Creating an SMS or MMS Message

After you've selected a campaign type and configured the SMS message settings, the next step is to start building out the message. This article is a high-level overview of the different elements available when building a message, configuring the content, and best practices for messages.

Build a message

Begin by entering the text into the editor. As you begin typing, a real-time preview of the message appears on the right-hand side.

When building out a message, keep in mind that each message should contain the following:

- A clear indication of who the message is from. Use the organizational prefix add-on in the message settings to automatically add this to each message. By adding this, it will affect the 160 character count.
- Short, but relevant text content that directs the customer to take an action, such as signing up with their email address, using a coupon code, or a time sensitive message (like a flash sale).
- Language that is clear and concise allowing customers to receive help or opt-out if they choose to.

Use the below elements directly in the text editor when creating a message.

- **Image**: There are two options to add an image to a message: from image library or dynamic product image.
  - *Insert image from library*: Images can be inserted from the image library or uploaded directly here. For guaranteed carrier delivery, Bluecore recommends using a jpeg, png, or gif image type.

> ⓘ When using images with MMS messages, please be aware of the following image guidelines:
> - Image types of JPEG, PNG, GIF, BMP, TIFF, HEIC, or HEIF that are between 0.6 and 4.9 MB will automatically be resized by our sending provider. Other file types may fail to send if they exceed 4.9 MB.
>   - WEBP image types are not accepted, regardless of file size.
> - Any image that is being sent *might* be resized by carriers.
> - The exact size depends on the send code type and carrier network, but Bluecore recommends images 0.6 MB or smaller.

  - **Emoji**: Add some character to a message by selecting an emoji. Using emojis in messages will affect character count, as explained below.
  - **CustomerAttribute**: Add customer information directly into a message to personalize the content, such as name, birthday, or gender. Be sure to set a fallback (such as customer or similar language) in case the attribute is not available for the customer. Adding customer attributes to a message will provide an estimate of the character count. An exact count cannot be determined based on the dynamic attribute or fallback length. Click here for more information on how to use Jinja attributes within text messages.
  - **Product Attribute**: Add specific product information to your triggered messages when a

customer abandons a browse, product, or search. Be sure to set a fallback (such as this product in your cart, this new product, etc.) in case the attribute is not available for the customer. Adding product attributes to a message will provide an estimate of the character count. An exact count cannot be determined based on the dynamic attribute or fallback length. Click here for more information on how to use Jinja attributes within text messages.

- **NOTE**: When adding customer or product attributes to a message, the attributes must be previously configured and uploaded to your Bluecore account. Upload additional attributes via file imports or by contacting your Customer Success Manager.

- **Coupon**: Include a unique coupon code as an incentive to your customers. Clickhere to learn more about how to configure coupons to be used in Bluecore Communicate.

Hey {first_name}! 👋 We noticed you left {out_of_stock} in your cart and it's unavailable. Check out some of our new arrivals and get 20% off with this code: {coupon}. Happy shopping! 🛍️

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- **Keyword**: Insert a previously configured keyword into a message. As a reminder, these must be configured on the SMS settings page and can be added to messages here.
- **Link**: Insert a link directly into the message. Static links (sale or new arrivals page) or dynamic links (the URL of a product left in a cart) **must** be added by using the link widget. By default, Bluecore will shorten all links in the message. Link shortening will add 22 characters to the message.
  - **NOTE**: Branded shortened links are not supported at this time.
- **Organizational Prefix**: Add a previously configured organizational prefix to any message to easily identify your brand to your customers.
- **Opt-Out Phrases**: Save time when configuring a message by adding previously configured opt-out phrases into the message. These may include help and stop language.

BluecoreRocks:
Text SALE123 to receive recurring reminders about our hottest sales! Don't wait, shop our new arrivals now: https://bl.cr/fiUCGgZ7!
Msg & Data Rates may apply. Reply END to stop receiving messages.

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Character counts and segments

Using emojis, customer or product attributes, coupon codes, organizational prefixes, and links in the body of a text message may affect the character count and segment count of the message.

By default, Bluecore uses GSM-7, which is the standard SMS alphabet. This allows up to 160 characters (including spaces) per message segment. As a fallback when messages can not be encoded using GSM-7, Bluecore will use USC-2. This allows up to 70 characters (including spaces) per message segment.

