



SMS MARKETING GUIDE

Everything you need to know about SMS marketing for your school, college or university.

Including tips, ideas and success stories.

Hello...

As mobile devices continue to develop and we become more and more reliant on them for both our work and social lives; it's becoming increasingly important to ensure you have mobile included in your marketing mix.

From checking your bank balance or shopping to searching for the best restaurant to eat in. Our mobile phones are now the source of all information and PCs are becoming less and less important. In fact, mobile internet browsing overtook desktop in 2014 meaning mobile marketing is more important than ever.

FireText is a UK-based team of developers, problem solvers, marketers, tinkerers, all working around the clock to offer the most powerful text marketing platform...for you!

Whether you're brand new to SMS marketing or a texting pro, we offer outstanding support and advice to guide you through your campaign.

We work with lots of education establishments from schools and nurseries to universities and training centres to help them engage with students and parents in an instant. So, if you're looking for a cost-effective solution to increase student engagement and boost communication in your education establishment, SMS won't disappoint.

How many text messages do you receive that you don't open?

Read on for updated to:

- How to make SMS marketing work.
- Five ways SMS can be used in education
- Success Story – Queen's University Belfast use SMS to meet registration deadlines
- Success Story – Classroom Medics use SMS keywords to collect new leads.

The FireText Team

The Stats



91%

of mobile phone owners use their device for SMS

You know you're communicating with customers in a way they know and love.

Smart Insights, 2013

98%

of SMS messages are opened

You can guarantee your message will be opened and read.

Frost & Sullivan, 2011

94%

of SMS are read within 5 minutes of being received

Perfect for time bound campaigns!

Ofcom, 2012

OVER **62%**

of UK adults own a smartphone

And growing...enrich your messages with URL links to online content.

ComScore, 2013

75%

of smartphone users like to receive offers by SMS

Give your customers what they want.

YouGovPLC, 2010

81%

of adults keep their mobile switched on 24/7

Send your campaign with confidence that it will be seen.

Media Ofcom, 2011

SMS Marketing – how to make it work

SMS marketing is fast, cost-effective and personal – it's no wonder it's becoming increasingly popular with businesses of all sizes, but it's important to use it well.

It's easy and convenient to use your mobile phone for everything you used to use your PC for i.e. email and browsing and with the number of smartphone users increasing this trend is set to continue. Consumers, however are used to receiving email marketing and are becoming immune to it, there is no need to read them straight away and therefore they don't prompt an instant response, if at all.

With a 98% open rate, SMS is clearly the most reliable way to ensure your message gets seen on a mobile device. You can be personal and straight to the point in a text message, everyone knows how to read and reply to them and they don't take up too much of their time.

When you send an SMS, you're delivering a message straight to the customer's pocket. Knowing that over 94% of text messages are read within 5 seconds of being received, if you need an instant response you can rely on SMS to deliver.

You need to ensure your customers want to receive the messages; if you send an unwanted text you will do your business more harm than good. You can contact customers you've interacted with previously or let your customers opt-in to your mailing list to ensure good quality data – give your customers a reason to opt in – e.g. to receive special offers or join a 'VIP club'.

Likewise, always provide an opt-out. It may hurt your pride if someone decides they'd no longer like to receive your offers, but it will hurt your reputation more if you don't give customers the option. Don't focus on the opt-outs, put your energy into providing irresistible offers to the customers who do want to hear from you.

Later in this guide, we'll give you some examples on how to use SMS in education.

At just 160 characters, SMS may be small but is certainly powerful and a versatile tool for every business.

Who's using SMS marketing?

“SMS is so simple and easy to use yet so effective in communicating with our audience....brilliant!”

GRAD CORNWALL

Sam Tilley
GradCornwall



Simon Goodwin
Snowbombing

“FireText are brilliant! Messages are scheduled and sent in super quick time.”

“Using FireText is quick and easy, but most importantly cost-effective, we always see a healthy return-on-investment with our SMS campaigns.”



Michael O'Kane
Pizza Hut

BLACK[®]
WHITE
DENIM.

