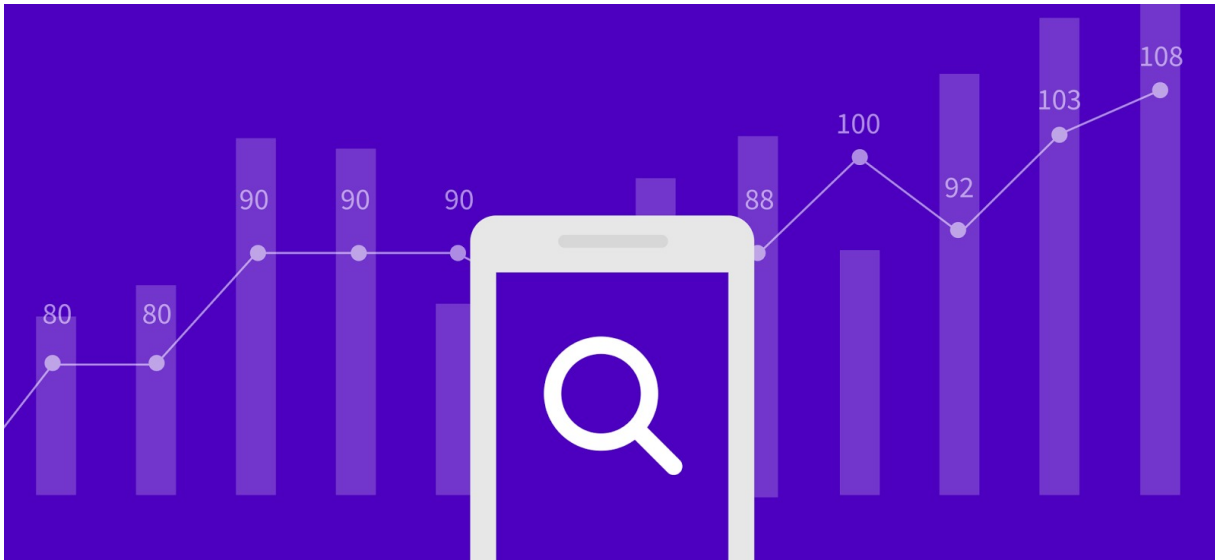


# SMS Marketing for Ecommerce: Everything You Need to Know to Supercharge Your Sales



**Ecommerce** is growing fast — particularly mobile commerce or mcommerce. And while email marketing has long been one of the top options marketers use to convey messages, **SMS marketing** is quickly gaining prominence.

Why? Because it can penetrate through noise better than almost any other channel.

Imagine your company's marketing communications were seen almost instantly — without the need for an online connection. That's what SMS marketing can help you do.

To help you get started with SMS marketing to increase ecommerce sales, we've teamed up with the experts to share **best practices**, top tips, examples and more.

# What Is SMS Marketing?

But first, for those unfamiliar, let's break it down: what exactly is SMS marketing?

SMS marketing refers to the act of sending promotional materials via text message. If you send a text message to your subscriber list saying, "BOGO only today in store! Come get your savings," that's SMS marketing.

Primarily, [SMS marketing](#) is a tool you use to communicate offers and other information to existing customers who have permitted you to send them text messages. And that's key — getting permission to send messages.

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# Top 3 Reasons to Use SMS as a Marketing Tool

One of today's biggest marketing challenges is getting your product or service in front of your target audience. Information overload has our inboxes full to overflowing, and ads are so common on our social media accounts that we hardly notice them anymore. This is where SMS finds its advantage.

## 1. SMS marketing is designed for mobile commerce.

A [recent study found](#) that (46%) of people say they spend between 5-6 hours a day on their mobile devices in their personal time.

This makes it critical for businesses to invest in mobile-friendly marketing. Fortunately, SMS messages make that easy since they're designed to be read on mobile screens.

"SMS is great for sending hyper time-sensitive messages like flash deals and limited offers. Most people have their mobile phones within reach for most of their waking hours, and it's tough to resist the ding of a new text message. With SMS, you can reach people within seconds."

— Tracy Puckett, Content Manager at Omnisend

## 2. High open rates can lead to more engagement.

Not only are people opening SMS messages, they're also engaging with them.

