

# Bringing Text Messaging to Campgrounds

*Improving customer and venue communications in-app via lean design and development*

*Role*

Lead UX Designer, UI Designer, Researcher

*Along With*

Product Manager, Development team of 6, 2 QAs

## Background

### The Feature -

One feature that we identified as having moved from a delighter in the space to an expected feature was Text Messaging. Our competitors were almost all doing text messaging, and our parks were feeling antsy to have SMS communication with their guests.

### The Company -

We wanted to stay competitive, as well as offer our customers a way they could increase their revenue. Promote sales, increase trust.

We were also going to charge for this feature, as a nice way of increasing our own revenue.

### The Scope -

We coupled up design and development to be done in sync. We went forward with this work in a very lean fashion - releasing work that would move the needle forward one bit at a time for our users. This work will be ongoing.



## Research

We talked to about 10 parks and discussed with them why this would be a valuable feature to have in their management toolkit.

Why do you need to communicate with your guests? -

We learned they'd use it for different scenarios, including:

- Promoting events that were going on in the park
- Alerting guests they had left a phone behind after checkout
- Letting guests know they had mail
- Alerting guests about dangerous weather
- Letting guests know internet/water was down
- Letting arrivals know key codes to get in the gate

Why text messaging? -

We learned why text messaging as a format was attractive to them.

- People don't check their email as quickly as they do their phone.
- The parks may or may not have reliable internet.



# What are other platforms doing?

I spent a lot of time researching how other applications handled this process.

I looked at apps that provided this as a service, and other management applications in this space and other spaces that provided it as a single part of their feature set.

The screenshot shows the Textedly platform's message composition interface. On the left, a sidebar navigation includes 'Dashboard', 'Subscribers', 'Messages' (selected), 'Keywords', and 'Reports'. The main area has tabs for 'Compose' and 'Templates'. A 'Message' box contains the text: 'Hi Everyone! I want to invite you to....' Below it, a note says 'Text STOP to end'. A character count of '58/160' is shown with a link to expand to 306 characters. A warning note states: '⚠️ Expanding to 306 characters will count as **two (2)** messages sent.' Below this, there are options to 'Add a Photo to Your Message' (with a 'Browse...' button) and 'Add a Link to Your Message'. At the bottom is a 'Send Preview Message' button. To the right, a 'Message Preview' window shows a simulated mobile phone screen displaying the same message: 'Hi Everyone! I want to invite you to....' with the note 'Text STOP to end'.

The screenshot shows the 'Mobile Inbox' application interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Who are you looking for?', 'Saved Views', and user icons. The main area is titled 'Mobile Inbox' with search and filter options. It lists four booking messages from different contacts, each with a status of 'Processing' and a 'Reply' button. The messages are:

- (Booking #126437) Erin Cullen: Yes
- (Booking #125932) Blair Noel: Yes
- (Booking #126974) Peter Piper: Yes
- (Booking #126992) Mrs Sharon Johns: Yes

The screenshot shows the 'SMS: Received (Inbox)' interface of the NewBook platform. The top navigation bar includes 'SMS: Received (Inbox)', 'NewBook Resort', and a user icon. The main area displays a table of received messages with columns: 'Message', 'Sent From', 'Sent To', and 'Sent On'. The messages listed are:

Message	Sent From	Sent To	Sent On
Enjoyed our stay, see you soon.	Mr Trois	NewBook Resort	8 November
Yes I would like to upgrade my room.	Mr Wahn	NewBook Resort	7 November
Yes, I would like an upgrade.	Mrs Smith	NewBook Resort	28 November
Our family really enjoyed our stay, see you soon.	Ms Joanne Smithson	NewBook Resort	23 November
Yes, I have received it, but I may have to double check the dates.	Mrs Schmidt	NewBook Resort	23 November
Please call me to discuss.	Jane Doe	NewBook Resort	12 November
9 out of 10, we loved our stay.	Ms Smith	NewBook Resort	11 November

# Initial Explorations and Ideas

Campspot

Notifications User@email.com

Nine Dot Menu Message Center Text Messaging New Message

[< Back to Conversations](#)

