



Postscript



SMS BENCHMARKS

for ecommerce marketing



2022 EDITION





Top Insights

- ✓ Across all product personas, **Keyword Opt-in messages generated the highest EPM** (Earnings per Message). This makes sense considering that someone who subscribes to your texts via keyword shows significant interest in your brand—which often translates to high purchase intent.
- ✓ **Keyword Opt-in messages also showed the highest CTR (Clickthrough Rate) and Conversion Rate** of all message types. Translation: Make sure you’re leveraging keywords across all of your marketing channels to grow and segment your subscriber list.
- ✓ **Abandoned Cart messages yielded the second-highest CTR (Clickthrough Rate) and Conversion Rate** across all product personas. This is perhaps the most important automation shops should have up and running in the background, as someone who places an item in a cart shows very high purchase intent—meaning even the slightest nudge can be enough to get them over the line.

Jargon Decoder

AOV

Average Order Value—the average dollar amount each purchase generates

Conversion Rate

The percentage of subscribers who purchase

UNSUB Rate

The percentage of subscribers who unsubscribe from your messages

CTR

Clickthrough Rate—the percentage of message recipients who click on the included link

EPM

Earnings per Message—the average dollar amount each message generates



Benchmarks by Product Persona

SMS marketing performance varies depending on the types of products a shop sells as well as how frequently customers typically purchase those products. We separated products into five “personas” based on factors like cost, number of purchases, and time between orders.



Small Subscription Spends

Monthly, recurring purchases of inexpensive goods and consumables

- ✓ AOV under \$100
- ✓ Repurchased more than 25% of the time
- ✓ Purchased fewer than 45 days apart

Examples: Subscription-based snack and coffee products or regularly-purchased skincare products

Message Type	UNSUB Rate	CTR	Conversion Rate	EPM
Campaign	0%–1%	4%–13%	0%–2%	\$0.16–\$1.05
Abandoned Cart	0%–1%	12%–20%	7%–16%	\$3.61–\$9.84
Winback	0%–1%	4%–8%	1%–5%	\$0.63–\$2.98
Post-Purchase	0%–1%	7%–16%	2%–7%	\$0.69–\$3.23
Welcome Series	2%–6%	8%–13%	4%–10%	\$1.86–\$5.60
Keyword Opt-in	1%–2%	25%–38%	10%–26%	\$5.09–\$14.79
Browse Abandonment	0%–1%	9%–16%	1%–3%	\$0.56–\$1.93

Key Takeaways: Small Subscription Spends

- Compared to industry-wide averages, earnings for Abandoned Cart, Keyword Opt-in, and Browse Abandonment are distinctly below average in the Small Subscription product category.
- Campaigns show the strongest EPM of all message types for Small Subscription Spends, generating twice the industry average on the low end and pulling in more than 60% higher earnings on the high end.
- For shops selling frequently purchased, inexpensive goods, the Welcome Series shows a lot of conversion value. These merchants’ Welcome Series messages yielded Conversion Rates up to 3% higher than the industry-wide average—all while maintaining a slightly below-average Unsubscribe Rate.

What to Do

- Create an engaging, multi-message Welcome Series to introduce new subscribers to your brand. Write a heartfelt message from the founder to explain your brand story and mission—or invite subscribers to share a little about themselves by texting back the keyword that best represents their interests or challenges.
- Plan a Campaign calendar at the beginning of each month or quarter to hold yourself accountable to sending frequent, compelling Campaign messages. Mix up your offers and A/B test different strategies to see what resonates most with your subscribers.



