Keeping customer data up to date with **SMS**

How to **collect** and **update customer information** using **text messages.**

esendex

When customer data goes bad

Everyone has heard horror stories relating to really poorly maintained customer data: late payment demands made to deceased people; family planning material sent to eight year olds; innocent people incorrectly identified as criminals.

These are extreme examples, but there's a good chance you've experienced data failures on the lower end of the scale. Personalised emails received with the wrong name; spelling mistakes in your name or address in letters; offers for services no longer appropriate to your current circumstances... The list goes on!

The important thing is that you don't subject your customers to these sorts of errors. Not only is it a really poor customer experience, it's also your legal obligation to keep your data up to date.

> *"Entities must take reasonable steps to ensure that the personal data they collect, use or disclose is accurate, up-to-date and complete."*
> *(Federal Register of Legislation)*

Contents page:

The benefits of a well-maintained database

A well maintained customer database allows you to contact customers easily, cater for their current needs, and offer them a level of customer service that meets their expectations.

Customers aren't the only ones to benefit from up to date information though!

Keeping your customer data up to date will save your business time and money by allowing you to cut out communications with people that can't be reached, or just don't want to be.

A clean database should also help you create more efficient marketing campaigns, and also provide better levels of customer care.

How to do this when you have no time and very little budget

Letters are time consuming, expensive to send, and responses are likely to be limited. **Calling customers** is also time consuming, and quite intrusive - you're not giving them the opportunity to respond when suits them best.

Email is very cheap, and with 43% of total email opens taking place on a mobile phone or tablet in Q3 2016 (source: Experian), quite convenient for customers on the move. Unfortunately they get lost in the spam folder very easily, or just in the sheer volume of emails we all receive on a daily basis.

In our experience, simple database cleansing can be done most effectively and affordably using **SMS Surveys**. SMS has the benefit of being seen by 98% of recipients (source: Adobe), so as long as you time your survey carefully and keep your questions short and to the point, you can get great responses from this channel.

How SMS Surveys work to help maintain accurate customer databases

Here's a typical scenario of how SMS Surveys can be used to refresh an existing database of customer information, by allowing the customers themselves to provide any updates that are required.
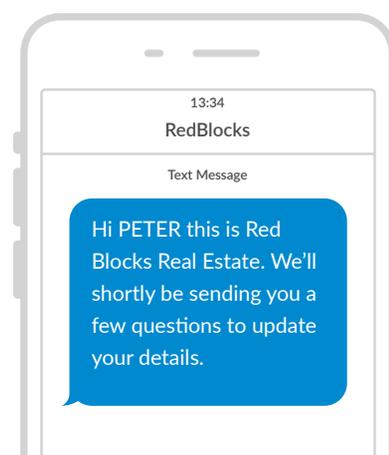
Red Blocks Estate Agents were looking to update their database of potential customers. They needed to find out whether each contact was still on the market, whether they were buying or renting, and what type of property they were looking for.

1. The intro message

Sending your customer a message to advise them that they're about to be sent a survey is a smart move. The alternative is sending your first question without much in the way of an introduction, which can be a bit abrupt.

We tested the value of intro messages during our own database cleansing exercise. We sent out 50% of our surveys without an introduction message, and 50% with an introduction.

We got a 15.92% response from customers who received the introduction message, and 8.62% from those who didn't (compare this to the 2.91% response we got from email and you can see why we rate SMS so highly for this purpose!).

13:34

RedBlocks

Text Message

Hi PETER this is Red Blocks Real Estate. We'll shortly be sending you a few questions to update your details.

Intro message example

2. The questions

Businesses have the option to use three different types of questions, when collecting and refreshing their data:

▶ Questions with no predefined answer – 'free type' answers

▶ Questions with predefined answers (such as the example we'll look at below)

▶ Net Promoter Score questions *(click here for more information on Net Promoter Scores)*

▶ Yes or no questions.

A closer look at predefined answers:

Red Blocks could ask a question like ***"When we last spoke you were looking to rent a property. Text "RENT" or "BUY" to let us know what you are looking for."***
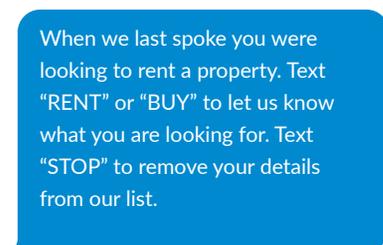
The message can also include an opportunity to opt-out of future communications. E.g. ***"Text STOP if you are no longer looking for new accommodation."***

In this scenario, we have three predefined answers: ***RENT, BUY*** and ***STOP***.

When we last spoke you were looking to rent a property. Text "RENT" or "BUY" to let us know what you are looking for. Text "STOP" to remove your details from our list.

