

SMS TEXT MESSAGE MARKETING

BEST PRACTICES

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OVERVIEW

Text message marketing is a powerful tool for marketers, but it's not as simple as texting your customers once you have their phone numbers.

These strategies and tips will help ensure that your texts get delivered and lead to a higher ROI on your invested time and resources. In other words, the more effective the text message marketing, the higher your sales.

We've divided this guide into two main sections: what you can do and what DailyStory does to help you achieve it. Even if you aren't a DailyStory customer, we want to help you be a great SMS marketer.

At DailyStory, we're focused on providing a marketing platform that doesn't require a degree in marketing! We'll give you the tools and guidance to incorporate process, consistency and measurement around your marketing campaigns.

Doing so enables you to make decisions based on performance versus what you think might be working. If you would like to learn more about DailyStory and how we've helped other marketers like you, please contact us at hello@dailystory.com or visit us at dailystory.com.



HOW TO RUN A SUCCESSFUL TEXT MESSAGING CAMPAIGN

Planning and executing any text messaging campaign can feel overwhelming for any marketer. Let's dive into how phone companies work, the difference between SMS and MMS messages, how carrier violations can impact your marketing, the importance of quality data, and more to empower you to make the smartest decisions when it comes to your text message campaigns.



#1 UNDERSTAND HOW PHONE COMPANIES WORK

Text message marketing, which utilizes telecommunication provider networks (such as AT&T), enables the delivery of content through both SMS (Simple Message Service) and MMS (Multimedia Service). It's important to understand how these telecommunication companies process your messages since it

directly impacts the types of messages that can be sent.

Messages sent over the phone companies' networks are billed per-message and are delivered solely at the phone companies' discretion.

WHAT ARE SMS AND MMS MESSAGES?

SMS messages are sent as text but can include special characters like emojis.

An SMS message has a character-length limit of 160 characters, known as a "segment." A segment is a hold-over from a time before smartphones. And, it's common to send and receive messages that are more than 160 characters long. However, the telecommunication companies still charge per message segment. On average, each segment typically costs \$0.0125 to \$0.025.



MMS messages will ultimately cost you more because an image will require more "segments" to send. Typically, it's the equivalent of three to four additional segments, so on average, an MMS message can cost upwards of \$0.10 per message.

While MMS messages have significant benefits for cannabis marketers, MMS messages are only supported by modern smartphones (such as Android and iPhone). Not all mobile devices are capable of receiving MMS messages.

All content sent through phone companies' networks is delivered at their discretion. This means that not all content will get through, and some content will get flagged as a "carrier violation."

WHAT ARE CARRIER VIOLATIONS?



A carrier violation occurs when carriers (such as Verizon, AT&T, and others) receive an outbound SMS or MMS message and opt to not deliver it to the destination phone number.

In other words, carriers monitor and filter text message content.

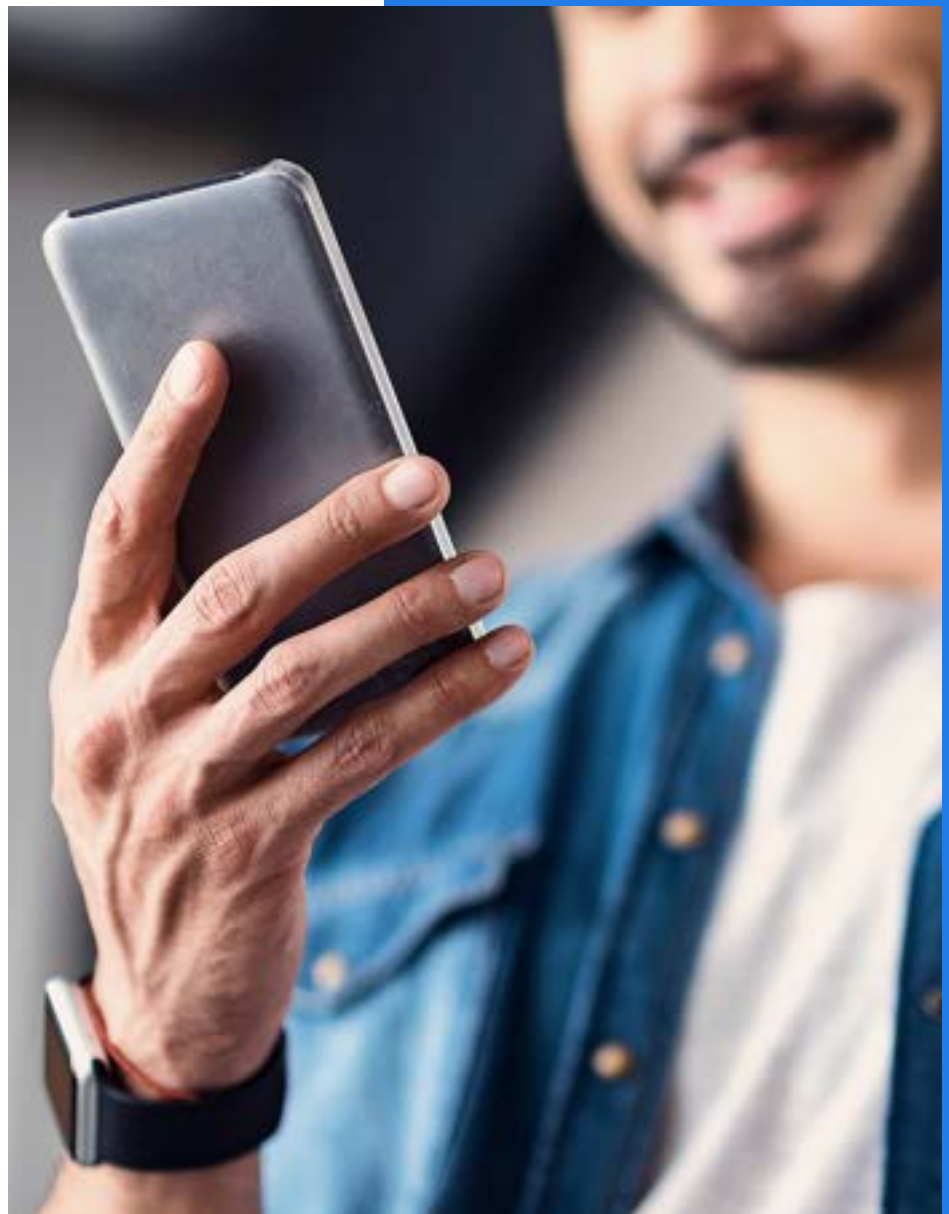
And, if your message triggers a perceived violation from the carrier's perspective, your text will not be delivered.

