



HOW TO

IGNITE YOUR PIPELINE

WITH

**TEXT
MESSAGING**

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MEET THE SPEAKERS



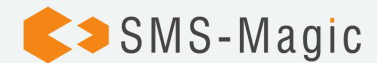
RYAN BRENEMAN

[Ryan Breneman](#) is a Marketing Manager from XANT. He facilitated the webinar and discussed the role and importance of text messaging in sales.



THOMAS PARBS

[Thomas Parbs](#) is SMS Magic's Senior Manager of Sales. An expert on the topic, he provided valuable insights on the use of text messaging in sales.



Content for this eBook is taken directly from a live webinar with Ryan and Thomas on July 31, 2019.

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HOW WIDELY ADOPTED IS SMS?

[Research from 2017](#) showed that the adoption rate for SMS was very low. When ranked against other well-known tool categories such as email engagement, phone, sales cadence, and chat, **SMS placed at the very bottom with a 9.3% adoption rate.**

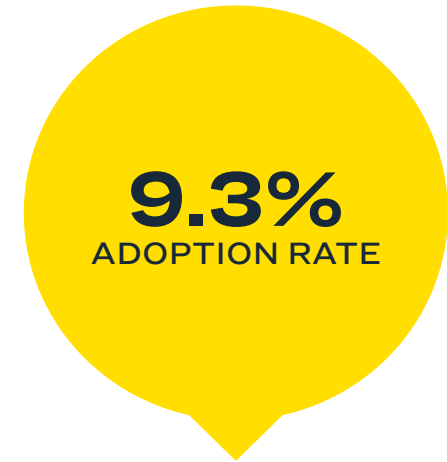
Based on Thomas Parbs' observation, people were still hesitant to adopt SMS as a sales tool, even though it's not a new method.

"Everyone sends text messages," Parbs pointed out. Just because sales leaders aren't tracking this tool in their Salesforce doesn't mean the sales reps aren't doing it. A lot of reps are sending text messages on behalf of their company without their sales leaders' knowledge.

Sales reps and customer support representatives who engage with prospects and customers use text messaging as a sales tool.

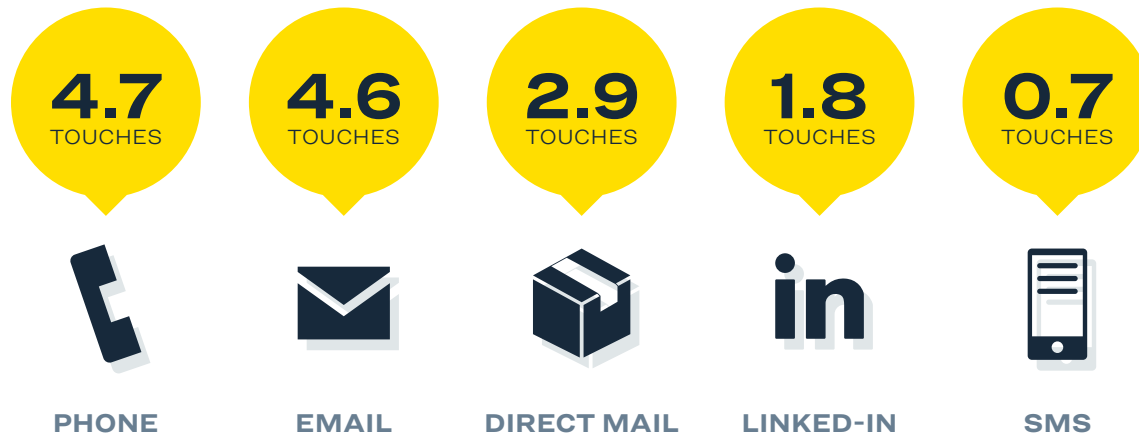
This is also true for other companies, where a majority of Business Development and Sales Development reps send out SMS using their mobile phones. This means it's not recorded in Salesforce or in any kind of CRM. The great thing about SMS is it helps the reps succeed in their dealings.

Given how commonly SDRs and BDRs use text messaging, how can companies make text messaging part of their process?



CADENCE TOUCHES

[XANT researched cadences](#) to observe the best practices of different sales teams. The findings revealed that **the average touch in the cadence is 15.1**. Further broken down, here are the number of touches made using different tools:



What stood out in the study was the number of touches made via text messaging, which got the lowest at 0.7 times. This shows that sales teams aren't utilizing SMS within their cadence. It's simply not something they put into their sales engagement when they're trying to reach out.