Occasional Orders

Occasional purchases of inexpensive goods and consumables

- ✔ AOV under \$100
- ✔ Repurchased more than 25% of the time
- ✔ Purchased more than 45 days apart

Examples: Beauty/cosmetics products and most clothing products

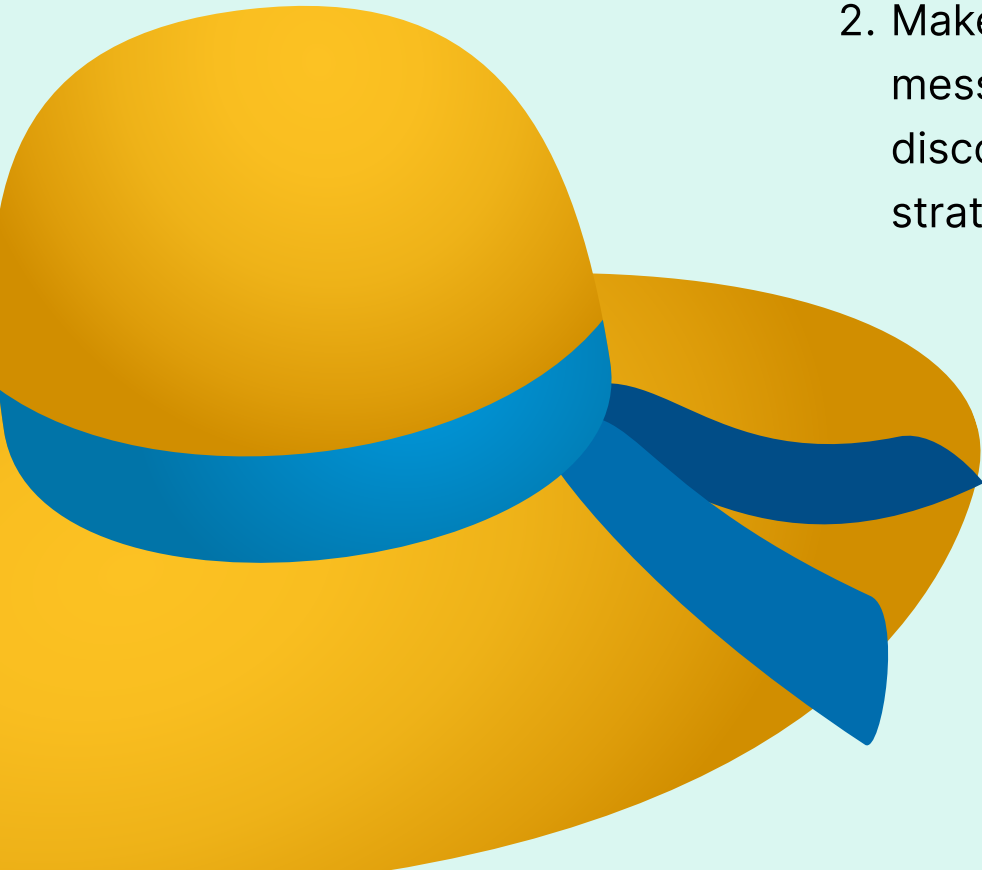
Message Type	UNSUB Rate	CTR	Conversion Rate	EPM
Campaign	0%–1%	4%–12%	0%–1%	\$0.13–\$0.63
Abandoned Cart	0%–1%	12%–19%	9%–16%	\$4.91–\$11.40
Winback	0%–2%	5%–10%	1%–3%	\$0.48–\$1.53
Post-Purchase	0%–1%	6%–13%	1%–6%	\$0.41–\$2.69
Welcome Series	3%–6%	7%–12%	3%–9%	\$1.60–\$4.81
Keyword Opt-in	1%–3%	27%–42%	13%–30%	\$7.78–\$17.27
Browse Abandonment	0%–1%	10%–16%	2%–4%	\$0.93–\$2.73

Key Takeaways: Occasional Orders

- Keyword Opt-in messages for products in the Occasional Orders category showed a substantially higher-than-average Conversion Rate, exceeding the industry-wide average by a margin of 3% on the low end and 6% on the high end.
- Conversion Rates for Abandoned Cart and Welcome Series messages are also notably above-average for Occasional Orders products.

What to Do

1. Leverage high-performing acquisition channels like social media and paid advertising to promote opting in via Keyword. For example, you could run an ad with a CTA like, “Text DEALS to 54321 to sign up for weekly discounts delivered via text.” (Just be sure to incorporate the appropriate compliance language when collecting opt-ins.)
2. Make it a top priority to set up (and test!) an Abandoned Cart automation. You can only send one SMS message per abandoned cart event—so it’s important to make it count! Test different offers (like discounts or free shipping) or try providing social proof in the form of customer reviews to see which strategy is most effective in getting subscribers to complete their orders.



