

MARKETING

SMS marketing offers brands a direct pathway to shoppers

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Ninety percent of consumers want to receive texts from their favorite brands. Image credit: Afterpay

By KATIE TAMOLA

There is a gold mine marketing opportunity available for brands and retailers, and the source is in many consumers' pockets: smartphones.

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In a webinar hosted by text messaging platform Attentive, marketing experts discussed the ample opportunities inherent in marketing with text messaging. As text messaging remains one of the most dominant smartphone uses, brands must acknowledge that many consumers want to sign up for SMS alerts and offers which could lead to additional streams of revenue.

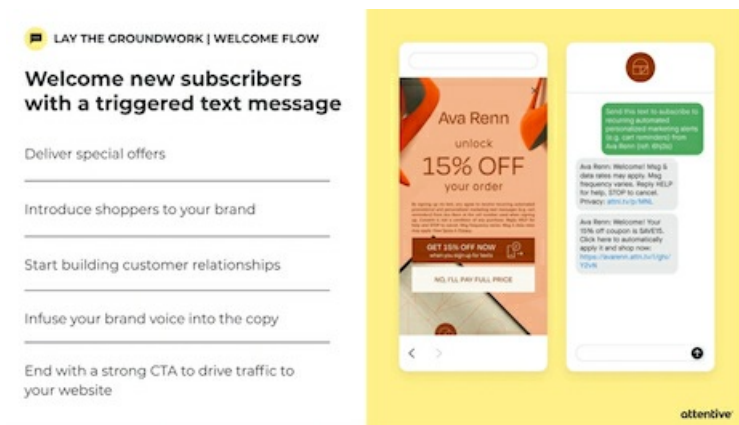
"Mobile commerce is continuing to rise, we see that nearly three quarters of ecommerce sales come from mobile today," said Annie Roche, SMS strategy manager at **Attentive**, Austin. "We're expecting this clip to only continue to rise over time.

"And it's anticipated that sales through mobile commerce is expected to nearly double between today and 2025," she said. "Everybody is using SMS more specifically 98 percent of smartphone users are using a messaging solution on their phone."

What is your number?

According to Attentive's 2021 SMS Marketing Consumer Trends Report, 90 percent of consumers want to sign up for texts from their favorite brands.

SMS marketing is a common sense tool for brands and retailers because a phone number is one of the most valuable first-party data points, as consumers rarely change their phone numbers, usually only have one number and do not share their smartphone devices.



An effective welcome message could set the stage for a loyal consumer relationship. Image credit: Attentive

Today, it is also abundantly clear that consumers are constantly using their cell phones, with Attentive reporting that 90 percent of messages are seen within five minutes.

With this in mind, brands and retailers must begin thoughtfully contemplating how to grow their lists.

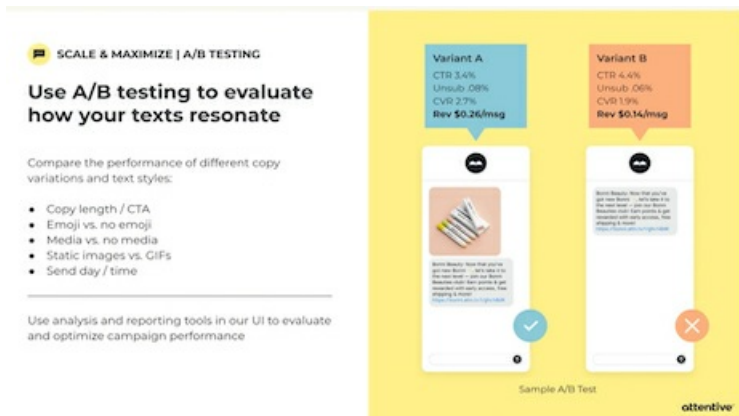
"If you don't have a list of subscribers, it's hard to make money with SMS," Ms. Roche said.

When growing their lists and SMS marketing programs, brands and retailers must ask themselves questions about how they are going to incentivize consumers, how they are going to promote their SMS program and more.

There are several ways to do this, starting with the prompt to opt-into SMS offers. From there, brands can seamlessly offer warm welcome messages and introductory discount codes.

Through this channels, brands can begin building strong consumer relationships with shoppers. If discount codes are not something brands wish to offer such as many luxury brands they can still connect with consumers through texting, offering exclusive news about product launches while and driving website traffic for revenue.

Other ways to keep consumers engaged through SMS include setting up abandoned cart messages to convert high-intent shoppers, inviting consumers to loyalty programs and VIP content.



Brands should utilize A/B testing in figuring out what kind of messaging most effectively reaches consumers. Image credit: Attentive

Brands can also use A/B testing to evaluate which kind of texts best reach their consumers, contemplating concepts like whether the brand messaging should include media or emojis, times of day the messages should be sent and copy length.

Inviting email subscribers and social media followers to join SMS lists can also be fruitful, as well as driving offline growth through physical advertisements in stores inviting shoppers to opt-in to messaging programs.

"If you really want to meet your consumers where they want to be met, it's becoming a must-have channel," Ms. Roche said.

Mobile mania

Consumers appreciate the convenience and worlds of opportunities inherent in smartphones, creating opportunities for marketers.

Use of mobile devices for commerce drastically increased during the height of the pandemic as precautionary

regulations restricted people from physical shopping, and as safety remains a top priority, the proclivity for online shopping is expected to continue. In its "2021 Holiday Shopping Survey" report, AdColony found that consumers in the U.S. and Canada predominantly want to shop online, and even rely on mobile devices when shopping in-store ([see story](#)).

Attentive's 2021 SMS Marketing Consumer Trends Report further reflects that online shopping has also shifted from desktops to smartphones. As more brands introduce SMS programs to reach shoppers, consumers are signing up to receive discounts, exclusive updates and build closer relationships ([see story](#)).

There are several ways to utilize SMS messaging to reach different consumers.

"Consumers are very value driven," Ms. Roche said. "What we have seen is things like discounting do work best in order to drive the highest conversion from your traffic on your website, ultimately, to subscribers opting into your SMS programs.

"But let's say you're really just not a promotional brand, some other ideas include exclusive offers loyalty or program reward benefits, first access to new sales or product recommendations," she said. "And even just keeping up to date on the news of what's going on with your brand could be things that you incentivize to drive it."

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