## New Message

Choose who to send to

Add Guests

Guest Groups

Arrivals

In the Park

Departures

Compose Message

Preview

Template

When to Send

Send Now

Send Later

Monday October 23 2020 12:43 PM

Cancel

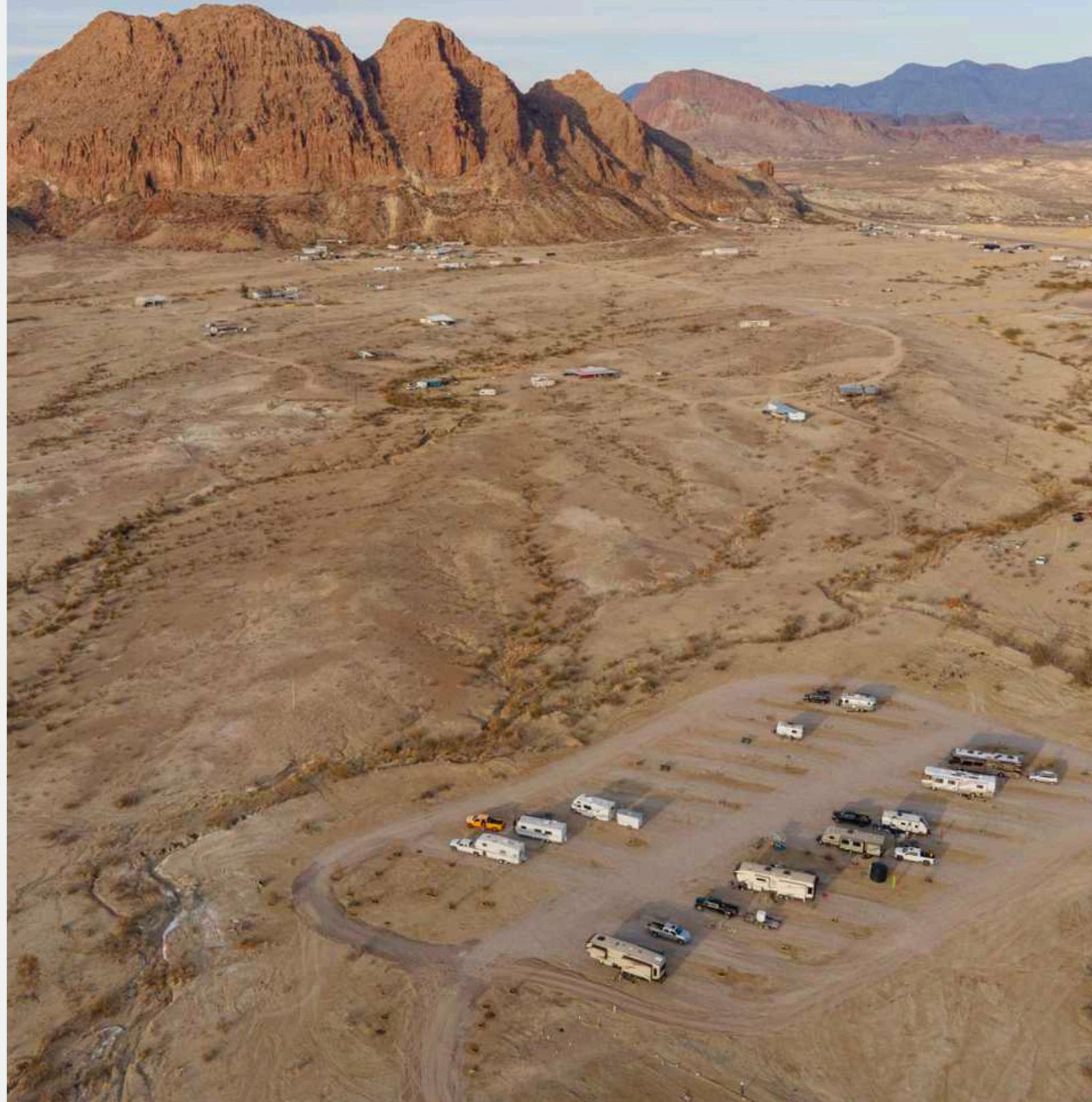
Send Message

## **Deciding to work leanly**

We decided that in order to be able to release the work in a timely manner and in a way we could validate feedback as we go, we'd chunk it up and deliver value in bite sized pieces while continuing to scope out the end vision.