"The biggest benefit our clients realize is the consistency of open rates. The message is getting through — and it's leading to strong click-through rates, conversion rates, channel intimacy, and attributed revenue numbers to deliver impactful return on ad spend (ROAS)."

— Cheryl Sanders, General Manager of SMS at Listrak

Additionally, according to a personalization study from [Periscope by McKinsey](#), SMS messages received high engagement levels with shoppers across the globe. In particular was the US, where it was the channel most likely to elicit an 'open and read' action.

"SMS can help you reach a highly engaged audience — and that can translate to more repeat purchases and higher customer lifetime value."

— Mariam Avetisyan, Ecosystem Marketing Manager at Klavyio

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### 3. Connect with shoppers using their preferred communication method.

SMS also helps you connect with shoppers in the way they want to communicate. People like to be in-the-know, and they want to feel like they matter to brands.

When your business uses text messaging to keep consumers informed about offers, events, and other news that matters to them, they feel cared for and part of the process.

“With recent data and privacy changes, reaching consumers on email and paid advertising is becoming increasingly difficult. SMS delivers what consumers want, personalized, interactive 1:1 messaging between them and your brand.”

— Greg Bauman, Director, Ecosystem Partnerships at Attentive

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# How to Get Started Using SMS Marketing

So you're all set on why you should use SMS marketing, but where should you start? Here's a quick-start guide to sending your first ecommerce SMS marketing message.

## 1. Narrow and define your goals.

Like with most marketing initiatives, make sure you [start with a goal](#) in mind and determine exactly what you want to achieve with this new channel.

“The possibilities with SMS are almost endless — which can easily become overwhelming. Many merchants want to be ‘in the mobile channel,’ but haven’t determined the ‘why’ and ‘how.’ So, launch with one main goal, focusing on quick wins, then build on your capabilities.”

— Cheryl Sanders, General Manager of SMS at Listrak

For example, some goals you can start with include reducing cart abandonment and customer support calls. Then, you can tailor your SMS text messages to notify shoppers they've left items in their cart, or send them post-purchase order notifications.

## 2. Find a great vendor to partner with.

Once you've narrowed down your focus, it's time to find the right partner. Prioritize working with a vendor that makes set-up and launch easy but that can also scale with you over time as you grow your SMS channel.

BigCommerce's ecommerce platform integrates with several of the leading SMS providers, such as:

- **Sendlane:** Trusted by over 1,700 business, Sendlane is a customer experience-focused email and SMS marketing automation solution that empowers merchants to turn their first-time shoppers into lifetime customers.
- **Klaviyo:** The marketing automation and customer data platform loved by more than 70K brands, helping them drive more revenue through building great relationships with their customers.
- **Omnisend:** An ecommerce-tailored email and SMS marketing automation platform built to help nimble teams drive more revenue without increasing their workload.

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- **Listrak:** The integrated digital marketing platform trusted by 1,000+ leading retailers and brands for email, text message marketing, identity resolution, behavioral triggers and cross-channel orchestration.
- **Attentive:** A best-in-class text message marketing provider, trusted by 4,000+ leading brands. Turn SMS into a top revenue channel in months, and drive revenue through text.

“Some of the things to look for when evaluating a vendor include complementary integrations, robust list growth tools, sophisticated personalization and targeting within both automations and campaigns, and the ability to have real-time, two-way communication with your subscribers.”

— Greg Bauman, Director, Ecosystem Partnerships at Attentive

### 3. Work on growing your subscriber base.

Once you’ve chosen your new [SMS marketing](#) platform, it’s time to build your list of subscribers.

“You can collect SMS subscribers via a form on your website, in one of your email flows, or by adding a checkbox to your checkout flow on any major ecommerce platform. You can also have a phone number and signup keyword that people can text to opt in.”

— Mariam Avetisyan, Ecosystem Marketing Manager at Klavyio

Of course one of the most important things to keep in mind with SMS is compliance. It’s very important to ensure all aspects of your program, especially growing your list, are done in a very compliant manner — since SMS marketing is a permission-based channel.

