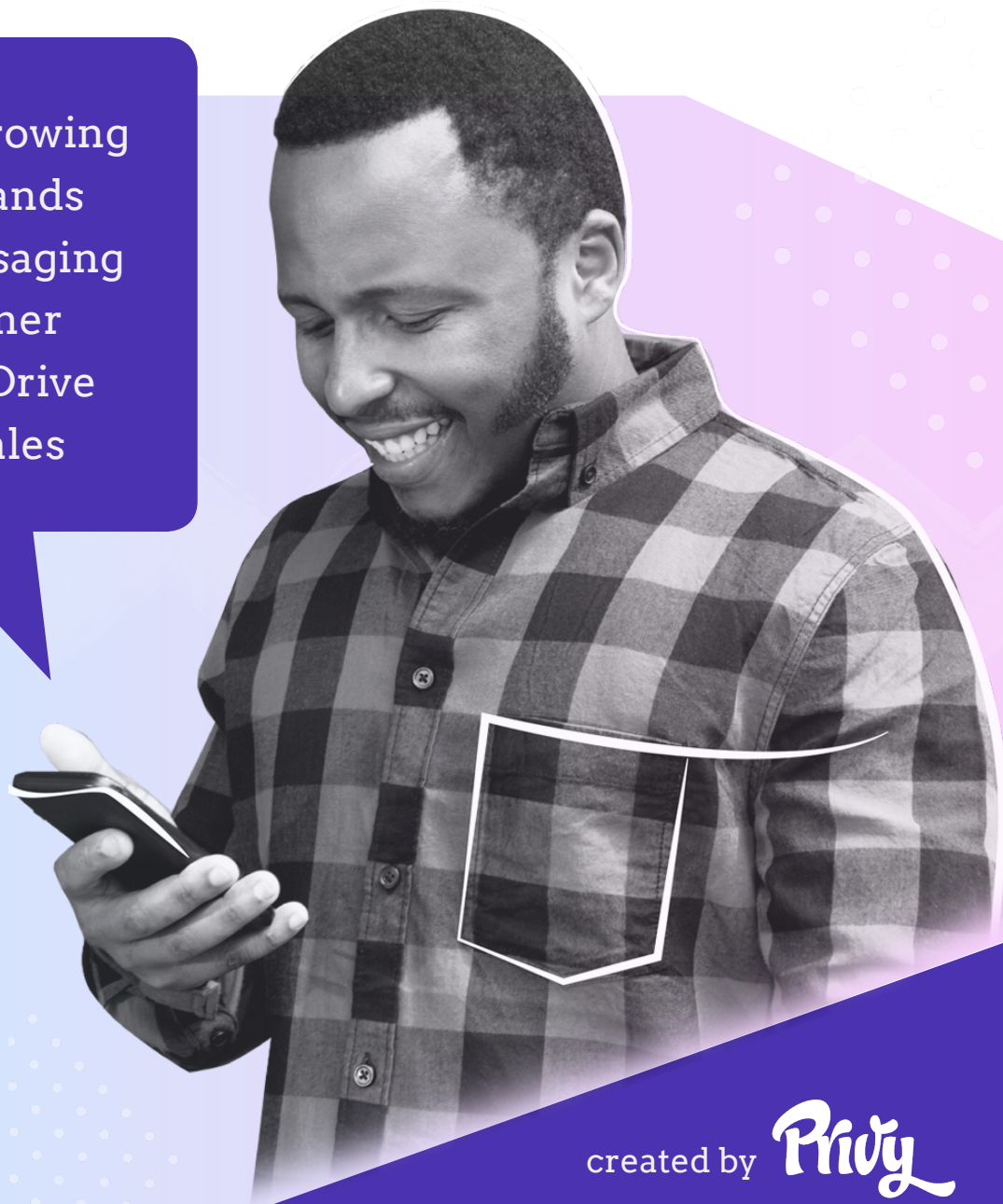# The Ultimate Guide to Text Message (SMS) Marketing for Ecommerce

3 Ways Small & Growing **Ecommerce** Brands Can Use Text Messaging to Build Customer Relationships & Drive More Online Sales

created by **Privy**

The Rise of Text Message Marketing

Attention all marketers, entrepreneurs, and anyone who runs an online store: Ready or not, text message (SMS) marketing is coming. Actually, scratch that:

Text message marketing is here.

While it may not be as ubiquitous as email marketing (yet), text message marketing has already proved itself to be an incredibly valuable channel, especially among ecommerce businesses. There are businesses out there right now using text messages to generate hundreds of thousands and, in some cases, even millions of dollars in revenue.

Ecommerce businesses that haven't adopted text message marketing are leaving all those dollars on the table. Meanwhile, businesses that are using SMS, but using it ineffectively, are missing out on additional revenue -- or worse, they could be scaring away customers (e.g. by texting too aggressively.)

Who is this guide for?

There's no denying that for a marketer, entrepreneur, or store owner, SMS can be a tricky channel to navigate. That's why for the past two months, our team at Privy has been testing text marketing with ten of our customers and building out a playbook based on what works (and what doesn't). Our goal with this guide is to teach you proper text messaging etiquette and to help you build a text marketing strategy that not only generates revenue, but that your customers love.

If you're a newcomer to the world of text message marketing, don't worry, we've got you covered. In this guide, we'll show you how to build and grow your list of text messaging contacts from scratch, and how to use texts to develop long-lasting relationships with your customers.

Already have experience with text marketing? There's plenty in this guide for you, too. In addition to covering the basics, we'll show you how to take your strategy to the next level. From increasing open and response rates, to recovering abandoned carts with perfectly timed texts, this guide will help you fine-tune your approach to text marketing so you can start seeing better results.

What's inside?