## **What this project is and isn't**

Providing simple text message services to parks. For this initial iteration, we will not provide the ability for responses, sending images, or scheduling messages.



## Part 1

# Guests in the park

### Use cases this covers

- Weather Warnings
- Events in the park
- Maintenance Issues

## Part 2

# Guests arriving

### Use cases this covers

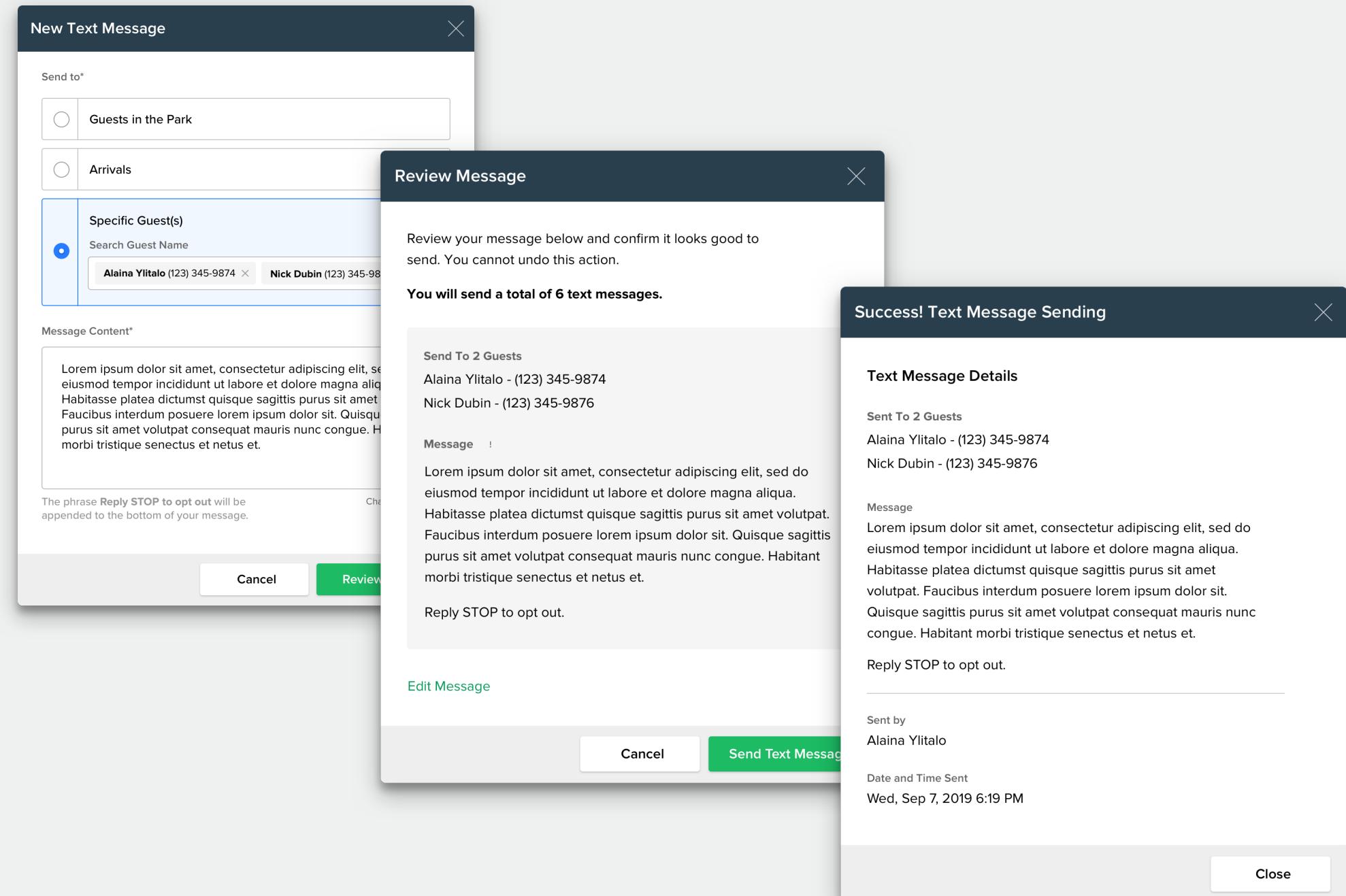
- Keypad combinations
- How to check in
- COVID information

## Part 3

# Specific guests

### Use cases this covers

- Left your phone behind
- Letting them know they have mail
- Noise complaints



# Testing with parks

## What we learned

We learned a lot of things after testing these initial workflows with parks.

