

# **Best Practices: A2P SMS Deliverability**



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## Introduction

A2P (Application-to-Person) SMS messaging is a powerful tool for businesses to engage customers, deliver important information, and drive actions. However, successful SMS campaigns require a combination of technical best practices, clear messaging, and regulatory compliance. This guide outlines strategies to optimize SMS deliverability, engagement, and effectiveness.

## Best Practices

### 1. Keep Messages Short and To-The-Point

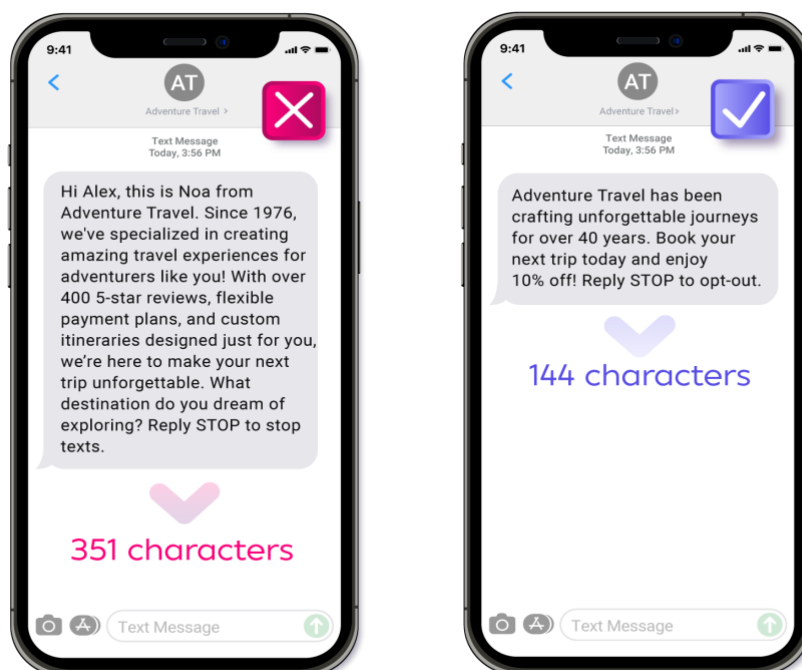
SMS messages are limited to **160 characters per segment** (70 characters if emojis are included). Messages long Optimize Your SMS Campaigns for Successer than this may be split into multiple segments, increasing costs.

#### Why it Matters:

Concise messages reduce the risk of being flagged as spam. Clear and direct communication improves engagement.

#### Pro Tip:

Avoid filler words and focus on delivering the key message in as few words as possible.



## 2. Use Links Strategically

### Shortened Links:

Most SMS platforms automatically shorten URLs to save character space and track click-through rates.

### Best Practices:

Include one link per message to avoid confusion or spam triggers.

Ensure links lead to high-value content and are relevant to the message.

Hi Ann! I remember you were interested in tips for integrating SMS into your sales tech stack. This blog might be helpful: [sms.com/blog/tech-integrations](https://sms.com/blog/tech-integrations)

### Pro Tip:

Test shortened URLs to minimize bounce rates and build trust.

## 3. Clearly Define Calls-to-Action (CTAs)

A strong, action-oriented CTA encourages recipients to take immediate action, whether completing a purchase or signing up for an event.

### Examples:

"Complete your purchase today: [Link]"

"Sign up now to claim your exclusive discount!"