The goal of this guide is to provide you with a comprehensive understanding of what text message marketing is, how ecommerce businesses can benefit from it, and why it's crucial that businesses adopt text marketing sooner rather than later. (Hint: your competitors will start sending texts eventually, assuming they haven't started already.)

Inside, we also share concrete, actionable steps you can take to build and optimize a text marketing strategy. Specifically, you'll learn about three "SMS recipes" you can whip up in thirty minutes or less. It's a 3-step approach to transforming text messaging from a nothing-burger channel into a channel that has 7-figure revenue potential.

Here's the tl;dr version:

- **Recipe #1**: Build your text subscriber list using email and website displays (e.g. popups, bars, banners).

- **Recipe #2**: Follow up with new subscribers right away with an after-signup text.

- **Recipe #3**: Save sales by sending cart abandonment texts.

For those of you who are already doing text marketing and have these text messaging recipes in place and are happy with how those texts are performing … first off, good for you. Seriously. You're ahead of the curve. And secondly, feel free to skip ahead to later in this guide, where we'll talk about some of the things you should NEVER do as a text message marketer. Keep reading and you'll also learn, step-by-step, how to use text marketing to promote new products and how to build buzz for those new products weeks before they launch.
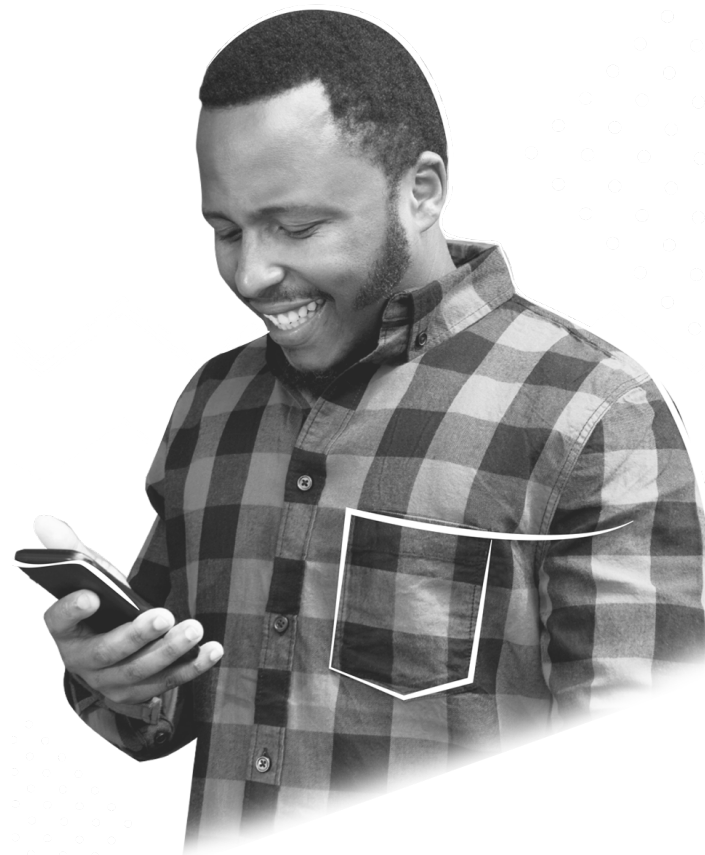
SMS vs. Text Messaging

"SMS marketing, text message marketing, text marketing: They're all the same thing, right?" In a word, yes.

Technically speaking, SMS, or "short message service," is the world's most widely used text messaging protocol, which allows you to send short, text-based messages. As a result of its popularity, SMS has effectively become a synonym for text messaging itself, even though many of the texts we send today are actually sent via MMS, or "Multimedia Messaging Service." (Unlike SMS, MMS gives you the ability to include images, videos, and other multimedia in your texts.)

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01. Why Text Messaging Matters

Look, we get it: as an ecommerce marketer, as a store owner, as an entrepreneur, as a human, you're probably hesitant about using text messaging as a marketing channel. Or, at the very least, you approach it with a great amount of caution. You worry about being perceived as pushy or invasive. And to be clear, that's a good thing.

In order for text message marketing to work, you need to develop trust with the customers and potential customers who've opted in to receive your texts. If you bombard their phones with spammy messages all day and night, that trust evaporates. But the important takeaway here is this: It can be done. You can turn texting into a channel that A) customers love, and, in turn, B) generates revenue.

The reality is that some people actually do prefer receiving texts from businesses over email -- especially when those texts offer something they can derive value from immediately (e.g. a limited-time offer or coupon code). So, why not give that segment of your audience the option? Even if it's a small segment, the upside is enormous -- more sales! -- and the investment required to do it is minimal. After you've built your list, you can set up a text messaging sequence in a few minutes just like you would an email sequence.

In today's crowded marketplace (a marketplace where Amazon claims a lion's share of ecommerce sales), getting your online store to stand out is more difficult than ever. SMS gives you an edge… at least for now. Because your competitors? They're going to hop on the bandwagon eventually. So now is your chance to become a texting leader and to build trust with your subscribers before your competitors join in and start crowding the channel.

Keep reading to learn more about why SMS is such a crucial channel for modern ecommerce businesses.

Owned, Not Rented

As the CEO and founder of Shopify, Tobi Lütke, once tweeted: "Email lists and website are the two only things you can own on the internet. Everything else is just rented."
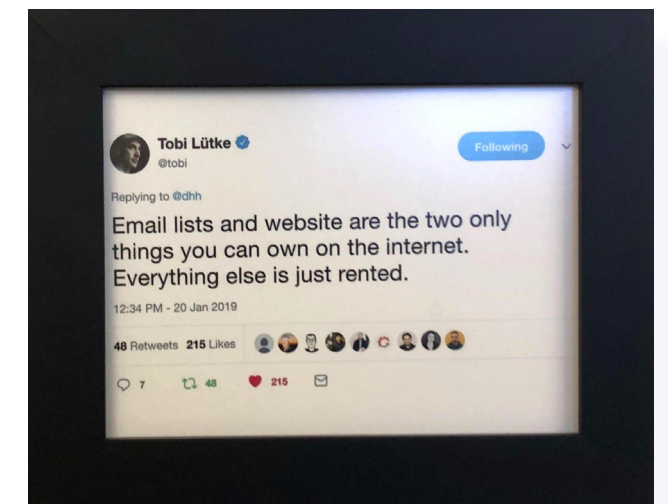
At Privy, this tweet resonated with us so much that we framed it and hung it in our office. However, we also began to realize that there's a third marketing channel that belongs in this "owned, not rented" category, even if it's not as popular as those other two channels: Text messaging.

