

Text Messaging Leads: What Works; What Doesn't?

Since 2016, Franchise Pipeline Solutions has sent 139,966 automated text messages on behalf of franchisors and franchise brokers, developing proven programs that integrate automated and 1:1/small group texts with email storytelling. Here's some of what we've learned and how you might apply it to your own franchise business development efforts.

There are two categories of texts: automated (everyone gets it) and 1:1/small group. Each has its own unique set of key learnings.

Text Messaging Results

About 50% of leads opt out of automated text messages. We've built powerful filters to catch simple words like STOP and phrases that indicate they wish to opt out. This opt out rate has proven true for all client types. Leads who do respond to texts tend to skew younger, primarily millennials and tech savvy gen x and younger boomers so it's become an essential channel to master.

Here are several examples that exemplify the types of results possible. The Inbound Text metrics below represent legitimate text messages, not stop messaging. An individual can and does send multiple text messages. The average is 1.5 messages per individual. So, extrapolating to the number of leads responsive to text messages.

Franchise Brand

New Leads: **1,310**

Inbound Texts: **241** =
18.3% of New Leads

Estimated #
Individuals: **160** =
12.2% of New Leads

Franchise Brand

New Leads: **2,158**

Inbound Texts: **400** =
18.5% of New Leads

Estimated #
Individuals: **267** =
12.4% of New Leads

Franchise Broker

New Leads: **4,203**

Inbound Texts: **2,080** =
49.5% of New Leads

Estimated #
Individuals: **1,386** =
33.0% of New Leads

Our clients have sent an additional 6,572 outbound texts to individual leads, in addition to their automated messaging programs. Presently clients have unlimited use of text messaging.

Text Messaging Strategy Tips

- ▶ Make sure your emails and texts are arriving. You never know how your lead's Mobile Service Provider (MSP), like Verizon or AT&T, your lead's Internet Service Provider (ISP) or personal Email Client (EC) like Outlook or Gmail will handle automated outbound text messages. Are your texts reaching their mobile device or getting treated as spam? To increase your odds of success, we've developed dozens of business rules that govern which message, and under which circumstances, an automated text is sent to a lead. It's getting harder to "trick" or SPAM the Mobile Infrastructure these days.
- ▶ Do your automated texts read like a machine wrote them? Does your lead read it that way? We've developed text copy writing best practices, so the text message looks like it was written by a person. That includes not just the words we use, but use of typos, no punctuation and abbreviated phrases like "cya later". We've even got opt out language that looks like a real person wrote the phrase themselves.
- ▶ Be careful what you ask for. Asking to schedule a call right away via text may hook you a few fish. But most new leads aren't ready to talk on minute one. Our early text messages ask if they're receiving your emails and asks them to check their junk/spam folder if they haven't seen them. These automated emails tell your story. Why is that strategically important? We've learned, so you don't have to, that a text message that asks them to look for your email does two things: a) it improves how quickly they'll take a look at it and b) it improves the open rate for your emails. We've seen email open rates go from traditional average percentages in the low 20s to the mid-30s even up to 45% or more especially for your strongest early story emails (i.e. emails 1-4).
- ▶ Another strategic advantage of integrating texts and emails is that 75-80% of initial contact and research is taking place on a mobile device. People have their phones with them almost every hour of the day. So, a ping for a new text message gets looked at far faster than an email. When you combine the two, they work synergistically to improve the odds your lead will pay attention to your email.
- ▶ Scheduling a Call? You can ask your lead to schedule a call via text. However, until you establish early interest in your story, don't expect much. With outbound screeners and aggressive call back efforts, we've learned that getting people to agree to intro calls is relatively easy. Showing up is another story. Then you're off to reschedule hell. Most calls scheduled too early end up in "now shows" and disqualification. And if you're a small or emerging franchise brand or a growing franchise broker, that's time you don't have to waste.

- ▶ Since we don't financially qualify every lead, we've developed an alternative business development methodology that identifies what we call "serious leads". These are leads acquired by purchase, referral, shows, etc. who by their behavior (we monitor three types of behavior) show serious interest in the story you send them. Doesn't mean they're qualified, but it does mean they are engaging with your key messages.
- ▶ Texting questions is one of the ways serious leads hold up their hand. If a lead sends you a legitimate question by text, consider it a flashing yellow light that says slow down and pay attention. On numerous occasions a prompt answer to a real question or two breaks down that initial engagement shyness and results in early trust and more productive intro calls.

Franchise Pipeline Solutions specializes in integrated business development pipeline management systems exclusively for small and emerging franchise brands and growing franchise brokers. Our systems identify leads showing "serious interest" in a brand story helping focus valuable relationship-building time on more of the right types of people.

Our system integrates 1:1 and group text messaging, advanced marketing automation (combining email and text), behavioral tracking and scoring (some actions are worth more than others), auto call scheduling to eliminate phone tag and a world-class CRM to handle incoming leads plus candidate task and sales communication management. Our systems do so much more than a simple CRM, while eliminating the confusion, clutter and complexity of other systems.

Download a [virtual demo for franchise brands](#) or a [virtual demo for brokers](#) or simply [schedule a chat](#) to learn more.