Some of the biggest assumptions that were challenged included:

Sending more than 1 message at a time.

We assumed that a park would only want to send 1 message and a time, and designed a solution that would cut them off when they reached their character limit. Almost all parks hated this feature. They wanted to be able to send as many messages as they wanted, as long as they got an alert that they would be sending and therefore charged for x number of text messages.

People would want to only send messages to arrivals arriving today.

We assumed that when texting arrivals, they only wanted to send messages to arrivals coming in today. It turns out that they want the flexibility to be able to send a message specifically to people arriving, for example, the upcoming weekend.

New Text Message

Send to\*

Guests in the Park

Arrivals  
32 Guests arriving today, Feb 1, 2021

Specific Guest(s)

Message Content\*

Character limit: 198/160

Message content: Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Habitasse platea dictumst quisque sagittis purus sit amet volutpat. Faucibus interdum posuere lorem ipsum dolor sit. Quisque sagittis purus sit amet volutpat consequat mauris nunc congue. Habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et.

The phrase **Reply STOP to opt out** will be appended to the bottom of your message.

Cancel Review Message

New Text Message

Send to

Arrivals ▾

Arrivals - Today  
32 Guests arriving today, Feb 1, 2021

Arrivals - Custom  
Arriving between 02-01-2021 and 02-02-2021  
32 Guests arriving between Feb 1, 2021 and Feb 2, 2021

Guest Number Preferences

Send to Primary Number Only

Send to All Numbers on Guest Profile

Message Content\* (This will send as 3 messages)

Character limit: 134

Message content: Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Habitasse platea dictumst quisque sagittis purus sit amet volutpat. Faucibus interdum posuere lorem ipsum dolor sit. Quisque sagittis purus sit amet volutpat consequat mauris nunc congue. Habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et.

The phrase **Reply STOP to opt out** will be appended to the bottom of your message.

Summary

A total of 96 text messages will be sent

Cancel Send Message

# Testing with parks What we learned

Where to send messages from.

I assumed parks would want to be able to send messages from a dedicated message center part of the application. When we talked to parks about this, they all indicated they would rather do this from the booking part of the application where we monitor the guests and park status, or from a reservation/guest profile. They also didn't really care about having a general repository of sent messages, just a guest-based section.

The screenshot shows the Campspot Message Center interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the Campspot logo, user information (Sun Communities, Select a Park, bk@example.com), and a notification bell icon. Below the navigation is a breadcrumb trail: Home > Message Center > Text Messages. On the right side of the header is a green "New Message" button. The main content area has a table with columns: Filter by, 2 New Messages, Phone Number, Number of Messages, and Last Activity. To the left of the table is a sidebar with a search bar labeled "Search Recipients:" and a "Messages" section with radio buttons for All (selected), Unread, Conversations, Sent Text Blasts, and Archived. The table lists eight messages, each with a small profile icon, the recipient's name, their phone number (585) 8876-323, the number of messages (10), and the last activity (Received Weds Oct 23 2020 2:40 PM MTN). The messages are repeated in pairs, likely due to a bug or test data.

Filter by	2 New Messages	Phone Number	Number of Messages	Last Activity
Search Recipients:	Alaina Ylitalo <small>New</small> Question for you - which store in your camp carries bandages? My son fell ...	(585) 8876-323	10 Messages	Received Weds Oct 23 2020 2:40 PM MTN
Messages	Jackie Quentin <small>New</small> Question for you - which store in your camp carries bandages? My son fell ...	(585) 8876-323	10 Messages	Received Weds Oct 23 2020 2:40 PM MTN
All	Brandon Bowers Question for you - which store in your camp carries bandages? My son fell ...	(585) 8876-323	10 Messages	Sent Weds Oct 23 2020 2:40 PM MTN
Unread	Brandon Bowers Question for you - which store in your camp carries bandages? My son fell ...	(585) 8876-323	10 Messages	Sent Weds Oct 23 2020 2:40 PM MTN
Conversations	Jackie Quentin Question for you - which store in your camp carries bandages? My son fell ...	(585) 8876-323	10 Messages	Received Weds Oct 23 2020 2:40 PM MTN
Sent Text Blasts	Brandon Bowers Question for you - which store in your camp carries bandages? My son fell ...	(585) 8876-323	10 Messages	Sent Weds Oct 23 2020 2:40 PM MTN
Archived	Brandon Bowers Question for you - which store in your camp carries bandages? My son fell ...	(585) 8876-323	10 Messages	Sent Weds Oct 23 2020 2:40 PM MTN

