forms of communication, there is always a generational divide: millennials do not do voice calls and they text much more often than they email, whereas baby boomers have been slow to adopt mobile apps.

But everybody texts. Not only do they enjoy texting their friends and loved ones, but they also want to receive offers

and discounts via text.

SMS is immediate

Mobile phones have increased our expectation of instant gratification.

Communication is speeding up, and text messaging is the marketing tool that is most compatible with the expectations of today's consumer.

Texts are opened within 90 seconds of being sent, as opposed to emails that are opened within 2.5 days, an average 2,400 times faster open rate.

This is particularly relevant when dealing with time-sensitive or urgent issues such as:

Banks sending alerts to their clients of possible security issues

Sending appointment reminders to reduce no-shows, which can be more effective than leaving emails

Letting customers know about the delivery status of their orders

Notifying customers about flash sales

Customer service winner

Seventy-nine percent of businesses believe that consumers prefer SMS as a customer service platform. And they are not wrong. Seventy-eight percent of consumers report that they would like to be able to send texts to businesses.

That is why a full 61 percent of call centers currently provide SMS support. Other customer service platforms can be useful depending on the situation, but have their downsides which text can address.

Most customers hate being put on hold - they feel frustrated when they're put on hold and many will hang up after one minute.

When it comes to social media, customers expect fast response times when they contact a business, but they usually do not get one.

Fast responses and the convenience of not being tied to the phone while waiting to talk to a customer service rep make SMS a popular way to solve customer issues and increase customer satisfaction.

Targeting across generations

Successful text messaging campaigns enhance customer satisfaction with their brand by sending relevant texts based on customer preferences, purchase history and other factors.

Marketers also need to pay attention to divides in preferences across generations.

For example, Generation Z and millennials are more likely to feel loyal to brands that send them personalized offers than Gen Xers and baby boomers.

Fun drives the loyalty of Generation Z (64 percent) and millennials (60 percent) whereas baby boomers are only 44 percent likely to be more loyal to a brand that offers fun.

For baby boomers and Gen Xers, value for money is the most important factor that drives loyalty (70 percent).

SMS IS A universally accessible tool and a proven winner as a marketing platform and a customer service feature.

To gain the loyalty of customers, send targeted texts that reflect their needs and preferences.



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