It may also allude to the fact that it's not part of the technology or the repertoire. It seems that utilizing text messaging is something that sales teams do ad hoc.

WHY YOU SHOULD USE TEXT MESSAGING MORE

If one went by the research findings, it would seem as if text messaging is “unpopular,” as it’s not part of the cadence structure.

However, just because it’s not in the system and there’s no data reported doesn’t mean reps aren’t using it.

Some people regard their mobile phones, and in effect, text messaging, as something personal. Yet it’s still a very useful tool, as mobile phones have also become a standard way of doing business. Yes, it’s personal, but people still conduct business using their mobile phones.

Text messaging has the best read-and-response rates among all the other communication tools. Yet, most people don’t have this within their cadence.

To drive this point further, here are several research findings on texting that are worth noting:



Usage of text message at work increased by 62%
from 26% in 2014 up to 42% ([XANT](#))

61% of people recommend contacting them by text message at work
increased 56.4% from 39% in 2014 ([XANT](#))

95% of texts from businesses are read within three minutes of being sent
([Forbes](#))

The average response time for a text message is only 90 seconds
([HubSpot](#))

Additionally, Thomas Parbs and his company have observed the following trends in text messaging:

Text messages have a **98% read rate**.

People read text messages within five to **90 seconds** of receiving them

On average, the response rate for text messages is within **45% to 50%**

If you have a personal relationship with the receiver, the response rate goes up exponentially.

The response rate for a text message is **209% higher** compared to phone calls

The average SMS campaign conversion is **45%**, but it can go as **high as 85%**

That's a **250% increase** than what people get from emails (from Salesforce)

Text message conversions are **295% higher** compared to phone calls

Looking at all these data, Parbs concluded that **90% of people would rather receive a text message than a phone call.**



Likewise, Twilio found that **85% of people preferred text messages over email** because **they want to engage** in the conversation.

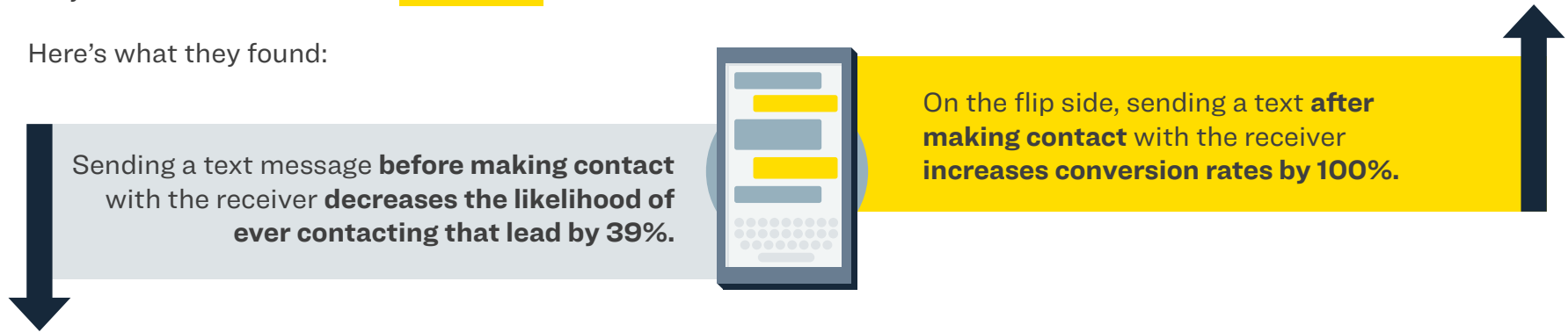
Now the question is, if reps are already sending out SMS, what's the best way to do it? How can you get the mobile numbers of decision-makers and make sure that you don't turn them off with your "cold texting"? How can you make them want to read your text message?

[Research from Thomas](#) reveals that **86% of companies don't have a formal strategy around utilizing text messaging, and only 14% do.** The goal is to equip companies to use this very powerful tool the right way.

TEXT MESSAGING | BEST PRACTICES

Velocify [conducted a study](#) on text messaging where they had their team send out **cold texts**.

Here's what they found:



Looking at that data, it would seem that sending cold text messages is not ideal. Yet there will always be outliers — situations that won't conform to that norm.