Just like your emails and your website, text messaging is something that you have complete creative control over. You can brand your texts however you like, send them whenever you like, and share whatever content in them that you like. It's a

channel that you own outright and that you can use to drive repeatable, predictable results.

In contrast, when you share content on Facebook, Twitter, or Youtube, or buy search ads on Google, or sell products on Amazon, you are merely renting space from those companies. At any moment, they could change their terms of service or tweak their algorithms, and, as a result, throw your entire strategy out of whack. Case in point: A recent Google algorithm update led to 30% to 40% drops in traffic (source: *Inc.*) for some businesses -- that's huge! Imagine relying on that traffic for growing your business, only to have it disappear overnight and have it be completely out of your control.

That's what makes owned channels, like text messaging, so important: You don't have to play by somebody else's rules. You're not renting an audience -- once you build it, you own it forever, and you're free to reach out directly to that audience and personalize the experience however you like.

Something else to keep in mind: As far as owned channels go, text messaging is still relatively new. As we mentioned earlier, that means you have an opportunity to be an early adopter and to start building your text list NOW before your competitors crowd the space. And here's the really good news: because people receive and read text messages so quickly (it happens almost instantaneously) you'll start seeing results from texting within days, or hours, or even minutes.
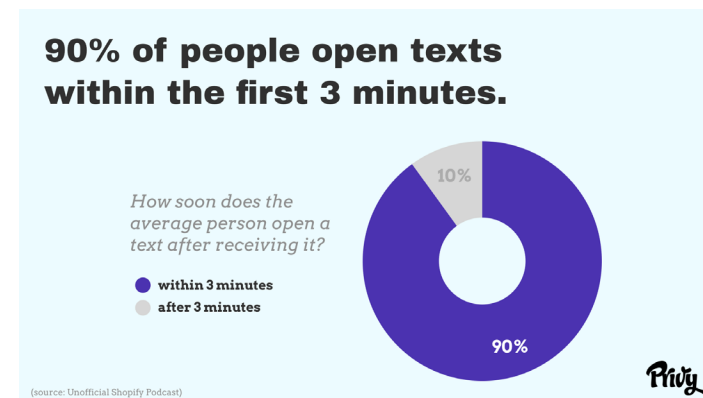
Faster Than Email

Imagine this hypothetical:

You text someone about a discount. They click the link in your message and go to your online store. They make a purchase.

According to the Unofficial Shopify Podcast, that

entire chain of events -- from text to sale -- could happen in less than 30 seconds.

Thirty.

Seconds.

Of course, that's just a hypothetical. But when you consider how quickly most people are reading their text messages after receiving them -- 90% of people open texts within the first 3 minutes -- it's not hard to imagine a scenario where a text-to-sale happens in less than 30 seconds. Text messaging, after all, is a real-time communication channel. It wasn't built for displaying or sharing vast swaths of information (re: websites and email). Instead, SMS was built for speed: short messages delivered and opened in a short amount of time.

90% of people open texts within the first 3 minutes.

How soon does the average person open a text after receiving it?

● within 3 minutes
● after 3 minutes

10%

90%

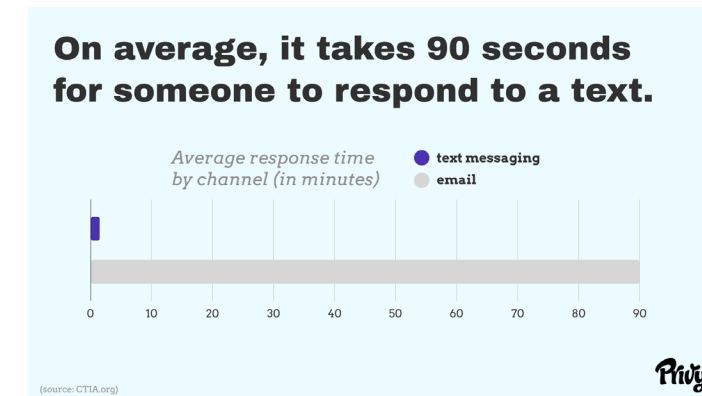(source: Unofficial Shopify Podcast)

As we're sure you're already aware, you never see that kind of speed with email marketing. Even if you're sharing compelling, lovable email content, most folks just aren't checking their email inboxes all that frequently. And that's part of what makes texting so unique: You can create a sense of urgency to a degree that just isn't possible with other channels.

For example, with SMS, you could share a discount code that expires in an hour, or even 15 minutes, with the reasonable expectation that a majority of people will see the message (and that a percentage of those people will click-through and purchase). Because in addition to opening texts quickly, most people take
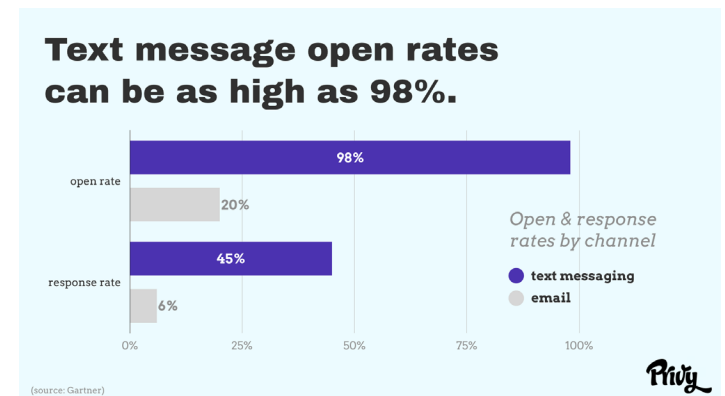
action on their texts quickly as well, i.e. by clicking a link or sending a response.

