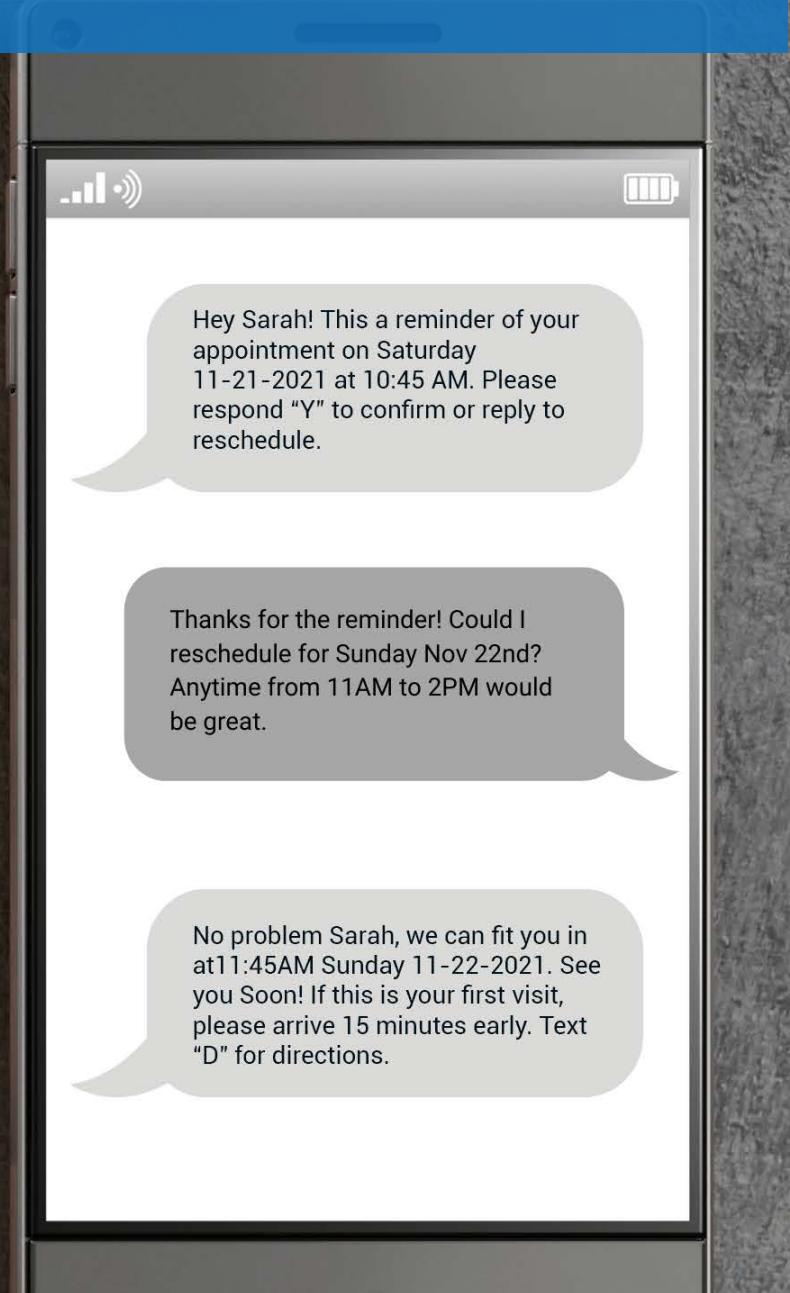


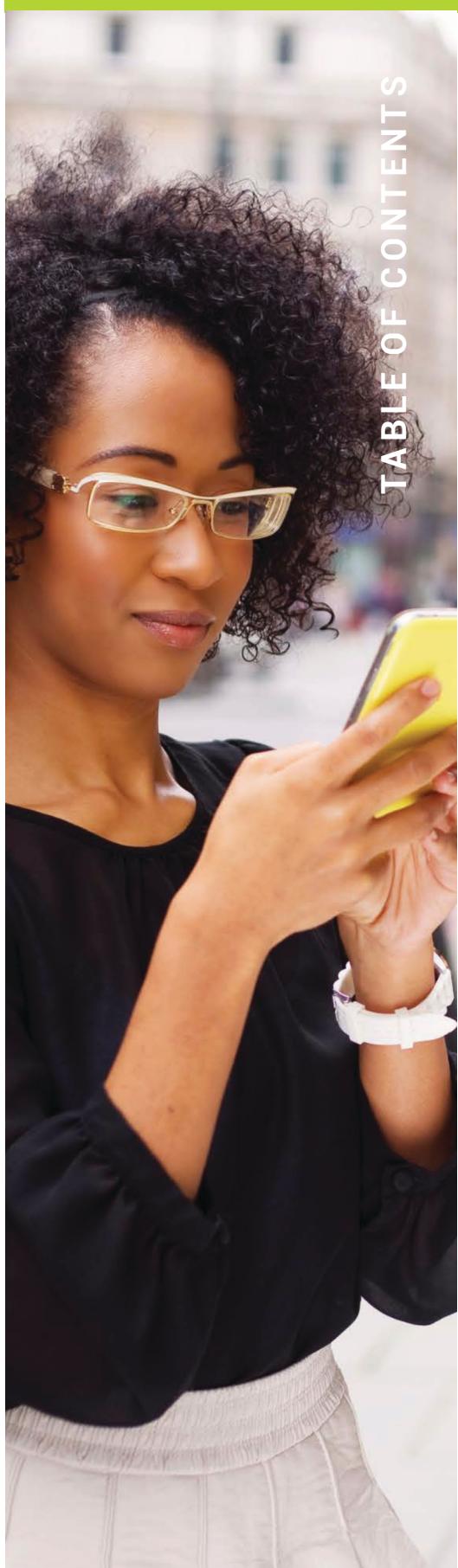


# BUSINESS TEXT MESSAGING

CAPTURE GREATER MARKET SHARE WITH THE  
MOST POWERFUL COMMUNICATIONS CHANNEL



Capture Greater Market Share With The Most Powerful Communications Channel



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

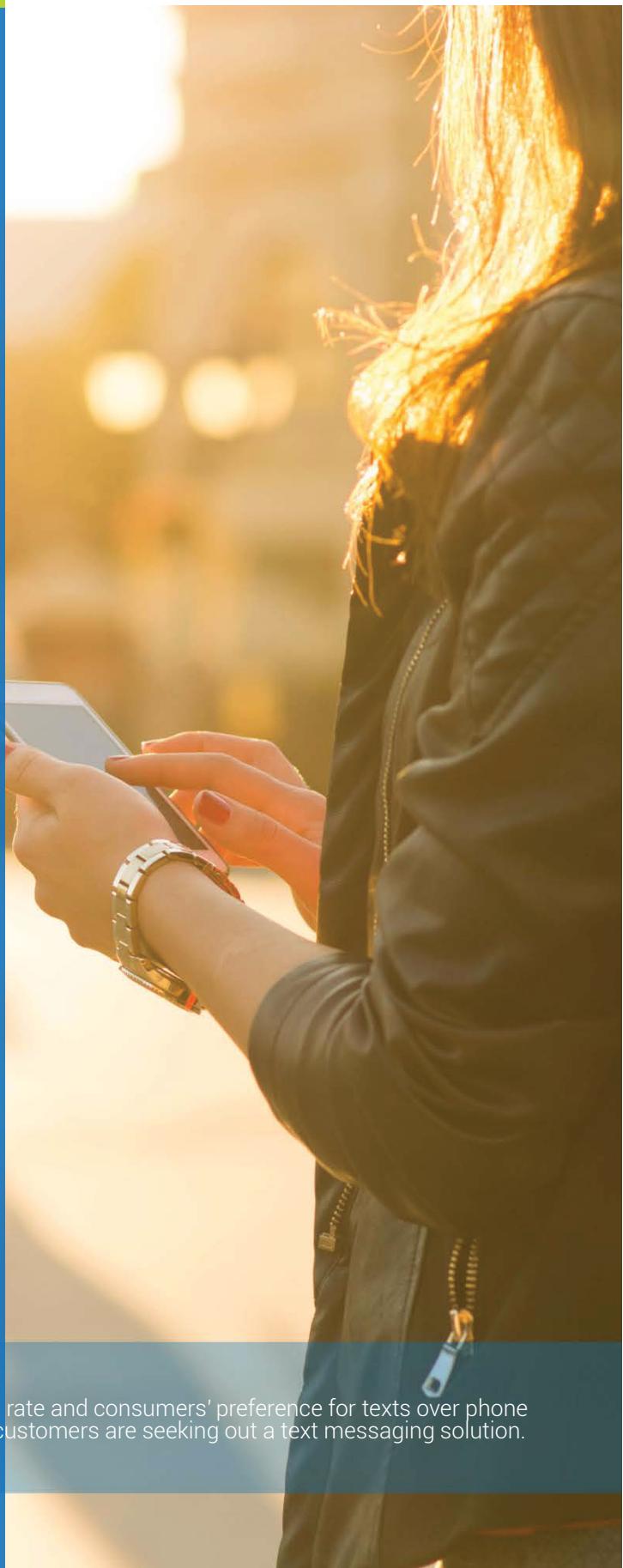
Communications service providers (CSPs) are introducing business text messaging (BTM) services to increase commercial revenue and get a leg up on the competition. This cloud-based product helps small and medium businesses (SMBs) foster customer relationships, streamline interactions, and improve business performance by engaging individuals using simple and convenient two-way texting. BTM lets consumers interact with businesses in the same, familiar way they interact with friends and family members.