For instance, one rep from XANT found success in cold texting. He gets the prospects' number from tools that provide mobile numbers and verifies them using Inside Sales. Then, he sends a short text message where he introduces himself and tells the prospect about what he does.

Cold texting may not be ideal in your typical cadence, but it can work for you in specific scenarios.

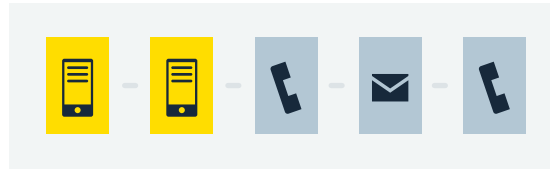
Parbs supported this by saying that cold texting is not the best practice. There are several laws and anti-spamming legislation that restrict marketers, and anyone else, from sending cold text messages.

However, if you're sending a text message after you've already started the contact cadence, you'll find success in utilizing this tool. This means sending the text after sending an email, making a phone call, or leaving a voicemail.

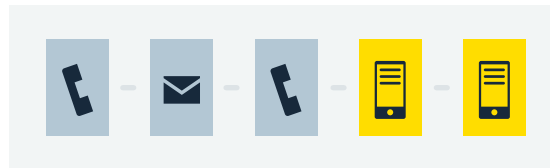
When you adopt this practice, you'll have a 100% chance of converting your prospect. You need to give something of value and make a purposeful contact.



Parbs reminded us that sending text messages outside the SMS functionality of your mobile phone is also considered text messaging. This includes sending texts using third-party apps like WhatsApp.



His sales team's inbound lead cadences touch base via text earlier in the cadence.



For outbound cadences, text messaging comes later on after they've established their cadence.



[Another best practice](#) is giving people the option to unsubscribe or opt-out from receiving a text message from you. Parbs recommends using an SMS platform that's automatically compliant to requests such as this so you can prevent sending a text to someone who already opted out.

If people don't want to receive text messages from you, you have to respect that. If your sales reps are texting prospects and customers using their mobile phones, they have to keep themselves in check personally. Aside from this, they have to regularly let the rest of the team know who opted out so they can also avoid making a mistake.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU TEXT YOUR PROSPECTS?

Another study from Velocify revealed that sending **at least three** purposeful text messages after making contact with a prospect can **increase conversion rates by 328%**.



One is not enough, but you also have to know the limit to your persistence so you won't become a pest. You can go with a once-a-week cadence when it comes to text messaging.

If your prospect prefers to contact you via text messaging, you may exchange more SMS conversations with them. If you've never made contact with your prospect, you can include one or two text messages in your cadence.

WHEN SHOULD YOU TEXT YOUR PROSPECTS?

When you're sending text messages to someone new, start by contacting them during business hours.



Then, slowly, as the relationship progresses, you can begin texting after business hours. Never text someone while they're driving, though.

If someone loves to text, they may be texting at odd hours like late at night or early in the morning. Then again, you have to build your relationship with someone to get to the point where you're comfortable with texting each other anytime.

You need to be conscious of when you're sending someone a text message. This also means paying attention to your recipient's local time.

HOW TO ASK SOMEONE FOR THEIR CELL PHONE NUMBER

One of the key questions everyone wants to know the answer to is how to ask someone for their cell phone number. To give you some ideas, Breneman shared some plays that XANT uses internally:

Give to Get

“It’s sometimes hard to get ahold of me so feel free to take my cell phone number down and you can text me whenever you want. Do you mind if I have good mobile number for you to text?”

The Exchange

“To make it easier to communicate, are you open to exchanging mobile numbers?” or “I’d like to get ahold of you when it’s convenient, and a lot of times we find that texting is easier. Do you mind if we exchange mobile numbers and start texting?”

The Explanation

“Currently I’m at 10% contact rate and a 10% email open rate when communicating with prospects, which is pretty lousy. Text is a whole different story though so if you’re open to it, I’d prefer to text back and forth when appropriate. What’s the best number I can use to send a text message?”

The Sneak

“What’s the best number to reach you on if I can’t get ahold of you?”

XANT reps have seen great success getting their prospect’s mobile numbers using these plays. After getting the mobile number, they ask for permission to send a text message to their prospects.

Parbs shared another play you can use on prospects:

“Here is my cell phone number so you’ll always have me at your fingertips. I know it’s easier to text someone, so if you want to text me, just go right ahead.”