Single-Stop Gifts

Single-purchase inexpensive goods

- ✔ AOV under \$100
- ✔ Repurchased less than 25% of the time

Examples: Baby items or wedding gifts as well as products that are part of small catalogs of niche items

Message Type	UNSUB Rate	CTR	Conversion Rate	EPM
Campaign	0%–1%	3%–9%	0%–1%	\$0.07–\$0.45
Abandoned Cart	1%–3%	11%–18%	6%–13%	\$3.12–\$7.85
Winback	0%–2%	4%–10%	1%–3%	\$0.40–\$1.63
Post-Purchase	0%–2%	6%–13%	1%–4%	\$0.38–\$1.82
Welcome Series	3%–8%	6%–11%	2%–7%	\$1.21–\$3.96
Keyword Opt-in	1%–3%	26%–42%	11%–26%	\$5.64–\$14.47
Browse Abandonment	0%–2%	9%–14%	1%–3%	\$0.66–\$2.24

Key Takeaways: Single-Stop Gifts

- For shops selling Single-Stop Gift products, Keyword Opt-in messages show a lot of conversion potential, yielding Conversion Rates 2% higher than the industry average on the high end and 1% higher on the low end.
- Keyword Opt-in messages are also valuable for this product persona in terms of earnings, far outpacing EPM for the other message types and pushing deep into double-digits on the high end.

What to Do

1. Create and advertise multiple opt-in Keywords based on channel, audience, and context. The more targeted your messaging following opt-in, the better it will convert.
2. Consider putting more advertising dollars toward Keyword promotions. While these ads won't lead to direct purchases, they may generate much higher long-term value in the form of a loyal SMS subscriber and customer.



One-Time Luxuries

Single-purchase luxury goods

- ✔ AOV more than \$100
- ✔ Repurchased less than 25% of the time

Examples: Big-ticket athletic purchases such as skis and other large purchases like furniture, jewelry, and art

Message Type	UNSUB Rate	CTR	Conversion Rate	EPM
Campaign	0%–1%	3%–8%	0%–1%	\$0.09–\$0.69
Abandoned Cart	1%–2%	11%–19%	7%–14%	\$8.56–\$22.31
Winback	1%–2%	4%–11%	1%–2%	\$0.55–\$2.49
Post-Purchase	0%–2%	6%–14%	1%–3%	\$0.78–\$3.33
Welcome Series	3%–8%	6%–11%	2%–7%	\$2.71–\$11.51
Keyword Opt-in	1%–4%	22%–39%	7%–20%	\$10.13–\$29.45
Browse Abandonment	0%–2%	9%–14%	1%–3%	\$1.45–\$5.34

Key Takeaways: One-Time Luxuries

- While higher-than-average EPM is expected for this high-AOV product segment, the EPM for Campaigns is only a few cents above average on both the low and high ends—suggesting that Campaigns are not the most effective messaging strategy for One-Time Luxuries (at least not in terms of direct revenue generation).
- On the other hand, EPM for Browse Abandonment, Keyword Opt-in, Welcome Series, and Abandoned Cart messages is remarkably above-average for this product segment—by a factor of 50% or more on the high end for all four message types.

What to Do

1. Save Campaign sends for truly special events—like annual sales or holiday promotions—and put the bulk of your SMS effort into creating multiple highly-targeted versions of each automation type. For example, make sure you have different Welcome Series for different opt-in sources and different Abandoned Cart messages for different products or categories of products.
2. Make sure you’re always running at least one A/B test for each active automation so you can determine which offers or conversion strategies work best for each product and/or subscriber segment.