This paper reviews business text messaging opportunities and go-to-market considerations for CSPs, describes target customers and use cases, and outlines the key features, functions, and benefits of a business text messaging service.



**98%**

With a 98% open rate and consumers' preference for texts over phone calls, your SMB customers are seeking out a text messaging solution.



Source: Forbes – SMS Marketing

## WHAT IS BUSINESS TEXT MESSAGING?

**Business text messaging enables your SMB customers to reach their end users where they spend the most time – on their smartphones.** As a SaaS application, it allows SMBs to use their local, toll-free, or VoIP phone numbers to send and receive SMS and MMS messages. SMBs can easily resolve customer inquiries, send reminders, promote events, automate common responses, and more – all from the business phone number their customers already know and trust.

Many consumers not only prefer text messages to phone calls for short exchanges, but also prefer companies that offer text messaging as a communication channel. In fact, **almost 63% of consumers would switch to a company that offers it.**<sup>1</sup> Which means SMBs and enterprises are seeking out text message solutions to meet their customers' expectations – creating a substantial market opportunity for service providers.

**Business text messaging is the ideal solution for businesses that schedule appointments and services or want to automate internal and external communications.**

### SMS VS MMS

Unlike SMS short codes (the often random 5- or 6-digit numbers companies use for promotions and alerts), business text messages are always clearly tied to a known business phone number and drive conversations, not just one-way communication.

### CONSUMER TEXTING VS SMS

Unlike peer-to-peer texting on a phone or unified communications client, business text messaging is managed with a cloud-based service portal for multiple business users.



Source: Campaign Monitor—SMS vs Email Marketing

## ENABLE CUSTOMERS WITH A POWERFUL COMMUNICATIONS CHANNEL

Text messaging has long been a way to connect individuals, and now it's maturing as a necessary tool for connecting businesses to their customers. In a noisy world where traditional communication mediums are often ignored, texting is a highly effective way to engage customers. Service providers seeking to incorporate a business text message solution into their product suite should seek a full-stack cloud communications provider that enables the following functionalities:

**Two-Way Capabilities.** A lot of text messaging platforms allow businesses to text with customers either one-on-one or in bulk. SMB customers want a solution that provides both.