These violations can occur for a number of reasons:

- High number of recipients replying STOP or QUIT to opt-out
- High delivery failure rate due to non-mobile numbers
- Objectionable content (including anything deemed illegal, as well as any variations)
- Content that is overly promotional or sales-related
- Overly frequent sending of texts
- Content that may be considered misleading

It also is especially important that text messages (SMS or MMS) are only sent to recipients that have both opted-in and are expecting the message.

[Click here for more about text message compliance](#)



WHAT ARE CARRIER VIOLATIONS? (CONTINUED)



Determining the ideal frequency of texting your customers can be a challenge. There's not always a "one-size-fits-all" rule. In general, we recommend texting customers up to once per week, with a monthly range of two to four texts.

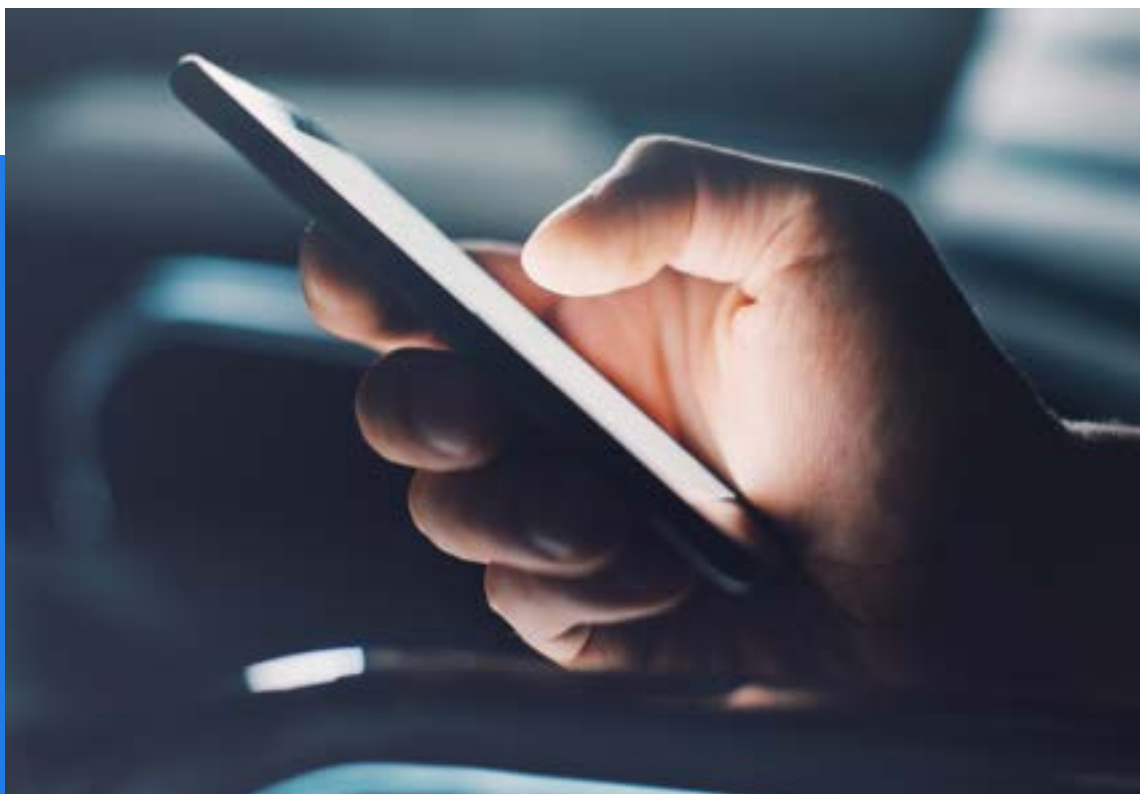
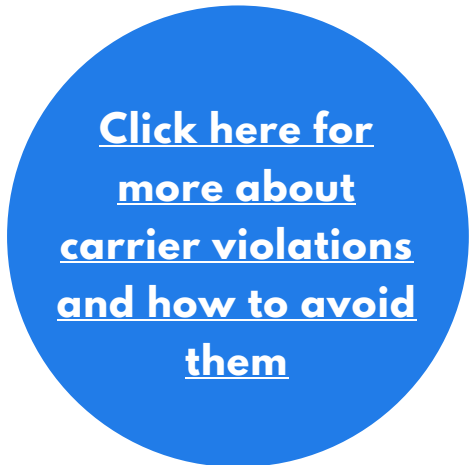
That's why using DailyStory to segment and target your contact list can be so valuable. There is power in getting the right message to the right people.

