OpenMarket

An **infobip** company

The Empathetic Interaction™

How mobile messaging can help you get close to customers in 2021

Cast your mind back

Remember what life was like before business messaging changed everything?

You only need to go back a few years.

For both consumers and businesses, getting simple things done together could feel like trudging through mud.

Rearranging a missed delivery? Not fun. Getting hold of passwords? A pain. Authenticating an identity? Don't go there.

Happily, things are very different nowadays. From deliveries, to authentication, to alerts and announcements, SMS helps all of our worlds go round.

Forget about that trudge through mud. When businesses and consumers use mobile messaging to get things done, it can feel like skipping through a green meadow – hands held tight, eyes locked, hair flowing in the breeze.

You get the picture.

Missed potential

But here's an exciting thought. Very few companies* are truly exploiting mobile messaging's unrivalled potential to reach consumers at any time, in any place and in any situation.

Many rely on mobile messaging for some core use cases – then miss the countless opportunities to automate customer or employee conversations in a wide variety of situations. Meanwhile few are making the most of the video-rich, branded, interactive messages that can now be delivered to customers' reassuringly familiar phone inboxes.

Why is this? Because up until now, rolling out mobile messaging programs – whether traditional SMS, or multi-format – hasn't been as easy as it should be. This means customers are missing out on experiencing the kind of engagement and convenience that creates lasting empathetic bonds.

That's what this ebook is all about: how to help departments across your organization set up what we call Empathetic Interactions™ with audiences – thousands and even millions at a time.

Enjoy!

*We should know, we work with CX leaders across the globe (including seven of the world's ten biggest brands).
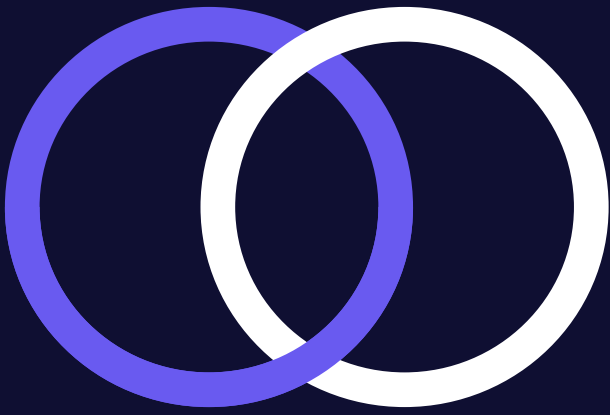
The Empathetic Interaction

Mobile messaging gives companies countless opportunities to surprise and impress customers in precise moments and in exact places by giving them information, alerts, experiences and engagements they will be thankful for.

This is what we mean by the Empathetic Interaction. For your customers, prospects or employees to enjoy them, you need to use what you know about the individual and the situation they're in – then anticipate what might make them happy.

All you need is an intelligent mobile messaging system linked to your customer ops tech stack. A good imagination comes in pretty handy too.

You might even find situations where your customers' needs and yours can be met in a single moment.

Be there when it counts

If your brand can be there for customers when it counts – and consistently and continually make their lives better – you can expect intense loyalty and advocacy in return.

This is the ticket to the big time in a business sense. But the sad fact is most companies can't make and maintain these long-term relationships because they can't stay in touch like they need to. Emails, automated voice systems and call centers don't offer the low-friction immediacy of messaging.

Even those organizations that use mobile messaging for certain use cases don't roll it out widely enough. The key for organizations is to minimize customer friction and create flow in as many situations as possible.

The compound effect of a consistent flow of Empathetic Interactions is hard to underestimate.

This is not to say that emails and human-to-human contact shouldn't be part of an empathetic communication strategy. Emails are perfect for detailed answers. And sometimes only human contact can get to the nub of a problem then solve it satisfactorily.

All these channels can work well together. But the point is that mobile messaging is there for the many time-sensitive situations that require low-friction, hassle-free interactions. Handled well, these can be the lifeblood of business-consumer relationships.

Messaging in action

Take customer operations as an example. This is often made up of multiple steps – from customer onboarding, all the way through to fulfilment and ongoing account management. In large companies with millions of customers, there are many billions of these interaction opportunities every year.

From buying a product or service, to setting up an appointment, each transaction tends to unleash several smaller, time-sensitive and interlinked interactions – such as account set up, choice of payment option, delivery set up, post-purchase follow up, and so on.

These interactions can be managed far more successfully with an immediate, low-friction and scalable form of automated communication such as mobile messaging (as opposed to email and voice) because:

- There are often lots of them going on at the same time – so an automated solution is necessary.

- They are subject to change at short notice (for example customers forgetting appointments or changing plans).

- There are often multiple interaction triggers – both inbound and outbound – making up an individual transaction. This tends to happen more when the product or service is comparatively complex.

