



SHOULD YOU INTEGRATE TEXT MESSAGING WITH CUSTOMER SERVICE?

In a fast-moving digital world, consumers want instant and on-demand service. And with **90 percent** of the world's population covered by a cell signal, it's really no surprise that text messaging—also called short message service (SMS)—is becoming a vital mode of communication for small businesses looking to reach out to their customer base in a way that is both efficient and friendly.



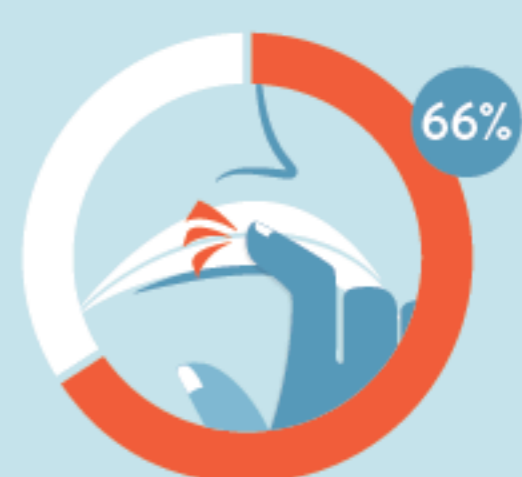
FACE IT, TEXTING IS EVERYWHERE



73% of American cell phone owners send and receive text messages at least occasionally.



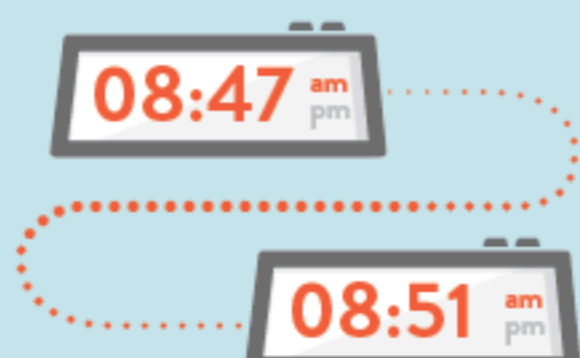
91% keep their cell phones within 3 feet, at all times.



In fact, 66% suffer from "nomophobia," the fear of being without your mobile phone.



While email inboxes are commonly filled with hundreds of unopened messages, an average of 94% of text messages are read.



And most cell phone owners look at their text messages within 4 minutes of receiving them.



About 1 out of 3 cell phone owners prefers texting to voice calls.

INSTANT CUSTOMER SERVICE

Through text messaging, businesses from any industry can easily serve their customers' needs and communicate time-sensitive information.

SERVICES
(e.g., dentists, salons)



Appointment reminders, confirmations, and customer support.



RETAIL



Special announcements, promotions, and mobile coupons sent directly to a subscriber's phone.



REAL ESTATE



Instant property listing details for potential buyers, viewing appointments, and updates on closing deals.



EDUCATION



Truancy notifications, emergencies, and general updates for parents whose children are enrolled in the school.



HEALTH CARE



Appointment reminders, upcoming inoculations, notification of disease outbreaks or product recalls, and more.



TRAVEL



Cancellations and last-minute updates to flight information and statuses.



RESTAURANTS



Alert patrons when their table is ready.



4 USEFUL REMINDERS ABOUT SMART CUSTOMER SERVICE THROUGH TEXTS

No 1



YOU ARE NOT A TEENAGER.

Text messaging may blur the line between professional and friendly, but try to keep your reputation intact by avoiding emoticons or shorthand typically reserved only for text-obsessed teens.

No 2



TAKING AWAY CHOICES IS BAD.

Consumers do not like feeling trapped or forced into anything, so allow them to opt in or out of the text-messaging service. At the end of the day, if they can choose how to receive their messages, they'll be more likely to respond positively.

No 3



IF IT'S BETTER IN AN EMAIL, LEAVE IT IN AN EMAIL.

The 160-character limit for text messages is meant to encourage brief messages but allows businesses to convey only so much. If your message requires detailed explanation, avoid a series of disruptive text messages. Save those messages for email instead.

No 4



RESPOND PROMPTLY.

Two-way text messaging is meant to be short and quick. If your customers ask questions or comment about a text, reply as soon as you can. Prove that you care about their needs, and you will see more loyal fans.