## Testing with parks What we learned

Being able to pivot your target while in the workflow. I had designed the UI to allow selecting who you were sending a message to by offering different radio buttons.

This confused many of the people we talked to. They didn't know why the options were there, or if they could select more than one.

New Text Message

Send to\*

Guests in the Park

Arrivals  
32 Guests arriving today, Feb 1, 2021

Specific Guest(s)

Message Content\*

Character limit: 198/160

The phrase Reply STOP to opt out will be appended to the bottom of your message.

Cancel Review Message

New Text Message

Send to

Arrivals ▾

Arrivals - Today  
32 Guests arriving today, Feb 1, 2021

Arrivals - Custom  
Arriving between 02-01-2021 and 02-02-2021  
32 Guests arriving between Feb 1, 2021 and Feb 2, 2021

Guest Number Preferences

Send to Primary Number Only

Send to All Numbers on Guest Profile

Message Content\* (This will send as 3 messages)

Character limit: 134

The phrase Reply STOP to opt out will be appended to the bottom of your message.

Summary

A total of 96 text messages will be sent

Cancel Send Message

# Final Designs

Where to send messages from.  
On the different pages of the application, we'd give parks the ability to message different segments of guests. Arrivals, In The Park, and Specific Guests.

We also added an option to message a guest directly from their profile.

The screenshot displays the Campspot Booking interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the Campspot logo, followed by tabs for 'Booking', 'Arrivals' (with 36 notifications), 'Departures' (with 62 notifications), 'Print History', and 'Message History'. The 'Message History' tab is currently active, showing a list of recent messages sent to various guest segments. Below this, the main content area shows a table of guest arrivals with columns for Confirmation, First Name, Last Name, Housekeeping, Phone, Group, Site, and actions (Print List, Print, Revert, Check In, No Show, Text Message). The 'Text Message' button is highlighted in green. The guest profile for Meghan Fitzgerald is open on the right, showing her overview with lifetime total spent (\$5,475.45), camp credit (\$3,517.49), user credit (\$162.50), and balance (\$13,647.05). Buttons for 'Text Message', 'New Reservation', and 'Refund' are also visible.

Sent To	Sent By	Sent Status
2 Guests	Alaina Ylitalo	Success
Guests In the Park	Lesley Sablatura	Success
Arrivals	Casey Peters	Success
Guests In the Park	Chris Horton	Success
Arrivals	Chris Nelson	Pending
Guests In the Park	Matt Bremer	Failed - Reason
Arrivals	Natalie Montoya	Opted Out

# Final Designs and Workflow

Sending to different segments of guests

The image displays three sequential screenshots from a mobile application for sending text messages:

