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SMS marketing: Sender ID, the rules here, and how to write one that works

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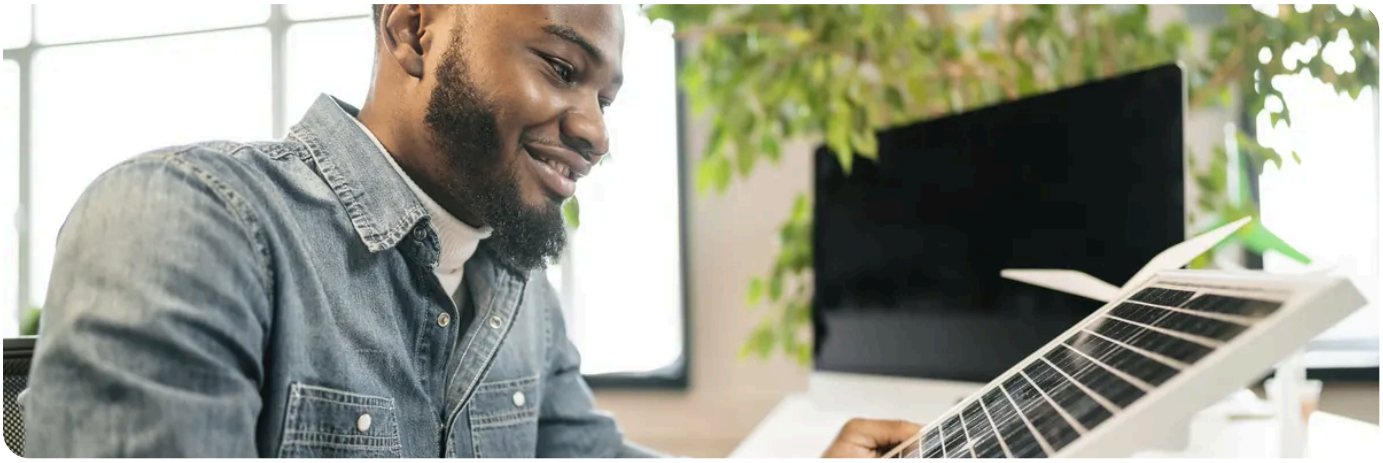
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SMS marketing: Sender ID, the rules here, and how to write one that works

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SMS has an advantage no other channel has here: **it reaches everybody**, without depending on internet access, an installed app or a modern phone. And it is read within minutes. In exchange, it is the most regulated of the three channels - and the rules are local.

The Sender ID: the name that appears on the phone

It is the first thing to sort out and what most distinguishes a company from an anonymous number. Instead of the message arriving from *+258 84...*, it arrives with **your brand name** in the sender's place.

What changes	Detail
Immediate recognition	The recipient knows who it is before opening. The difference in readership is large.
You cannot reply to a Sender ID	Brand-name messages are one-way. If you want a reply, the text has to say how.
It has to be registered	It is not chosen at send time: it is requested and approved beforehand, and approval takes time.

The rules in Mozambique changed, and they catch people out

The regulator is **INCM**, and the rule that matters is this: **promotional messages may only be delivered to people who have previously authorised that category of communication** with their operator. Your own consent record is not what counts - what counts is what is registered on the operator's side.

Operators are required to offer, simply and free of charge, a **global blocking mechanism** that prevents any promotional SMS from arriving. Which means part of your list may be out of reach by their own choice, and that is normal and lawful.

What this changes in planning.
A campaign to «all contacts» will reach fewer people than the list suggests, and that is not a technical failure. Build it into your expectations, and prefer lists of people who asked to hear from you.

Writing an SMS that works

SMS does not forgive padding: it is **160 characters** per message, and going over splits it in two - and charges for two. Accented characters drop the limit to 70, which catches many people out in a Portuguese message.

```
Bad  (2 messages):
  Dear customer, it is with great satisfaction that our company hereby
  informs you that a special promotion is currently taking place

Good (1 message):
  [BRAND] Sale until Saturday: 20% off all phones.
  Downtown store. Stop: reply STOP
```

1. **Start with the brand name**, even with a Sender ID. It is what stops the message being read as a scam.
2. **One idea per message.** One offer, one deadline, one place.
3. **Say what to do next**, and make it fit: a number, an address, or a short link on your own domain.
4. **Include the way out.** It is not just good manners - in practice it is what prevents complaints.
5. **Write without accents** if you want to fit 160 characters. Plain text fits; accented text may not.

The hour you send is not a detail.
An SMS at 10.30pm wakes people and generates complaints - and complaints are what make the operator cut off the sender. Weekdays, business hours, and never in the middle of the night. It is the simplest rule to follow and among the most ignored.

When SMS beats the other channels

Use SMS for	Use another channel for
Confirmations and notices	Order ready, appointment tomorrow, invoice due. This is where SMS is unbeatable.
Codes and urgent alerts	They arrive in seconds and do not depend on mobile data.

Use SMS for	Use another channel for
Long campaigns or ones with images	That is e-mail - see **e-mail marketing**
Conversation and support	That is WhatsApp - see **which WhatsApp suits your business**

Need to send SMS?

We can handle it for you, with your own Sender ID, in Mozambique and in Angola. We handle the request and registration of the sender name with whoever has to approve it, the sending itself, and the delivery reporting - which is the part that consumes most time for anyone trying it alone for the first time.

It is not an off-the-shelf product with a price tag: it depends on volume, destination country and message type. **Open a ticket** telling us **how many contacts you have, for which countries, how often, and what name you want as the sender**, and we will come back with a concrete proposal and what is needed for the registration.

Sort the Sender ID out early.
Registering the name is not immediate and some names are refused - generic ones especially. If the campaign has a fixed date, start here rather than with the copy.

The legal part, in three lines

1. **Send only to people who consented**, and the consent has to be demonstrable - when, where and for what.
2. **The opt-out has to actually work.** Asking to leave and still receiving is the shortest route to a complaint to the regulator.
3. **Phone numbers are personal data**, with the obligations that brings - see **personal data protection**.

NEED A HAND?

Want a proposal for SMS sending under your brand name?

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