The Beginner’s Guide To

Text Message Marketing
01 Overview
What is text marketing? 4
What is permission marketing? 5
Why text marketing? 6
Benefits of text marketing 7
Text marketing statistics 8

02 Basic Knowledge
What is a keyword? 10
What is a shortcode? 11
What is an auto-reply? 12
What is text message spam? 13
Who uses text marketing? 14

03 Choosing a Keyword
Keep it easy to remember 16
Don’t be too clever 16
Avoid special characters 16
One word is best 16

04 Creating a Good Auto-Reply
Confirm subscription 18
Offer something of value 18
Include frequency 19
Include opt-out instructions 19

05 Growing Your List
How to advertise your list 21
What to put on advertisements 22

06 Sending Your First Campaign
Create value 24
Pay attention to frequency 24
Start with the deal 25
Include call to action 25
Campaign examples 25

07 Measuring Your Success
List growth 27
Redemption rates 27
Churn rates 27

08 Additional Resources
Text marketing resources 29
CHAPTER 01
Overview of Text Marketing
What is Text Marketing?

Text marketing, also known as text message marketing, is a method by which businesses and organizations send out specials, coupons, promotions, alerts, and more via highly targeted, permission-based, opt-in text messages. These messages are limited to a max of 160 characters.
What is Permission Based Marketing?

Permission Based
Permission based is a form of marketing in which customers give their explicit permission to be marketed to. This can be via an online opt-in form, contest entries, or texting a particular keyword to a shortcode.

Interruption marketing
Interruption marketing is the exact opposite. Marketers try to interrupt whomever they can, in hopes of forcing a promotional message or offer on the consumer. This alternative to permission marketing has become a mainstream way to advertise, as we’re all hit with unwanted messages everyday.

We as consumers, are exposed to over 3,000 interruption marketing messages on a daily basis. To combat all these messages fighting for our attention, we’ve developed a “hard outer shell” to block out this communication. That’s why we’re now seeing more provocative, over-the-top ads in modern media.

How exactly does permission based marketing break through that shell? It does so by only marketing to people who have expressed specific interest in certain messages. That’s why text marketing is so effective. With that being said, let’s talk about why text messaging is so powerful.
Why Text Marketing?

It’s permission based.
Just like what we discussed in the last section, you can only send text messages to customers that have opted in to your communication. This makes your marketing lists extremely concentrated, as they contain customers who plan on patronizing your business, usually on a regular basis.

It’s a mass communication tool.
Just about everyone owns a cell phone. It’s more than likely that all these phones can receive texts. Text marketing allows you to touch base with subscribers at the click of a button.

It’s instant.
Text messages are sent and received in a matter of seconds. Think about how powerful that is alone. It allows you to control the exact time and date that customers read your promotions.

It’s trackable.
It allows you to easily measure which messages/promos are working and which ones aren’t. This helps you constantly improve your text campaigns and marketing messages on all other promotional outlets.
Benefits of Text Marketing

There are many different benefits of text marketing, and they vary based on the industry you’re in, and how you choose to use it. Here are some of the most common benefits experienced by marketers and business owners who use SMS.

- Increase foot traffic to your business
- Increase your sales and customer base
- Reward loyal customers while creating new ones
- Establish a stronger personal connection with your customers
- Instantly communicate with customers
- Customers can easily forward valuable text promotions to friends and family
- Customers stay in the loop with your business
- Customers won’t feel forgotten due to lack of marketing reach
Text Marketing Statistics

Now that we have some background on why text marketing is so powerful, let’s take a look at some quick stats.

- **95%**
  The percentage of text messages that are read within the first 5 minutes

- **70%**
  The percentage of Americans who would like offers from their favorite businesses sent right to their cellphones

- **150**
  The number of times an average American looks at their cellphone per day

- **22%**
  The percentage of text messages with value that are forwarded to friends and family

- **20%**
  The percentage of an average redemption rate for a mobile coupon
CHAPTER 02

Basic Text Marketing Knowledge
A keyword, or “textword” as referred to by the Slick Text team, is a word that’s unique to your business or organization. Each keyword represents its own list. For example, if you owned a sporting goods store that sold skis in the winter and bikes in the summer, you might reserve both “SKI” and “BIKE” as two different keywords, and have customers sign up for the lists that pique their interest.
A “shortcode” is a 5 or 6 digit phone number specifically made for commercial use and mass mobile communications. They are regulated and held to a much higher standard than “longcodes” which are normal, 10 digit phone numbers. These numbers are shorter so they’re easy to remember and type. All text marketing programs must use shortcodes to prevent legal implications to both the service provider and the business
What is an Auto-Reply?

