



Newsletter

May 2007

Ta dah!

There's a touch of the theatrical about this month's newsletter and this time it's your communication taking centre stage. We'll show you how to use alerts to grab attention, turn the smoking ban into a communication opportunity and showcase your message with pictures.

Have your say – what do you think about our newsletter and the topics we've raised? email us at news@rapide.co.uk

Or call our automated feedback line
0870 428 0436

This Month's Stories

❖ Up in smoke - Page 2

The smoking ban affects almost every enclosed work space in Britain, with England being the last to implement it on 1st July 2007. For some it feels like the world is ending, for others it's a moment of triumph. How you handle communication when emotions could be running high really counts.

❖ ...worth a thousand words - Page 3

The spoken word is powerful, but sending a picture says much more than you could ever explain - just like radio made way for TV. There's a knack to choosing the right method for your message, so we'll show you how.

❖ Don't forget! Top 10 reasons to use mobile for alerts and reminders - Page 4

No matter who you're sending a message to, no matter where they are at the time or what they're doing, we deliver it straight into their hands. No other communication channel boasts such immediate impact.

❖ Text talking - system to system - Page 5

When you're sending texts, take people out of the equation by bringing systems together in perfect harmony. It's actually really easy to do - even if (like most people) IT gives you nightmares.

Up in smoke

The national smoking ban has polarised the population. Is smoking a human right or a drain on national health and resources? With emotions running high about the ban, sensitive communication to staff and customers is key.

1. Don't wait till the last moment. Be proactive.
2. Beat the grapevine with facts.
3. Be open and honest – anticipate, even prompt debate so you can manage it, rather than drive it underground.
4. Get people involved. Allow them to vote or make suggestions. Those who feel in control are more likely to buy into the final decisions.
5. Offer appropriate support. Be sensitive to non-smokers – make it clear that people may need different support at different times not all are related to smoking.

Find out more about the changes across the world as well as in the UK at www.smokefreeengland.co.uk

How Rapide can help

Inform, educate, open a dialogue. Rapide can help you with all three. By being innovative and creative in the way you deliver the message, it's more likely to get through and be remembered by your audience.

Text

- In its most simple form, just send a text message to remind everyone that the changes start today.
- A text could refer them to details on the intranet or in a leaflet. Or we could build a tailor made WAP site for staff or customers to browse on their phone wherever they are, without having to find an internet connection.
- Collect feedback about the changes by allowing staff to reply to the text.
- Text staff to invite them to vote on the issues involved.

Voice

- A voice message is personal, you can use tone to soften or add emphasis to the communication. By using a senior manager or the CEO you can add weight to the message too.
- Invite recipients to press 1 to hear more details about quitting if they're a smoker, or to be connected to a call centre to ask for more information, or to record their feedback to the message.

Team Call & Listen

- Record all the information staff or customers will need. We send text messages inviting them to call in to listen to it or you can publish the phone number on your intranet or in your magazine.
- At the end of the message you can offer the same options as the voice message for being connected to a call centre or to leave feedback.

Interested? Call us to see how it can work in your business on 024 7643 0180

...worth a thousand words

There's a knack to choosing the right way to get your message across

By now you're used to sending text messages, maybe even everyday, either at home, or at work as well. They're dinky little chunks of information. Simple. To the point.

You'll have left a voice message or two in your time as well. Probably a few more than you'd like to remember. You can fit in more information, your tone means there's no question about exactly what you mean and it's really quick to organise.

Most of our clients have sent voice and text messages to groups of staff or out to customers through our Rapide Services.

Get theatrical!

It takes a lot of words to paint a picture. And sometimes your message is crying out for on the spot drama and impact. That's when it's a picture or a video you need to send.

- When looks matter, show what you've got – perfect for hip stuff like clothing or state of the art appliances. How can you explain how cool your brand or idea is in 160 characters?
- Show how it works. Demonstrate it on a video clip. Give them their own personal guide, directly into their hands.
- It's not all one way. You can receive pictures too – customers can send in pictures for feed back, to enter a competition or just for a moment of fame, being published on your website.
- Why spend time talking on the phone describing a situation – just send a picture instead.