The Empathetic Interaction

Without easily automated conversations, these interactions are labor intensive. High costs hide in the process nooks and crannies between customer journey steps, communication channels and siloed in-house departments.

Mobile messaging is the perfect solution to work alongside voice and email solutions – as long as messages can be personalized and orchestrated at scale. By connecting the process dots, the right mobile messaging platform allows individuals and teams to proactively plan (rather than reactively fight fires), work smarter, improve customer service, and enjoy their jobs more.

Use your imagination

Banks use messages to secure online banking transactions, airlines use them to send gate-change alerts, logistics companies use two-way texting to arrange deliveries.

There's an endless array of use cases for mobile messaging – and endless opportunities to facilitate Empathetic Interactions. We have a large use case encyclopedia for you to check out here. But for now, here are some ideas to get you thinking.

She brought her umbrella today because you thought to add a weather alert to your

It's not just that her train's late. It's that she's going to miss her connecting train. And the flight after that. So why is she so calm? Because you surprised her with an alert and a link to a quick re-booking page.

He needed urgent help for a software update. A message to your two-way helpline helped him solve his problem without waiting on hold – leaving him free to enjoy his Saturday.
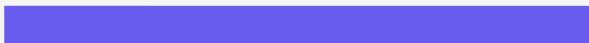
Rich messaging

Finding situations you can deliver Empathetic Interactions in is the first part of your CX challenge. The second is finding a way to roll Empathetic Interactions out more easily (more on that later in the guide).

For now, let's focus on a third part of your challenge – to look beyond the text in text messaging and find more empathetic and powerful ways of reaching customers in these moments.

There are different messaging options available. You can make use of them as part of a multi-channel messaging strategy that lets you communicate with customers on the formats that suit them.

Let's explore these formats.

Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS)

MMS has been available for over 20 years but has recently seen an explosion in commercial use – particularly in the US. MMS uses the same technology as SMS but allows you to send additional media in the messages. While it's most commonly used to send photos, it can also send short videos, GIFs and audio.

Discover MMS messaging

Rich Communication Services (RCS)

RCS is SMS on steroids. It lets you deliver interactive, branded app-like experiences straight to your customers' messaging inboxes. In addition, it allows you to gather data that you can use to optimize customer experiences and understand business outcomes.

Discover RCS messaging

Rich Media Messaging (RMM)

RMM is a solution provided by OpenMarket and our partner VoiceSage. It lets you deliver RCS-style messaging experiences to customers that don't have an RCS-compatible phone. When you send an RCS message, any device that does not support it automatically receives a fallback SMS message containing a personalized website link. A customer that clicks on this link gets a website experience that replicates the RCS message

Discover RMM messaging

Branded Messaging

Branded Messaging is a unique solution from OpenMarket that allows you to send SMS messages that arrive in customer inboxes with your brand logo. Our indigo multi-channel messaging platform converts the message during transit. It's a quick, simple solution that requires no more work on your side than sending an SMS does.

Discover Branded Messaging

On the horizon
Other rich business messaging formats, provided by giants including Apple and WhatsApp are emerging. indigo will soon be adding new formats to its multi-channel messaging mix.

Explore the new messaging landscape with indigo

indigo by OpenMarket is a new type of mobile messaging platform for businesses. indigo makes it easy for non-technical people to set up automated customer interactions – across SMS, RCS, MMS and other rich messaging formats. indigo will upgrade or downgrade the message to the richest format for the receiving handset.

indigo is directly connected to the world's leading global, cross-channel mobile messaging network (used by seven of the planet's ten biggest brands).

The platform combines an intuitive interaction builder with powerful and practical tools for analysis. It's never been so easy to roll out reliable, timely,automated conversations with consumers in around 250 countries.
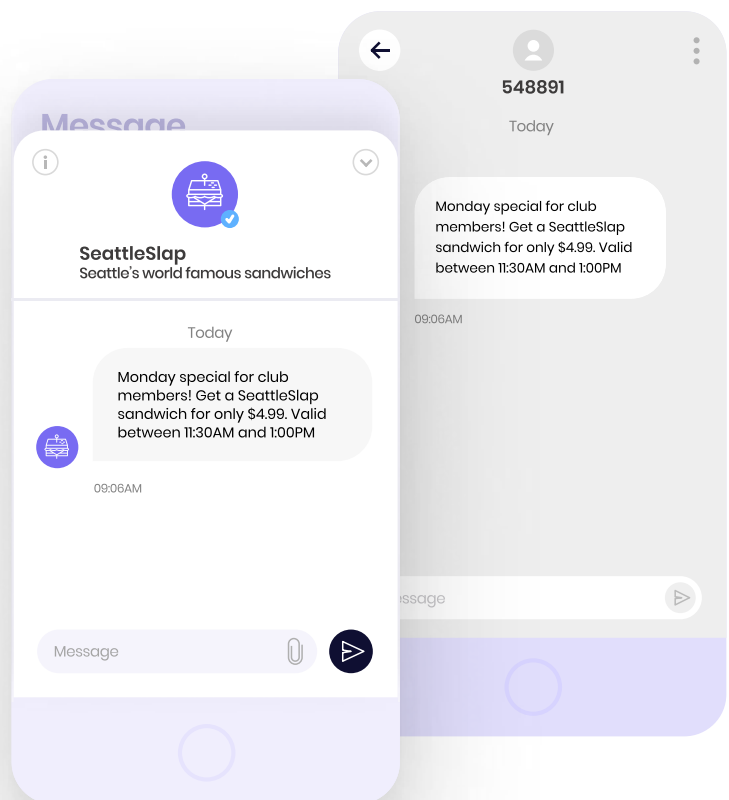
Explore indigo

