

10 Ways to Streamline Your Sales Communications Using Text Messaging



Would you like a 98% open rate on your marketing messages?

It's possible if the message is sent via text.

Text messaging has become a table-stakes feature offered by many businesses out there. But many dealership businesses are still lagging behind when it comes to text messaging.

If you aren't using text messaging to communicate with customers, you could be missing out on some big opportunities to deliver better customer service and win repeat business.

According to a 2019 survey commissioned by Avochato, over 69% of respondents across all generation would prefer an unfamiliar company to contact them via text rather than a phone call. What's more, Millennials and Gen Z often prefer texting over phone and other forms of communication. (Source)

Customers still want the same thing they always have - good customer service. But their expectations for how businesses should communicate with them are changing.

In this guide, we will share some tried-and-true tactics for using text messaging to make your sales processes more efficient and to strengthen customer relationships.

1. Text-Enable Your Landline



Think: what happens most of the time when you try to call someone? Often, they will text you back because they can't take the call (for example, if they're in a meeting). That means if you don't have text enabled, you are potentially missing out on customer communications.

Not only that, but texting can also make your customer communications more efficient by cutting down on the time needed for your sales team to make calls. For example, communications letting customers know when their unit is ready.

Most phone systems are able to receive texts. All you need is software to read and respond. But most businesses haven't taken advantage of text-enabled landlines—meaning you have an opportunity to gain a competitive edge over your competition.

How it Works:

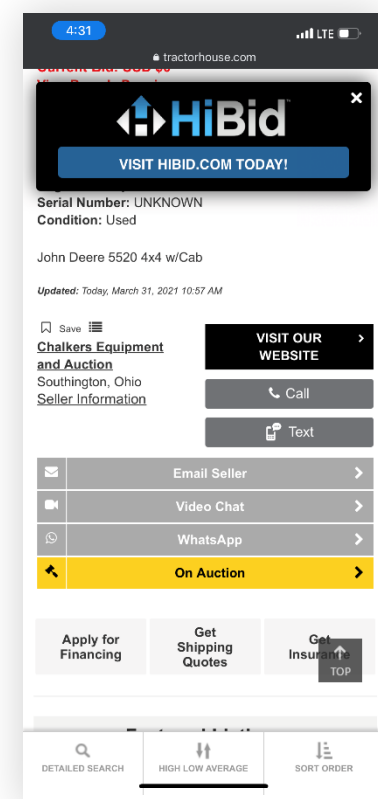
1. Your phone number remains with your carrier.
2. Connect texting to your landline using an automated sales CRM like TargetCRM.
3. When customers call, your phone rings. But when they text, **the message will come through your CRM.**

2. Connect Your CRM to Online Marketplaces

If you have leads coming in from online marketplaces like Tractor House or Equipment Trader Online, it's easy for your leads to get lost in your email inbox. But you can prevent leads from getting lost in the shuffle by diverting them to your text message inbox instead.

The idea here is not for text to replace email. Instead, it's to help you meet customer expectations by offering faster responses via a channel they expect you to use—text messaging. Sending a text message is faster than filling out a contact form or calling in and customers will typically expect a faster response time in return.

Not only that, but you can also qualify leads from your phone. According to MarketingProfs, text messaging marketing has a 45% response rate, while email only has a response rate of 6%.



How it Works:

1. Connect your CRM to the phone number you post on online marketplaces.
2. Text messages from customers will be routed to your CRM.
3. Set up automated templated messages responses to **speed up response time.**

3. Connect Craigslist to your CRM



Buying a tractor or mower is different than buying a car. Often, customers don't know where to start their hunt.

The average customer visits four websites whenever they're shopping—typically, two dealers and two third party sites like marketplaces. Plus, most customers are doing this search on their phones.

By offering text messaging, you are offering interested shoppers a quicker and easier way to get in touch. That has the potential to give you a big edge over competitors who don't offer text communication.

How it Works:

1. Customer visits Craigslist on mobile and clicks the Reply button at the top of the ad.
2. Connect your text-able CRM phone number or landline to give customers an option to text.
3. When the customer taps the phone number, it pulls up the native text app on their phone, **connecting you to their pocket.**

4. Convert Cash Sale Customers to Subscribers

For many dealers, a large percentage of small-ticket sales are charged in their POS system to a generic "cash customer". That means they aren't collecting phone numbers, addresses and other details from customers—information that enables a business to track data related to specific types of customers.

Other industries have faced a similar challenge. Their solution? They use loyalty programs.

You can take the same approach for your dealership by setting up pricing levels on parts sales, to incentivize customers into offering their contact information. Give customers an opportunity to "opt-in" to sharing their contact information to get a lower price on parts.



How it Works:

1. In your point-of-sale system, set a price rule for cash sale customers to ~5% higher on parts.
2. Set a rule that regular customers with contact information in your system get a ~5% discount.
3. Ask customers to opt-in to receive the discount by providing their contact information, **so you can track customer behavior.**

5. Set Up Departmental Hotlines



Typically, about half of a dealership's calls will be for Parts and Service. But most dealerships have their phone systems set up one of two ways:

One, they have a live operator. But this can create a bottleneck—after all, they can only answer one call at a time.