### 4. Launch your first campaign.

In the beginning, take your time to try new things and find what works best for your ecommerce business.

“Experiment and treat SMS as its own channel. We suggest beginning with a one-off campaign. If you’re sending an email about the same promotion, focus on differentiating the messages. Once you gain confidence, insert SMS into your marketing automations to create an omnichannel customer experience.”

— Tracy Puckett, Content Manager at Omnisend

### 5. Continue to test.

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Don't assume you hit it out of the park the first time. Or the second. Or the one-hundredth.

Follow up by reviewing the results and metrics you set for your SMS marketing campaigns, so you can understand what you're doing right and what can be improved. Continue to test new messages, times and days, deals and workflows to identify the best SMS strategy for your ecommerce store.

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# SMS Marketing Ecommerce Best Practices

Now that you've got an [SMS marketing strategy](#) in place, let's review some important best practices to help ensure your efforts succeed.

## 1. Add value to your customers.

When you reach out, make sure you have something valuable to offer like:

- A unique or special offer — especially one that's only going to your SMS list.
- A time-sensitive deal, like BOGO for the rest of the day on items you need to clear out.
- Information that's necessary to customers who might want to participate in an event.
- Introductions to new products or services, especially if you're giving your SMS list first dibs.

## 2. Keep it short, sweet, and to the point.

Be as concise as possible. People are reading these messages on little screens.

Try to avoid sending a thread of texts and stick to one call to action (CTA). Remember that many people still pay a surcharge on text messages, so they won't appreciate you using three messages to communicate one thing.

## 3. Personalize your SMS marketing campaigns.

At the same time, make sure you're using your brand voice whenever possible, and invest in the effort needed to [personalize your messages](#).

You can do that by creating sectioned lists and texting groups about the things that interest them the most. When possible, include people's names in their message with [data automation](#).

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# Example SMS Marketing Messages to Send

Typically, there are two types of messages you can send to start communicating with your customers: transactional and broadcast.

Transactional SMS refers to when a text message is triggered after an action. Just like email, you can set up triggered text messages that follow a customer action; e.g., signing up to receive communications, placing an online order or attending an event.

**Broadcast SMS** are scaled marketing messages that, although not triggered directly from a past action, should still be super relevant to customers. You can ensure their relevancy by taking subscribers through a preference center — once they opt in — and using demographic information to tailor your content; e.g., based on age or geolocation.

Here are some examples of transactional messages and broadcast messages.

## 1. Complement your welcome emails with a text.

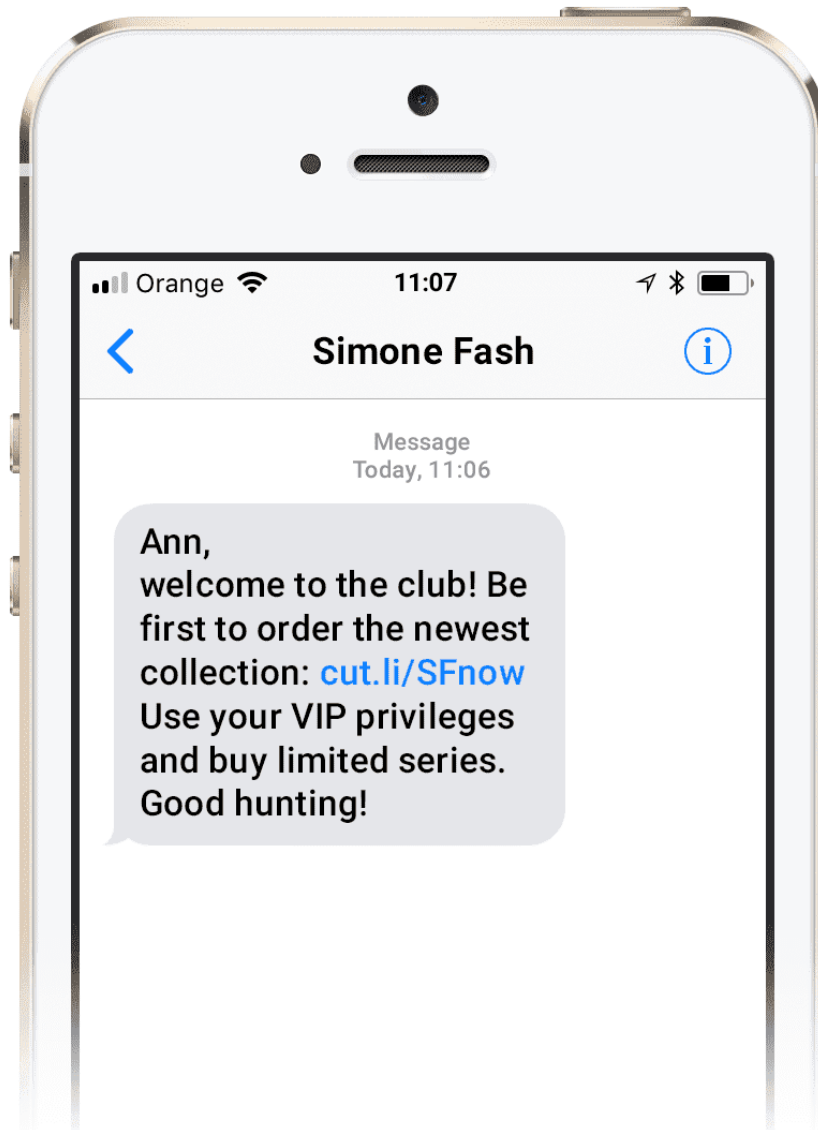
Automated welcome email programs can offer many benefits, from improving **customer experience** to increasing engagement rates. And adding SMS to the mix can help boost your success. Also, don't forget to reinforce any benefits of signing up — just as you would in email.