**Integration.** Businesses use a wide range of existing applications. A solution that guarantees interoperability can integrate with both the service providers' and end users' existing infrastructures.

**Message Bots.** Automatically reply to messages based on end user-established keywords and business rules to increase automation and ease of SMB use.

**Scheduled Messaging.** Send reminders for appointments, deliveries, due bills, updated business hours, and more.

**Message Templates.** Use templates to keep messaging on brand and expedite responses for frequent questions to reduce repetitive tasks and increase employee productivity.

**Contact Lists.** Organize contacts into targeted groups for campaigns and bulk notifications — an integral feature for segmentation.

**Keyword Intelligent Responses.** Customize keywords that trigger specific automatic responses for things like business FAQs and inquiries for marketing, sales, and operations teams.

**Multiple Numbers.** Ability for SMBs to send and receive text messages from multiple phone numbers (such as the main company number, sales, support, billing, etc.).

**Bulk Messaging.** Ability to message contacts, broadcast sales and marketing campaigns, event announcements, emergency notifications, and more.

**Multi-User Portals.** An imperative feature for businesses with multiple locations because it ensures brand consistency across multiple agents, and allows them to participate in the same customer thread, transparent to the customer.



Texting is the easiest and most effective way for businesses to reach and interact with their customers.

## MARKET OPPORTUNITIES & END USER BENEFITS



**Increase customer satisfaction and response rates** by engaging customers using their preferred means of communications.



**Accelerate sales and support interactions** by enabling fast, efficient, conversational text exchanges.



**Improve employee productivity** by automating repetitive, time-consuming tasks and allowing agents to engage multiple customers at once.



**Boost business performance** by improving campaign results and avoiding missed appointments, payments, or service calls.



**Avoid missed texts and lost business** by turning the landline number into an easy-to-use communication channel for customers and prospects.



**Improve data privacy and regulatory compliance** by avoiding data loss if a personal cellphone is lost or stolen, or when an employee leaves the company.



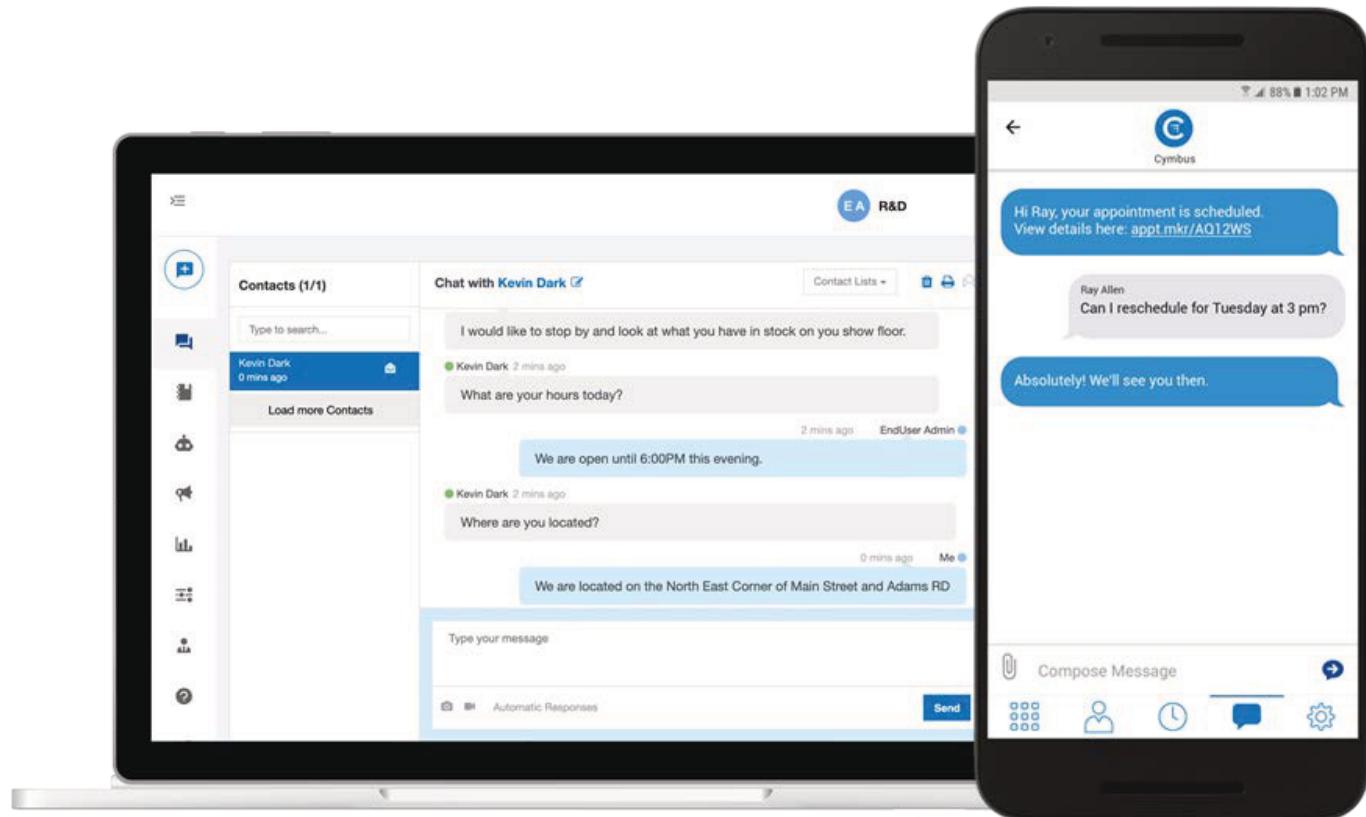
**Provide interaction continuity and preserve message trails** by eliminating the use of personal cellphones for business conversations.