BUY
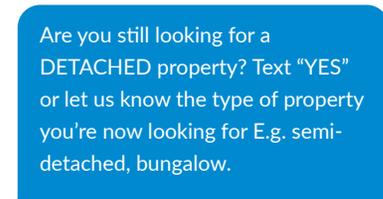
Are you still looking for a DETACHED property? Text "YES" or let us know the type of property you're now looking for E.g. semi-detached, bungalow.

SEMI-DETACHED

Predefined answer example

If the survey recipient provides an answer that isn't one of these three, we can send them an auto-reply asking them to reply with one of these three options.

The benefit of a predefined answer is that you can trigger the next question based on the answer to the first question.

By using this method we can personalise the survey, and create questions which are more relevant to the recipient. This all helps increase the completion rate of the survey.
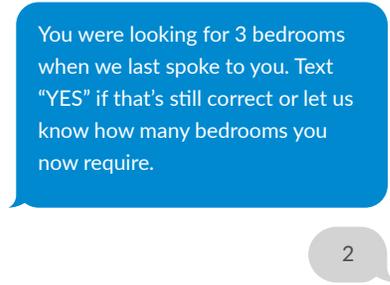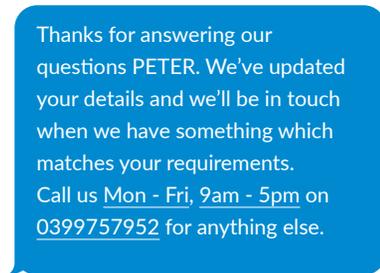
A closer look at free type answers

This allows the recipient to reply with anything they like, which is great if you'd like them to provide a more detailed response such as a new address, or change in circumstances.
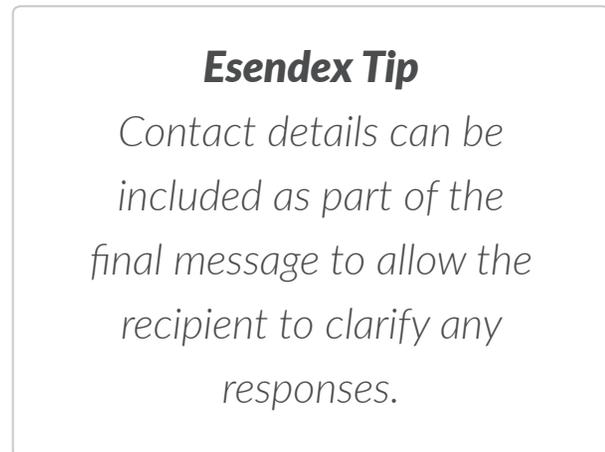
> You were looking for 3 bedrooms when we last spoke to you. Text "YES" if that's still correct or let us know how many bedrooms you now require.
>
> 2

Free type answer example

3. The sign off

After gathering all of your required data, it's time to sign off and thank the customer for their time.

> Thanks for answering our questions PETER. We've updated your details and we'll be in touch when we have something which matches your requirements. Call us Mon - Fri, 9am - 5pm on 0399757952 for anything else.

Free type answer example

Esendex Tip
Contact details can be included as part of the final message to allow the recipient to clarify any responses.

4. The analysis

You can download the responses from your survey as a spreadsheet, and either manually update your customer database, or import the data.

SMS Surveys can be used for:

▶ Updating address details

▶ Updating personal details such as a customer's full name, number of children or pets

▶ Updating employment status

- Updating current requirements for a service (such as our Red Blocks example)
- Refining your understanding of a customer's requirements – they may have purchased a pair of work shoes, size 5 – would they like to receive messages about belts, bags, wallets etc.?
- Finding out how often a customer wishes to be contacted by you
- Finding out how a customer would prefer to hear from you (letter, email, SMS, phone etc.)
- Understanding how happy a customer is with your product or service
- Removing customers from your database if they no longer wish to hear from you.

How are SMS Surveys different from normal SMS?

The key difference is that you can just create your survey with 3-4 questions, upload your customer database to the SMS Surveys dashboard, and the Survey platform will do all of the work after this point.

You don't have to keep replying to messages; the survey will automatically send the next question after receiving a valid response to the first question, and so on.

The information is available for you to view in a colourful dashboard, but more importantly, can be exported as a spreadsheet to update your customer database.

Want to give it a go?

Contact your Esendex account manager and they'll help you get started with our intuitive online platform.

About Esendex

Esendex is a mobile business communications provider helping thousands of customers worldwide.

We offer 1-2-1 account management to help you get the best out of your SMS campaigns, and have direct network connections to all of the major networks, meaning that your messages will be delivered quickly, securely and reliably.

To contact your account manager:

📞 Call **1300 764 946**

🖥 Visit ***www.esendex.com.au*** where our agents are available on ***LiveChat*** (office hours only).

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