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## 2. Send speedy order confirmations and updates after a sale.

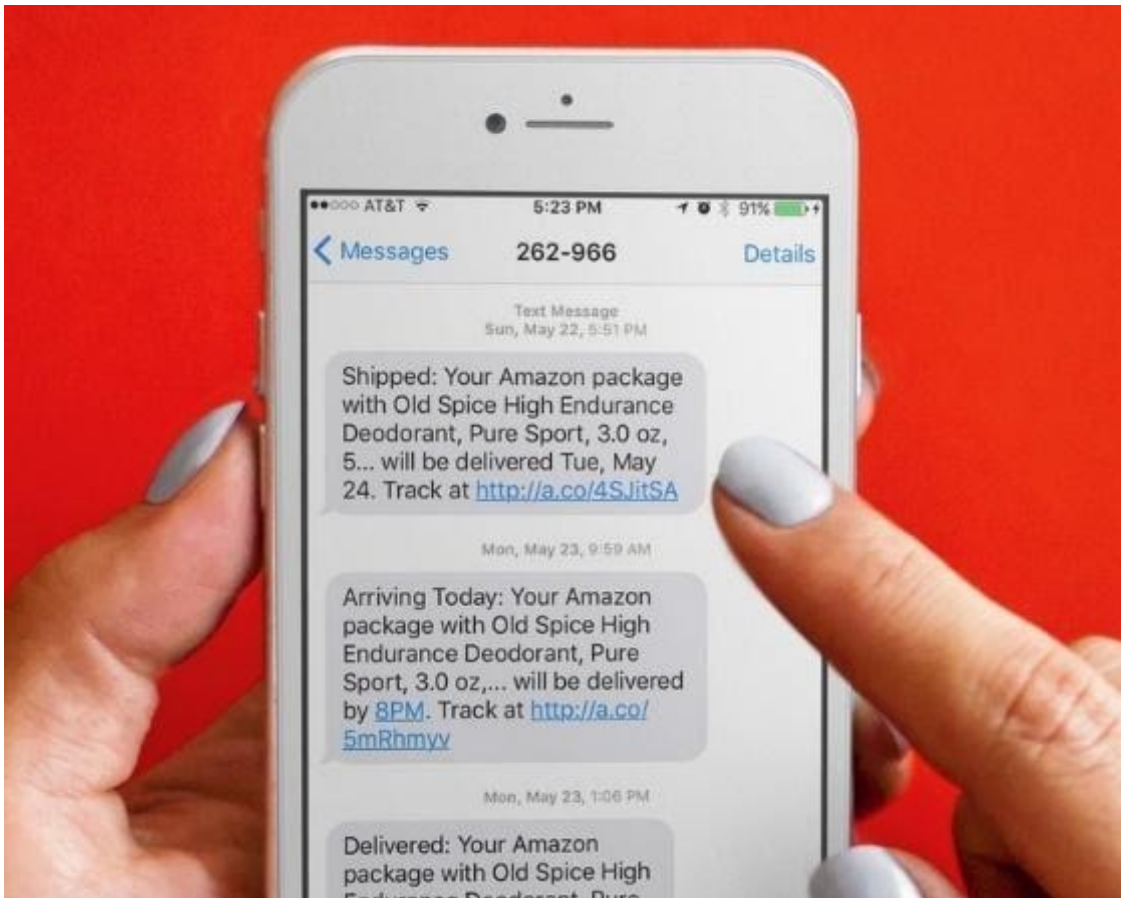
Sending order updates via text helps anchor your SMS strategy. Informed customers are happy customers. A first-rate customer experience includes updates on the state of customers' orders, including [shipping](#) and delivery timelines.

