

SMS marketing overview: What it is and how it can help your business

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Learn more about SMS (short message service) marketing, features, and how you can use it to reach your audience in a new and more personal way

We added SMS marketing as a communication channel to help you connect and engage with your audience through targeted messaging! Here's everything you need to know about how SMS marketing works and the benefits of using it:

- [What is SMS marketing and how does it work?](#)
- [Why should I consider adding SMS marketing to my email plan?](#)
- [What are the features of SMS marketing through Constant Contact?](#)
- [Why use email, social media, and SMS together?](#)
- [How can I grow my list for SMS marketing?](#)
- [What should my content be for SMS vs email vs social?](#)
- [What do I need to register for SMS?](#)
- [Is there anything else I need to know before signing up for SMS Marketing?](#)

When you're ready, follow these steps to [add SMS to your email plan](#) and then [register for SMS marketing](#) in your account. We'll even automatically create a Sign-up Landing Page that's enabled with SMS for you, so you can start building your SMS list immediately after your registration is approved.

What is SMS marketing and how does it work?



SMS marketing is a form of consent-based communication for you to engage your contacts through text messages sent directly to their mobile phones.

First, your contacts opt in and give you explicit permission to send text messages to the mobile number they provide. Then you're able to create and send SMS messages that include information or a call-to-action. Your contacts can't respond directly to you through the SMS message, but you can provide them with a URL to click to get them to more targeted information.

- [Constant Contact's SMS permission policy](#)

Since most people read their text messages quickly after receiving them, it's a great way to get your message in front of your customers and supporters!

Why should I consider adding SMS marketing to my email plan?

SMS marketing is a cost-effective way to engage your audience! SMS messages are typically opened within minutes of being received and have high engagement rates. You can use it to appeal to customers and contacts who want to receive news, coupons, promotions, and other messages via text.



Be a better marketer: Check out our [Small Business Guide to SMS Marketing!](#)

What are the features of SMS marketing through Constant Contact?

Constant Contact makes it easy to grow a list of contacts that are opted in to SMS and then engage them through SMS messages. We offer:

- **Easy-to-use editor:** Create messages quickly with an editor that includes a live preview and built-in link shortener. The editor also provides counters so you always know how many individual text messages your



SMS includes and the number of contacts you're sending to so that you don't go over your monthly allotment.

- **Phone number:** We provide you a dedicated phone number to send your texts from. The area code for your dedicated number is based on the support phone number you provide when you register. The phone number stays the same, so your contacts always know the message is coming from you.
- **Privacy policy and terms of service templates:** If you already have a privacy policy and terms of service you can link to them or upload them into your Library to host them. If you don't yet have them, we provide templates you can use to create them, to get you up and running quickly.
- **Sign-up Landing Pages:** Grow your list with a custom webpage designed to capture new contacts! We create an SMS-enabled landing page for you that you can start using immediately. The landing page includes an SMS marketing consent field and a field to collect a mobile number independently from a general phone number. You can even create additional Sign-up Landing Pages that can be further customized for a specific audience, too.
- **Automated communications:** For those in the Plus package, you can automatically send communications at the right time without having to lift a finger. Create abandoned cart messages that trigger to send SMS message reminders to help increase your sales through BigCommerce, Shopify, and Wix.
- **Reporting:** Know what works by seeing clicks, views, unsubscribes, revenue, and more, and use your data to inform future marketing campaigns.

Why use email, social media, and SMS together?

SMS is a powerful marketing channel that allows you to engage with your customers quickly and easily. Combined with email and social media marketing, you can maximize your reach and increase consistent customer engagement on whichever platform they prefer.

- [Create and send an SMS marketing message while respecting quiet hours](#)



- [Create an automated customer journey for abandoned carts with email and SMS reminders](#)



Be a better marketer: Learn more about [How To Use SMS and Email Marketing To Boost Engagement](#).

How can I grow my list for SMS marketing?

Once your registration is approved, we automatically create a Sign-up Landing Page that can be shared in your emails, on your website, in social posts, in online ads, and more, to grow your SMS contact list. In addition, you can create and customize your own landing page for a targeted audience, and if you already have existing email contacts, you can incentivize them to sign up for SMS updates and reminders too!

- [Share your Sign-up Landing Page](#)
- [Create a Sign-up Landing Page to collect new email and SMS contacts online](#)
- [Ask your existing email contacts to opt into SMS](#)
- [Add new email and SMS subscribers through Text to Join](#)



Be a better marketer: Learn more about using [SMS Text Message Marketing Best Practices to Build Relationships and Increase Sales](#).