According to CTIA.org, **on average, it takes 90 seconds for someone to respond to a text**, compared to 90 minutes for someone to respond to an email.

On average, it takes 90 seconds for someone to respond to a text.

Average response time by channel (in minutes)   ● text messaging   ● email

0   10   20   30   40   50   60   70   80   90

(source: CTIA.org)

While email is the channel for "I'll get to it later," text is the channel for "this is happening right now." Think about how important of a distinction that is, especially during the year's biggest shopping days. Imagine if on Black Friday and Cyber Monday -- days when essentially every ecommerce business is promoting discounts -- you could cut through the noise and give your customers the opportutiy to claim a discount (and make a purchase) almost instantaneously.

In addition to being the faster channel, SMS is also the more reliable and less saturated channel when compared to email. Overall, **open rates for SMS can be as high as 98%**, compared to just 20% for email. Meanwhile, SMS response rates can be as high as 45%, compared to just 6% for email (according to research from Gartner).

Text message open rates can be as high as 98%.

open rate   98%
             20%

response rate   45%
                 6%

0%   25%   50%   75%   100%

Open & response rates by channel
● text messaging
● email

(source: Gartner)

Now, all this being said, our point here isn't that you should throw away your email lists and dedicate all of your time and resources to texting instead. Email is still incredibly popular and is still an incredibly valuable channel for ecommerce businesses.

At Privy, we recently conducted a survey of 500 consumers and found that 80% regularly use email to get updates from brands -- that's 30x more than the next closest channel. We also found that people prefer using email for the broadest of use cases. Translation: Email is a catch-all for all types of branded content: promotions, events, sales, newsletters, etc. In contrast, people prefer to hear from brands via text only after they've taken specific actions, like signing up to receive updates or adding items to their carts.

Clearly, SMS and email are two very different channels designed for two very different types of communication. Mastering both of them and using them to complement one another is a surefire way to get an edge over your competitors.

Keep reading to learn how to incorporate texting into your overall ecommerce strategy.

02. Three Recipes For Growing Your Business With Text Messages

Recipe #1: Build your text subscriber list instantly using tactics you already know.

Ingredients:

- Dedicated landing page offering discount in exchange for SMS signup
- Website popups, bars, & banners that link to landing page
- Email that links to landing page

So, you've decided to give this whole text message marketing thing a shot. The next step is to dig into your CRM or list of contacts and start searching for phone numbers… right? After all, you've probably already collected the phone numbers of hundreds or maybe even thousands of customers. Sooo you can start texting them all right away… right?

Not so fast.

Before you text any of your contacts, you need to get them to opt in. Even if they've already gone through your checkout process, or signed up for a newsletter, or opted in for email updates, until you have their express permission to send them text messages, your hands are tied. (Note: for a deeper dive into the specific laws and regulations that govern texting, check out Twilio's *Guide to U.S. Messaging Compliance*.)

Fortunately, getting folks to opt in to receive your texts isn't as hard as you might think.

Step 1: Set up a dedicated landing page. Let's face it: the promise of receiving text messages from a brand in exchange for entering your phone number isn't all that enticing of an offer. Most people are protective of their phone numbers, even moreso than with their email addresses. That's why as an ecommerce business, it's crucial that you offer something of value -- like a store discount -- in exchange for that initial opt-in.

This is a tactic you might already be using to drive email signups. But because people are usually more reluctant to share their phone numbers, you need to sweeten the pot. For example, if your typical email signup discount is 10%, the *Unofficial Shopify Podcast* recommends bumping that discount up to 12% (or higher) for a text signup. To inject a sense of urgency into the signup process, you can also make the discount available for a limited time only.

Now, when a person comes to your landing page to claim that discount, make sure that you are very explicit with your language in regards to what they're signing up for. At Privy, for example, we often use the phrase, "Join our text subscriber list to get your limited time offer." Or, to quote the *Unofficial Shopify Podcast*, you could write something like, "Sign up for our best deals and discounts through SMS." Whatever language you use on your landing page, just make sure it's abundantly clear to people that they know what they're signing up for.
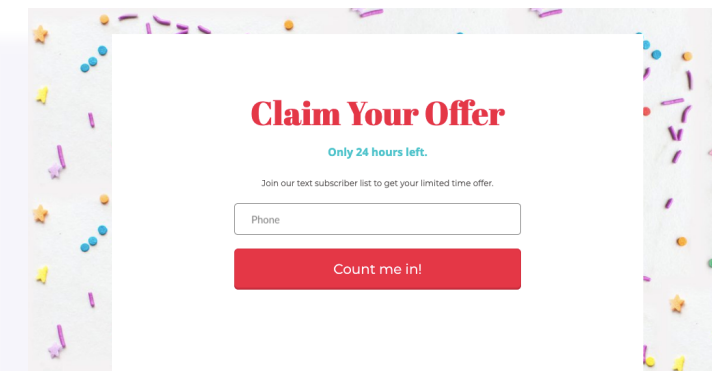

Pssst. One last thing before we move on to Step 2: If you need help getting a landing page setup -- especially one that fits snugly into a multi-channel marketing strategy -- Privy's got you covered. Our free landing pages (available at *Privy.com/landingpages*) are mobile-friendly, simple to build, and you can easily track how well they perform across different social networks and ad platforms.