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### 3. Automate date-triggered SMS marketing messages.

Meet customers in the moments that matter to them — from appointment reminders to birthdays and abandoned cart text messages.

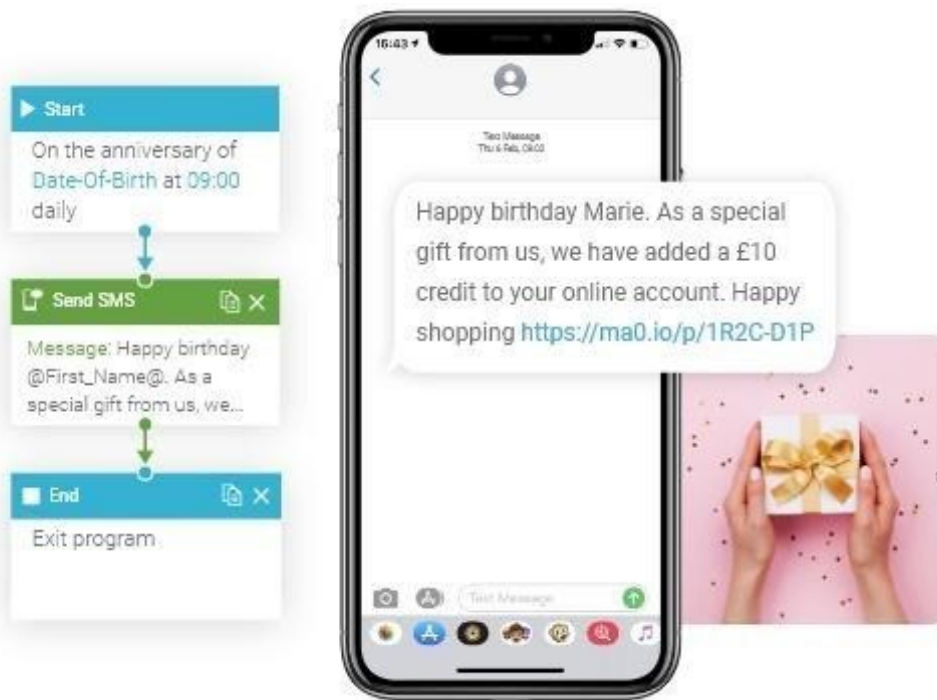
Additionally, you can make headway in holiday revenue by meeting customers on mobile. A simple, clean email paired with timely, personalized SMS alerts is a holiday must-have.

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With the right omnichannel marketing automation platform, you can automatically pull in names and personal details to add an additional layer of personalization to your texts.

