Introduction

SMS lets you reach customers in a few clicks, with open rates and conversions that beat other channels by a mile. You’re probably as unsurprised as we are that it’s the fastest-growing eCommerce channel out there.

But, like any channel, you have to work its angles to get the results – that means getting the right message to the right person at the right moment. And this guide has the ‘right moment’ bit covered.

This calendar covers you from New Year’s Eve to Boxing Day, plus bunch of smaller celebrations in between, so you can prep early and use SMS to make the most of every occasion.
Do more with mobile

SMS seems simple – we’re texting all the time. But to get those sweet returns, you can’t just chuck something out and hope for the best. You need a bit of strategy. Luckily, it’s not as complicated as it sounds. Start by answering these questions.

1. **Goal-setting** – what are you working towards?
2. **Targeting** – who are you talking to?
3. **Action** – what do you want your audience to do?
4. **Channels** – what channel or channels will you use?
5. **Frequency** – how often will you reach out?
6. **Content** – what will your SMS messages say?
7. **Test** – which approach works best?
# January 2023 – key dates

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- **All month – Dry January**: It’s time for giving back and showing a bit of love to your customers.
January: Rest, relaxation and resolutions

There’s more to January than the classic new year’s sale. The Chinese Lunar New Year kicks off on the 22nd. The week-long festival is all about gift-giving, special foods and buying new household goods as a nod to the new year.

Campaign ideas:

New Year’s sale: Sales and promos during Jan can be a great way to get rid of Christmas stock and up revenue at a slow time.

Chinese New Year: Switch things up with a Lunar New Year sale, focusing on relevant products for your Chinese customers.

Launch something new: If you have a new product or service ready to go, the new year is the perfect time to introduce it to your audience.

Boost brand awareness: Take advantage of the quiet to make connections and build brand knowledge. Think posting product videos on social, telling brand stories and sharing behind-the-scenes content.

Giveaways: After an expensive holiday season, people love freebies – amp up the positivity with a fun, summer-themed competition.

Back to school: The school term starts around the beginning of Feb. If your product or service has a connection to kids or families, it’s a great time for a sale.

Jan tips:

• Use the downtime to plan your campaign strategy for the year.

• Focus on positivity and connection: after a busy holiday season, customers don’t want a hard sell.

• Show a bit of love – donate to charity, partner with a community org or run a giveaway.
## February 2023 – key dates

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- **February 5** - Waitangi Day (NZ)
- **February 6** - Super Bowl Sunday (US), Galentine's Day (global)
- **February 7** - Valentine's Day (global)
- **February 12** - Valentine's Day (global), Presidents' Day (US), Mardi Gras (global), Shrove Tuesday/Pancake Day (Christian)
- **February 15** - Ash Wednesday (Christian)
February: Valentine’s, Galentine’s and more

In February, summer is still in full swing, but kids have started school and more people are back into their normal routines. Valentine’s Day is a great chance for a promotion, and in New Zealand, there are often sales around Waitangi Day on the 6th.

Valentine’s Day

In 2021, Valentine’s Day spending hit $21.8 billion in the States – that’s... massive. Even if you’re not selling roses or chocolates, it’s worth looking for ways to tie in with this lucrative holiday – and the good vibes that go along with it.

Start campaign: Late Jan

Ideas:

- Use customer stories to showcase your product or service – the more real, the better.
- Bundle products or services to create Valentine packs – like a massage and facial or a package of beauty products.
- If your business doesn’t fit with Valentine’s, a related holiday could work – Galentine’s Day, on the 13th of Feb, celebrates female friendships.

Waitangi Day

In New Zealand, Waitangi Day celebrates the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. Sales are often generic, and more about Kiwis getting a day off rather than having any specific connection to Waitangi.

Start campaign: Early Feb

Ideas:

- Use customer stories to showcase your product or service – the more real, the better.
- Bundle products or services to create Valentine packs – like a massage and facial or a package of beauty products.
- If your business doesn’t fit with Valentine’s, a related holiday could work – Galentine’s Day, on the 13th of Feb, celebrates female friendships.

Check out more Valentine’s SMS campaign ideas here.
March 2023 – key dates

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- March 1: Autumn begins (Southern Hemisphere)
- March 8: International Women’s Day
- March 21: Holi (India)
- March 21: Purim (Jewish holiday)
- March 21: Harmony Day (Au)
- March 21: Ramadan starts (Muslim)
- March 21: St Patrick’s Day
- March 31: End of Financial Year (NZ)

March is manic – choose one or two dates and make it big.