Recurring Splurges

Luxury goods purchased periodically

- ✔ AOV more than \$100
- ✔ Repurchased more than 25% of the time

Examples: Upscale clothing and footwear, big-ticket beauty items like hair extensions, certain home goods and athletic gear

Message Type	UNSUB Rate	CTR	Conversion Rate	EPM
Campaign	0%–1%	4%–12%	0%–1%	\$0.25–\$1.59
Abandoned Cart	0%–1%	12%–20%	9%–16%	\$9.58–\$28.15
Winback	0%–1%	5%–11%	1%–4%	\$1.69–\$6.38
Post-Purchase	0%–1%	7%–16%	1%–6%	\$1.48–\$7.02
Welcome Series	2%–6%	7%–14%	4%–12%	\$4.36–\$16.64
Keyword Opt-in	1%–3%	24%–39%	11%–25%	\$12.50–\$32.87
Browse Abandonment	0%–1%	9%–15%	2%–5%	\$2.64–\$7.36

Key Takeaways: Recurring Splurges

- Compared to other product segments, the Welcome Series shows greater value in terms of subscriber engagement and sales. Both the CTR and Conversion Rate for Welcome Series messages are distinctly above-average for Recurring Splurges.
- Post-Purchase messages for Recurring Splurges show a slightly above-average CTR, suggesting above-average levels of subscriber engagement.
- Abandoned Cart messages are an effective sales tool for Recurring Splurges, with 2% higher-than-average Conversion Rates on both the low and high ends.

What to Do

- Create a Welcome Series that showcases your value and provides new subscribers a special offer right off the bat to capitalize on the high conversion potential of this automation.
- Create product-specific Abandoned Cart messages and experiment with different conversion strategies, including discounts, free shipping, free gifts, or reviews and other forms of social proof.



Benchmarks by Industry

Every industry has a different customer profile, different best practices for reaching those customers, and different expectations for their various marketing efforts. In essence, there is no one-size-fits-all approach. After all, a ski shop and a baby food store probably shouldn't text their customers the same way. We looked at the top 5 ecommerce industries and analyzed their success with SMS marketing.



All Industries

If your shop doesn't fit into one of the other verticals, this is a great starting point for assessing your SMS performance.

Message Type	UNSUB Rate	CTR	Conversion Rate	EPM
Campaign	0%–1%	4%–10%	0%–1%	\$0.07–\$0.64
Abandoned Cart	1%–2%	11%–19%	7%–14%	\$4.36–\$13.79
Winback	0%–2%	5%–10%	1%–3%	\$0.44–\$2.14
Post-Purchase	0%–2%	6%–14%	1%–4%	\$0.49–\$2.70
Welcome Series	3%–7%	6%–12%	2%–7%	\$1.55–\$6.64
Keyword Opt-in	1%–3%	25%–41%	10%–24%	\$6.63–\$18.70
Browse Abandonment	0%–2%	9%–15%	1%–4%	\$0.88–\$3.57

Top Action Items Across All Industries

1. Set up an Abandoned Cart automation! Across every industry, the CTR, conversion rate, and EPM for cart abandonment flows are incredibly strong.
2. Put some thought into your Keyword Opt-in replies and your Welcome Series. These high-value messages are a crucial part of any store's strategy to build a strong list and boost revenue.
3. Be strategic with Campaigns. While they have some of the lowest Unsubscribe Rates, they also have lower EPM, Conversion Rates, and CTR—so you want to make sure you're sending them to the right recipients.

Most Importantly:

Optimize Your Send Volume and Frequency

Your messaging strategy and sending cadence are the most important levers you can pull to positively impact the metrics included in this report. In a separate analysis of Postscript customers, our data team determined that:

1

The most successful brands send each subscriber **5 or more messages per month**.

2

Brands seeing moderate SMS success send each subscriber **fewer than 5 messages per month**.

3

Brands experiencing the least success with SMS send each subscriber **fewer than 3 messages per month**.

Apparel

From streetwear to swim trunks and evening gowns to athleisure, apparel brands can gather insights from these SMS benchmarks.

Message Type	UNSUB Rate	CTR	Conversion Rate	EPM
Campaign	0%–1%	4%–10%	0%–1%	\$0.08–\$0.73
Abandoned Cart	0%	12%–19%	7%–15%	\$4.68–\$13.46
Winback	0%	6%–11%	1%–3%	\$0.61–\$2.56
Post-Purchase	0%–1%	8%–16%	1%–5%	\$0.82–\$3.43
Welcome Series	2%–7%	7%–12%	2%–7%	\$1.63–\$5.96
Keyword Opt-in	1%–3%	25%–38%	10%–23%	\$7.07–\$18.04
Browse Abandonment	0%–1%	9%–15%	1%–4%	\$0.81–\$3.22

Key Takeaways: Apparel

- CTR, Conversion Rate, and EPM all break into double-digits on the high end for Abandoned Cart and Keyword Opt-In messages sent by Apparel brands.
- Compared to the industry average, the EPM for Winback and Post-Purchase messages is higher for Apparel brands.
- CTR and Conversion Rates for Post-Purchase, Welcome Series, and Browse Abandonment messages are strong in this industry.