An auto-reply, also known as an auto responder, is an automated message that gets sent to a subscriber after they’ve texted your keyword to a particular shortcode. Usually to confirm subscription, auto-replies let subscribers know that they successfully joined a text marketing list. In this message, you can also offer subscribers an incentive for joining, and let them know how often they’ll be receiving messages, or how to unsubscribe.
What is Text Message Spam?

In the most generic form, spam is unwanted and/or unsolicited messages that are received by someone who has never elected to receive them. Spam takes many different forms. You’re probably familiar with some of the most common, which include unwanted emails and phone calls.

Spam certainly occurs in the world of mobile as well but unlike email, text marketing laws are much more strict. There are some pretty hefty penalties and fines associated with text message spam. Some of the biggest individual lawsuits in history have reached $250 MM.

In addition to legal penalties, text message spam can severely damage your company’s reputation and brand image. Spam will not be a problem for you and your business as long as you follow one basic rule: only market to people who have opted in.
Restaurants are using text message marketing to send mobile coupons, dinner specials, new dish alerts, healthy eating tips, reservation reminders, and even staff communication alerts.

Nightclubs and bars are using it to send coupons similar to restaurants but target more towards their clientele. They also run “text 2 win” contests, offer free cover charges, and event reminders communication alerts.

Salons and spas are using SMS to send out appointment reminders, special offers, mobile coupons, and to fill schedule gaps due to appointment cancellations.

Schools use mass text messaging to send alerts, event reminders, cancellation notifications and more to parents and staff.

Churches are a huge consumer of bulk texting. Congregations all over the world use it as a tool for church-wide communication, event alerts/reminders, prayer requests, and daily devotionals.

These are just a few examples. The sky’s the limit when it comes to leveraging SMS marketing.
CHAPTER 03

Choosing a Keyword
When choosing a keyword for your text marketing program, keep it simple. A keyword, or “textword” as we say at Slick Text, is a unique word or phrase that people text to a shortcode to join your SMS list. Here are a handful of things to keep in mind when selecting your keyword.

**Keep It Easy to Remember**
The simpler, the better. It should be something people see once and remember. Also, because one on one verbal requests help you grow your text marketing list, a simple keyword helps employees quickly and easily let customers know how to join.

**Don’t Be Too Clever**
Refrain from using keywords that confuse people. Just because you get it doesn’t mean others will. It’s better to err on the side of simplicity. Make it as easy as possible for people to subscribe to your list. Your keyword should also be a direct reflection of your business. For example, if you own a ski shop called “The Loft”, some appropriate textwords might be “SKI” or “LOFT”.

**Avoid Special Characters**
This one is pretty straight-forward. For example, if your business name is “Burgers at the Pier,” don’t reserve a keyword that’s something like “BURGER$” or “BURGER @ P!ER.” Special characters do you no good. If your customers experience frustration while trying to sign up for your text program, they might skip joining all together.

**One Word is Best**
Some customers ask, “Can keyword(s) be more than one word”? The answer is yes. Although it complicates the signup process, you can use 2 or more words. Referencing our previous example, what’s easier to remember? “BOBSBURGERS” or “BURGERS?” Or better yet, just “BOBS.” The shorter, the better. You’ll also be surprised at how many people will try to join your text marketing list by trying “BOBSBURGERS” without a space. Two or more words adds a small level of complication that’s avoidable.
CHAPTER 03

Creating A Good Auto-Reply
Include Your Frequency
Let customers know how many times per month you’ll be texting them. Not only should this be in your auto reply, it should also be on all your materials that announce your text marketing program. Including your frequency, or number of times per month you’ll be getting in touch, gives subscribers peace of mind. An example of how you can communicate your campaign frequency might be “Receive up to 4 msgs/month.” Sometimes you may find yourself crunched for character space in longer auto-replies, so shortening that up might be “4 msgs/month.”