Step 2: Send people to your landing page! Once you have your landing page set up and your discount in place, the natural next step is to tell people about that discount and to send people to your landing page. This is a play you've likely run dozens if not hundreds (or thousands) of times already.

To entice people who are already visiting your website, promote the text signup discount using targeted popups, bars, and/or banners. Here's a quick breakdown of the different display types you can use…

**Popup** = a window that literally "pops up" over top of your website. You can configure popups to appear when people show exit intent, i.e. they're about to navigate away from your website. It's a great way to actively capture a person's attention.
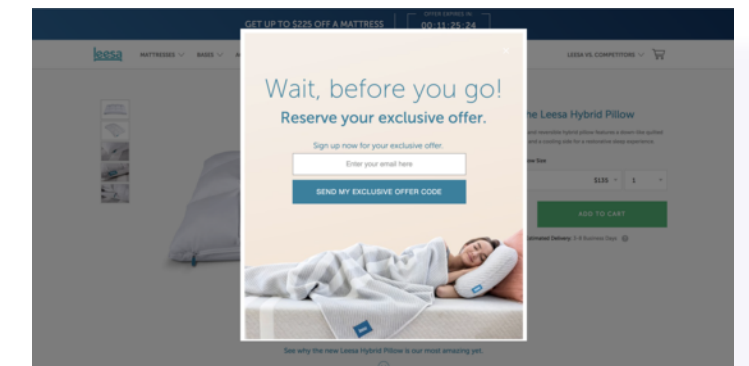
Bar = a band of text that sits at the top or bottom of your website. It's a subtler, more passive approach to letting people know about your signup discount.
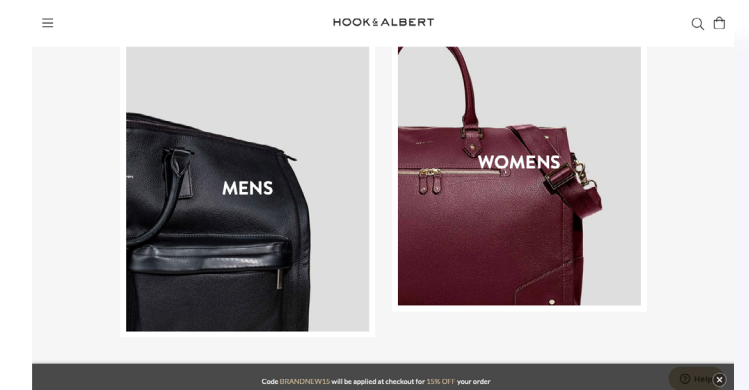
Banner = the middle-ground between a popup and a bar. Sitting at the top of your website, it's less "in your face" than a popup but larger and flashier than a bar.
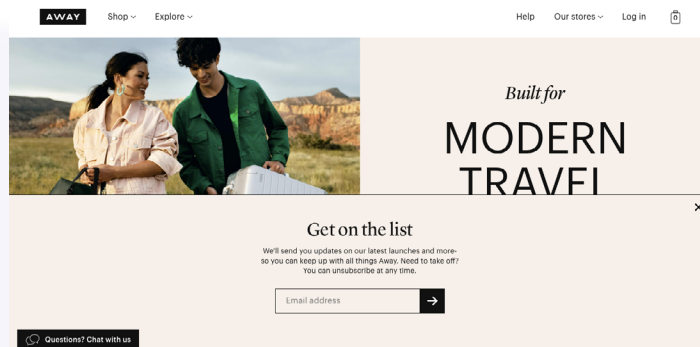
Of course, while popups, bars, and banners are great for encouraging people who are already on your website to opt in to receive your text messages, what about folks who aren't on your website? That's where "old faithful" -- email -- comes into play.

While not everyone on your email list will be interested in receiving texts, it can't hurt to send off an email letting everyone know about the opportunity. In addition to telling people about the initial signup discount, you can use this email to share how you plan to use texts if they do signup (e.g. for sharing exclusive offers, for following up after people take specific actions on your website, etc.). By being upfront and honest about why you're asking folks to opt in, you can -- at best -- win some of those people over, and -- at worst -- avoid coming off as spammy.

Email vs. SMS

"But wait... if you use email and SMS simultaneously, won't the two channels cannibalize each other?" In a word, no.

Far from cannibalizing each other, email and SMS complement each other. That's because whenever you can drive more engagement, your likelihood of making a sale goes up. As ecommerce consultant Kurt Elster explains: "It's funny that small businesses have this idea that, 'Oh, these channels will cannibalize each other,' when you would think most merchants would realize from experience, 'Hey, when I increase the total number of touch points across channels, or within a channel, I'm more successful.' And could you imagine Proctor & Gamble being like, 'Well, we can't use billboards, that's gonna cannibalize our TV commercials!' No one would ever say that."

(source: Unofficial Shopify Podcast)

Recipe #2: Turn new subscribers into customers with your after-signup text.

Ingredients:

• Automated text triggered by signup

• Unique discount code

• Link to store

Alright, let's assume you've completed Recipe #1. So you've got a dedicated landing page for text signups, you've come up with an enticing sign-up discount, and you've just sent out a bunch of emails and added popups, bars, and banners to your website promoting said discount...

Where does the experience go next?

That's what Recipe #2 is all about: Once someone opts in to receive your brand's text messages, how do you start? What's the first text message you send? This is the icebreaker, that nerving-racking first impression that you don't want to mess up. (And, anecdotally, for many ecommerce marketers, this first text or "welcome" text ends up being one the highest-performing texts they send. Sooo yeah, no pressure.)

The good news: We have a tried and true process for creating an after-signup text that will keep your subscribers coming back to your store.

