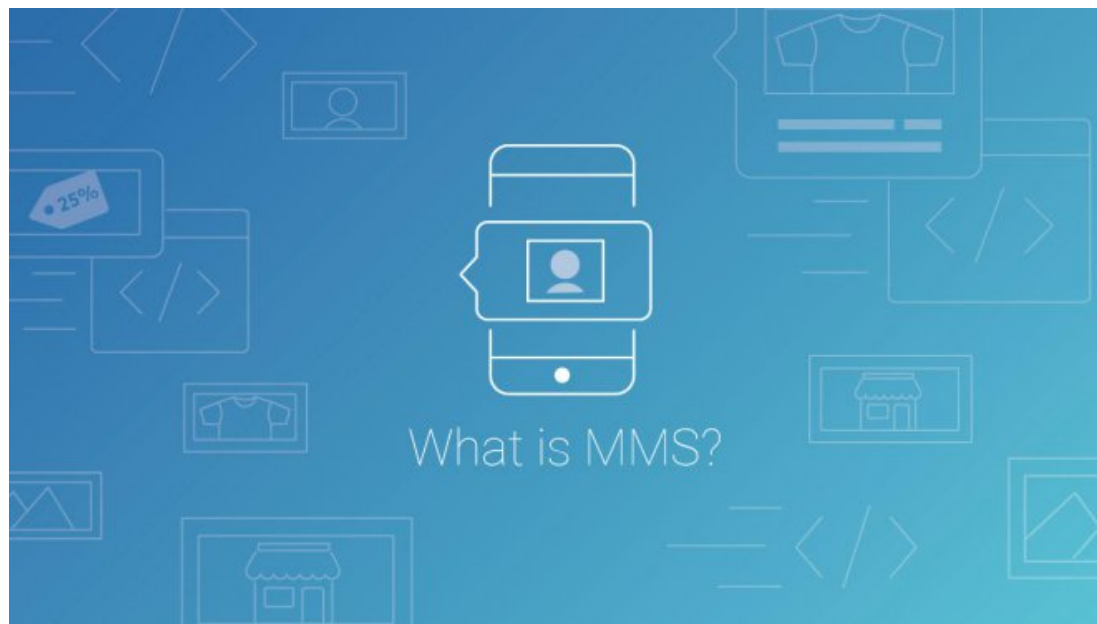


More Than Words: MMS for Rich Customer Messaging



By SHERI ATIENZA

Chances are you send and receive text messages every day. Whether they contain words, images, or some combination of both, you still call them text messages. You'll say "Text me that picture," even though technically speaking text refers to characters and not images. In fact, messaging industry types like me will tell you that text messages are usually transmitted via SMS (Short Message Service). And while SMS serves many critical business-to-consumer messaging functions—two-factor authentication, alerts, notifications or customer service—it doesn't support images.



To send images, businesses need to use MMS (Multimedia Messaging Service), a method of sending richer content than just text. With MMS, a brand can send messages that include engaging content such as images, videos, files and, of course, everyone's favorite, GIFs.

But nontechnically speaking it's understood that *text* is a catch-all term for all types of messaging, which has become part of our everyday lives. We text not only our friends and family but we also use messaging to communicate with companies. If these companies want to keep pace with users' expectations, adding MMS and rich media support to their messaging strategies is a natural progression.

Images Speak Louder Than Words

Images speak louder than words. Adding images creates a story.

We see these adages confirmed by the rise of memes and other image-based messages that allow the recipient to immediately understand what is being communicated. While SMS is limited to 160 text characters, MMS can handle up to 1,000 characters and it enhances the visual experience of the message by supporting text within an image or an image with a text caption.

But how do brands take advantage of these features? Simply stated, they can incorporate visual elements that offer a more branded customer experience and provide their customers with feature-rich, value-added information.

For example, travel companies can provide boarding passes with QR codes, logistics companies can send pictures of a package delivered, retailers can send images of an order receipt, and finance companies can send fraud alerts with branded imagery to indicate that they’re legitimate. Whatever the industry, customer messaging is always enhanced with imagery.

Short Codes for High-volume MMS Distribution

As important as the content of their messages are, brands shouldn’t overlook how customers receive those messages. For example, MMS messages can be sent with a neat “From” number called a shortcode. A short code is a 5-6 digit number that can receive an MMS (or SMS). It can be a vanity number that a company chooses or a random number that is assigned. Either one is able to receive and send app-to-person (A2P) traffic.

So when should a company use a shortcode? Any messaging that requires huge volumes is ideal for shortcodes, as a shortcode is not bound to the one-message-per-second limit that a standard phone number is. That means a shortcode can get the messages out much quicker, which is critical for scenarios when time-sensitive alerts need to reach multiple customers right away.

SMS Still Has Its Place in Your Messaging Strategy

In all this MMS talk, I don’t want to sell SMS short (you see what I did there?). It is a key technology for many customer messaging use cases. Armed with both SMS and MMS in your messaging arsenal, you choose the best delivery mechanism for the job.

Whether it be validating a new customer with 2FA, engaging with the customer with mobile promotions or notifications, fulfilling purchases or solving support issues, decide which type of messaging will deliver your desired results. At Nexmo we provide SMS and MMS capabilities via the Messages API. That means with one API, you can send both SMS and MMS and *social chat messages*.

Please fill out the form and we will be in touch with you shortly.

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Are you a Developer?		Company Name	
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Existing traffic to switch?		Traffic Volume Monthly (Optional)	
Message (optional)			

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