

# How marketers and service professionals use SMS messages

**ARTICLE | JANUARY 21, 2021**

**Jeremy Goldman**

Marketers and service professionals are using SMS messages in many ways:

1. **As a complement to email marketing:** Despite email's continued success, some marketers are concerned that consumers may be tuning emails out. Some brands are utilizing SMS to follow up on messaging they may have missed.
2. **As a live chat substitute:** Email marketing could have been used to develop a two-way conversation between brands and audiences but didn't. SMS is conversational and facilitates an ongoing dialog between brands and consumers.
3. **To provide a human element:** SMS may be AI-deployed depending on rules written by the brand, and an ensuing conversation may even be managed by AI; however, when warranted, a human can take over the conversation to improve the customer experience.
4. **For transactional messaging:** SMS is often used to send transactional messages informing a user that an ecommerce order has shipped or to review a recent order. These

messages needn't be used for ecommerce orders alone: DoorDash and other delivery services provide updates on deliveries via SMS, and many service-oriented businesses will confirm appointments via SMS, as well.

5. **To guide digital shoppers to a conversion:** Reminders to complete ecommerce transactions are an effective use of SMS, with compelling results. Attentive, for example, said it helped clients recover 5 million online carts in 2020 using triggered abandoned cart text message reminders.
6. **To send time-sensitive messages:** SMS is an ideal marketing channel for communications that need to be opened and acted upon quickly. That's especially true when compared with email, which experiences far lower open rates and takes longer for a consumer to notice. Types of time-sensitive messages often include sale previews and last chance messaging to let consumers know about expiring offers.
7. **As a replenishment mechanism:** While not commonplace, this is an area to watch. Brands can receive an order via text message. The customer is then routed to a page where they input shipping and billing information that's saved. Subsequent orders can then be placed via text without the customer needing to re-enter such information, eliminating a friction point.

Companies employing SMS marketing tend to either be innovators, early adopters, or simply have less loyalty to other channels like email. Interviews with marketing executives revealed that most who are not currently utilizing SMS are watching the space closely or in the planning stages of adding those capabilities to their marketing tech stack.

SMS marketing can be highly cost-effective, especially for smaller businesses. Janna Land, co-founder and COO of direct-to-consumer (D2C) food retailer FarmFoods, Inc., said SMS gave her "the ability to break through in a very noisy and competitive advertising environment."

Land believes customers who receive texts are more inclined to open the company's emails. In fact, FarmFoods texted a list of customers who had stopped engaging with its email marketing and drove \$4,000 of sales in less than 24 hours at a cost of just \$60.

Luxury retailers are embracing SMS differently. Norman Guadagno, CMO of marketing technology solutions provider Acoustic, cited the example of a salesperson at Louis Vuitton taking a customer's phone number after a purchase to follow up with a text containing a link to a webpage with a curated set of goods they might be interested in. That concierge-like service makes SMS feel more appropriate for that segment of the market.

Alex Jennison, ecommerce marketing manager at apparel company Mad Engine, whose brands include LRG Clothing and Neff Headwear, uses SMS messages promoting new product launches, promotions, in-person events, and automated messaging sequences, as well. Sam Shames, co-founder and COO of wearables startup Embr Labs, deploys SMS largely to convert abandoned carts in the lower funnel.

To learn more about how ecommerce, D2Cs, and others are leveraging this emerging consumer touchpoint, Insider Intelligence subscribers can read our recent report:

**Report** by Jeremy Goldman Jan 15, 2021

## SMS Marketing 2021