Step 1: Automate it. Time is of the essence when sending follow-up messages. And while that might be true for every marketing channel, it's especially relevant with text messaging given that real-time responses are the norm. Ideally, you want to be reaching out to people when they're at their most interested, i.e. when they're already engaging and have your brand top of mind. That's why it's key that you have your first text message arrive on people's phones automatically, immediately after they opt in. (And FYI: For that, you'll need to use a text marketing tool.)
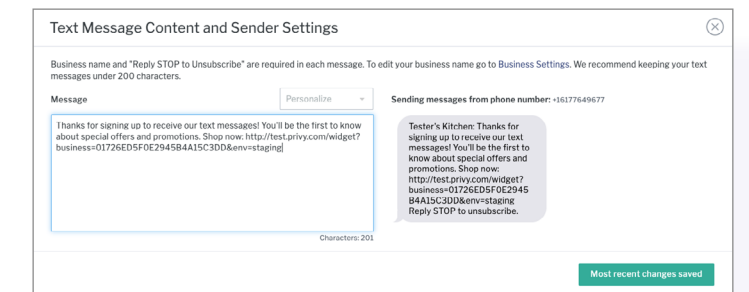
Pictured above: setting up a text message using Privy Text

If you've ever set up an automated email before, you already know how this works: When someone new subscribes to your list, you have that event trigger an automated follow-up (a.k.a. welcome email) that goes out right away. It's the same basic principle when setting up text message follow-ups. From a technical perspective, there's really no learning curve to get started. What most beginners struggle with isn't figuring out how to send text messages, but knowing what to say.

Step 2: Welcome subscribers & remind them why they signed up. Texting is short-form content at its finest. Ultimately, you want to add as much value as possible into as few characters as possible. So when crafting text messages, you need to make every word count.

For your very first text, we recommend you start by thanking people for signing up and/or welcoming them to the channel. At Privy, our default opener is, "Thanks for signing up to receive our text messages!" It's clear, concise, and it reminds people up-front that, yes, they opted in to receive these messages.

After your opener, take the opportunity to reinforce the value of being a text subscriber. While some people who sign up to receive your texts might only be in it for the discount and will consider unsubscribing immediately after they redeem that discount, you still have this one text to win them over. If you can sell them on the fact that they'll keep getting discounts and other benefits if they remain subscribed, you might be able to convert them. At Privy, our go-to line for this is, "You'll be the first to know about special offers and promotions."

Thanks for signing up to receive our text messages!

You'll be the first to know about special offers and promotions.

Step 3: Share a discount and/or link to your store. Now it's time to put your money where your mouth is. If you offered a discount, pony up and share the code. And be sure to end your text message with a link to your store. You can also stick the phrase "Shop now:" in front of your link to create a mini call-to-action (CTA).

However, sharing discounts and store links isn't all that you can do with an after-signup text. For example, you could use it instead to promote a "VIP" customer group: a place where highly engaged (and highly knowledgeable) customers can go to talk about your products. And here's the kicker: It's invite-only. In order for people to join this exclusive conversation, they first need to opt in to receive your texts. Then you can send them an invitation link in the after-signup text with the message: "Here's your invite to our insider FB group."

Reply STOP to Unsubscribe

"Do I have to worry about including an unsubscribe option when writing my texts?" Nope, we got you.

Text marketing tools, like Privy's, typically take care of all the "legalese" for you, so all you have to worry about is your marketing message. Specifically, our text marketing tool automatically adds your business name to the front of every text and adds the language "Reply STOP to Unsubscribe" to the end of every text -- both of which are required in order to keep your texts compliant with anti-spam laws."

# Recipe #3: Save sales with cart abandonment texts.

Ingredients:

- Automated text triggered by inactivity or cart value
- Unique discount code
- Link to scart

Here are the facts: **On average, more than 70% of ecommerce carts are abandoned.** For 72% of merchants, recovering these abandoned carts is a top business challenge... and it's easy to see why: As of today, ecommerce businesses with average order values of between $100 and $500 recover just 4% of their abandoned carts, while ecommerce businesses with average order values of below $50 recover a measly 3%.

Obviously, there's room for improvement. And at Privy, we've pinpointed a fundamental flaw in the way ecommerce marketers approach cart abandonment. It turns out, a lot of us aren't actually sending cart abandonment follow-ups, we're sending checkout abandonment follow-ups. Our emails, website displays, and text messages don't get triggered until someone has reached the checkout page and has gotten far enough along in the process that they've entered their contact information.)

Most abandoned cart strategies don't kick in until checkout.
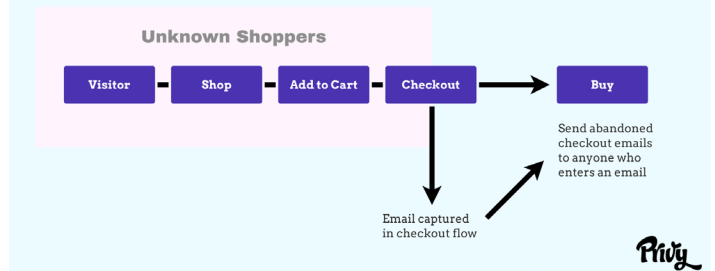
Here's a better approach: Target anyone on your list who's added something to their cart, even if they don't get to the checkout page. Here's how you do it...

Step 1: Schedule texts based on cart value / hours since last seen. Just like with an after-signup text, you can automate your cart abandonment texts using a text marketing tool. Only in this case, instead of a signup being the trigger event, you'll want your text messages to trigger after A) the value of the item(s) in a person's cart exceeds a certain threshold (e.g. $100), or B) a person adds an item or items to their cart but then goes inactive for a certain amount of time (e.g. an hour) and never completes the checkout process.