You also want to make sure to give every text message you're about to send a second (or even third) look before sending.

NOTE: IN SOME CASES, IT IS POSSIBLE TO WORK AROUND TRADITIONAL VIOLATIONS BY SENDING SMALLER BATCHES OF MESSAGES OR PURCHASING A SHORT CODE NUMBER. YOU CAN SEND SMALLER MATCHES OF MESSAGES BY SEGMENTING AND TARGETING YOUR CUSTOMERS, RATHER THAN BULK SENDS.

The good news is that there are things you can do to improve the deliverability of your text messages.

NOTE: WHEN USING DAILYSTORY, IT IS POSSIBLE TO CHECK YOUR TEXT MESSAGE DELIVERABILITY SCORE USING THE DAILYSTORY DELIVERABILITY SCORE TOOL. IT WILL HELP YOU QUICKLY IDENTIFY ANY PROBLEMS WITH THE CONTENT OF YOUR TEXT MESSAGE.



#2 BRING QUALITY DATA

As previously mentioned, it's imperative that your customer database has been opted-in to receiving text messages from you.

You can obtain this permission when a new customer signs up or agrees to an offer.

For example, several of our customers provide an opt-in for their customers when they make a purchase at a store or add to an online cart.

An easy way to opt potential customers in is with an offer.

For example, you can say on your website: "Text JOIN to (555) 123-4567 and get offers and coupons sent to your smartphone."

NOTE: ASKING FOR REPLIES TO YOUR TEXTS SENDS A POSITIVE SIGNAL TO THE PHONE COMPANIES THAT YOUR MESSAGE IS VALID.

And opting out of text messages should be just as easy. The most common opt-out option for texts is replying "STOP."

NOTE: WHEN DAILYSTORY RECEIVES THE TEXT "STOP," "QUIT," OR "UNSUBSCRIBE," THE RECIPIENT IS AUTOMATICALLY MARKED AS "DO NOT TEXT" AND IS INELIGIBLE FOR FUTURE TEXT MESSAGES. WHILE TEXT MESSAGE KEYWORDS ARE OFTEN SHOWN FULLY CAPITALIZED, DAILYSTORY'S TEXT MESSAGE KEYWORD PROCESSING IS NOT CASE SENSITIVE.

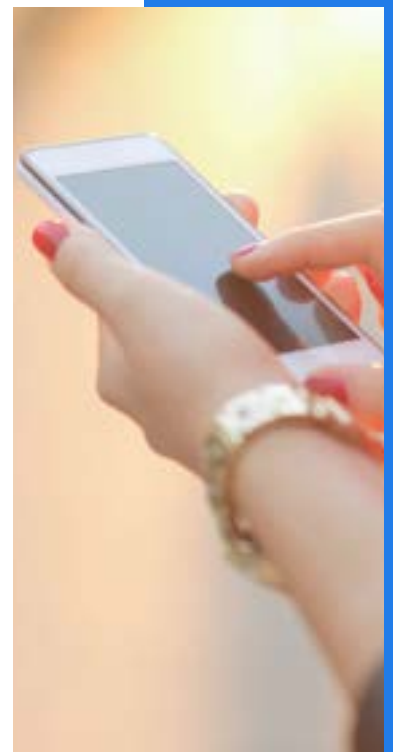
QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

When it comes to your data, think quality over quantity. A smaller database with up-to-date contact information is more powerful than a larger database with out-of-date information and contacts who haven't opted in yet.

Next, don't focus exclusively on a transactional relationship with your customer. Consider sending the following types of text messages:

- Alerting them that a subscription or membership is about to expire (if applicable)
- Wishing them a happy birthday
- Welcoming new customers
- Expressing "we miss you" to customers that haven't purchased recently
- Targeting customers with specific offers

We also recommend focusing on brand identity. If all the text messages are transactional and not relational, your customers will have no affinity to your brand or location.