Two, they have a phone tree that prompts callers to pick the department they want to talk to. But let's be honest—most people hate phone trees. After listening through all the menu options, you can end up still not getting ahold of someone, resulting in a dreaded game of phone tag.

But by setting up departmental hotlines for both calls and texts, you can forward calls to each department directly. Goodbye, phone tag!

How it Works:

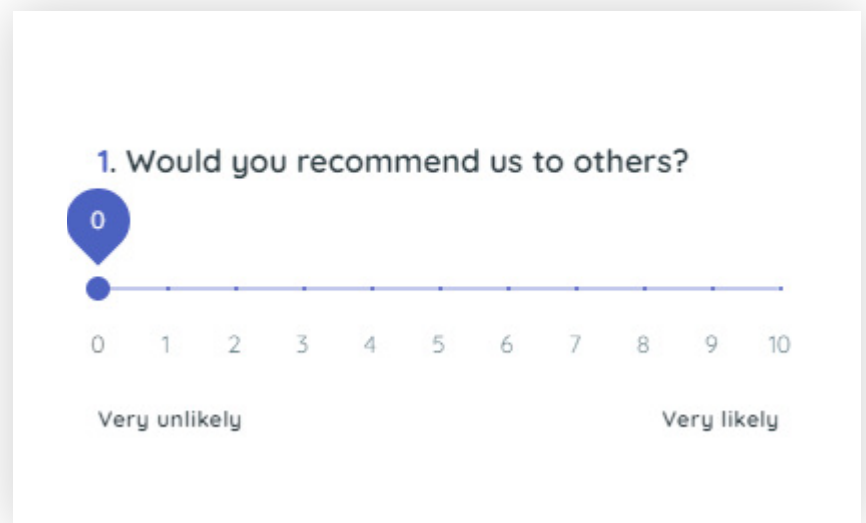
1. Generate unique phone numbers for each department of your dealership using either your phone provider or your CRM.
2. Using a voice over IP phone system (VO IP), route each phone number to the designated department.
3. **Text-enable your landline.**

6. Automatically Send Post-Sale and Service Surveys

Post-sale and service surveys are a valuable meter for understanding what kind of customer experience your dealership offers. Not only will customer surveys help you know how you're doing, but you will also gain an edge over the many dealerships out there that still aren't using surveys.

When it comes to surveying customers after they leave your dealership, you want to strike while the iron is hot and ask them for their feedback as soon after they leave as possible. Because time is of the essence, it's a good idea to keep your surveys short. Ask them something to gauge their satisfaction and loyalty—you can always follow up for more details later.

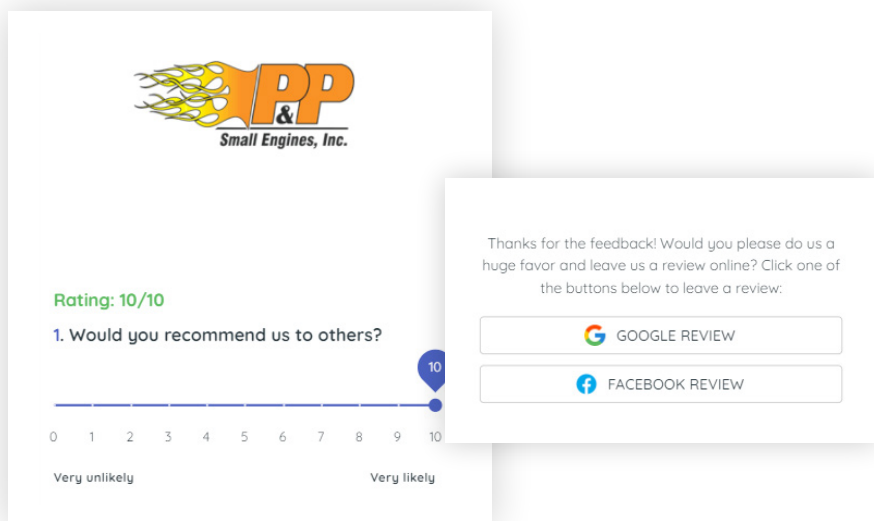
For example, you could ask customers to rate how likely they are to recommend you on a scale of 1-10, with a question field where they can leave more details.



How it Works:

1. Using your CRM, set up text message survey triggered by when a sale or service job is completed at your dealership, **asking customers to rate their experience.**
2. If you don't want to contact regular customers after every visit (such as business customers who are in daily/weekly), set up exclusions so that they will not be automatically surveyed more than once in a 60 to 90-day period.

7. Automatically Ask for Reviews



Along with automating post-sale surveys, you can also set up automated messages asking happy customers for reviews. The more online reviews you have, the stronger your online presence will be—and having a strong online presence for your business is more important than ever.