What should my content be for SMS vs email vs social?

SMS marketing is great for content that's more time-sensitive, and short (160 characters or less). Email marketing is ideal for increasing brand recognition, educating, and engaging your audience, and promoting multiple products. Social media allows you to engage with your existing audience and reach your target audience with announcements, video and article links, images, stories, and reviews.



Be a better marketer: Want to learn more about using SMS marketing? Check out [Text Message Marketing for Small Business](#), [What is SMS for Retail and How Can You Use It?](#), and [How to Use SMS for Nonprofits](#) for ideas.

What do I need to register for SMS?

When you go through the SMS registration process, there are a few things that are required:

- **You need to be a US customer.**
- **You need a valid EIN (Employer ID Number).** EINs aren't just for corporations or partnerships. Sole proprietors are also eligible to apply for an EIN. [Learn more.](#)
- **Your organization needs to be registered with the state in which you conduct business.** Your SMS registration information is checked by our SMS messaging provider against official state and federal databases. If the information you enter into your SMS registration doesn't match these databases, it can result in your registration being rejected. [Learn more.](#)
- **You need a valid website.** This website is linked in the response message when your SMS contacts reply "Help." Your website can't be a Constant Contact landing page. [Learn more.](#)
- **You need a valid way of capturing SMS opt-ins.** We automatically create an SMS-enabled Sign-up Landing Page for you that you can start sharing immediately once your registration is approved. This landing page is required and can't be deleted, but you can also create and customize additional sign-up landing pages. [Learn more.](#)
- **You need a privacy policy.** You can upload your own or create one during the registration process. This is linked in your Sign-up Landing Page for collecting new SMS subscribers. [Learn more.](#)
- **You need mobile terms and conditions/terms of service (T&C/TOS).** You can upload your own or create one during the registration process. This is linked in your Sign-up Landing Page for collecting new SMS subscribers. [Learn more.](#)
- **You need to provide sample SMS message content.** This helps us understand how your organization will be using SMS marketing.



Is there anything else I need to know before signing up for SMS Marketing?

Since SMS marketing is a communication channel separate from email marketing, there are a few extra policies than what you might be used to. Read more about these and how Constant Contact's tools automatically have required information and consent features built-in to keep you compliant:

- [Guidelines for using SMS marketing through Constant Contact](#)
- [Add your organization's SMS privacy policy and terms of service](#)
- [SMS best practices](#)

Phone carriers have restrictions for small businesses based on the amount of SMS messages being sent. This may restrict your ability to send to large numbers of customers at once, so some messages may take 2 to 3 days to arrive. This is due to carrier sending restrictions and is not specific to Constant Contact.

- **T-Mobile** - sends 2000 messages/day (queuing currently unavailable for 4 to 6 weeks).
- **AT&T** - sends 75 messages/minute or 4500 per hour.

Guidelines for using SMS marketing through Constant Contact

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What you need to know about consent, prohibited use, quiet hours, your assigned phone number, and other policies for SMS marketing



Important: Our SMS marketing tools are only available to US customers (excluding Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands) with a website and a valid Employer ID Number (EIN). EINs are the 9-digit federal tax ID numbers assigned by the IRS to businesses operating within the United States. (Contacts with phone numbers from Puerto Rico are able to join your list and receive text messages.) [Learn more](#).

- [Privacy policy and terms of service for SMS marketing](#)
- [Consent](#)
- [Prohibited use and content](#)
- [Assigned phone number](#)
- [Quiet hours](#)
- [Abandoned cart text message restrictions](#)

Privacy policy and terms of service for SMS marketing

Since SMS marketing requires requesting and handling personal data from your subscribers, a link to your organization's updated privacy policy and terms of service is required to use our SMS marketing tools. You can easily [upload a copy of your privacy policy](#) into your Constant Contact library to generate a URL link, or add a URL to where your privacy policy is currently hosted online.

If you don't yet have a privacy policy or terms of service document, you can use our templates to create them, either ahead of time, or during the registration process:

- [Example template: Privacy Policy for SMS \[Download\]](#)
- [Example template: Mobile Messaging Terms of Service for SMS \[Download\]](#)

For more information, please check out our article [Privacy policies and terms of service for SMS](#).



Consent

At Constant Contact, we make it easy for you to send text messages only to contacts that truly want to receive them. Since anything other than this can be considered spam, we built our tools to keep you compliant, and have put in place all the required elements by requiring consent from your contacts, explicitly stating that they have given you permission for SMS text messages in addition to email consent.