**Pro Tip:** Use templates for consistency but customize messages to align with your audience's behavior and needs.

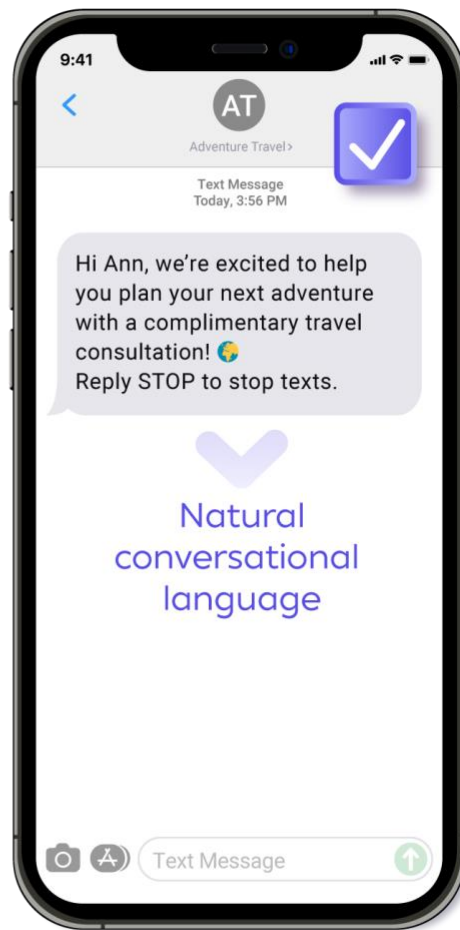
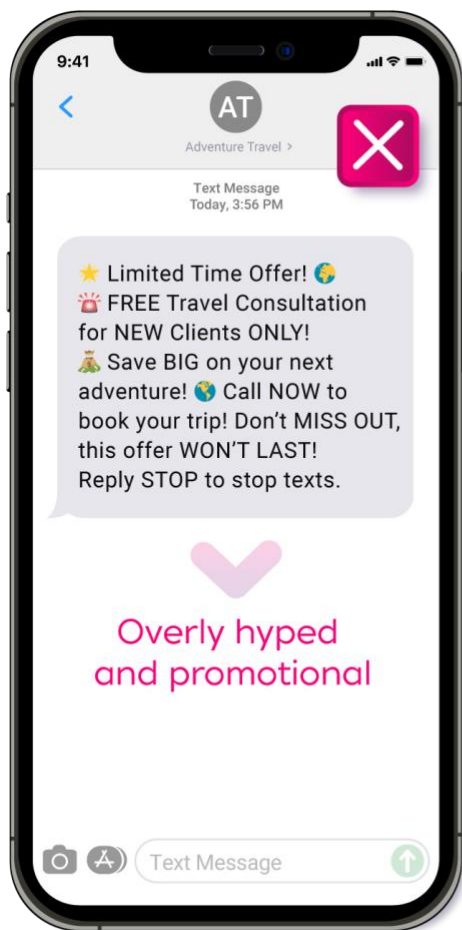


## 4. Address Common A2P SMS Deliverability Challenges

### Carrier Filtering

- Carriers use filtering mechanisms to block spam or non-compliant messages.
- **Tips to Avoid Filtering:**
  - Use natural language instead of sales jargon and don't overhype.
  - Avoid inconsistent capitalization and all-caps (other than opt-out instruction).
  - Comply with local regulations and carrier-specific guidelines.
  - Avoid excessive links, emojis, spam trigger words, or restricted keywords.

SPAM TRIGGER WORD	WHY IT'S FLAGGED	ALTERNATIVE
<b>Free</b>	Often linked to scams or spammy offers.	<b>No-cost or Complimentary</b>
<b>Limited-time offer</b>	Overused in spam campaigns.	<b>Exclusive opportunity</b>
<b>Act now</b>	Creates unnecessary urgency.	<b>Don't miss out</b>
<b>Guaranteed</b>	Seen as unrealistic or misleading.	<b>Proven or Reliable</b>
<b>Cheap</b>	Suggests low value or spammy intent.	<b>Affordable or Cost-effective</b>
<b>Winner</b>	Often linked to fraudulent contests.	<b>Achiever or Earned reward</b>
<b>Click here</b>	Pushy and overused in phishing.	<b>Learn more or Find out more</b>
<b>100% free</b>	Too good to be true.	<b>Completely complimentary</b>
<b>Lowest price</b>	Implied low quality.	<b>Best value</b>
<b>Congratulations</b>	Common in spam giveaways.	<b>Well done or We're thrilled to share</b>



## Opt-In Issues

- Recipients must provide explicit consent to receive messages.
- **Best Practices:**
  - Maintain accurate records of opt-ins.
  - Include opt-out directions in every message to prevent complaints or filtering.
- **Pro Tip:**
  - Ensure compliance with specific regional requirements, like the TCPA in the U.S.