With both types of targeting, you don't have to limit yourself to a single text. You can set up a sequence of texts that continues until someone takes an action. For example, your first text could be the one that goes out immediately after a cart is inactive for an hour or after someone's cart value reaches the threshold you've set ahead of time. This is that first nudge. "Hey, come back! You left something in your cart…" Your next reminder text could come two days later, and your third text could come five days after that. But these are just rough guidelines -- a jumping-off point. Ultimately, you'll want to experiment with and fine-tune your text sequences to figure out the timing that works best for your specific subscribers.

Step 2: Give people a reason to go back to their carts. The goal of sending cart abandonment texts is not only to remind people that they've left items in their carts, but also to convince them that it's in their best interest to go back and make a purchase. In most cases, you're not going to be able to make a convincing argument using words alone. That's why we recommend offering a discount or some other perk, like free shipping.

If you send a sequence of cart abandonment texts, you could even ramp up the value of what you're offering as your sequence progresses. For example, in your first text, maybe you remind people about their abandoned items and -- based on what's in their carts -- give an inventory update to create a sense of urgency.

> • ex. "Pssst. We noticed that you had X in your cart and just wanted to let you know that there are only 10 left in stock. Grab yours now before it's too late!"

With your next text, which you can schedule to send a few days after the first, you can start being more direct with your language and offer a small perk to sweeten the deal. To increase urgency, consider adding a time constraint to your offer (e.g. have it expire within an hour).

> • ex. "Hey! Still thinking about X? If you complete your purchase within the next hour, shipping's on us!!"

Of course, you should save your most enticing offer for the final text in your sequence, which can go out a few days after the second text. Typically, this

offer is a discount on the item(s) in the cart and comes with a time constraint.

> • ex. "Hi! Complete your purchase of X and receive 10% off your order. Offer ends today at 10p.m."

Step 3: Share a cart link. The final but arguably most crucial step when setting up your cart abandonment texts: at the end of every text, **include a dynamic link that takes subscribers directly to their carts.**

Remember, speed is what sets texting apart from email and other marketing channels. By including a cart link in your texts, you're making the buying process as quick and as easy as possible for your subscribers. It's a better experience for them and leads to more sales for you.

03. What NOT to Do With Text

If you're reading this guide, you most likely already know what it takes to be a good marketer. The same rules apply with texting:

> • **Be human**
> • **Be authentic**
> • **Be honest**
> • **Put in the work**
> • **Tell your story**
> • **Treat potential customers like they're friends or family members (not leads in a database)**

That being said, because texting is such a personal form of communication, and because using it for marketing is still relatively new, there is a certain etiquette you need to follow. But rather than telling you what to do, it's easier to tell you what *not* to do...

DON'T text people unless they've opted in.

We mentioned this before and we're mentioning it again. Why? Because it's super, super important. Texting without permission is a surefire way to land yourself and your business in trouble. So before you start setting up automated sequences and rattling off texts, do the work upfront of growing your text

subscriber list. (FYI: We actually built compliance directly into Privy Text, which means we make it impossible for you to text someone you're not supposed to. Only people who've opted in can receive your messages.)

This is one of the biggest mistakes we see ecommerce marketers make: they get ahead of themselves. They get excited to start marketing to people and they forget that they need to build an audience first.

DON'T use text solely as a "flash sale" channel.

Yes, offering discounts can be a great tactic for increasing (and saving) sales at your ecommerce business. And as you learned earlier, in addition to using time-constrained discounts (e.g. "This offer expires in one hour") for recovering abandoned carts, you can use them to convince people to opt in to receive your texts in the first place.

But here's the thing: If you treat text messaging solely as a channel for running these limited-time promotions or flash sales, you might end up turning people off. Think about it: if the content of your text messages is always "Buy this now! Last chance! Only one hour left!", you've effectively transformed the channel into a never-ending infomercial.

When texting, you can't always be selling. You need to intersperse sales with other types of content. For example, you could share…

- blog articles you think your subscribers would find interesting
- product reviews / press coverage
- happy birthday messages, complete with GIFs, emojis, etc. (this is a great opportunity to show off your brand's personality)

At the end of the day, if you treat text as a channel for building relationships -- and not merely as a megaphone for shouting about discounts -- it'll be easier to make the sale when the time comes.

DON'T have your texts come from some anonymous corporate entity.

In order to make your marketing text messages feel as human as possible, have them come from an actual human… like you! Or from someone on your team.

Now, as we mentioned before, in order to stay compliant with spam laws, you need to have the name of your company appear at the beginning of your texts (something Privy adds automatically). But that doesn't mean you can't sign off each text with the name of an actual person. Or, you could introduce the sender at the beginning of your texts: "Hi, this is Dave from Privy. Just wanted to let you know…"

It may seem like a small detail, but using names -- and using them consistently -- will go a long way in developing trust with your subscribers. You could even start having different types of texts come from different people. For example, all of your texts with educational content could come from Dave, all of your texts with product updates and promotions could come from Evelyn, and so on. That way, subscribers will begin to associate these different personas with the content you're sending, and the overall experience will feel more predictable and familiar.

Hi! 👋 This is [name]. Just wanted to let you know that even though this is an automated text, there's a real human being behind the scenes…

04. The Future: How to Launch a New Product Using Text

As is the case with your overall marketing strategy, a product launch isn't rooted in a single channel. Instead, it's a coordinated effort. You use every tool in the toolshed to reach as many potential customers as possible.

With the rise of text marketing, you now have the opportunity to reach a segment of people (i.e. people who prefer communicating via text) that you might have missed with previous product launches. Here's a quick primer on how you can incorporate text messaging into your future launches.

Pre-launch

First things first: You need to decide on a launch date for your new product. And while the date you choose will no doubt be dependent, at least in part, on internal factors (e.g. when you're able to get the new product in stock), it's also important to consider when your customers will be most likely to buy.