Through month: March Madness sales
March: Prepare for madness

There’s a lot going on this March. St Patrick’s Day goes off globally, and Ramadan – the main celebration of the Muslim calendar – begins.

The 8th is International Women’s Day, and a few Australian states celebrate Labour Day later in the month. March Madness sales also run throughout the month, online and in stores. Finally, in New Zealand, we have the end of the financial year on the 31st. Afterwards, you’ll need a bit of a sit-down.

Of course, you don’t need to run a campaign for every date – pick a few that are most relevant to your business and customers.

International Women’s Day

Created in 1911, International Women’s Day celebrates women’s achievements and highlights inequality. Basing a campaign on the day can be powerful – but if it’s not relevant to your brand, it could end up looking a bit cringe.

Campaign start date: Late February

Tips:

• Focus on people, not product. It’s not a great look to use Women’s Day to sell half-price razors or lippy. Tell authentic stories and make sure you’re doing the work to support equality long-term.

• Fit the brief. Match your campaign to the 2023 theme – Cracking the Code: Innovation for a gender-equal future.

St Patrick’s Day

St Patrick’s Day is a huge deal in the States – not so much in NZ and Australia. While the bulk of St Paddy’s spending goes to the hospitality sector, it’s also an opportunity for relevant retail and eCommerce tie-ins.

Campaign start date: Late February

Tips:

• Use colour and classic St Patrick’s imagery to define your campaign.

• Think about partnering with a local bar or restaurant to promote your product or service.

EOFY NZ

Whether they’re trying to meet sales targets, reduce inventory or take advantage of a promo opportunity, retailers have run EOFY sales for decades. Consumers see EOFY sales as a chance for a real bargain – a modest 5% or 10% off isn’t going to cut it here.

Campaign start date: Mid-March
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April: Easter, Eid and Earth Day

This month has some big calendar events, plus a range of smaller celebratory days. Easter is a no-brainer for sales, while April Fool’s, Earth Day, National Pet Day and World Book Day could be relevant, depending on your business.

April Fool’s Day

April Fool’s is a chance for some cheeky humour (but don’t take it too far).

Campaign start date: April 1st.

Earth Day, Pet Day or National Book Day

These lesser-known days can be great opportunities for smaller sales or promotions if they’re relevant to your business. It’s less noisy out there, so your message will pop more.

If you’re an eco-brand, it makes sense to run a campaign around Earth Day, and the same goes for pet supply brands on National Pet Day and booksellers on National Book Day.

Tips:
- Let loose a bit. Find a funny way to bring attention to your brand with a spoof social media post, a tie-in to a recent news story or by poking fun at stereotypes around your brand.
- Use your campaign to push product that won’t be included in your April sales.
- Keep it safe: Humour is great, but offensive or inappropriate content could damage your brand. Even if you think it’s hilarious, run your campaign idea by a few people before you start.

Easter

Easter is a major event in the Christian calendar, as well as a chance to rest, relax and eat chocolate – a lot of chocolate. In 2022, Australians spent $1.5 billion on Easter chocolate and treats and more on holidays and gifts.

Campaign start date: Mid-March (or whenever Easter eggs start showing up in supermarkets).

Tips:
- Easter isn’t just about chocolate. Gifts, flowers and non-chocolate foodstuffs are also big sellers around the holiday.
- In New Zealand and Australia, Easter comes with two statutory holidays – giving people a break even if they don’t celebrate the religious part. You could choose to focus on that break rather than Easter itself.

Get creative. Try to engage customers in new ways – Easter basket giveaways in-store, online ‘egg hunts’, prize draws for Easter products or vouchers.
May 2023 – key dates

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- **Daylight Saving ends (AU, NZ)**
- **Mother’s Day (AU, NZ, US, Can)**
- **Easter Monday**
- **Click Frenzy Mayhem begins (global)**
- **King Charles’ coronation (UK, NZ, AU)**
- **Cinco De Mayo (US, Mx)**
- **Passover begins (Jewish)**
- **World Fair Trade Day (global)**
- **World Book Day**
- **Reconciliation Day (ACT)**
- **Memorial Day (US)**

Start prepping early so you’re ready for two massive shopping events this month – Mother’s Day and Click Frenzy.
May: Kings, Mothers and Mayhem

May 2023 sees a new date popping up on the calendar: King Charles’ coronation on the 6th. It’s a once-in-a-lifetime event – and could be a driver for some interesting campaigns. We celebrate our mums on the 14th, then Click Frenzy Mayhem, which sees thousands of eCommerce businesses running fast and furious sales events.

