

What is Text Messaging?

Text messaging, or **texting** is the common term for the sending of "short" (originally 160 characters or fewer, including spaces) text messages from mobile phones using the Short Message Service (SMS). It is available on most digital mobile phones and some personal digital assistants with on-board wireless telecommunications. The individual messages which are sent are called text messages or, more colloquially, texts or SMS.

The most common application of the service is person-to-person messaging, but text messages are also often used to interact with automated systems, such as ordering products and services for mobile phones, or participating in contests.

According to both the Mobile Marketing Association and Pew Internet & American Life Project Surveys, 40% of US Mobile phone users text. The split by age group is as follows: 13–27's: 82% text, 15–37's 73% text, 28–39's: 44% text, 40–49's: 18% text. The amount of texts being sent in the United States has gone up over the years as the price has gone down to an average of \$0.10 per text sent and received.

What is Text Messaging Marketing?

About 85% of all cell phones in the U.S. are capable of sending and receiving text messages. As text enabled cell phones become more common, another method of communicating with your workforce is now available. Much like email marketing, sending text messages, sometimes called "thumb mail," to cell phone requires some guidelines.

Since the use of text messaging as a promotional tool is still in its infancy, it is very important to discuss this idea extensively with the Local Joint Committee to ensure that they are comfortable with this form of promoting classes. If you decide to use text messaging, it is critical that the LJC surveys the workforce to see how they feel about receiving text messages. Personal privacy is important to all of us. You may find that texting would be viewed as an invasion of privacy that would not be welcomed. If, however, a majority of your employees approve of the idea, use the rest of this document to guide your planning.

Where do we start?

First of all, you have to collect cell phone numbers of prospective class attendees and get their permission to send text messages to their cell phones. This can be done in the same way you collect email addresses; through the use of an information form. Be sure to include a statement that gives the employee the chance to opt in or opt out of receiving text messages. If they indicate they do not want to receive text messages, respect that request and do not include their phone number on your text message list.



Joe Ubben, President
13 Lincolnway, Valparaiso, IN 46383
219-508-8418 – joe@breakawayperformance.net

Why Use Text Messaging Software?

While it is easy to send a text message to one cell phone, it is much more difficult to send a text message to a large number of cell phone numbers. Consequently, the use of Text Messaging Software hosted on your computer or a Web-based service makes sending a message to hundreds of phone simultaneously easy. It is easy to find text messaging software or Web-based services through an internet search. Like email messaging services, text messaging services require you to set up an account and pay a small monthly fee to use the software.

Once you set up an account or download the software, you can access the software, type in your text message and schedule the day and time the message will be sent. Most of the vendors we have reviewed provide a user-friendly format that makes it easy to use the software. During the set up process, you will be asked to import your cell phone distribution list. Most of the text messaging software allows you to import these phone numbers from a variety of different database formats.

In addition, most vendors' software allows you to select special groups within your list of cell phone numbers. For example, if you want to promote a class that will primarily appeal to women, you can select the females on your cell phone list and only those individuals will receive that message.

Advantages of Using Text Messaging Marketing

Text messaging is ideally suited to promote interest in your class offerings. It is relatively easy to use and has several advantages including:

- **Ease Of Use** – Text Messaging Marketing is simple to use. It is web-based, which means that there is no software to install. You can check on your campaigns and launch new ones from any computer with an Internet connection or even directly from your own cell phone.
- **Cost Effective** – Our current economic climate is extremely challenging. There is a good chance that your customers are spending less. A mobile marketing campaign allows you to keep talking to your workforce without the upfront costs of traditional printing costs or ad buys. Text messaging allows you to design and execute targeted campaigns.
- **Control** – Everyone needs a helping hand every now and then, and a premier mobile marketing firm is always there to help you get started and answer your questions. Text messaging software allows you to conceive and send messages on your own.
- **Data** – When you run your own text marketing you control the data. Names, phone numbers, response rates – whatever data you collect, it is all yours.