In fact, according to a 2020 Brightlocal survey, 87% of consumers read online reviews for local businesses—an increase of 6% over 2019.

Prompting customers to leave reviews is a tactic used by businesses in many other industries, from dentists to ecommerce. But it's still not widely used by industries like agricultural dealers.

How it Works:

1. Set up a text message triggered by when a sale or service job is completed, asking your customers to rate their experience at your dealership.
2. In the message, include links to your Google Review and Facebook Review pages.
3. **Watch the reviews roll in.**

8. Streamline Pickup and Delivery with Texting

A lot of your delivery team's time can be wasted by calling customers to approve appointments, customers showing up late, and customers not being home to accept their deliveries.

You can save a lot of time by automating text communications with customers. For one, an automated text is faster than calling. But automating your communications can also make it easier to weed out customers who do not confirm their pickup and delivery appointments. That way, your delivery team doesn't need to make unnecessary stops.

An added bonus? Your team can notify customers when a delivery has been made via text, meaning they can drop off deliveries even if a customer isn't home.



How it Works:

1. In your CRM, create templated text messages that your team can send to customers before a delivery to get confirmation and after delivery to notify customers.
2. Track customer communications in your CRM, so you can have a record in case any issues come up.

9. Set Up Curbside Service, Powered by Texting



Curbside pickup definitely saw a major increase during the COVID-19 pandemic. But even post-pandemic, offering curbside pickup can set your dealership apart from the competition.

Customers can call or text their order number to your team and receive text notifications about when their order is ready to be picked up. Then, you can route text messages to go to a team member at the counter to alert them when a customer has arrived to pick up their order. Routing these communications via text will help prevent your phone lines from being clogged up.

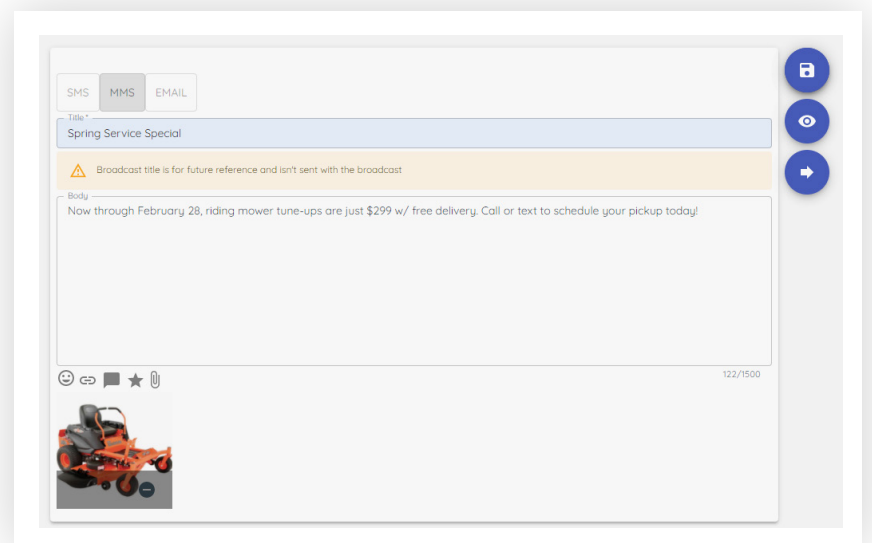
How it Works:

1. Designate parking spot(s) for curbside service and indicate your dealership's text-enabled number on the signage.
2. Instruct customers to text when they've arrived for their pickup.
3. Send a payment link to customers via text for any outstanding balances, **enabling them to pay from their cars.**
4. Customers remain in their vehicle while someone on your team brings the order out to them.

10. Send Targeted Service Promotions by Text

Texting puts you in your customers' pockets in seconds. But like some of the other tips we have covered here, text promotions are still an underutilized tool, especially by dealers.

According to research by MessageMedia, 59% of customers have visited a shop or online store after receiving a marketing text message from them. Not only that, but the average text is read within 90 seconds.



How it Works:

1. Using your CRM, segment your customer list based on criteria like location, past purchases, and customer types.
2. Batch send your list of customers text messages for current promotions, coupon codes, or store events.
3. Track responses from customers in your CRM, **so you can optimize your marketing campaigns moving forward.**

Start with a CRM



The bottom line? Text messaging can be a powerful tool for driving new and repeat business to your dealership. But to put the tips we've shared here into practice you will need a reliable CRM to help you manage your communications.

You can do all of this and more with TargetCRM. Learn more about how TargetCRM can help you connect with more customers and strengthen your sales and service, even in the off season:

<https://www.idealcomputersystems.com/targetcrm>



"We love TargetCRM! Thanks to it, we now have a ton of positive reviews online. Almost 30 of them, I think. We all want good reviews, but occasionally you're going to get a bad one. What TargetCRM does is that it takes that bad review and notifies you immediately of the dissatisfied customer, so you can go and fix the problem. It's an opportunity to turn bad reviews into positive ones."

Brandon Crawford, ATS Outdoors