PERSONALIZE THE CONTENT

Personalization is your ability to use the data you have about your audience to understand how your content best fits their needs or interests. This ensures visitors and customers get messaging tailored to them.

DailyStory's personalization engine uses a contact's profile properties and custom fields to build simple replacement personalization, such as displaying a person's first name, or more complex personalization to show varying blocks of content.

NOTE: DAILYSTORY HAS BUILT-IN PERSONALIZATION ENABLING THE PERSONALIZATION OF TEXT MESSAGE CONTENT.

[Click here for more about personalization](#)

AVOID FREE URL SHORTENERS

When you do include a URL in your text message, you want that URL to be as compact as possible since the character count in your URL impacts your message segment size (increasing the cost).

A common mistake is for marketers to use free URL shorteners like bit.ly or tinyurl.com.

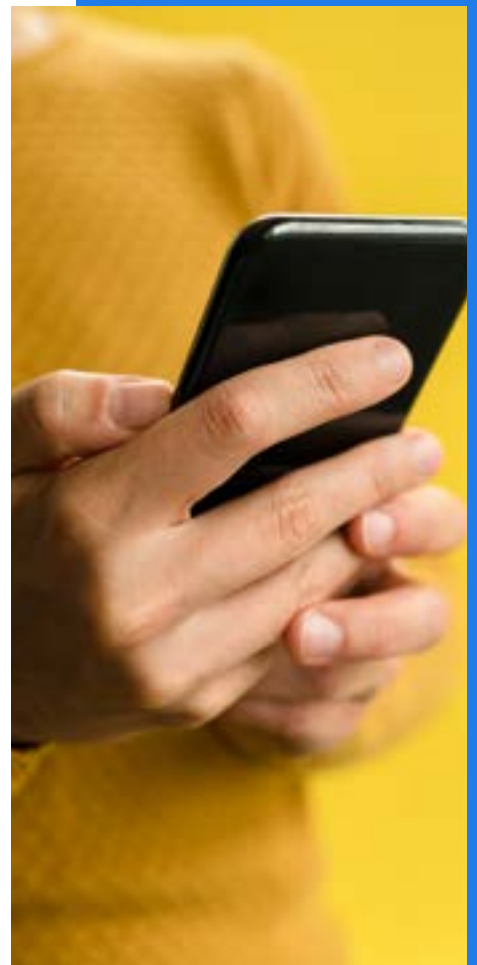
These URL shorteners take a long URL, such as:
<https://www.dailystory.com/blog/see-the-value-of-email-marketing-with-these-48-statistics/>

And shorten it to: <https://bit.ly/37485xg>

However, the use of these public URL shorteners is almost always guaranteed to cause a carrier violation. Because public URL shorteners aren't associated with a specific business, where they redirect to isn't automatically trusted.

DailyStory includes a built-in URL shortener. When editing or creating a text message, use your full URL, and DailyStory will automatically convert it to a shortened URL. An added benefit is that each recipient will have their own unique, shortened URL.

NOTE: DAILYSTORY'S BUILT-IN TEXT MESSAGE URL SHORTENER IS ENABLED BY DEFAULT BUT CAN BE DISABLED, TOO.



#3 BUILD YOUR SMS REPUTATION

Similar to [warming up your email-sending reputation](#), you should warm up your text message sending number(s). Suddenly sending from a new number can cause recipients to opt-out, which may cause your message to get flagged.

When carriers see your text messages for the first time, it's best to keep your messages simple and concise. Most importantly, **don't use** links or any sales language to begin with but **do use** images with

your logo to help recipients know who the message is from. Better yet, if you can craft a message that requests a response, such as "Reply YES for more info," these replies help the carriers identify that your content is expected and welcomed by the recipient.

NOTE: CUSTOMER REPLIES TO TEXT MESSAGES CAN START AUTOMATIONS IN DAILYSTORY AND WILL BE SENT AS A NOTIFICATION TO YOUR TEAM MEMBERS, DEPENDING ON YOUR PREFERENCES.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SHORT CODES AND LONG CODES

In text messaging, there are short codes and long codes. A **short code** is a 5- to 6-digit number used to send SMS or MMS messages. For example, a spa can ask customers to text RELAX to 35353 to join its loyalty program. Short codes are special because they are designed to be used for promotional purposes, unlike long codes. A **long code** is a standard, 10-digit number that also can be used to send SMS or MMS messages. It's the type of phone number you're likely used to: (123) 456-7890.

One of the differences between the two is that short codes allow you to send thousands of messages at once, making them ideal for mass texting, while long codes can only send one message per second. A common practice is to register multiple long codes to share the load because short codes can be more costly and frankly more impersonal.

Short codes are usually rented from providers for

\$1,000 per quarter. Long codes are usually rented for about \$1 per month. The main differences have to do with send rates and allowed content. Long codes typically should send no more than about 200 messages per hour. Otherwise, you risk getting flagged for a carrier violation and seen as a potential spammer.