Get permission: For more information, please see [Constant Contact's SMS permission policy](#).

Automatic outgoing messages

One of the key differences between SMS marketing and email marketing is that there are certain text messages automatically sent to those that opt in that ensure your contacts have provided their consent. These automated messages keep you and your account compliant with the consent laws around SMS marketing. These text messages will be:

- **Confirm opt-in:** This is what someone will receive upon submitting their information to opt-in for SMS text message marketing.

```
Thanks for your interest in receiving {SENDER NAME} news & alerts! Reply YES to confirm your subscription or STOP to cancel. Msg&data rates may apply.
```

- **Opted in:** This is what will be received when someone replies “YES” to confirm their subscription.

- Welcome to {SENDER NAME} text alerts! You'll receive up to {NUMBER OF MESSAGES} msgs/{TIMEFRAME}.

```
Msg&data rates may apply. Text HELP for help & STOP to cancel.
```




- **Help:** This is what will be received when someone texts “HELP” to your assigned phone number.

```
{SENDER NAME}: Please visit {WEBSITE} for support or call {PHONE NUMBER}.  
Msg frequency varies. Msg&data rates may apply. Reply STOP to cancel  
.
```

- **Unsupported text:** When an unsupported command or message is texted to your assigned phone number they will receive this message.

```
{SENDER NAME}: Sorry, we didn't understand that. Visit us at {WEBSITE}.  
Reply HELP for help, STOP to stop. Msg&data rates apply.
```

- **Opt-out:** This message will be sent when an SMS Subscriber wishes to stop receiving SMS marketing messages and texts “STOP” to your assigned phone number.

```
You will no longer receive text messages from {SENDER NAME}. Type UNSTO  
P to restart messaging.
```

- **START and UNSTOP replies:** When a previously subscribed phone number has opted out for SMS marketing messages texts “START” or “UNSTOP” to your assigned phone number they will receive this message.

```
Welcome back to {SENDER NAME} text alerts. Msg&data rates apply. Text H  
ELP for help & STOP to cancel.
```

- **Reply to an opted-out customer:** If someone who has opted out of your SMS marketing messages attempts to text your assigned phone number they will receive this message.

```
{SENDER NAME}: Sorry, we didn't understand that. Visit us at {WEBSITE}.  
Reply HELP for help, STOP to stop, or START to resubscribe. Msg&data ra  
tes apply.
```



Important: The automatic outgoing messages count towards your [monthly text message limit](#) for billing purposes.

Opt-out policy

Just like with email marketing, you are required to have an easy opt out option for your text recipients at the end of each SMS message. We automatically include instructions with a command (STOP) for recipients to opt out in every text message to comply with laws and regulations for text message marketing.

Please see [Title 47, Chapter 5, Subchapter II, Part I, § 227 of the U.S. Code](#) for more information about the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA).

Prohibited use and content

It's important to note that SMS prohibited content is more strict than email. Even if you meet Constant Contact's content requirements, you should confirm that your SMS content is permitted. Constant Contact prohibits any SMS messaging that includes the following:

- Illegal substances
- Sex, hate, alcohol, firearms, and tobacco (S.H.A.F.T.)
- Third-party lead generation
- High-risk financial services
- Debt collection and forgiveness
- Gambling
- Multi-level marketing

Please see the [CTIA's Short Code Monitoring Handbook](#) for more information about S.H.A.F.T. and prohibited content.

Assigned phone number



Upon approval for use of the SMS tool, you'll receive an assigned 10 DLC phone number to send marketing messages from. 10 DLC phone numbers are long code phone numbers that allow you to send at a higher volume than a normal phone number while meeting the legal requirements for sending marketing messages to those that opt in for marketing purposes. In addition, 10 DLC phone numbers will allow messages to be sent at a less expensive rate than a standard text message with better delivery rates.

Quiet hours

Marketing to someone via text message comes with limitations on when you are allowed to send messages to those that have opted in to receive such messaging. We have built the quiet hours into the our SMS tool to prevent your from sending SMS messages between 8:00 p.m. and 11:00 a.m. ET.

Abandoned cart text message restrictions

When using an SMS message to remind someone that they've left some items in their cart, there are several requirements that you must follow:

- An automated customer journey is limited to one SMS message per each abandoned cart.
- The message must be scheduled to send within 48 hours of the cart being abandoned.
- You cannot complete the abandoned cart transaction on your customer's behalf.