Client Case Study - Whitbread

Whitbread wanted an innovative new way to get staff involved in their new promotion and encourage bars to make the most of their point of sale displays.

Rapide's Multi- Media Messaging Service (MMS) allows staff with a camera phone to send picture messages straight into the Whitbread newsletter competition published in the staff newsletter.

The best pictures were chosen by the Whitbread team and the winners included in the next newsletter.

Natalie Skett from Whitbread was impressed with the service,

"It's brilliant! It is such a clever way to get staff to participate with the newsletter and shows off how fabulous our bar displays look in our restaurants."

Interested? Call us to for a demonstration on 024 7643 0180

Don't forget!

Top 10 reasons to use mobile for alerts and reminders

When you want to prompt a customer or member of staff into action, using their mobile is the way to do it.

1. A mobile phone is always with you, so it's the ideal way to grab attention RIGHT NOW!
2. You'll get the message straightaway. No need to get home to open the post, check your answer phone or log into your emails.
3. Messages are delivered directly into your hands - exactly what you need for time sensitive reminders.
4. You check for voice and text messages more times a day than you drink cups of tea.
5. In fact, you can tell it's a good way to receive alerts because you probably already use it to remind you that you're supposed to a) be at the dentist b) buy a present for your mum c) pay your credit card.
6. It's personal - the reminder is just for you.
7. Talk back. You can reply to a text message or transfer from a voice message to a call centre - for more information, to carry out the transaction on the spot or send your feedback.
8. A text costs less than sending a letter and it gets a better response.
9. You can automate the whole process, making it even cheaper to run (have a look at our article this month on Text talking - system to system). Use it to replace outbound calls by sending messages asking customers to call in instead.
10. Text alerts get through. That's why more and more companies are using them for Incident Management.

Fire your imagination

If need some inspiration to see how mobile alerts could work for you, here are a few examples from our clients.

- Send appointment reminders - it's proven to reduce the number of 'no shows' and increase revenue. One client reports the increase to be around £1million a year.
- Send a text to customers in arrears asking them to call - with an incredible 80% response, it's no wonder our clients have demonstrated it increases the cash they collect
- Let customers know where they are in a process or application - so they're much more likely to stay with you till it's completed. Great for long applications like mortgages.
- Remind customers that their policy, contract or insurance is due for renewal today.
- Notify when a warranty or licence expires.
- Let staff know when a system is down, and again when it's all working again. Especially popular when the system in trouble is email!
- Tell staff in a crisis what they need to do. They may not be near their email and they might already be on their way to work - but you'll still get through to them - even if your own system is out of action.

Find out how to run your own alerts by calling us on 024 7643 0180

Text talking - system to system

Our automated text system is simple, yet elegant, and unless you want to make any changes, you can just ignore it and let it get on with what it's good at.

You connect your system to feed data directly into our system. The data is just a mobile number and a message, and then we send it out for you. For example, one client sends information directly to Rapide to send a text message to customers to tell them that they are in arrears, asking them to call in. Once the system is running, the first member of staff involved is the person answering the call.

The system in action

Customers book rooms online for Premier Travel Inn 24 hours a day, every day of the year and expect to see an instant confirmation of their booking. Their website offers customers the option to receive confirmation by email or by text, passing the data directly from the website to Rapide to send out the confirmations. It's a popular system, accounting for around 46% of all reservations and over a million texts a year.

For over three years Rapide Text and Email has been an integrated part of Transas' own service to the international shipping community for ship security alert systems. Although, fortunately there have been very few incidents of real alerts, there are messages sent consistently every day for test purposes from ships at sea.

The same, simple system also sends texts for the Environment Agency's flood alerts and the Co-op's internal system alerts, among many more. Have a look at all our case studies www.rapide.co.uk/case-studies.html

Interested? We promise not to blind you with science. Unless that's what you really after, in which case we can go into as much technical detail as you need.

Give us a call for the details 024 7643 0180