## PRIME OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

In today's ultra competitive cloud communications market, CSPs are always looking for new ways to **differentiate and increase revenues**. Business text messaging services enable service providers to **grow commercial revenue and stand out from the competition** by delivering a compelling new communication service to their small and medium business (SMB) customers.

CSPs can augment their commercial voice services and expand their product portfolio to capture a greater market share with a more powerful communications channel. Customers prefer texting, which means service providers can use business text messaging services to attract new SMB customers and increase monthly recurring revenue from existing customers. With its limitless applications, BTM appeals to a wide range of SMBs including retailers, professional services firms, and home services companies.

Because BTM utilizes the business's existing telephone number(s) to exchange SMS and MMS messages with customers and prospects, SMBs are better able to foster customer relationships, streamline interactions, and improve business performance. **With SMS open rates as high as 98%, it's one of the easiest and most impactful communication channels a business can use.<sup>2</sup>**



## CSP BENEFITS & PROVEN SMB INTEREST

An ideal solution any telecommunications service provider, MSO, or ISP that offers or plans to offer phone services for SMBs.

- **Grow Revenue.** Attract new customers to win business away from competitor accounts.
- **Bundle or Sell Standalone.** Sell BTM anywhere — even outside your broadband or voice footprint — and over the top of any voice solution.
- **Easy to Launch.** In a few simple steps, onboard and text-enable your business customers without any additional equipment.
- **Sell on Any Voice Service.** Easily sell to and reach a broad range of SMB customers by adding on any voice platform.
- **Increase Stickiness.** Most SMBs surveyed view business text messaging as a valuable customer communications channel.