#### **4. Deliver new arrival notifications to prompt a purchase.**

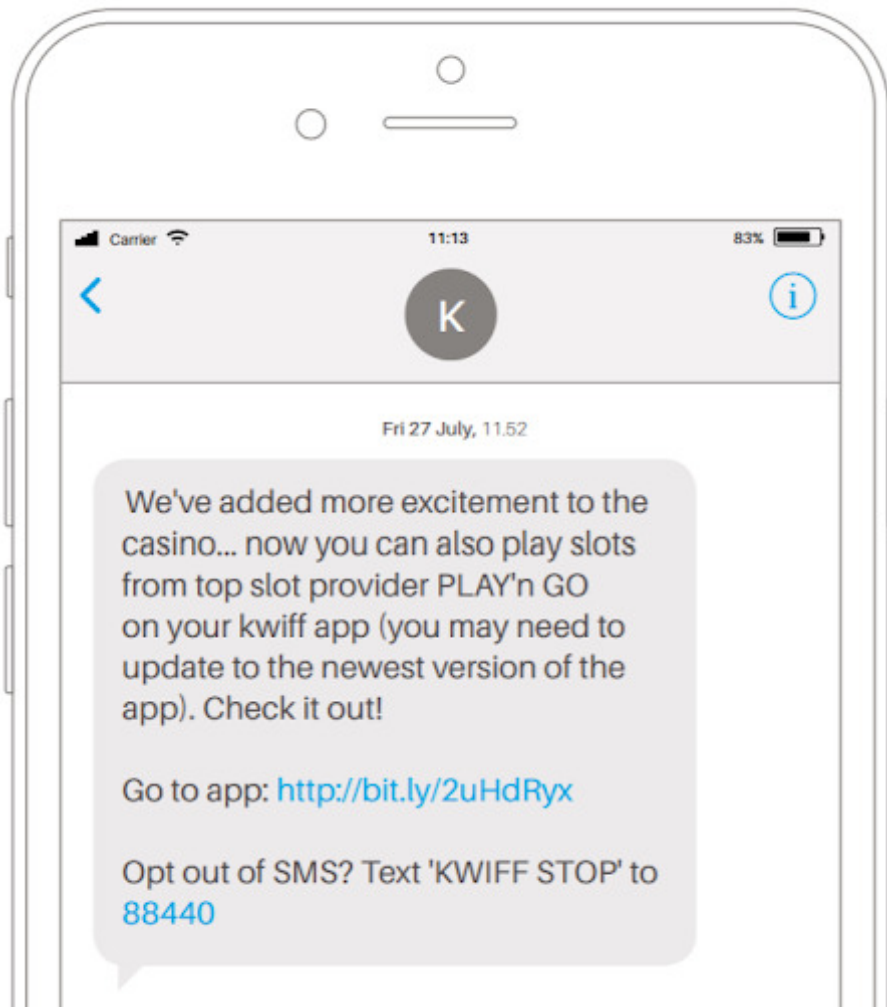
Communicate your hottest product drops via SMS marketing messages.

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This is a great example of when an SMS message would be better than an email — particularly if it's a product that sells out fast. Plus, in addition to driving online traffic, new product updates are a great way to get customers to visit your store in-person.