Include Opt-Out Instructions
Let people know how they can unsubscribe, should they ever choose to. This is extremely important. It’s one of the most basic best practices for text message marketing, and also required by law. Because it’s so important, at SlickText.com, we give you 20 less characters in your auto-replies so we can automatically attach “(txt STOP to cancel.)” Note that this message is only attached to the end of your auto-reply; not every text you send out.

Now let’s put all of those components together into one example of an A+ auto-reply.

“Thanks for joining Bob’s Burgers VIP text club! Show this text for a free burger with the purchase of a drink. Up to 4 msgs/month. (txt STOP to cancel.)”
Auto-replies are customizable text messages that automatically send back to a subscriber when they join your text marketing program. All good auto-replies contain these four key components.

Confirm the Subscription
First, let people know that they’ve just been added to your text messaging list. Confirm their subscription and thank them for joining. For example, the confirmation portion of your auto-reply might say “Thanks for joining Bob’s Burgers VIP text club!”

Offer Something of Value, AKA “The Hook”
When someone subscribes to your text marketing list, they’re allowing you to market your business or organization to them at your leisure. Furthermore, they’re letting you do so through an incredibly personal source of communication that’s normally reserved for friends and family. There should be an incentive in return for them letting you into their world and that’s that “something of value”. This is that hook that gets your customers to join in the first place. Because it’s an incentive, it should be something you communicate verbally and make apparent on any materials you have announcing your text program. That’s the next thing you’ll want to include in your auto-reply. An example of a “hook” might be “Show this text for a free burger with the purchase of a 32OZ drink.”
CHAPTER 05
Growing Your Text Marketing List
How to Advertise Your List

Growing your list is key to text marketing success. Without an audience, your marketing efforts are wasted. The more people reading your message, the better. Because almost every text that you send is read by your customers, there’s a direct relationship between the size of your list and the number of customers who walk through your door. Statistics show that only 10% of your Facebook friends see what you post in their news feeds. Compare that to the 99% that read your text messages. Keep in mind, your text marketing efforts will be 10 times more effective and powerful as any Facebook post that you create.

As stated previously, the size of your list has a direct effect on your ROI. That’s why you should be doing everything you can to grow/advertise your list. Here’s a list of all the different ways/places you can advertise.

- Verbal requests
- Facebook & Other Social Media
- Emails & Email Signatures
- Table Tents
- Business Cards
- Pamphlets
- Direct Mail
- Website Signup Widgets
- Radio
- Newspaper
- Customer Receipts
- Flyers
- Billboards
- Blogs
- Menus
- Magazines
- Yard Signs
- T Shirts
When advertising your program, familiarize customers with what you’re doing and how it works. No matter where you’re advertising, touch on the following points. Include a description of your program. Let your customers know what you’re doing and what they’re signing up for. For example, “Join our weekly VIP text club.” Provide a resource for help. On your marketing flyers, for example, simply include somewhere that they can reply “HELP” for more information on the service, or give them a website address they can go to consume more information on your text marketing program. Provide the frequency of your text messages. Just as mentioned in the previous section on autoreplies, let them know how many times per month your customers will be hearing from you. This puts them at ease with a number of texts to expect from your business or organization. For example, “Up to 4 msgs/month.”

Provide opt-out instructions. Letting your customers know they can opt out of your text marketing campaigns at any time gives them peace of mind. Don’t make them feel cornered into receiving your marketing messages.
CHAPTER 06

Sending Your First Campaign
Excited to send out your first text marketing campaign? You’ve grown your list, familiarized yourself with how it all works, and you’re finally ready to text your customers. Here’s some basic beginner guidelines.

**Make Sure Each Campaign Creates Value**
Before you send out any text marketing campaigns, ask yourself, “Does this text create value for my subscribers?” If you’re hesitant or unsure, don’t send the campaign. Why? Put yourself in the shoes of the customer. Would you like to receive worthless texts from a business you love? Probably not. Furthermore, these invaluable text messages may become a nuisance and cause customers to unsubscribe. It could damage your brand image. The bottom line is, make sure every text you send creates real value for customers.

**Pay Attention to Frequency**
You must avoid sending your subscribers more text messages than what they expect. This can and will become annoying to your subscribers and encourage them to opt out. Think about how many texts per month you’d like to receive from your business and stick to that number. Don’t ever go over the amount of touches per month that you’ve specified in your auto-reply. If you ever find yourself needing to break this rule, do so only on rare occasions ... and the offer you’re sending out should be one heck of a deal.