According to Messenger Mastermind, to optimize product launch sales, you should **avoid Mondays** (when people are busy getting their work weeks kicked off), **avoid weekends** (when people are busy hanging out with friends and family), and, in some cases, even **avoid holidays** (when people can be overwhelmed by all of the other sales and promotions happening).

One caveat on that last one: as an ecommerce business, you'll need to think about whether or not you'd want to launch a new product during Black Friday/Cyber Monday. On the one hand, promoting a brand new product in your store could help you stand out from the crowd. On the other hand, your store is probably going to get a lot of attention anyway during that time frame, so maybe it's best to wait and save that product launch for a time when your business could use a little extra oomph.

Regardless of what time of year you launch your new product, the best day of the week to launch (according to Messenger Mastermind) is Friday. That's because a lot of people get paid on Fridays and average order values are likely to be higher.

One final tip: Make sure to plan your launches as far in advance as possible. That way, you can start teasing your new product via text messaging weeks ahead of the actual launch.

For example, you could schedule your first text to go out two or three weeks before the launch. And at this point, you wouldn't even necessarily want to announce the launch date (which might cause people to put off checking out your store and/or prevent them from making an immediate purchase). Instead, just let them know that something new is coming and that they'll be among the first to know when it's live in your store. Next, you could schedule a follow-up text to go out around five days to a week before the launch in which you deliver on your promise and share the exact launch date.

Launch

If you follow the Pre-Launch guidance above, you won't catch any of your text subscribers by surprise on the day of the launch. And that's a good thing. Because instead, they will have been anticipating your product launch for weeks and counting down the days until the big reveal.

On launch day, send a text message to your list announcing the new product and be sure to include a link back to your store. The best time to send this text: In the morning. That's because people check their phones throughout the day, even when they're at work. So if you send the text in the morning, people will have lots of opportunities to open it (e.g. during coffee breaks, lunch, etc.). The worst time to send: the evening. That's because after work, people aren't checking their phones as much -- they're having dinner and walking dogs and spending time with family and friends.

Whenever you decide to send your day-of-launch text message, don't be afraid to really SELL. Remember: texting has huge revenue-generating potential, but in order to unlock that potential, you can't be afraid to sell. **More than 50% of Cyber Monday sales are now made on mobile devices** and overall, **79% of smartphone owners use their phones to make purchases** (source: OuterBox).

With more and more people making purchases on their phones, texting gives you a unique opportunity to reach people when they're ready to buy and to get them to move directly from a marketing message to a purchase. (Just be sure to include that store link!)

Yes, being overly salesy in your text messages all the time can scare people off and make you come across as spammy. But the day of a product launch is a day when subscribers will be expecting to be sold to. You'll have invested enough into building a relationship and building anticipation that you'll have earned the right to say, "Hey, here's a link to our new

product. We think you might like it."

One final launch tip: Be consistent with your launch days. If you always launch new products on the same day -- e.g. on the first Friday morning of every month -- your customers will learn that pattern and you'll be able to drive even more anticipation.

Launch Plan

- **First text** (teaser) goes out 2-3 weeks before launch
- **Second text** (date drop) goes out 5-7 days before launch
- **Day-of text** includes link to product
- **Friday** = the best day for a launch
- **Morning** = the best time for a launch
- **Avoid** Mondays, weekends, holidays

Post-launch

After your product launch, review your texting metrics: What were your open rates? How many subscribers visited your store? How many subscribers purchased your new product?

Over the next few days, you can dissect these results and think about what improvements (if any) you'd want to make for your next product launch. But now isn't a time for reflection only: You can take action by following up with your subscribers who didn't buy, and potentially, you can recover some of those sales. Just send a simple text reminding them about the launch, and if you feel so inclined, offer a discount to entice them further.

For your text subscribers who *do* end up purchasing that new product, you now have a topic for your next text conversation: Ask them how they like the product. The call-to-action at the end of your text can be for them to leave a review.

05. Final Thought: Retention Is the New Growth

The traditional playbook for growth revolves around driving traffic to your website. The levers you pull are all rented channels: social media, search results, paid ads. But here's the thing… ponying up the dough to pay for those rented channels just isn't sustainable -- not as the owners of those channels continually raise the rent.

These days, it's more important than ever that in addition to attracting new customers, we focus on retaining the customers we already have. To quote our friends at Shoelace, "As cost of acquisition continues to rise, it is more important than ever for brands to turn their newly acquired audiences into repeat customers."

Today, **retention is the new growth**. And one of the keys to increasing retention is to make strong investments in your owned channels.

Remember: when you share content on Facebook, Twitter, or Youtube, or buy search ads on Google, or sell products on Amazon, you're merely renting an audience. At any moment, an algorithm change could pull the rug out from under you. But with owned channels, like email and your website, you own the audience you build, and you get to customize the experience however you like.

Text messaging is the next big owned channel for ecommerce businesses. The gold rush in text marketing is happening RIGHT NOW. It's new. It's

fast. And the revenue upside is enormous. Once you build your text list, you'll be able to return to that well again and again, sharing new content and new promotions with your subscribers and giving them a reason to keep coming back to your store.

Thanks for Reading

Hi. 👋 We're Dave Gerhardt (CMO), Evelyn Hartz (Product Marketing Manager), and Dan Murphy (Director of Marketing) from Privy. We hope you enjoyed reading this guide as much as we enjoyed creating it.

Privy is an ecommerce marketing platform for entrepreneurs and marketers. Our product helps you grow your list, reduce cart abandonment, and drive more online sales. Today, there are more than 400 thousand online stores using Privy, and in 2019 alone, those merchants used Privy to process more than $2.5 billion in sales.

For ecommerce brands looking for a new way to break out from the pack, Privy Text provides the easiest way to get started with text message marketing. When you use Privy Text in combination with Privy's On-Site Display tools, our pre-built recipes make it simple to reach more of your customers sooner.

Learn more about Privy Text:

Privy.com/text