



# SaaS and Enterprise Applications' Guide to Programmable SMS

SMS messaging is a cornerstone of SaaS application usefulness and engagement, especially for users who don't log into your application every day. This uniquely informal and mobile communication channel is perfect for notifying users of important alerts, and simple SMS transactions can stand in for in-app functionality when it makes sense. And, connecting the people behind an application with their users in SMS-enabled conversations can be a powerful way to deliver support, engage users or facilitate sales discussions.

This guide is meant to highlight what makes SMS different from other channels and how to leverage its strengths to improve user experiences in your application.

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## Why SMS?

If users are consistently seeing in-app messages or are responsive to email, it may not seem like implementing SMS to communicate with your users should be a priority. But, text messaging's unique features make it advantageous for some application functions and indispensable for others. Most notably, SMS is underutilized as a channel by brands and businesses, making it easier to cut through the noise and capture your users' attention.

**Users are very accessible via SMS:** your message is almost guaranteed to be read whether that user is at work, in front of the TV or on the go. So, well-designed applications often leverage SMS for critical alerts and notifications.

The streamlined, transactional nature of text messaging can also support workflows through SMS automation. Onboarding surveys, abandoned cart follow-ups and lead nurturing can all be driven forward by SMS messages.

**Reportedly, consumers are 40% more likely to proceed to purchase when SMS messages are included as part of a multi-channel marketing experience.**

Users also appreciate interacting with the people behind their application, like support representatives or engineers or their account or customer success manager—as long as you avoid content-heavy messaging, long or complicated workflows, intrusive interruptions or irrelevant information.

### What SMS drives forward:

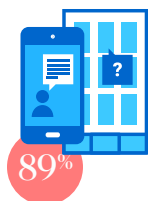
Onboarding surveys

Abandoned cart follow-ups

Lead Nurturing



## Best in Class Features



**Best for Coverage** — 92% of adults have a mobile phone, and 89% of consumers wish they could text businesses.



**Best for Deliverability** — SMS messaging is the communication channel most likely to reach its destination.



**Best for Open Rate** — No channel beats SMS's 99% open rate.



**Best for Quick Responses** — 95% of texts are read within three minutes of being sent.



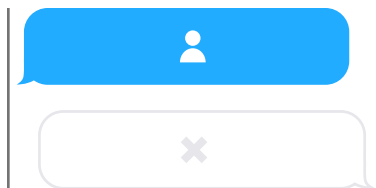
**Best for Conversion** — 36% conversion for SMS marketing and as high as 70-80% for opt-in notifications like credit card alerts.

## SMS Best Practices

- ◆ Users should **opt in** to your SMS interactions. Unwanted texts won't achieve your goals and will annoy your users.
- ◆ Focus on **narrow topics and small asks**. SMS messages are character-limited and ideal for short, to-the-point messages.
- ◆ **Give context**. What application is this for, why are users receiving this message now and who is on the other end monitoring responses?
- ◆ If possible, avoid making the user click through to another page and, instead, let them **finish the workflow via text response**. If it is necessary for users to click through to another page, be sure to link to mobile-friendly landing pages or application screens.
- ◆ **Be consistent**. If users are used to receiving a certain notification via SMS, they'll expect that information to keep arriving in the future.
- ◆ Make it a **two-way conversation** whenever possible. Users will always prefer a conversation with a person to machine-generated messages.
- ◆ Integrate SMS deeply into your application and your user-tracking platform. Based on user profiles and tracked user actions, messages should be **personalized** to be as relevant as possible to recipients.
- ◆ Test test test. SMS is short, text-based and machine-powered, perfect for **AB testing** messaging, calls to action, user segments, times of day to send and more.

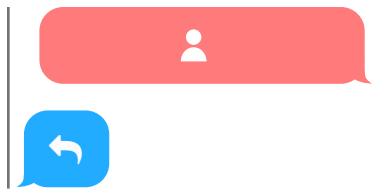
## How Users Interact with SMS

SMS is a versatile medium, but you will primarily leverage it in one of three ways:



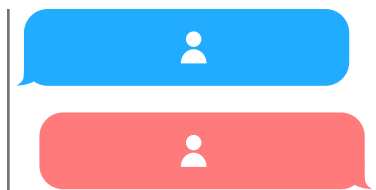
### **Broadcast:**

One-off messages meant to inform. They don't require a response from the user.