Whereas long codes will always pass through carrier filtering, short codes are not as restrictive. While short codes are more costly, they do allow for better content. They also have a higher delivery rate than long codes.

[Learn more about 10DLCs and what they can do](#)

#4 A PICTURE IS WORTH 1,000 WORDS

As discussed earlier, MMS is an extension of the SMS protocol. Unlike SMS, which is text-only, MMS can deliver a variety of media, such as images, videos and GIFs.

While there is an increased cost for sending text messages with images, there is increased value as well that cannot be ignored. Visuals consistently generate higher engagement rates across various marketing platforms. Think of a tweet with an image versus a text-only tweet. Images also help you convey the intended message while avoiding flagged words and phrases.

GOOD USES OF MMS MESSAGES

We typically recommend using MMS as part of your text messaging strategy if it is within your budget to do so.

A few good examples include:

- Brand identity for text messages help the recipient know who the message is from
- Use of words or terms that would cause carrier violations if sent as plain text
- QR codes for discounts or offers



POOR USES OF MMS MESSAGES

We see many marketers publishing large, beautiful high resolution images on social media. These platforms are fully capable of handling these large images, which are typically displayed on a desktop or app designed for images, like Instagram.

These large, high resolution images are typically not great candidates for MMS messages.

An ideal MMS message should be optimized for the dimensions of a mobile phone screen (16:9). The message file type should be a JPG and is ideally as small in size as possible (fewer than 300KB).

Of course, MMS messages can run up against carrier violations for such issues as the media file not being the right size for the carrier. Also, not all receivers' devices are MMS compatible.

When that's the case, the carrier may return an error indicating the device is not capable of receiving MMS messages.

#5 INVEST TIME AND EFFORT INTO YOUR CONTENT

Compelling content works alongside clean contact data for a successful SMS marketing campaign. In essence, content is truly king.

WHAT TO AVOID WITH YOUR CONTENT

As noted earlier, you'll want to avoid any carrier violations to the best of your ability. Even the word "only" can cause your text not to be delivered.

There are some exceptions to this, such as smaller send sizes and when sending using a short code.

In addition, it's critical to avoid language that is too sales-focused. Terms like "free," "deal," "sale" and others can flag carrier violations and prevent your text from being delivered as well.

WHAT TO FOCUS ON WITH YOUR CONTENT

This means that you have to get creative. Writing a short message that's conversational, not overly sales-focused and shares your brand doesn't just happen.

Remember, just because the words "deal" and "sale" can get flagged, you still want to think through ways to convey that there is a deal or a sale that a recipient should act on. Write a few drafts, get feedback from colleagues and use the DailyStory Deliverability Score tool to rate how successful your deliverability will be (according to typical carrier violations).

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRANSACTIONAL AND PROMOTIONAL TEXTS

There are two categories of text messages: transactional and promotional.

Transactional is tied to behaviors occurring or not occurring that trigger a message. Promotional tends to be more bulk messaging and focused on selling or promoting products. Transactional texts tend to be more successful, while bulk messaging can get flagged more and require time to develop your sender reputation.

[Click here for more about how you can write effective texts](#)

HOW DAILYSTORY CAN HELP YOU RUN A SUCCESSFUL TEXT MESSAGE CAMPAIGN

We built DailyStory to help business owners, like you, easily communicate with your customers. Letting you focus on running your business, not on the challenges of digital marketing. DailyStory does this by getting your content to the right people, at the right time, using the right medium. Our No. 1 priority is helping you!

The first section featured steps and recommendations for running a successful text message campaign. These should be common across any marketing platform you use. But, when using DailyStory, there is much more that can be done to boost the success of your campaign.

DailyStory is a marketing automation platform. It helps you take your existing and new marketing campaigns and execute them with process, consistency and measurement. It does this with a set of common marketing tools (text message, email, pop-ups, website, landing pages), provides reporting around those, but most importantly enables powerful automation to enable you to run automated campaigns.

The capabilities we share in this section are what we believe DailyStory can uniquely offer to marketers in a highly competitive digital world.

#1 SEND TARGETED MESSAGES TO SEGMENTS OF YOUR CONTACTS

Often, when working with various marketers, we find that their approach to text message marketing is to send the same message to their entire audience. For example, your business may have 10,000 contacts. In this case, a text message is sent to all 10,000 of your contacts.

While this can work, a complimentary and proven strategy is to segment your contacts and target each segment with the most appropriate message.

NOTE: AN AUDIENCE SEGMENT REFERS TO A GROUP OF CONTACTS WITH SHARED OR COMMON ATTRIBUTES THAT ARE GROUPED TOGETHER FOR MARKETING PURPOSES.

Here's an applicable scenario: You want to start a campaign, which will offer exclusive discounted deals to your customers who purchased from you within the last 90 days and have spent over \$1,000 since becoming a customer. And, you want to restrict this segment only to customers who are within a 25-mile radius of your location.

This type of audience segmentation ensures

that the accompanying offer is well targeted at potential customers.