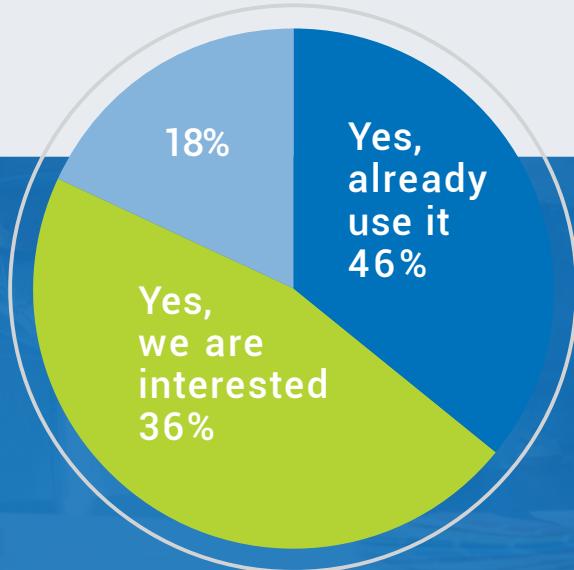
2021 INDEPENDENCE RESEARCH

### Would your business customers use business text messaging?

**Proven SMB Interest.** 82% of over 500+ SMB decision makers said they use or are interested in using BTM.

#### CSP BENEFITS

- Increase SMB Opportunities
- Grow Customer MRRs
- Boost Loyalty and Lifetime Value
- Improve Competitive Edge



Source: 2021 Independent Research

## LIMITLESS APPLICATIONS

Business text messaging solutions are ideal for businesses that schedule appointments or want to automate internal and external communications. With limitless applications, service providers can target an unparalleled range of industry verticals to meet SMB needs with ease.

### RETAIL



- In-stock notifications
- Sales promotions
- Send sales receipts
- Order placement
- Order status queries
- Delivery notifications
- Hours of operation changes
- Flash sale reminders

### EDUCATION



- Tuition notices
- Semester dates
- Field trips
- Report card result links
- Class allocations
- Course admissions
- Exam reminders
- School closures

### HOSPITALITY



- Reservation reminders
- Event alerts
- Room service ordering
- Hotel checkouts
- Customer surveys
- Contact reception
- Booking confirmation

### FOOD AND BEVERAGE



- Drive online orders
- Curbside pickup
- Manage reservations
- Loyalty programs
- Table availability
- Weekly specials
- Promote new menu
- Staff rostering

### MANUFACTURING



- Schedule changes
- Project updates
- Site closures
- Material shortages
- City inspections
- Supply needs
- Emergencies alerts

### PROFESSIONAL SERVICES



- Spa booking
- Salon appointment reminder
- Services coupon
- Sales quote
- Interview reminder
- Seasonal greeting
- Staff requests
- Meeting changes

## BUSINESS TEXT MESSAGING IN ACTION

### Day 1: Customer Reports Problem via Text

A homeowner sends a text message indicating that their furnace is not working. Based on a keyword, an automated response instructs the customer to power cycle the unit and report back. Then a conversation ensues to make an appointment.



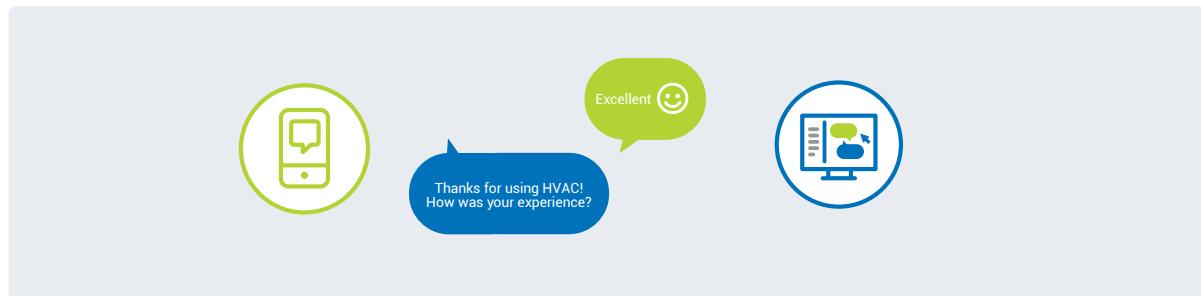
### Day 2: Technician Performs Service Call

The HVAC company confirms an appointment and provides the status of the repair.



### Day 3: Customer Satisfaction Followup

The morning after the service call, the customer receives an automated message to follow up and measure satisfaction.