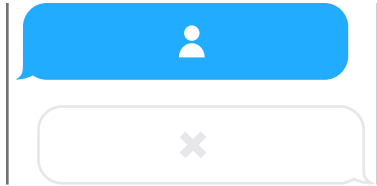
### **Automation:**

User-to-application interactions that utilize keywords or prompts to trigger machine responses.



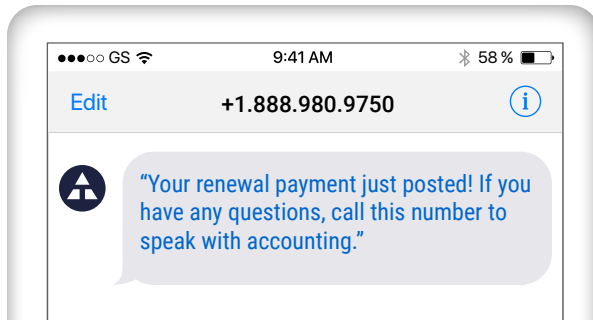
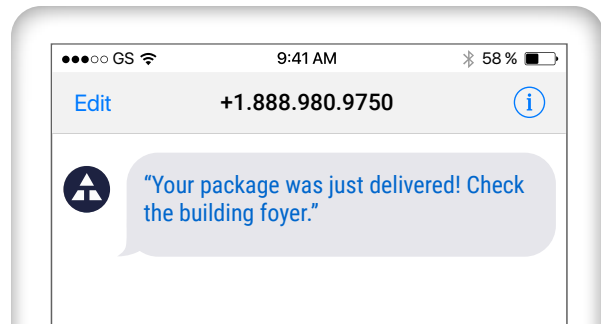
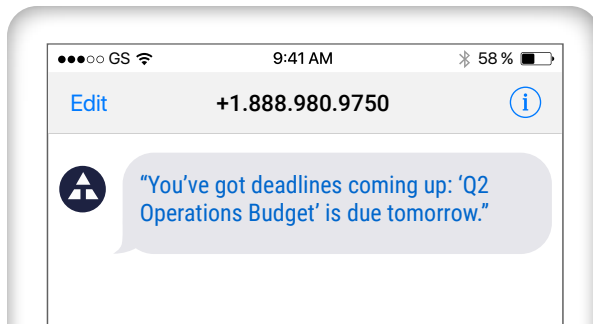
### **Conversation:**

Person-to-person interactions over text between a user and someone behind their application.

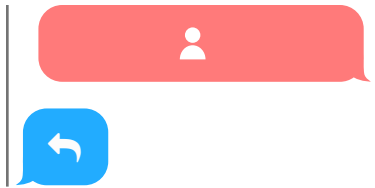


## Broadcasts: One-Off Messages to Notify and Alert

Because SMS messages are short, text-only and mobile, they're perfect for informing users of time-sensitive or important notifications.