## Number Format Errors

- Incorrectly formatted numbers, such as missing country codes, can prevent successful delivery.
- **Pro Tip:** Validate contact lists before sending campaigns.

## Network Coverage and Technical Issues

- Delivery may fail due to recipient network outages, low coverage, or device issues.
- **Pro Tip:** Consider the recipient's network conditions for time-sensitive messages.

## Message Length and Content Restrictions

- Text messages are measured in segments, typically 160 characters each with standard (GSM-7) encoding. Using emojis or special characters switches to UNICODE, reducing the segment limit to 70 characters. Messages longer than 160 characters are split into 153-character segments (or 67 for UNICODE), which are reassembled by the recipient's device.
- **Pro Tip:** Keep messages concise (1–3 segments) to control costs and maximize deliverability. Avoid prohibited content like S.H.A.F.T. (Sex, Hate, Alcohol, Firearms, Tobacco) and use emojis sparingly to avoid reducing the character limit.
- Delivery charges depend on message length and destination rates, so longer messages increase costs. Limit your text length for better cost efficiency and smoother delivery.

## Sender Reputation

- A sender's reputation is critical for deliverability.
- **Best Practices:**
  - Avoid unsolicited messages to reduce spam complaints.
  - Monitor engagement rates and address issues proactively.

## Timing

- Sending messages at inappropriate times can result in lower engagement.
- **Pro Tip:** Schedule messages during business hours and consider time zones.

## 5. Offer Meaningful Incentives and Rewards

- **Why It Works:**
  - Incentives like exclusive discounts, loyalty perks, or early access build engagement and trust.
- **Pro Tip:** Align rewards with your audience's preferences to maximize impact.



## 6. Ensure Content is Relevant and Timely

- Timely and relevant messages are more likely to engage customers and drive action.
- **Best Practices:**
  - Personalize messages using customer data.
  - Align content with current campaigns or promotions.
- **Pro Tip:** Use segmentation to tailor messages to specific audience groups.