## GO-TO-MARKET CONSIDERATIONS

### Platform Considerations

To accelerate time-to-market and minimize total cost of ownership, seek out a mature cloud communications provider that offers a business text messaging service that is specifically built for reseller distribution models. For example, Alianza's feature-rich Business Text Messaging solution can be launched quickly and cost-effectively while maintaining control over pricing, feature bundling, and customer relationships. This cloud-based solution also provides an intuitive Messaging Admin Portal for provisioning customers and managing accounts.

### Security and Compliance Considerations

When launching a business text messaging service, CSPs must implement systems and practices to comply with relevant country regulations, which can be a time-consuming hurdle. For example, a bad actor may pose as an SMB and subscribe to a BTM service to carry out a scam or another malicious act, so service providers must authenticate customers and validate telephone numbers to prevent impersonation and defend against illicit activity.



**MESSAGING PRINCIPLES & BEST PRACTICES**

The wireless industry association CTIA has published Messaging Principles & Best Practices guide to help inform providers and users. CSPs must also provide guidelines and tools for SMBs to manage consumer consent. To ensure compliance, SMBs must:

- **Obtain Opt-In Consent.** Only send text messages to consumers who have explicitly and voluntarily agreed to receive them.
- **Ensure Consent Is Informed.** Disclose the type of messages the consumer will receive (such as marketing promotions or shipment updates).
- **Honor Opt-Out Requests.** Ensure consumers can choose to stop receiving messages at any time.

**Regulatory Compliance**

SMB users need to be aware of this regulation and how it relates to permissions and opt-out for texting.

**U.S. TCPA – Canada CAN-SPAM**

## NEXT STEPS

Business text messaging is a powerful tool CSPs can add to their solution suite to **improve market differentiation and expand commercial sales opportunities**. Alianza offers a cloud-based managed service that enables service providers to deliver profitable business text messaging solutions — quickly and cost effectively — with our success-based model.

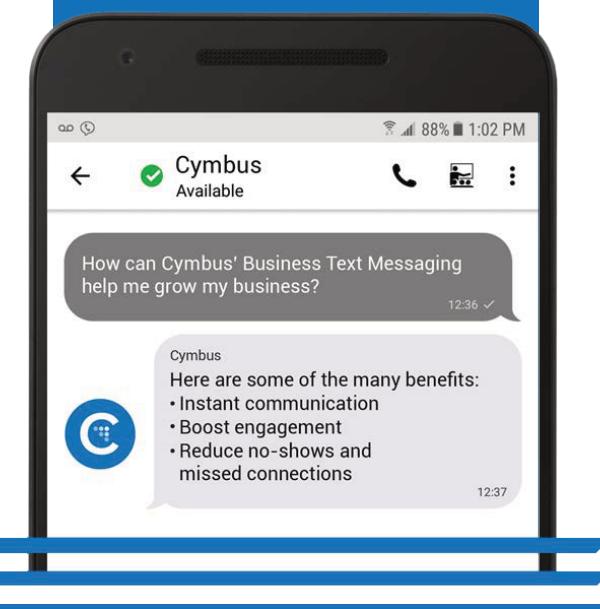
The market demand and use cases are clear: SMBs will embrace this service because it helps them strengthen customer relationships, improve business outcomes, and streamline sales, support, and marketing interactions. In a world where consumers have tuned out traditional mediums, **texting is the most effective medium for customer engagement**.

Alianza's full-stack cloud communications platform powers a turnkey solution that includes service provider account management, all the features SMBs need to automate and streamline customer interactions and improve business performance. **The Alianza solution is well suited for any telecommunications service provider**, MSO, ISP, or telco that offers SMB voice services — even CSPs that don't operate their own voice networks. It helps CSPs increase market opportunities, extend service reach, and grow revenues.



## Get Started !

To learn more about how Business Text Messaging can add a powerful, profitable, and SMB sought after solution to your platform, **contact our sales team today** →



<sup>1</sup> Retrieved 09 June 2021 from PR News Wire

<sup>2</sup> 2021 Independent Research - Small & Medium Business Cloud Communications Survey