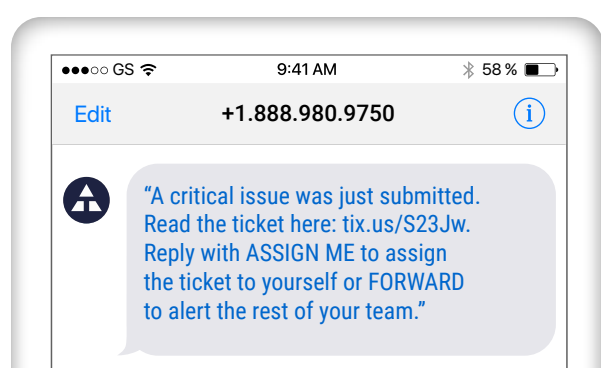
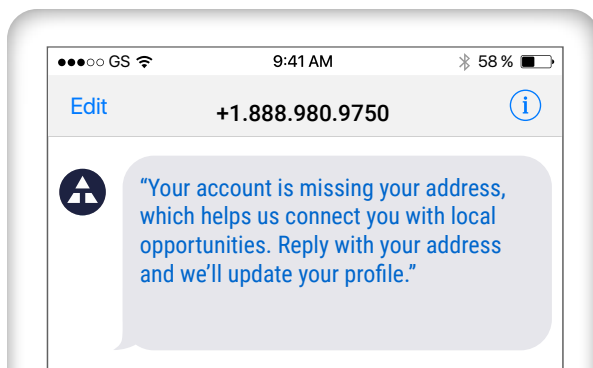
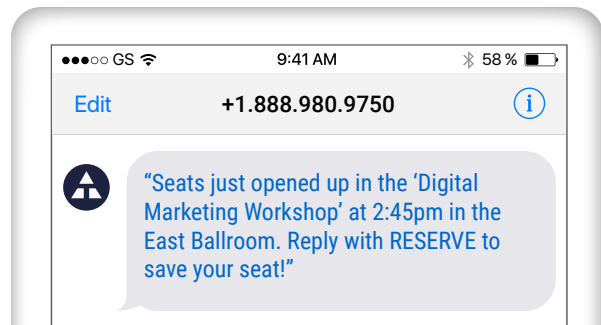
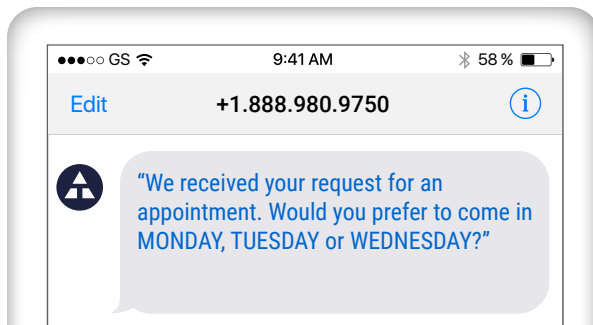


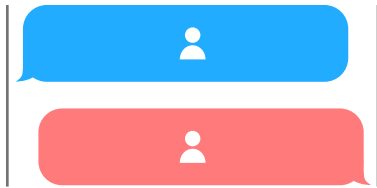
## SMS Automation: User-to-Application Interactions

SMS interactions can be automated by coaching users through prompts or using keywords.

Keywords use specific response words or phrases to understand users' needs and drive the interaction. You can build the logic into your application using an SMS API.

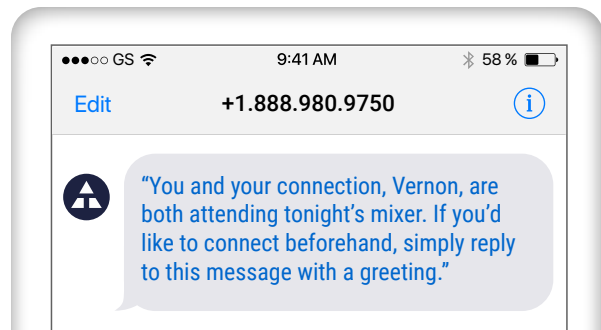
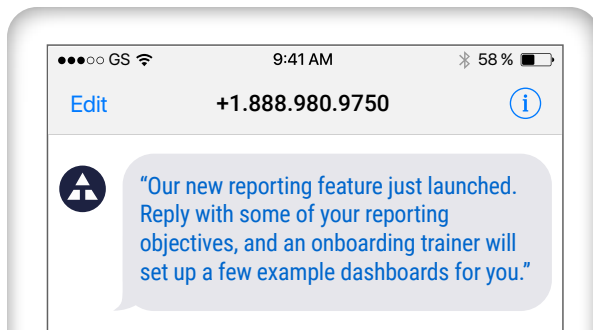
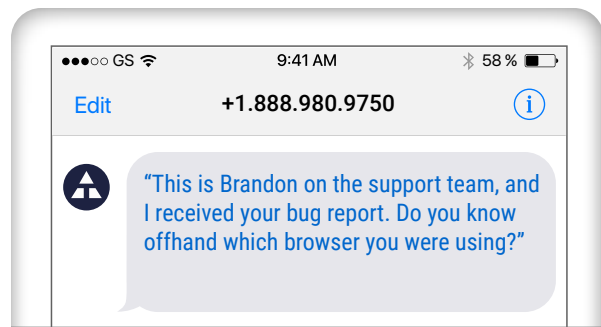
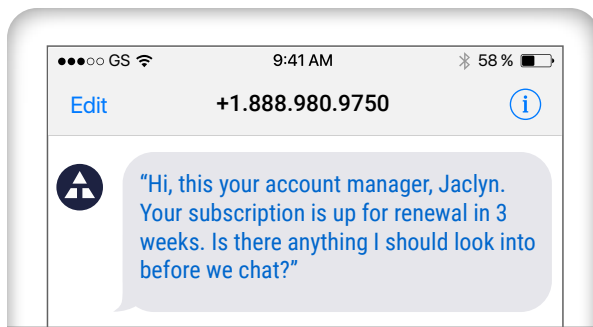
Prompts are useful for filling out text fields or to communicate other text-based information. By asking a user a direct question then using their response to populate text fields, you can conduct user surveys, fill in account information or receive user feedback to specific inquiries.