- Screenshot 1: New Text Message - Arrivals Segment**
  - Send to:** Arrivals
  - Arrivals - Today:** 32 Guests arriving today, Feb 1, 2021.
  - Arrivals - Custom:** Arriving between 02-01-2021 and 02-02-2021. (Selected)
  - Guest Number Preferences:** Send to Primary Number Only (selected).
  - Message Content:** A placeholder text block with a note: "The phrase Reply STOP to opt out will be appended to the bottom of your message." (Characters: 134)
  - Summary:** A total of 96 text messages will be sent.
  - Buttons:** Cancel and Send Message.
- Screenshot 2: New Text Message - Specific Guests**
  - Send to:** Specific Guests
  - Select Guests:** Eric Hartman (123) 345-9874 and Donna Shepard (123) 345-9874. (2 guests, 2 numbers selected)
  - Guest Number Preferences:** Send to Primary Number Only (selected).
  - Message Content:** A placeholder text block with a note: "The phrase Reply STOP to opt out will be appended to the bottom of your message." (Characters: 134)
  - Summary:** A total of 6 text messages will be sent.
  - Buttons:** Cancel and Send Message.
- Screenshot 3: Text Message Confirmation**
  - Success!** Your text message is on its way.
  - Sent To:** Alaina Ylitalo - (123) 345-9874  
Nick Dubin - (123) 345-9876
  - Message:** Sent as 3 messages
  - Text Content:** A large block of placeholder text: "Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Habitsasse platea dictumst quisque sagittis purus sit amet volutpat. Faucibus interdum posuere lorem ipsum dolor sit. Quisque sagittis purus sit amet volutpat consequat mauris nunc congue. Habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et..."
  - Reply:** Reply STOP to opt out.
  - Summary:** A total of 6 text messages sent  
3 messages sent to 2 guests with a total of 2 numbers
  - Buttons:** Close.

Guest  
**Meghan Fitzgerald**

... TEXT MESSAGE   + NEW RESERVATION   ⟳ REFUND   X

Guest Overview						<a href="#">Edit Guest Overview</a>
Name	Email	Lifetime Total Spent	Camp Credit	User Credit	Balance	
Meghan Fitzgerald	meghan.fitzgerald@campspot.com	\$5,475.45	\$3,517.49	\$162.50	\$13,647.05	

 Most Recent Reservation  
**R00000027538 (Multi-Site)**  
 Sep 18 - Sep 21, 2020

- [Guest Profile](#)
- [Reservation History](#)
- [Account History](#)
- [Message History](#)

**Texting History**

Message	Date and Time Sent	Sent To	Sent By	Sent Status
<a href="#">Hey all! When you arrive to Sleepy ...</a>	Wed, Sep 7, 2019 6:19 PM	2 Guests	Alaina Ylitalo	<span style="color: green;">● Success</span>
<a href="#">Hey all! When you arrive to Sleepy ...</a>	Wed, Sep 7, 2019 6:19 PM	Guests In the Park	Lesley Sablatura	<span style="color: green;">● Success</span>
<a href="#">Hey all! When you arrive to Sleepy ...</a>	Wed, Sep 7, 2019 6:19 PM	Arrivals	Casey Peters	<span style="color: green;">● Success</span>
<a href="#">Hey all! When you arrive to Sleepy ...</a>	Wed, Sep 7, 2019 6:19 PM	Guests In the Park	Chris Horton	<span style="color: green;">● Success</span>
<a href="#">Hey all! When you arrive to Sleepy ...</a>	Wed, Sep 7, 2019 6:19 PM	Arrivals	Chris Nelson	<span style="color: gray;">○ Pending</span>
<a href="#">Hey all! When you arrive to Sleepy ...</a>	Wed, Sep 7, 2019 6:19 PM	Guests In the Park	Matt Bremer	<span style="color: red;">● Failed - Reason</span>
<a href="#">Hey all! When you arrive to Sleepy ...</a>	Wed, Sep 7, 2019 6:19 PM	Arrivals	Natalie Montoya	<span style="color: gray;">● Opted Out</span>

# Final Designs and Workflow

Sent Messages on Guest Profile

# What's Next

## Next Steps

- Getting released this next week (Mar 2021), will collect feedback and make changes

## Down the Line

- Conversations with guests (2 way messaging), message center

- Templates

- Attaching Images

- More Advanced Recipient Picking

- Automatic Messages triggered by in-app actions

and more!

The screenshot displays the Campspot software interface. On the left, the 'Message Center > Text Messages' screen shows a conversation with guest Alaina Yitalo. The messages include a welcome message from Jackson Hole RV Park, a question from Alaina about bandages, and responses from Bigby Wolf and Jackson Hole RV Park. On the right, a 'New Text Message' modal is open, allowing the user to select specific guests (Nick Dubin) and attach images. The modal also shows a summary of 1 text message to be sent and provides 'Cancel' and 'Send Message' buttons.

## Final Thoughts

- This is the most time we've spent on user focused qualitative research on a project, and it's amazing how customer insite shaped the project
- Find ways to deliver value in an agile way while completing your larger vision
- Design and product management working together was like dream team material
- Good research takes time