With his technique, he doesn’t have to ask for someone’s mobile number explicitly. If he gets someone interested, they’ll send him a text message, and he’ll have their number. However, he still gives people a choice to opt-out of receiving texts from him.

Parbs warned against abusing the privilege of sending someone a text message. If you tell them that you’ll send them a message only when it’s necessary or just to keep in touch, **don’t blow up their inbox.**

If your prospect is not responding to your text messages, switch to something else instead of spamming them. Spamming someone will only annoy them and ruin the relationship you’ve built with them.

BEST USE CASES FOR TEXTING IN SALES

What are some actual use cases for utilizing text in a cadence? Here are a few examples that XANT reps use in their day-to-day cadences.

The Initial Reach Out

This works really well with an ABM campaign where you send someone something.

“This is [your name] with [your company’s name]. I sent you a [item you sent] that should’ve landed on your desk [expected delivery time]. Did you get it? We wanted to connect and explain why we sent it. Do you have some time next week?”

Big News

You send this when your recipient has something big going on with their personal life or in their company.

“I loved your article on prospecting best practices. The point on using multiple communication methods was great timing for my team.”

The Appointment Reminder

This technique increases your appointment holds, and it’s also something you can automate.

“I just sent the invitation over, would you like a text reminder as well?” and “[Prospect’s name], just a quick reminder for our meeting at 2 PM to talk about [your agenda].”

The Appointment Follow Up

You can send this after the initial appointment and before the next one.

“[Prospect’s name] as promised, I sent the invitation for our next meeting on [date] and attached the research report you requested. Talk soon.

The Breakup

This could be your last-ditch text after not getting a response from your prospect.

“We’ve not been able to connect over the past few weeks, so can we schedule a quick catch up to discuss next steps? If not, we can go our separate ways.”

Cience [did a study](#) on the average cost in a sales organization. According to them, it costs a company approximately \$1,561 to book one meeting. If your show rates aren’t 70% to 90%, there’s a huge hole in your profit bucket.

It’s also beneficial to use a good SMS platform where you can automate reminders, opt-ins, opt-outs, and find the best time to send a text, among others. This way, you’ll also have access to your SMS data.

Always go for providing relevant value to your prospect or customer. Make sure the content of your text message fits with the recipient — it should be valuable and purposeful. Talk *with* people and not *at* them.

THE VALUE OF TEXT MESSAGING

Text messaging doesn't replace the other communication channels you have in place. It's most likely not the silver bullet that'll change everything, but it can still make a significant impact.

It can increase connection and conversion rates. It's undoubtedly another tool you can use to try to get ahold of somebody to help grow your appointment setting and to move prospects down the pipeline so they can understand the value of what you're offering them.

BIGGEST MISTAKES IN TEXT MESSAGING

Texting at inappropriate times

Using abbreviations or jargon language

Using GIFs or emoticons when the relationship is just beginning

Using too many characters (over 160 characters)

Being too familiar or too formal

Keep your text messages short, concise, relevant, and straight to the point. Have a good business conversation.

SHOULD YOU WORRY ABOUT SENDING TEXTS IN SALES OR MARKETING?

There's no need to worry about sending texts in sales or marketing! There may be things you need to remember to avoid, but this is a communication tool you should use.

You should worry if you're not texting because chances are, your competitor is. However, you need to deploy it tactically and with a purpose behind it.

If you work with the right company, you should be able to put together a formalized plan where everyone is on board. In this plan, you can have Marketing nurture the prospects so your sales reps can focus on qualified people in the pipeline and engage your prospects and customers.

On the service side, like customer support, text messaging is a huge tool. It's essential to set up a mobile channel people can communicate with when they need help. You can make your customers' lives easier and give them a good reason to continue spending money on your business.

Remember, if you don't give them a platform to communicate with you, they may find someone else that does.

CONCLUSION

Text messaging is an underutilized communication tool with so much potential. While there are rules around using it that you should always adhere to, overall, it proves to be beneficial for your sales team.

Don't miss the chance to maximize your ability to connect with your prospects and customers. Start forming a plan today to use text messaging in your sales cadence!

There are technologies that can help you when it comes to text messaging.

One of the technologies you can use is [Playbooks from XANT](#) which can save and record text messages directly to your CRM, and can automatically send out reminder texts as part of a cadence structure.

PLAYBOOKS

Double your contact rate with
AI-powered sales cadence.

Try Playbooks from **XANT**.

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