## SMS-Enabled Conversations: Connecting Users with the Team Behind Their Application

Finally, don't forget that two-way conversations were the original purpose of SMS, and they're still a powerful way to engage users, deliver support or connect people.





# Value-Added Messaging: Where SMS Shines

## Broadcast - Alerts and Notifications

Short, no-nonsense and mobile: SMS is the perfect delivery system for important information that can't wait for users to log into your application or sit down to their email inbox. Use SMS broadcasts to drive immediate action or manage user expectations.

## Broadcasting Best Practices

**Restrict broadcast messages to information that is:**

- ◆ New
- ◆ Critical to satisfying user expectations
- ◆ Time-sensitive
- ◆ Critical to the effective use of your application or service

**Tailor broadcast messages based on users' actions and to a user's preferences.**

**Use local DIDs or a branded toll-free number to increase conversion.**

**Deliver important information at the time it is most needed and most actionable.**

## Convert - Marketing and Sales Promotions

SMS conversion goes beyond its high open and click-through rates. With SMS, conversion happens faster because text messages are usually read immediately. And, SMS's character limits keep messaging concise and transactional, which improves conversion and makes it easier to identify which verbiage and calls to action work best.

## Conversion Best Practices

**Focus on one small ask.**

<b>Continually optimize campaigns with AB testing</b>	<b>Keep messages short, concise and transactional.</b>
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**Make it a conversation.**  
**Quick answers to users' follow-up questions can push almost-conversions to actually click that link.**

**Give users an option to convert via text message:**

"Reply to this message to set up a short demo of this new feature. Interested?"

"Reply with YES and we'll enable this feature on your future projects."

## Engage - Improving Lifetime Value

SMS is the best channel to drive engagement in your application outside of the application itself because it's informal, familiar and has low barriers to engage.

Reactivating cold users or engaging users in a new product or functionality requires a light touch and a user-driven conversation. Text messaging provides the functionality for a two-way conversation or an automated workflow that is also short, informal and as close as a user's pocket.

## Engagement Best Practices

**Work backwards from the goal to define a narrow segment of receptive users.**

**Who needs this feature?  
Who is most likely to finish this workflow?**

**Personalize messaging by tracking and being responsive to user actions.**

**Constantly test and refine messaging content, timing, targeting and asks.**

**When will they be most receptive to this message?**

### Focus on small asks:

**Next steps** - "You didn't quite finish this workflow. Reply FINISH, and we'll submit it on your behalf, or text HELP if you'd like a customer success rep to answer your questions."

**Network effects** - "Your friend just joined. Reply to this text with a welcome message, and we'll send it to them from your account."

**New functionality** - "We wanted to let you know about this new feature. Read about it here ([fea.tur/Sif2c](https://fea.tur/Sif2c)) or reply with DEMO to set up a guided tour next week."

