

Messaging services from O₂



Few organisations in the UK have a customer base as large and diverse as O₂'s, yet customer focus is at the heart of our success. So how do we, a large organisation with a wide range of products and services, communicate with our customers in a way that's personal and relevant to each customer?

Messaging services from O₂

Stuart Maciver, Head of Campaign Creation and Management at O₂, says "We know that 91% of texts are viewed within 60 minutes of being sent. If you compare that to, for example, email of which on average only around 25% are ever read, you can see texting has a unique place. You can't carry such a big message, but you can send it to the customer in a managed time frame and know that they are likely to read it."

Relevant, timely offers

"We use specific insight about a customer to send them a text, for example by location. If we know a customer is near a Halfords, we could send a text about offers we have with Halfords in Priority Moments."

"Or if we know a customer goes to a particular stadium, we can send them messages based on that behaviour, for example from Priority Tickets, and we can be reasonably confident that they will welcome the message. They will, of course, already have opted in to receive marketing messages."

These customers will have already opted in to receive messages, and they only receive messages that they are likely to be interested in so that it doesn't occur to them as a nuisance.

Helping customers choose what they want from us

Because messages are likely to be read upon receipt, they are invaluable for alerts and service messages. For example we use messaging to alert customers who have exceeded their data limit. Crucially, there is a convenient response mechanism so they can act on the message right away. We send alerts to customers to say they have used 80% and 100% of their data limit and they can then top up if they want to.

"Another example would be that we know when our customers go abroad so, when they do, we send them a text message to explain roaming charges. Messaging gives them the opportunity to act on the message in the most relevant way."

No longer a dumb channel

Stuart Maciver likes the dynamic nature of messaging. He says "We develop communications channel preference models so we know which of our customers are more likely to respond in the channel of their preference. We know that customers respond by text better than email so that's the channel we use."

Versatile and visual

Messaging has changed dramatically from the simple format of its early days.

Stuart Maciver says "Until recently, the text used to have to be all bunched up in a single paragraph. Now, we can

"Text is no longer a dumb channel. There was a time if you sent a text you wouldn't know what a customer did. But now we can track customers' engagement with texts. Thanks to the smartphone revolution we can do much more. We can insert links and we know if the customer engages. We can design progressive campaigning after that, in an automated way. If they do something via a link we can follow their journey and, for example, if we see they looked but didn't buy, we can push a "buy" offer."

Stuart Maciver
Head of Campaign Creation
and Management, O₂

do so much to make messages visually appealing. We can insert shortened URLs within the text so that people can see what they're clicking on. We have begun making much more use of layout with headlines and paragraphs. This is much more inviting for customers to read, easier to consume and allows us to deliver relevant info much more quickly."

Text messages no longer have to stick to a character limit. Over 98% of mobile devices will 'concatenate' and send the messages, regardless of their length. The emphasis is now on making them relevant and appealing.

Strengthening other customer communications

We've found that messaging works particularly well together with other channels, for example as a CRM tool. For example "We sometimes make 'health check' calls to our business customers. But busy people may not answer a call from an 'unknown' number. So we use texts to alert customers that we're about to call them. By deploying this we have had a 50% improvement in contact rates."

Reaching the hard-to-reach

Conversely, sometimes messaging is the only way to reach some customers. Stuart Maciver says "The vast majority of our prepay base don't have any other contactable channel. So messaging is one of the few channels available to us where we know we have consistency of contact and the ability to build and sustain relationships with them. They may move house, or change their email, but their mobile will be the one channel of communication that is always up to date and that they will always access."

Matching customers' changing habits

"The modern consumer's attention span is very short. We have little time to consume commercial messages, but we have got time to absorb words conveniently delivered and integrated into 24/7 behaviour. We are more intimate with our mobile than anything else, and messages are consumed immediately. We provide small pieces of information on an ongoing basis that don't overload people, and that fits perfectly with their way of living."

"Direct mail and email are not very welcome any more, but text is a modern channel which suits the behaviour of the modern consumer."

High quality data

It's widely recognised that understanding and using big data is key to helping a business succeed. We are using messaging to take insight gained from our unique understanding of customer data and translating it into measurable, effective communication. It's using the vast range of – often real time – data uniquely available to a mobile operator to simultaneously promote products and services and add value to the customer.

Easy to set up

O₂ works with messaging partners such as IMI and HTK to analyse customer data and understand the target consumer on both a static profile level and a dynamic real-time behavioural level. We can begin to predict buyer behaviour and patterns in a far more advanced way than before and present more intuitive campaigns.

"Messaging is one of the cheapest and most effective ways to build relationships with customers that make them feel valued."

Pam Knox
Messaging Product Manager, O₂

We'd love to hear from you.
To find out more about how O₂ can help your business, just contact your Account Manager or call Matt Worth on 01235 433 507.

You can also visit
o2.co.uk/business/products-and-services/mobile-and-tablets/messaging-services.