Mother’s Day

Since the early 1900s, Mother’s Day has been a chance to celebrate mums and mother figures. These days, it’s also a major gifting day, with Australians spending more than $700 million.

Campaign start date: Mid-April

Tips:

- Think beyond the cliche. While flowers, chocolates and massages will all fly off the shelves, some consumers will look for unique experiences, curated gift packs and odd gift ideas.
- Go for the heart. Authentic emotion is key – think about using real customer or staff stories to humanise your message.

Check out our list of memorable Mother’s Day SMS campaigns for more ideas.

King Charle’s coronation

In Australia and NZ, there’s a lot of interest in the royals – and a coronation is bound to attract some attention.

Campaign start date: Mid-April

Tips:

- Focus on generic ‘royalty’ content rather than sharing opinions about the new King.
- Make it interesting. How could your product tie into the coronation? Can you promote your most luxurious product lines or celebrate the event with a giveaway?
### June 2023 – key dates

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Winter blues are setting in – time for some mood-lightening messaging.
June: Winter warmers and World Environment Day

Winter can be dreary – add some excitement with sales, promos or giveaways linked to events like World Environment Day, Best Friends’ Day and the end of the Aussie financial year.

**World Environment Day**

Established in 1973, World Environment Day promotes awareness of environmental causes and issues. If your business strongly focuses on sustainability or sells eco-friendly products, it could be the perfect fit for a campaign.

**Campaign start date:** Mid-May

**Tips:**

- Use this time to shine a light on your sustainability work with real stories and information, not just vague feel-good statements.
- Launch a new eco-friendly product or service.
- Offer a discount or deal to help people start their sustainability journey. For example, a free trial pack of eco-friendly cleaning tablets.

**Winter sales**

Winter sales are a staple on the retail and eCommerce calendar. Whether winter-related (coats! PJs! Vitamin C!) or just winter-themed, they’re a great way to brighten up a dull time of year and boost revenue at the same time.

**Campaign start date:** Early May

**Thought starters:**

- Mid-winter Christmas – showcase Christmas-themed food and décor.
- Winter warmers – now is the time to promote warm clothing, heaters, HRV systems and more.
- Winter escape – give away a holiday, spa voucher or anything else that helps people escape the winter blues.
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**July 2023 – key dates**

- Independence Day (US), NAIDOC Week begins (Au)
- Matariki (NZ)
- Parents' Day (global)

*With Matariki in NZ and NAIDOC week in Aussie, earmark July as a time for respect.*

Through month: Plastic-free July
This July, New Zealanders celebrate Matariki on the 14th, and Aussies mark NAIDOC (National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee) week. The month is also ‘Plastic-free July’ – a great opportunity for sustainable businesses to promote their wares.

**Matariki**

In 2021, New Zealanders got a sweet new holiday. Matariki celebrates the beginning of a new year, marked by the appearance of a cluster of stars known as the Pleiades or Matariki to the Māori. People celebrate by cooking, spending time with loved ones and connecting with nature.

**Campaign start date:** Early July

**Tips:**

- Acknowledge the holiday, rather than trying to cash in. This could mean featuring stories about your staff members celebrating or asking customers to share theirs.
- Be thoughtful. If you’re using Te Reo Māori in your advertising, check with an expert to ensure you get it right.

**Plastic-free July**

Plastic-free July raises awareness about the harm caused by plastic packaging and promotes alternatives. If your business is strong on sustainable packaging, it’s the perfect time to get the word out.

**Campaign start date:** Late June

**Tips:**

- Educate. If you use plastic-free or recycled packaging, share details to inform your customer base – just make sure it’s accurate.
- Go plastic-free. July is a good time to switch to plastic-free packaging or eliminate plastic bags from your stores for good.
# August 2023 – key dates

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- **6 August**: NSW Bank Holiday, Northern Territory Picnic Day
- **9 August**: Book Lovers Day
- **16 August**: Royal Agricultural Show Day (QLD)
- **17 August**: National Non-Profit Day (global)
- **18 August**: World Photography Day (global)

Use the relative emptiness of August to speak to your own point of different, and start building towards those crucial summer months.
August: Picnics, books and photography

August is a quiet month, with few major sales opportunities. Instead, use this month to plan your summer campaigns – and maybe slot in a smaller promo if you can.