**Surveys** - "We'd like to better personalize your experience on our app. What do you primarily use your account for: Personal, Family, Business or Other?"



## Secure - User Authentication

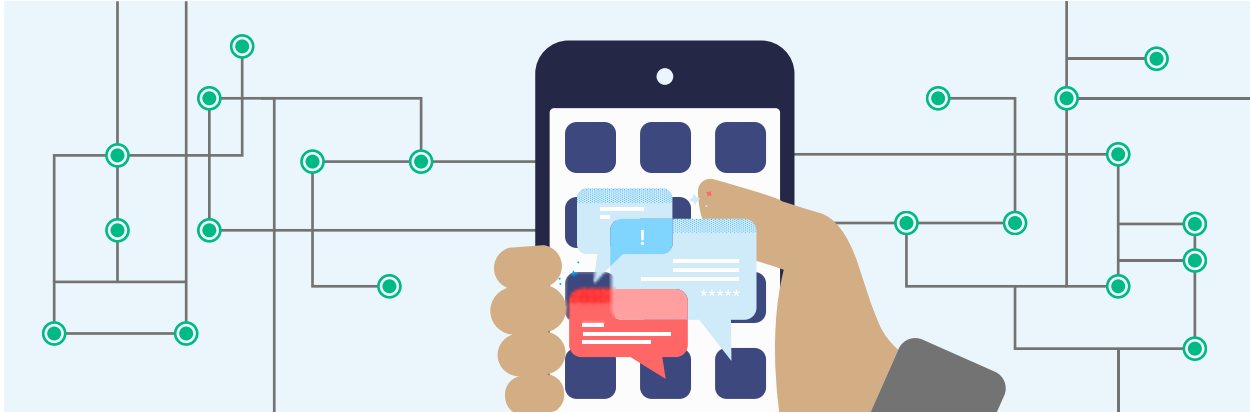
Phones are typically more secure than your average online account, and they are reliably unaffected when online accounts have become compromised. That's why SMS is a go-to channel for delivering or confirming two-factor authentication, which requires one more authentication factor beyond a password or PIN. Two or more authentication factors keep accounts safe, unless a hacker can both guess a user's password and gain access to that user's device.

## Security Best Practices

Unify authentication protocols across your entire suite of products and user interactions.

Contextualize authentication using user location, network and device? Some sign-ins are more suspicious than others.

Reuse authentication for registration, password resets, new devices, unusual behavior and significant changes to user settings or account profiles.



## The Right Channel at the Right Time

Adding SMS as a channel to communicate with users makes for a more satisfactory user experience. Users get to interact with their application or the people behind their application in a comfortable, on-the-go, low-barrier way.

But satisfactory SMS experiences rely on you being conscientious of users' limited time, privacy and preferences. Because text messaging can be disruptive or feel particularly personal, take care to only choose it for appropriate situations.

### When it needs more than a text:

- ✦ Long, time-intensive, or complex information.
- ✦ Workflows longer than two or three exchanges.
- ✦ Messages that would feel intrusive, irrelevant or spammy when delivered to a user's phone.
- ✦ Information or asks that have already been sent in previous messages (either through SMS or another channel).

## Other Considerations for SMS

### Legal

In most countries, SMS is classified as a commercial electronic message and must adhere to that country's spam restrictions.

**Typically, there are three main elements to compliance:**

Prior consent from the recipient (express or inferred)

Accurate identification of the sender (your business name)

A clear unsubscribe function

### Time of Day

Use common business courtesy. A good rule of thumb is don't text during a time you wouldn't call. That means no middle-of-the-night texts, and business applications should avoid evenings, holidays, and weekends when possible.

**Some general guidelines:**

Time sensitive or critical messages The moment they happen

Event reminders The day before and again an hour before

Special events or sales Several days prior and the morning of

Marketing messages 10:30 – 11:30am or 2:30pm – 3:30pm

## About Telnyx

We are bold and gritty builders and pioneers tackling the future's toughest and most technical communication challenges today. We believe in working on behalf of the underserved businesses that require the bleeding edge of telecom technology—every one of our products is a foundation for something better.