DailyStory brings in data for segmentation through either import or integration. DailyStory is integrated with several platforms. Data from your sales system flows into DailyStory and makes it incredibly easy to build segments based on customer data. The following are some examples of segments:

- Never purchased
- Have not purchased within last 30, 60, or 90 days
- Engaged customers (clicked links or visited your website)
- Disengaged customers (have not clicked links or visited your website)
- New customers
- Customers that have spent more than \$1,000
- Customers with a subscription or membership expiring in the next 30 days
- Customers with more than 100 loyalty points
- Customers that purchase a particular product or service
- Customers that are within a 25-mile radius of your location



USE EXCLUSIONS IN YOUR SEGMENTATION

Segmentation is also used to build exclusion lists.

For example, if you are running an ongoing promotional campaign to target contacts who have not made a purchase yet, you'll want to ensure that once they do, they're no longer marketed to in that way in that campaign.

So, you can easily build exclusions to be reactive to how they just interacted with your business (by claiming the deal in this instance). Otherwise, you risk those contacts viewing your continued promotion that no longer applies to them as unwelcome.

IDENTIFY WHO IS ENGAGED AND NOT ENGAGED

We recommend building segments first of engaged and disengaged customers.

This simple segmentation will enable you to better target different content for different groups.

And, most importantly, you will not send text messages to people who have a higher likelihood of opting out or flagging your message as objectionable.

The ability to segment your customer data is a powerful tool within DailyStory. You can bring any data about your customers into the system and use that for segmentation.

REGIONALIZE YOUR MESSAGE DELIVERY

As discussed in the example above, using distance-based segmentation is a powerful and simple tool to better focus who receives your message.

We often advocate regionalizing the content if it is common for your business to have transient, out-of-state customers who can't always visit your location.

Targeting these customers with regular marketing is a guaranteed way to generate an opt-out if you're not careful.



#2 RELY ON INTELLIGENT SENDING

DailyStory's text message platform uses a world-class infrastructure for sending texts. Our experience and platform is used by thousands of marketers in a variety of industries. As such, there are numerous unique capabilities that DailyStory is able to offer.

For example, DailyStory can use a pool of long-code phone numbers when sending texts from your account. We also will make the recipients

"sticky" to the phone number that text messages were sent from. This ensures that even when you have multiple phone numbers, recipients will always receive your texts from the same number. Furthermore, if you have multiple area codes, your pool of long-code numbers will automatically match up with recipients based on area code, so a recipient with a 702 area code will receive texts from a 702 number.

AUTOMATED SENDING GUARDRAILS

DailyStory enforces rules when sending text messages, which are in place to help you better communicate and avoid simple mistakes.

- **A lead in a campaign is only sent a text message once.** When sending text messages, we will ensure that a lead in a campaign will only receive your text message once. This keeps you from sending the same text message by accident, and it allows the tracking of text message performance per unique send. What this means is that a text message can be scheduled repeatedly for the same campaign or sent again through an automation without any concern of over-sending the same text message to the same contact.
- **Auto-cool down once flagged. If a contact is flagged for a carrier violation,** DailyStory will auto-cooldown your account until it's appropriate to begin sending again.
- **The max contact frequency cannot be exceeded.** If the maximum number of messages per day a contact can receive is exceeded, the text message will not be sent.
- **Contact must be opted-in.** Contacts who are marked as "do not contact" or have opted out of text messages will not be sent any texts.
- **The contact must be Active.** The recipient must be an Active contact. Contacts marked as Deleted, for example, will not receive a text.
- **Lead status must be Active, Converted, or Nurturing.** When a contact is added to a campaign, it is called a lead. A lead in a campaign can only receive a text if the lead's status is Active, Converted or Nurturing.
- **The mobile number must be valid.** Invalid mobile numbers will not be sent to.
- **Mobile numbers are automatically de-duplicated.** While a recipient can only be sent a text message once, it is possible for multiple recipients to share the same mobile number. When both contacts are set to receive the text message in a campaign, both will be marked as have been sent the text message, but the text will only go to that shared number once.
- **"Do not contact" date must not be in the future.** If a contact's "do not contact until" date is set to a future date, the text message will not be sent.

While these examples are specific to text messaging, DailyStory's capabilities extend well beyond this as you begin running multi-channel marketing, such as email and more.

#3 BENEFIT FROM ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

DailyStory offers a proprietary Text Message Deliverability Score tool that is built into the text message editor.

This tool is built to help you avoid getting your message flagged as a carrier violation. In general, you should attempt a score of 85% or higher. And while this does not guarantee that your message won't be blocked, there is a much higher chance of delivery.

WHAT IMPACTS THE DELIVERABILITY SCORE?

DailyStory maintains a growing list of more than 2,500 words and phrases that are known to impact carrier deliverability.

This list is driven largely by artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning to analyze customer content and deliverability.

For example, a low impact phrase may be "get 15% off" whereas a higher impact word or phrase uses terms that may be illegal, such as "buy cannabis today" for a cannabis dispensary.

In addition to words and phrases, the URL used in your text message is important. As mentioned earlier, you should not use public URL






shorteners like bit.ly. Instead, simply include your URL and allow DailyStory to use its built-in shortener.