What to Do

1. Set up Abandoned Cart and Keyword Opt-in flows. These automations are the best in terms of Conversion Rates and EPM. Use new product drops as an opportunity to collect Keyword Opt-ins by incentivizing first access to new arrivals. (For example, “Text FRESH to 54321 to receive early access to our newest products.”)
2. Create a Post-Purchase automation to let customers know when their order has arrived. Once it has, use it as an opportunity to collect UGC and promote your hashtags and social channels so they can share their purchase.



Home Goods

It takes a lot to furnish a home! From candles to bedding—and beyond!—all the items that go into decorating or enhancing your home belong here.

Message Type	UNSUB Rate	CTR	Conversion Rate	EPM
Campaign	0%–1%	4%–11%	0%–1%	\$0.06–\$0.55
Abandoned Cart	0%–3%	12%–20%	6%–13%	\$4.38–\$17.48
Winback	1%–2%	4%–8%	0%–1%	\$0.14–\$1.19
Post-Purchase	0%–2%	6%–14%	1%–4%	\$0.38–\$2.59
Welcome Series	3%–8%	6%–12%	2%–7%	\$1.51–\$8.22
Keyword Opt-in	1%–4%	24%–42%	8%–23%	\$6.17–\$20.88
Browse Abandonment	0%–2%	9%–15%	1%–3%	\$0.83–\$4.24

Key Takeaways: Home Goods

- Keyword Opt-in and Abandoned Cart messages clearly outperform all other message types in this category in terms of CTR, Conversion Rate, and EPM.
- The Welcome Series is also a strong performer for Home Goods brands.

What to Do

1. Once you’ve set up an Abandoned Cart automation and a Keyword Opt-in flow, build out a creative Welcome Series that tells your brand story with compelling creative—and maybe a discount code to convert.
2. Fine-tune your winback strategy. Customer winbacks can be highly effective, but they require some strategizing. Run A/B tests with varying offers and test different time windows (30 days later, 60 days later, etc.) to see what performs best.



Beauty/Cosmetics

Whether you're in the business of selling lip-kits, hair-styling tools, or skincare products, this is the data for you.

Message Type	UNSUB Rate	CTR	Conversion Rate	EPM
Campaign	0%–1%	2%–7%	0%–1%	\$0.05–\$0.46
Abandoned Cart	1%–2%	10%–16%	6%–12%	\$3.32–\$10.50
Winback	1%–2%	4%–9%	1%–3%	\$0.42–\$1.46
Post-Purchase	0%–2%	4%–11%	1%–2%	\$0.31–\$1.34
Welcome Series	0%–1%	5%–10%	2%–7%	\$1.41–\$5.32
Keyword Opt-in	1%–3%	28%–44%	12%–26%	\$7.46–\$17.60
Browse Abandonment	0%–1%	9%–14%	2%–4%	\$1.01–\$3.57

Key Takeaways: Beauty/Cosmetics

- Keyword Opt-in messages perform well across the board for this industry, with above-average CTR and Conversion Rate.
- There is a wide variance in performance for Abandoned Cart messages in the Beauty/Cosmetics space, suggesting optimization is key.
- Browse Abandonment is the only message type where Beauty/Cosmetics brands achieve above-average EPM on both the high and low ends.

What to Do

1. A/B test your Abandoned Cart automation with different offers, as the EPM for Abandoned Cart flows varies widely in this industry. When done right, this could be a huge revenue driver for your brand.
2. Set up a Browse Abandonment automation for an easy win. For subscribers who click through but don't purchase, consider following up with a limited-time offer that incentivizes them to come back and purchase.