**Book Lovers Day**

This day is obviously a natural fit for booksellers, but other retailers can also get in on the action. Whether you promote your product alongside books, give away books as part of a promotion, or partner with a local bookshop, there are plenty of opportunities.

**Northern Territory Picnic Day**

Started in the late 1800s, NT Picnic Day was originally a bonus day off for hard-working railway employees. Now, it’s a chance for people to get out, spend time with their families and – naturally – have picnics. It’s a good chance to promote your picnic or picnic-adjacent products, share feel-good stories about staff and customers, or give away a luxury picnic experience.

**World Photography Day**

Now that we all have extremely flash cameras in our pockets, great photography is much more accessible. World Photography Day is about celebrating the art of photography – and it could be a chance to celebrate your product too. Join the party by running a photo comp based on your product or offer a discount on photography gear.
September 2023 – key dates

Think about Father’s Day differently – modern dad’s appreciate more than sock.

**Father’s Day (AU, NZ)**

**Labor Day (US)**

**Daylight Saving starts (NZ)**

**Yom Kippur (Jewish)**

**Rosh Hashanah (Jewish)**

**AFL Grand Final (AU)**
September: Dad’s Day and daylight saving

Things are looking up this month – for those Down Under at least – with the start of daylight saving. Father’s Day, on the 3rd, is the big shopping event of the month, too.

Father’s Day

Created in 1910, Father’s Day celebrates the dads and father figures in our lives. Pile on the positivity and feel-good content, bring out the BBQ tools and whiskey, and you’re away.

Campaign start date: Mid-August

Prepping for the holidays

If you haven’t already, now’s the time to plan your SMS campaign strategy for Christmas and New Year – get cracking!

Campaign tips:

• Keep it real. Like Mother’s Day, this is a sentimental holiday and a time for authentic, heart-warming content.

• Think outside the toolbox. Today’s Gen X and millennial dads don’t want ties and golf clubs – think cool experiences, foodie gifts, craft beer and coffee.
October 2023 – key dates

Choose the between the light and the dark side in October, with the sparkle of Diwali and Guy Fawls night vs Halloween spookiness.

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- **Daylight Saving starts (AU)**

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- **Labour Day (ACT, NSW, SA)**
- **World Animal Day (global)**

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- **World Mental Health Day (global)**
- **Diwali (Hindi/India)**

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- **Labour Day (NZ)**

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- **Halloween (global)**
October: The Halloween sugar high

Halloween used to be an American holiday, but these days, more Kiwi and Aussie kids are getting in on the trick-or-treating action. It’s a great chance for a fun – and sugar-centric – campaign. October is also home to Diwali, one of the biggest holidays on the Hindu calendar.

**Diwali**

Diwali, also called the Festival of Lights, involves five days of eating, decorating, fireworks and celebration. One of the most important festivals for Hindi people, it’s celebrated by Indian communities in NZ and Australia.

**Campaign start date:** late Sept – early Oct

**Campaign tips:**
- Positivity is key. Diwali is a celebration, so get excited and let your customers know you’re celebrating with them.
- Make it relevant. Lights, bright colours, fireworks and food – make sure your campaign does more than just name-check the holiday.

**Halloween**

Americans gobble up nearly $10 billion in candy, decorations and Halloween merch every year. We’re not quite that obsessed yet, but Kiwis and Aussies are increasingly keen on decorating their houses, throwing Halloween parties and taking the kids trick-or-treating.

**Campaign start date:** End of Sept.

**Campaign tips:**
- People start shopping for costumes and candy pretty early, so get your campaign into gear at the end of September.
- Make it fun. Halloween is a chance for some spooky silliness – don’t be afraid to pun it up and get creative.

**World Mental Health Day**

At the serious end of the spectrum is World Mental Health Day on October 10th. Designed to raise awareness and reduce stigma around mental health issues, it’s a chance for your org to get involved with an important cause.