The reason for this recommendation is that shared shortener domains, like bit.ly, are used by a wide variety of messaging industry-wide, potentially including spam or unwanted content, which is filtered by carriers.

You also should always identify your business in every text message you send. While this does not impact your deliverability score, it is a best practice that helps prevent opt-outs and engages better with the recipient (since they know who is texting them).

Deliverability Score: less than 50%

This text message is a **carrier violation** and will likely have a very low delivery rate

-  The URL <https://bit.ly/ak3k3> appears to be a URL shortener - use the full URL instead
-  The word or phrase **20% off** may be considered an exaggeration
-  The word or phrase **cannabis** may be illegal and may significantly impact delivery
-  The word or phrase **flower** may be illegal and may significantly impact delivery
-  The word or phrase **price** may be considered pushy

Check Deliverability score

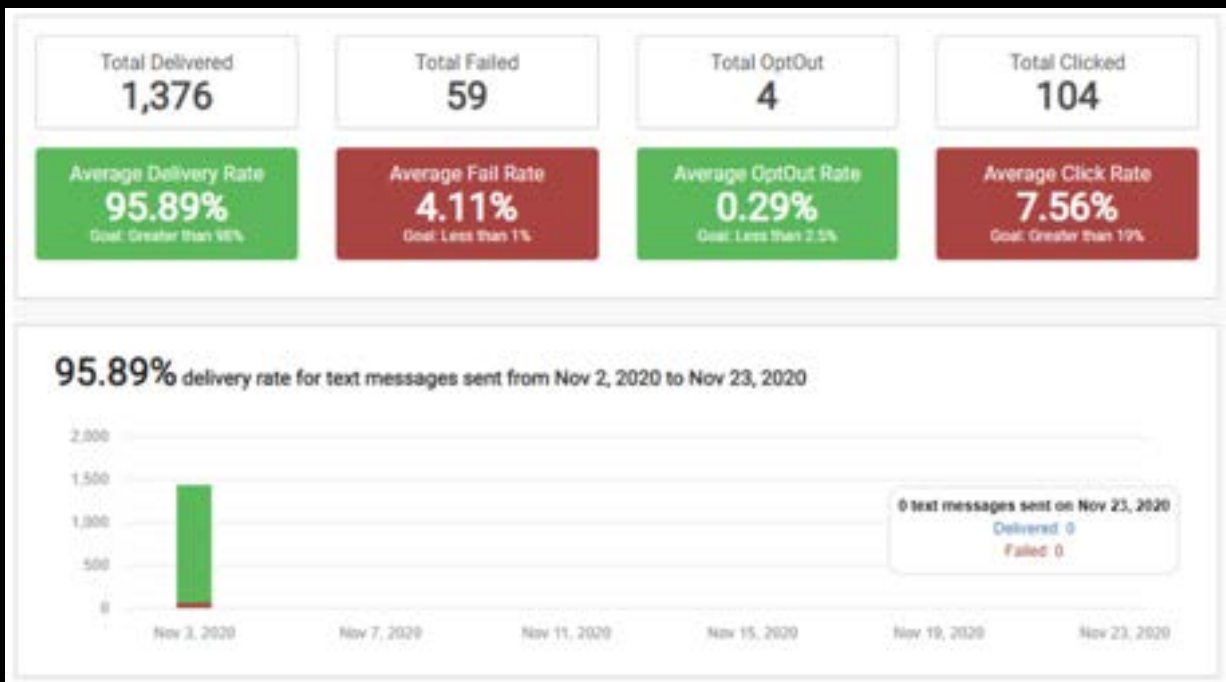
#4 MAKE DECISIONS USING REPORTS AND INSIGHTS

From the text messaging reports homepage, you will find a summary dashboard for total delivered, total failed, total opt-out and total clicked across all text messages within a selected time frame.

Beneath the dashboard, you will see a list of text messages for the time frame selected and the following summary information for each:

- Name of message
- Sent total
- Delivered
- Failed
- Opt-out
- Clicked
- Replied
- Last Sent date (you have the ability to sort this column by most or least recent)

Once you are inside the report for an individual text message, a new dashboard will appear with results that apply for that specific text message. The dashboard buttons also are clickable links to the supporting data for each metric.



VIEW REPLIES IN TEXT MESSAGE REPORTS

In addition, there is a Text Message Replied Report that shows you all of the replies received for any given text message.

When viewing All Text Messages under the Sent Text Messages Report, you can click on a number in the reply column to go directly to the replies report. From there, you can view all replies that were sent.

#5 SIMPLIFY KEYWORD MANAGEMENT

With DailyStory, it is possible to create keywords for text message replies from your recipients. When a keyword is texted back as a response, the contact can automatically be added to a campaign.

KEYWORD	CAMPAIGN	AUTO-RESPONSE	
LOYALTY	ALL Loyalty Customers	Thanks for your interest in our loyalty program. We'll send you more details to this number shortly.	Delete

Add keyword

This is exclusively used for adding people to a campaign. If you want to take an action when a keyword is received for a contact already in the campaign, we have an Autopilot automation that you can set up for that purpose.