Food/Beverage

This section is for all purveyors of coffee, snacks, and meal prep products—people need to eat and drink!

Message Type	UNSUB Rate	CTR	Conversion Rate	EPM
Campaign	1%–2%	3%–8%	0%–1%	\$0.12–\$0.76
Abandoned Cart	1%–3%	10%–17%	6%–13%	\$3.38–\$8.96
Winback	1%–2%	4%–8%	1%–4%	\$0.58–\$2.64
Post-Purchase	0%–2%	6%–12%	1%–4%	\$0.50–\$2.16
Welcome Series	3%–8%	7%–12%	3%–11%	\$1.38–\$7.10
Keyword Opt-in	1%–4%	23%–43%	8%–23%	\$3.90–\$13.75
Browse Abandonment	1%–2%	9%–14%	2%–4%	\$1.11–\$2.95

Key Takeaways: Food/Beverage

- Campaign EPM is slightly above the industry average for Food/Beverage brands.
- Compared to the industry average, Keyword Opt-ins are not as effective in driving EPM for Food/Beverage brands—but relatively speaking, these messages clearly outperform other message types sent in this industry.

What to Do

1. Try using Keyword replies as part of Campaigns to segment customers based on preferences (e.g., “Reply with SALTY or SWEET to let us know what you’re craving”). That way, you can make future sends more personalized.
2. Consumables tend to generate repeat buyers. A loyalty offer or rewards program can help incentivize folks to keep purchasing. You can also set up an automation that reminds subscribers to buy again (two weeks later, 30 days later, etc.) to help drive repeat purchases.



Health/Wellness

Does your shop cater to consumers’ mental and physical well-being? If so, then this is the section for you.

Message Type	UNSUB Rate	CTR	Conversion Rate	EPM
Campaign	0%–1%	3%–7%	0%–1%	\$0.10–\$0.56
Abandoned Cart	1%–2%	11%–18%	8%–14%	\$5.19–\$15.66
Winback	1%–2%	3%–7%	1%–3%	\$0.48–\$2.20
Post-Purchase	0%–2%	5%–11%	1%–3%	\$0.37–\$1.80
Welcome Series	4%–8%	6%–11%	3%–9%	\$1.79–\$7.27
Keyword Opt-in	2%–4%	25%–48%	13%–29%	\$8.21–\$22.82
Browse Abandonment	0%–1%	9%–14%	1%–4%	\$0.88–\$4.29

Key Takeaways: Health/Wellness

- Unsubscribe rates for Keyword Opt-in and Welcome Series messages are slightly higher than industry averages—but so is EPM.
- Despite having a below-average CTR, the EPM for Winback messages in the Health/Wellness category is higher than the industry average.

What to Do

1. Once your high-converting automations are set up, consider investing in a Winback automation. Target lapsed buyers 30, 60, or even 90 days later with a limited-time discount code encouraging them to come back and buy again.
2. If you offer subscription savings, use a Post-Purchase automation to remind customers to sign up for subscriptions and nudge them toward becoming repeat customers.





*Research Methodology

Data was taken from all Postscript stores with active accounts between March 2021 and March 2022. The aggregate statistics reported here were taken from campaigns and automation flows sent to 200 subscribers or more. In the case of automation flows, the earnings per message (EPM), conversion rates, and unsubscribe rates are defined here as revenue earned, purchase counts, and unsubscribes (respectively) per subscriber who entered the automation flow. The clickthrough rates are defined as the number of unique subscriber clicks (maximum one per subscriber) per message sent, for all message types. Only messages containing links are included in the reported clickthrough rate statistics. The “Keyword-Opt-In Flow” message type refers to the opt-in confirmation and keyword reply sent to subscribers immediately after joining a store’s SMS list.

The performance data per message was first averaged for each individual store over messages sent by the store throughout the year. The store averages for each message type and performance statistic were then ordered from lowest to highest. The final ranges reported here span from the 25th percentile cutoff (the cutoff point for a given performance statistic where 25% of stores had a lower value and 75% were higher) through the 75th percentile cutoff (the cutoff point for a given statistic where 75% had a lower value and 25% were higher).

Postscript