How could rich messaging help your business?

We've already set out how image-rich MMS can help your communications. But MMS doesn't offer the chance to deliver a branded messaging experience to customers. In fact, up until now, it's been difficult for businesses to get their brand logo and colors on mobile messages at all.

Branded Messaging solves this problem.

Compare a Branded Message (left) with a standard SMS (right).

SeattleSlap
Seattle's world famous sandwiches

Today

Monday special for club members! Get a SeattleSlap sandwich for only $4.99. Valid between 11:30AM and 1:00PM

09:06AM

Message

548891

Today

Monday special for club members! Get a SeattleSlap sandwich for only $4.99. Valid between 11:30AM and 1:00PM

09:06AM

The Empathetic Interaction

And here's what a Branded Message looks like in an inbox.

Message

Search

SeattleSlap — 11:21 AM
Monday special for club members! Get a SeattleSlap sandwich for only $4.99...

Short code →

500500 — 11:06AM
Love Comedy? Listen to your favorite authors and comedians...

Long code →

+18337197827 — 3 Feb
Kayla, it's your birthday soon! Come to Queens Hair and Wigs Supply...

7535 — 1 Feb
AT&T Free Msg. Wi-Fi Calling is enabled and can be turned on and...

Personal →

15012019504 — 31 Jan
Hello
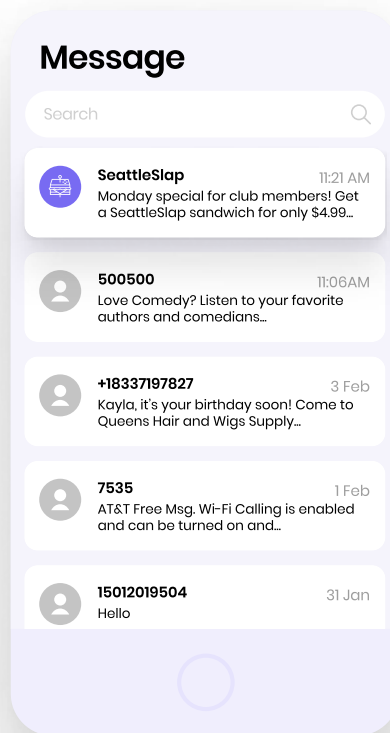
Not only does this mean your SMS messages stand out, your customers will instantly recognize your brand and trust that the messages are from you.

If you're already set up to send SMS messages, there are zero technical requirements to adopting Branded Messaging on your side. No integrations. No dev work.

You simply press send on the SMS message. And (as long as you have registered your brand details with us) our new indigo multi-channel messaging platform delivers the messages in a branded form to compatible handsets.
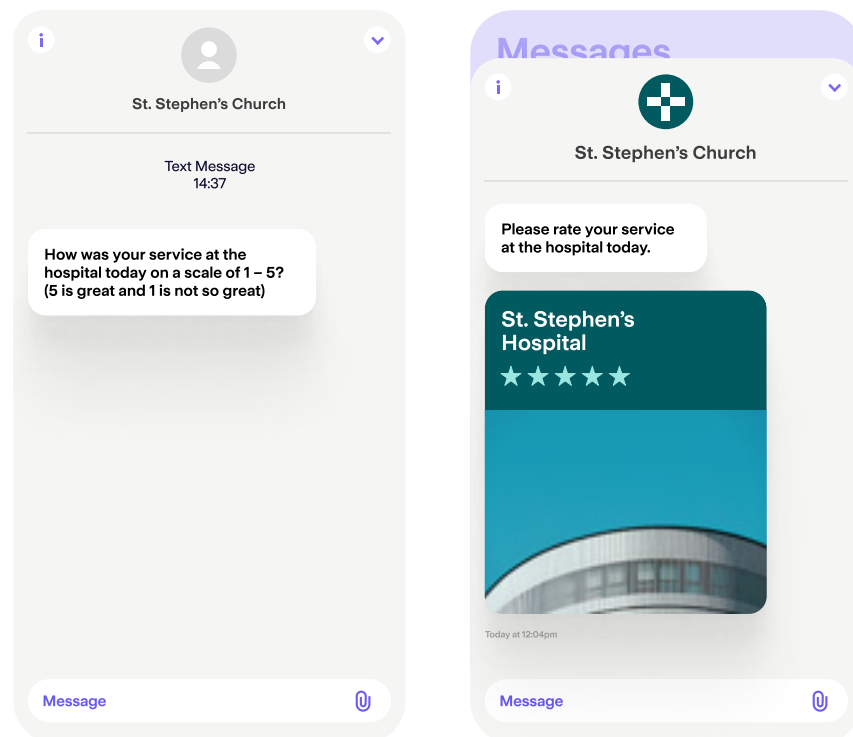
An even richer experience
The RCS format also gives you the opportunity to display your brand logo and colors – but it delivers so much more too. Imagine sending a customer an important message – but instead of just text, it contains a video or image carousel, along with your branding. It might even give the option of clicking buttons to open a map or initiate a call.