Joanna Davies
Black White Denim

“FireText makes communicating with my highly valued customers so easy. It's great value, simple to use and delivers great results.”

Five ways you can use SMS messaging for education

Juggling communication for a school or college can be tricky if you need to reach students, parents and teachers. Finding a method which is suitable for all three audiences is key to ensuring you manage time effectively but can also get the message across.

With super-high open rates and a wide reach, SMS could be the perfect solution to keep everyone informed and updated.

1 Schools Closed

If it's snowing and school needs to close, you need to reach every parent quickly before they head off. Setting up a group in advance will save you time when it comes to sending out a last minute update to multiple contacts.

Morning Susan, there is snow at Park View this morning so we'll be closed for the day. We're hoping to open tomorrow & will keep you updated! Head Teacher

2 Communicate with Busy Students

Students aren't always checking their emails but you can't keep them off their phones! If you need a response and don't want to wait, try reaching them via text message so you can get the message across instantly. What's more if they can reply on their phones or click a link, it's quicker for them too meaning they're more likely to engage.

Hi Emily, the registration deadline for this term is on Monday, please click on the link to do this ASAP: www.uwoe.ac.uk/register Stuck? Call us: 0800 038 55 22

3 Interview Reminders

SMS works great for reminders as you're delivering all the important details straight to the recipient's pocket. If you're interviewing for places at the college or university, try sending an SMS reminder to ensure they turn up on time. You can even get them to reply to confirm their attendance.

Hi Jake, your interview at UWOE is tomorrow at 10am, please follow the yellow signs on arrival in the west car park. Please reply if you can no longer attend

4 Send Emergency Notifications

Rounding up hundreds of students, teachers and staff in the event of an emergency seems like an impossible task. Try setting up a template SMS which can be triggered at the click of a button to everyone on site.

5 Collect Students Numbers

Letting students reach out to you by text means you're offering a communication method which you know is popular, what's more you can collect their contact details when they text you to follow up with communication later!

Text UNI to 82228 to stay up to date with the latest student events and offers

This is by no means a definitive list of how to use SMS for education; but hopefully it will get your creative ideas flowing!

Queens University Belfast Case Study

There are some audiences which can be hard to reach and engage with, when you need to ensure your message is being seen this can be a problem, especially if you have deadlines to meet. Oonagh Bell from Queen's University Belfast explains why SMS was the perfect solution to meet registration deadlines amongst busy students.

The Objective

Ensure students register within deadline

Find communication method that works for both the university and the students

Save time chasing students to register

The Plan

The Student Registry Service at Queens University Belfast manage a number of core services for 24,000 students. In order to manage these services effectively, it's important that students register on their Student Information System. In 2014 over 300,000 emails were sent to students but still many students missed important deadlines for enrolment, examinations and graduation. Oonagh needed to find a much more reliable communication method.

Following on from research with the students and taking into account past experiences email communication; the team felt text message alerts to the students would be far more beneficial. As the majority of students had a smartphone, Oonagh knew that they could include a URL link to the Student Information system to make the process efficient for students.

Oonagh tells us

“While email is relatively inexpensive, but proving more ineffective each year, and as we needed to send approximately 60,000 text message reminders we were concerned about costing. After doing some research and trying out the FireText system, not only was it exactly what we were looking for, it also offered the best value for money.”

Oonagh and her team have now started sending their registration reminders by text message to students.

They are able to reach students instantly by SMS, the open rates are significantly higher and more students are engaging and registering within the deadline.

The Message

Registration is now open! Log into your QGIS account now to complete your registration wizard <https://qgis.qub.ac.uk>. Need help? Pop into our Drop In Centre at the MBC between 10 – 4pm. #HereToHelp

The Results

Using FireText has enhanced the registration process for Queen's University Belfast, whilst the investment is more than email, it saves on valuable time and staff resources and has provided the results tha email never could.

Oonagh explains; As soon as we send out a text message to students, the numbers for the service they are registering for increases straightaway. For example, we sent out a text message to all returning undergraduate students during enrolment & registration advising them that the registration wizard was open and they had to register. Within one hour over 500 returning undergraduate students had completed registration.