## 5. Promote flash sales to drive urgency.

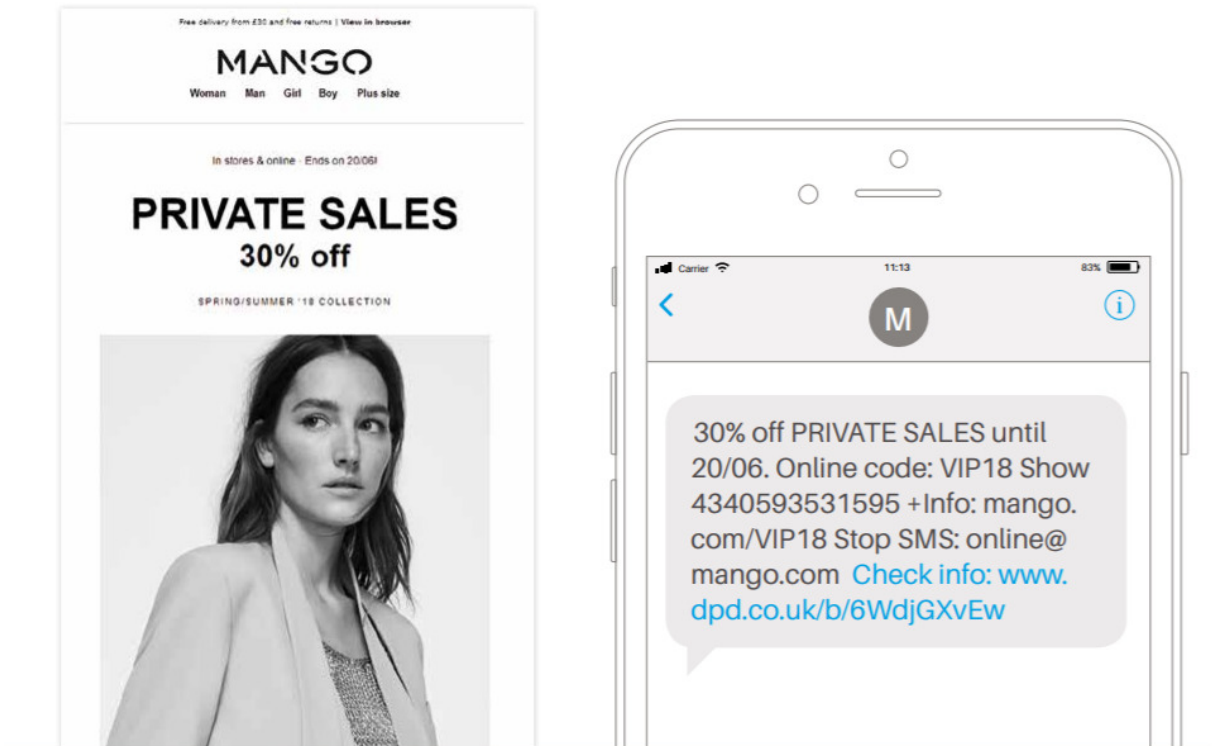
Support your [email marketing strategy](#) with punchy alerts via text.

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For customers who have purchased from you before, a timely nudge may be all they need to return and repeat their order.

## 6. Keep the conversation going with content-driven communications.

Enrich the customer experience with value-driven engagements, delivered straight to the consumer's device. Ask how they liked the product they purchased or share a video with them on creative ways they can use the product.

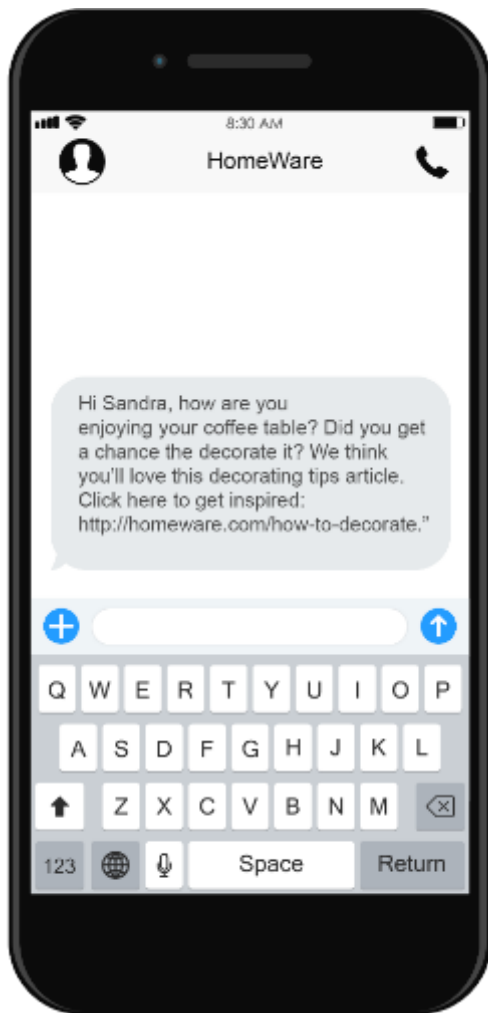
SMS is a great channel to deliver concise, to-the-point content because it's fast, direct, and clear.

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## Wrapping Up

Getting started with SMS marketing is easy. Figure out what your message is and why, ask people if you can send them messages, and find an SMS messaging service.

Then, start sending messages out to your consumers. Keep them short and relevant, and don't overstay your welcome by showing up on people's cell phones every day.

The more you use SMS messaging — and review your results so you know what to tweak in the future — the more powerful this marketing tool can become.

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