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Growing an SMS marketing list from zero: the counter, your website, events and receipts

SEO & Marketing

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RLX Holdings, S.A. · Group RLX Holdings
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Growing an SMS marketing list from zero: the counter, your website, events and receipts

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The short answer: a good SMS marketing list is built from customers who **asked to receive messages**, wherever you already talk to them: the counter, your website, events and receipts. Give people a reason to join, record when and how each one agreed, and keep the numbers in the SMS Center, in a group just for promotions. Never buy lists.

Where to collect numbers

Where	How
Counter or till	A short question at payment ("Would you like our offers by SMS?") and a sheet or tablet where the customer writes their name and number and ticks that they agree.
Your website	A form with name, number and an unticked box: "I agree to receive offers by SMS". If you do not have a website yet, see the **hosting plans**.
Events and fairs	A prize draw or a gift for people who leave their number, with the consent written on the slip itself.
Receipts and invoices	A line at the bottom of the receipt: "Offers by SMS? Sign up at [WEBSITE] or at the counter".
Social media and WhatsApp	A link to the form on your website in your page description, with what people get for joining.
Posters and window displays	A QR code that opens the form on your website.

Give people a reason to join

Nobody hands over their number without knowing what is in it for them. Say what you will send and why it is worth it: "offers only for people on the list", "hear about new arrivals first", "10% off your next purchase when you join". Then keep your word: if you promised exclusive offers, the list must get them.

From paper to the SMS Center

1. **Put the numbers in a spreadsheet**, with name, company (for business customers), phone, e-mail and a note with the date and place of consent.
2. **Import the CSV file** in the SMS Center, under Contacts, into a new group such as "Promotions". The steps are in **SMS contacts and groups**.
3. **Send a welcome message** soon after people join, with the promised benefit and how to opt out.
4. **Repeat the import** with each week's or month's new numbers. With the option to update existing contacts, you will not end up with duplicates.

A welcome example:

```
Hi {$contact_first_name}, welcome to the [COMPANY] list! Show this SMS on your next visit for 10% off. Opt out: [PHONE]
```

Only ask for what you will use.
Name and number are enough to start. If you want to split by interest ("children's clothes", "shoes"), ask that on the form and create a group for each answer. See **how to segment with groups**.

Bought, borrowed or scraped lists do not work.
People who get an SMS from a company they do not know complain, and your brand ends up linked to spam. Each country's rules are in **SMS rules in Mozambique** and **SMS rules in Angola**.

RECOMMENDED

With your list growing, it is time for the first campaign. See what SMS Marketing can do for you.

See the SMS Marketing page →

SEE ALSO

- **SMS good practices and consent: who you may send to and how to let people opt out** →
- **SMS contacts and groups: importing a CSV list and keeping it clean** →

- **Segmenting SMS campaigns with contact groups: by purchase, area, interest and activity**
- **The SMS opt-out list: how unsubscribing works across every send from your account**
- **Old or inherited customer lists: what to check and how to reconfirm before a campaign**

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TAX ID (NUIT)	401 191 607
LEGAL ENTITY NO. (NUEL)	105 045 974
ECONOMIC ACTIVITY CODE (CAE)	62022
REGISTERED OFFICE	Bairro 7 de Setembro Vilankulo 1304 · CEP 0411-02, Inhambane, Mozambique
CONTACT	info@interweb.co.mz · +258 84 635 1111 · +258 86 635 1111 · www.interweb.co.mz
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