Classroom Medics are using Zapier

We've been working with lots of customers to help them make the most of our exciting integration with Zapier. This week we caught up with Tom at Classroom Medics who has hooked up Infusionsoft with their FireText account to help automate communication, efficiently and professionally, as well as providing customers with the instant information they need.

The Objective

- Automate communication
- Provide customers with instant information
- Integrate software platforms

The Plan

Classroom Medics provide inspiring medical and sports science workshops for schools; giving students the skills and opportunity to excel in the health sector. They speak at events and shows and wanted a really easy way for their audience to reach out to them instantly for further information.

After setting up a keyword on our shortcode, they were able to encourage potential clients at their event to text MEDIC and their email address to 82228 for further information. This enables Tom to collect contact details and follow up with their info pack!

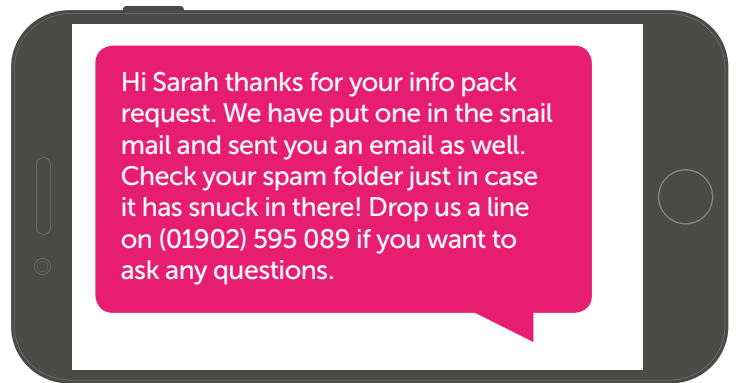
The team at Classroom Medics also use Infusionsoft and when we announced our Zapier integration Tom thought of another way he could use SMS!

When someone enquires or requests an info pack on our website, this adds a tag into Infusionsoft which triggers a Zap. Zapier tells FireText and they instantly get a text message telling them someone will be in touch today as well as confirming they will get something in the post as well.

Tom explains,

“Instant confirmation to the enquirer, makes us look bigger than we are ;-) as well as making us look really professional and switched on!”

The Message



The Results

Tom found it all pretty easy to set up. One or two tests were needed to make sure everything was set up right, but that was easy too.

Now the customers get confirmation of their request instantly, the information is sent out and all the software platforms are hooked up. Tom and his team are happy too as it gives them more time in the classroom doing the job they love.

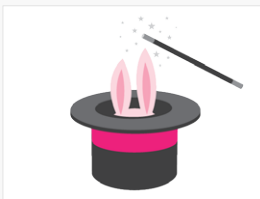
“Love it! Adding text messaging to our tools is a fab way to communicate with people.”

Last Word...

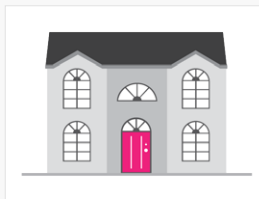
If you're looking for an effective way to communicate and engage with students, staff and parents then you've found it. SMS is simple, fast and gets results by improving communication.

In this guide, we've explored some great uses of SMS for your school, college or university to get you thinking; these are by no means definitive so please get in touch to discuss how SMS could work for you.

Easy online SMS marketing for every type of business...



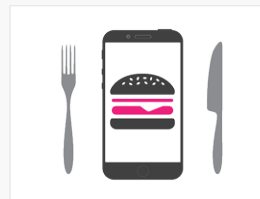
Recruitment Agencies



Estate Agents



Retail Shops



Restaurants



Hotels & Guest Houses

Your in great company...



Let's chat

Don't worry if you still have some questions; at FireText we're always talking SMS.

We'd love to talk to you. You can get in touch on:

Text us

HELLO to 82228

Talk to us

0800 038 55 22

Visit us

firetext.co.uk

Write to us

hello@firetext.co.uk

Join the conversation