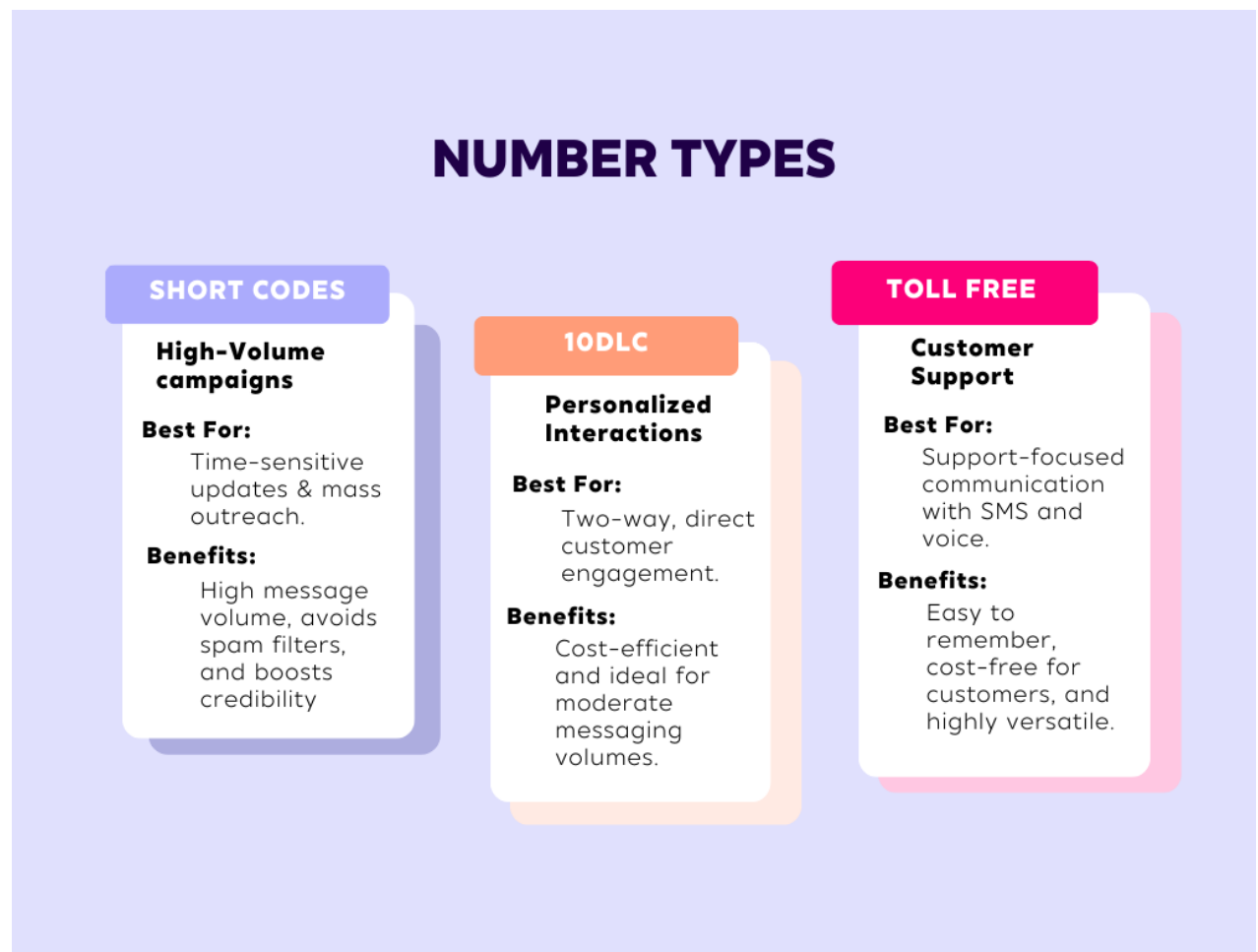
## 7. Leverage Multi-Channel Strategies

- SMS works best when integrated with other channels like WhatsApp and Viber:
  - **SMS:** Best for urgent updates and transactional messages.
  - **WhatsApp:** Great for interactive customer support and rich media.
  - **Viber:** Ideal for detailed and visually engaging communications.
- **Pro Tip:** Use a unified strategy to engage customers across their preferred channels.





## 8. Choosing the Right SMS Number for Your Business Depends on Your Communication Goals



### Pro Tip:

Match your business goals with the right number type to maximize efficiency and engagement.

## Optimize Your SMS Campaigns for Success



### Quick SMS Marketing Checklist

Use this checklist to ensure your SMS campaigns are optimized for success:

- ☐ **Short and Clear Messages:**  
Stay within 160 characters for better engagement.
- ☐ **Strong CTA:**  
Use actionable and concise calls-to-action.
- ☐ **Opt-Out Instructions:**  
Include "Reply STOP to unsubscribe" in every message.
- ☐ **Proper Formatting:**  
Verify international numbers and shorten URLs.
- ☐ **Timing:**  
Schedule messages during business hours and consider time zones.
- ☐ **Compliant and Trusted:**  
Ensure opt-in consent and follow regional regulations.
- ☐ **Monitor Results:** Track delivery, engagement, and click-through rates regularly.



## Conclusion

A2P SMS is a powerful tool that, when optimized with best practices, ensures messages reach the right audience while delivering exceptional experiences. Regular reviews and refinements boost engagement and customer satisfaction. By following deliverability guidelines, you can maximize the impact of your SMS campaigns.

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