**Campaign start date:** Early October

**Campaign tips:**
- Partner up. You could do some good in your community by partnering with a local mental health organisation.
- Show support. You don’t have to create a huge campaign or tear-jerking ad – just quietly show your support on social media or else-where.
November 2023 – key dates

- **5**
  - **Guy Fawkes (UK, AU, NZ)**

- **6**

- **7**
  - **Melbourne Cup Day (AU)**

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  - **Singles Day (US/global)**

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  - **Thanksgiving (US)**

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  - **Black Friday (global)**
  - **Small Business Saturday (global)**

- **25**

- **26**
  - **Cyber Monday (global)**

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It’s go time – try something different that’ll stand out amongst all the other pre-Christmas noise.
November: Ramping up for the holidays

November: Christmas advertising is in full swing, summer is almost here and everything suddenly feels busy. With shopping events like Black Friday, Cyber Monday, plus Small Business Saturday, marketers have their hands full this month.

Black Friday and Cyber Monday

Black Friday – or the day after Thanksgiving – kicks off the Christmas shopping season. It’s always been a massive sale day in the States, and that bargain fever has spread to New Zealand and Australia.

Cyber Monday is Black Friday’s online cousin – a way for eCommerce retailers to get in on the sales action. In 2021, Cyber Monday sales actually eclipsed Black Friday for the first time – a sure sign of the shift to online shopping.

Campaign start date: End of Oct

Campaign tips:

• Tick the boxes. Before sales start, test your site to ensure everything is running smoothly. It doesn’t take much to put an online customer off.

• Do something different. Everyone will be running sales – what can you do to make yours stand out? Create some cheeky campaign lines, amp up your social presence and use SMS to get that instant connection to your customers. (Check out this blog for SMS ideas)

• Grab new customers. Great deals could see new customers stepping through your doors – virtual or otherwise. Even if they don’t buy now, keep in touch with reminder emails and SMS, and boost your customer base.

Small Business Saturday

This event started as a counter to Black Friday, focusing on small local businesses instead of big-name stores and global brands. If you’re running an independent business, it’s a fantastic chance to get your brand out there – and potentially make some big bucks. In 2020, the event saw small businesses raking in a crazy $19.8 billion.

Campaign start date: October

Campaign tips:

• As with Black Friday, ensure your site is working perfectly so you’re not losing customers unnecessarily.

• Get the word out. Send SMS messages, emails, flyers in-store – whatever you can do to make sure your event is on customers’ radar.

• Make it exciting. A straight-up sale is fine, but you can go further. Run an in-store event with music or local artists, have a market day with other small businesses in your area, or introduce a brand-new product.
### December 2023 – key dates

Focus on support and customer service – it’s a stressful time for customers, make their lives easier and they’ll love you forever.

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- **Hanukkah begins (Jewish)**
- **Free Shipping Day**
- **Christmas Eve (global)**
- **Christmas Day (global)**
- **Boxing Day (global)**
- **New Year’s Eve (global)**
- **Super Saturday (US)**
December: The big one

December is the biggest month by far for most retailers and eCommerce stores. In fact, some retail businesses make most of their profit during this ultra-busy month.

Free shipping day

A newer event on the retail calendar, Free Shipping Day is when retailers offer free shipping – with the promise that the items will arrive in time for Christmas. It’s a boon for those of us who leave things to the last minute. While Free Shipping Day is more of a US-centric event, it could be a valuable way to bring in some extra sales during the holiday season.

Campaign start date: Early December

Campaign tips:

- Promote the day as both a bonus for customers and a reminder that their online shopping time is running out. Remind customers with an SMS before and on the day, so they can easily grab the deal.
- Be clear. Free shipping and pre-Christmas delivery sound great – but don’t overpromise. Make it clear that Christmas delivery only applies to local customers, and don’t run a free shipping promo if you can’t get deliveries out quickly enough.

Christmas

We don’t need to tell you that Christmas is a huge deal. In the Southern Hemisphere, it’s a chance to get out in the sun, see the family and kick off summer. Oh, and it’s a chance to buy tons of pressies and splash out on food and booze.

Campaign start date: November

Campaign tips:

- Give yourself lots of lead time. Plan early, and start your campaign 1-2 months before Christmas, so you can really hammer your messaging home.
- Make it fun. Christmas shopping is stressful for many, so make the shopping experience – in-store or online – as easy and pleasant as possible. Decorate your store, take on enough staff, and make sure your website works as it should.
- Cover your bases. Think about all the possibilities before you start – last-minute shoppers, early birds, returners, people waiting for a specific deal or discount – and set up your site to cater to everyone.

Get more Christmas tips in your free Holiday SMS Playbook.
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