**Start Your Text Off With the Deal**
SMS campaigns should be short and to the point. SMS stands for “Short Messaging System.” You get 160 characters to get your message across, and that’s it. Your customers are busy, and probably on the run. With those two things in mind, cut right to the chase. Put your coupon, promo, or other important message out there first. It doesn’t need to be cluttered with other verbiage. Your customers will appreciate it. If you have leftover space in your text, then you can have some fun if that’s the type of crowd you’re communicating to.
Include a Direct Call to Action
When putting together your text marketing campaign, it’s important to have a clear “call to action.” A call to action is a request or instruction telling customers to do something. For example, one of the most popular is “show this text.” If you owned a restaurant, your text might include “Show this text to get your FREE appetizer!” This lets your customer know what the next move is. It gives them a push in the right direction.

Create a Sense of Urgency
Creating a sense of urgency within your campaigns helps you achieve the results you’re looking for. Put an expiration date in the text. This inspires subscribers to take action in a timely manner. Here’s a good example. “Tomorrow night at Bob’s Burgers, show this text for a free drink with the purchase of one burger. Expires 2/24/13.”

Text Marketing Campaign Examples
There are different ways that you can engineer text marketing campaigns to be successful. Some techniques will be more effective than others. A lot will depend on your audience and the type of industry you’re in. Here are some generic campaign ideas.

Save More - “Show this text for 50% off any entree with the purchase of one at full price! Deal expires 2/24/13.”

Spend More - “Show this text for a $10 gift card when you spend $50 or more on Christmas gift cards this year! Deal expires 12/25/12.”

Buy More - “Show this text for $5 off the salad bar when you purchase a featured lunch special. Expires 2/27/13.”

Get More - “Show this text for a free ice cream cone with the purchase of 2 others. Expires 2/27/12.”
CHAPTER 07

Measuring Your Success
To be successful with any type of marketing, you must test, measure, and refine. Try new things, see what’s working, and then replicate your system throughout the rest of your marketing streams. These same steps are important when it comes to your text campaigns. Here are 3 solid ways you can measure your success.

**List Growth**
The growth rate of your text marketing list helps you gauge the success of your efforts. The more people that are regularly subscribing to your list is a direct reflection of how valuable they perceive your texts to be. The bigger your list grows, the more powerful it will obviously become. You can easily track your list growth in our Analytics Dashboard.

**Redemption Rates**
Another excellent way to measure the success of your text marketing campaigns is through redemption rates. Your redemption rate is the percentage of subscribers who cash in on a particular text promo. To calculate redemption rate, divide the number of people who redeemed your coupon by the total number of subscribers on that given list.

**Churn Rates**
Churn rate is the number of subscribers who are opting out of your text program. Slick Text shows you what subscriber activity looks like for a 24 hour period trailing each individual campaign. This gives you a good idea as to how people are responding to your text offers. If you see a spike in opt outs after a particular SMS campaign, you can then review the content of your text to determine what the issue was.
CHAPTER 08

Additional Text Marketing Resources
If you’ve read through this entire guidebook, we commend you! We also hope that you learned a thing or two. So what are your next steps from here? You have a couple options. If you want to dive right in and get set up with a SlickText account, we’d love to bring you on board! Click here to sign up to our pricing page. If you want to explore the world of text marketing further, below are a list resources for you to consume!

The Advanced SMS Marketing Guide
Your next step after The Beginner’s Guide to Text Message Marketing. Take what you’ve learned here and dive even further into your campaign optimization.

The SlickText Text Marketing Blog
Our large resource of blog posts and other content focused on text marketing tips and best practices.

The Mobile Marketing Association (MMA)
The MMA is the premier global non-profit trade association representing all players in the mobile / text marketing value chain.

The Common Short Code Administration (CSCA)
The CSCA oversees technical and operational aspects of common short code functions and maintains a master database of shortcodes around the world.

The Cellular Telecommunications & Internet Association (CTIA)
The CTIA is a global nonprofit that has represented the wireless communications industry since 1984. Members of the CTIA include wireless carriers and their suppliers, as well as service providers of wireless data and products.

Mobile Marketer Magazine
The news leader in mobile marketing, media and commerce.
Questions? Concerns?
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