An airline could use RCS to deliver a full, multimedia check-in experience – including boarding passes, visual flight updates, and on-demand terminal maps (without the traveler ever needing to download the airline's app).

Or a retail chain could send messages about their new products that are branded, contain visual calls to action, and offer clear, one-click location sharing, or easy-to-complete customer surveys.

St. Stephen's Church

Text Message
14:37

How was your service at the hospital today on a scale of 1 – 5? (5 is great and 1 is not so great)

Message

Messages

St. Stephen's Church

Please rate your service at the hospital today.

St. Stephen's Hospital
★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Today at 12:04pm

Message

The rich messaging formats and tools at your disposal give you an opportunity to empathetically interact with customers like never before. For a deeper dive into your rich messaging options, check out our rich business messaging guide.

The importance of insights

To empathetically interact with customers you need to know as much as possible about them and the interactions you're having with them.

But few brands can answer how well their mobile messaging campaigns are performing. Even fewer can answer why are they performing that way – and how to improve them.

That's why you need a platform that gives you real-time querying, data visualizations and in-depth reports. This helps you understand customer behavior and campaign performance better – increasing message deliverability, and optimizing campaigns.

Discover indigo Insights

The Romans and the space shuttle

Mobile messaging is the simplest, easiest and most natural way of communicating through a device that is in our possession almost all of the time. But there's another reason the technology will endure. Here's one last story.

The Romans, by all accounts, were a very particular civilization. And they were particularly exacting when it came to their vehicles.

So wheel spacing on Imperial Roman war chariots became a standard 4 feet and 8.5 inches. After the Romans conquered England, their 4ft and 8.5in wide chariots gradually made ruts in the roads. From then on, English wagons tended to be made to the same specifications – otherwise the wheels would break on the uneven roads.

Fast forward a few hundred years, and engineers making the first English trams started using the same tools and measurement devices they had always relied on to create wagons.

The Empathetic Interaction

So tramways ended up 4ft and 8.5in apart. The same measurement was then used for rail lines in England – and the U.S. Fast forward another hundred or more years, and booster rockets for the first U.S. shuttle (made in Utah) had to be transported through a tunnel only slightly wider than the track.

So engineers had to design the booster rockets to be slightly smaller than they would have liked. So there you have it: a standard set by the Romans influenced the building of the space shuttle.

Your next steps

It's time for organizations everywhere to realize the vast potential this open line to customers presents. Even those that have been using SMS with great success for years could be serving customers better, enjoying more business benefits, and slashing communication budgets further.

Integrating an intelligent SMS messaging system into a communication stack and initiating structured workflows can be easier than you might imagine. There are two routes you can go down – APIs or an interaction builder solution. The indigo platform can help with both.

indigo Create empowers non-technical users to simply and quickly build automated messaging interaction workflows. Tools, templates and best-practice guidance help you every step of the way. Your audience is waiting…

Check out Create

Your next steps

indigo Connect offers your developers all the tools they need to set up automated conversations. Flexible APIs make connecting mobile messaging to your systems and tools simple and straightforward. Connect helps you set up an endless variety of triggers for your messaging – so your processes run smoothly.

Check out Connect

Or you could just get in touch. Getting a mobile messaging program up and running – then delivering Empathetic Interactions to millions of customers – is easier than it sounds. So is migrating your mobile messaging short codes. Our expert team is here to help.

Get in touch

We are OpenMarket
As an Infobip company, we help the biggest brands in the world use mobile messaging to connect with people in the moments that count. When they need to be helpful and responsive in real time. When customer experience isn't just a buzzword, it's an obsession. We'd love to do the same for you.

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