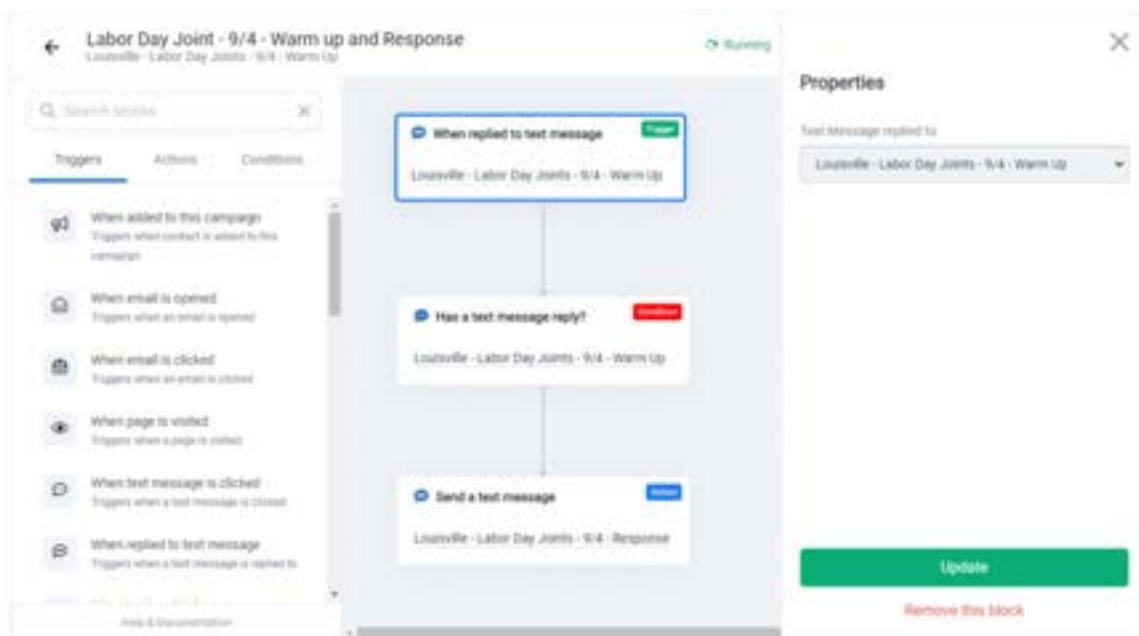
#6 AUTOMATE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE

DailyStory enables you to automate how text message replies are handled. When someone replies to your text message, several things happen:

- The text message reply can run an automation.
- The text message reply will get logged in the text message replies report.
- You will receive a notification that a text message reply was received.

RUNNING AN AUTOMATION

When a text message reply is received, if there is a trigger or condition set up for the text message, DailyStory's Autopilot will run that automation. For example, you could start an automation when a reply is received. This could be as simple as starting a drip campaign or replying back with a specific message.



You also can set an Autopilot condition to evaluate the text message reply and take specific actions. For example, if you sent a text message with an offer, such as "Reply YES to get this awesome deal," you could run a condition that would automate the series of actions when "YES" was received.

Automation is an incredibly powerful part of the DailyStory platform. And, you can automate everything from new member welcome campaigns, handling replies to text messages, taking actions when people visit your website and so much more. It is one of the most popular capabilities with our customers.

#7 LEVERAGE A MULTI-CHANNEL MARKETING PLATFORM

Email marketing is an incredible opportunity for any business not already using it.

In fact, about 91 percent of U.S. consumers use email, and it is estimated that for every \$1 spent on email marketing, an average of \$38 is gained, making the ROI (return on investment) a potential 3,800 percent.

Emails also are not as restrictive as SMS marketing and serve as a perfect compliment to an overall digital marketing strategy that already features text messages.

Click here for
48 more statistics
about the value
of email
marketing



IN CONCLUSION

We hope this guide helps you run a successful text messaging campaign and provides some good tips. Whatever business you are marketing, it's important to find partners that understand this competitive digital marketing environment and help you maximize your marketing investments.

At DailyStory, we help business owners, like you, easily communicate with your customers. We're focused on helping marketers put process, consistency and measurement around your marketing campaigns. Doing so enables you to make decisions based on performance versus what you think may be working.

Our automation features make marketing easy. Our reporting focuses on your business outcomes. We offer powerful email marketing that gets emails to the intended inboxes, with reliable SMS marketing that delivers.

If you would like to learn more about DailyStory and how we've helped other marketers, please contact us as hello@dailystory.com or visit us at dailystory.com.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following is a compiled list of resources shared throughout this guide:

- [Read more about text message marketing compliance.](#)
- [Read more about carrier violations and how to avoid them.](#)
- [Read more about personalization and how it is truly one-on-one marketing.](#)
- [Read more about how you can write effective text messages.](#)
- [See 48 statistics we've compiled that show the value of email marketing.](#)