Segments are the character batches that phone carriers use to measure text message. Both GSM-7 (160 characters) and USC-2 (70 characters) are one message segment.

When emojis or smart quotes are used in text messages, message are automatically encoded using USC-2, where the character count becomes 70 per segment, instead of the defaulted 160 characters with GSM-7.

If a message using the GSM-7 encoding exceeds the 160 character limit, the message will be segmented into 153 character segments where it will be sent individually and rebuilt by the recipients device. For example, a 170 character message will be sent as two messages, one with 153 characters and the second with 17 characters.

If a message using the UCS-2 encoding exceeds the 70 character limit, the entire message will be segmented into 67 character message segments where it will be sent individually and rebuilt by the recipients device. For example, a 80 character message will be sent as two messages, one with 67 characters and the second with 13 characters.

In the example below, you can see that the message will be split into four different segments.
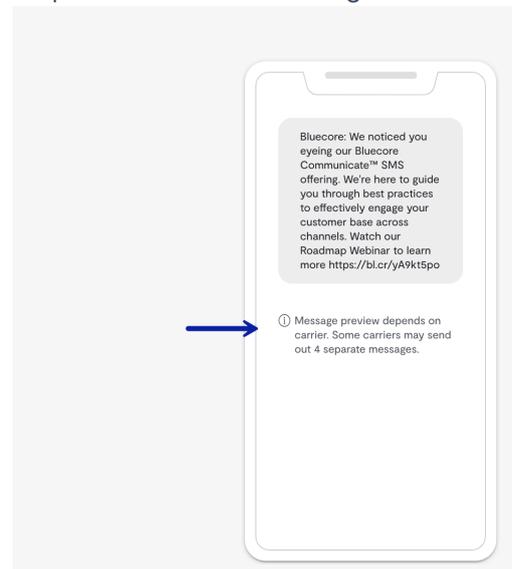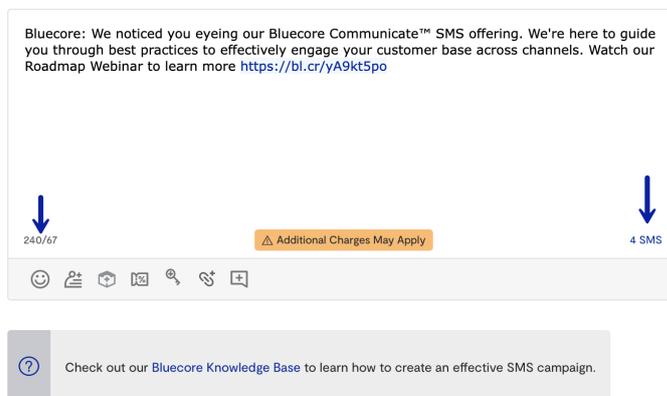
When this message is sent, it will be stitched together based on the recipients device. Here's the above message shown on an iPhone (left) and an Android (right) device.

Message delivery and send times may vary based on the sending code type. Click here for more information on sending code types.

Character counts with MMS

Compared to the 160 character count of a standard SMS message, MMS messages can have a character count up to 1600 characters. This character count allows you to send larger messages to your customers.

Use cases

Read more about some of our suggested strategies when setting up an SMS campaign.

Welcome

This is the automated message that customers receive after explicitly opting-in to receive SMS messages from your brand. This message type can happen before and in conjunction with an email welcome series.

This message welcomes subscribes, tells them an expected message frequency, gives an incentive for opting-in, and provides explicit language on how to opt-out if they need to.

Abandoned cart, product, or search

An abandonment campaign, similar to email, notifies a subscriber of items that they've left in their cart, a specific product, or search with a triggered SMS message.

This message encourages a sense of urgency to customers, and sometimes incentivizes them with a coupon to complete the purchase.

Post purchase

Send a message to your customers after they've completed a purchase. While this isn't a transactional campaign, send a message to thank them for the order with a coupon as an incentive, to keep them engaged with your brand.

Cross-channel

If your customers aren't responding to an email, target them in another channel where they may be more responsive. Send a message to customers who haven't opened emails in a specific period of time to extend reach into a different channel.

Additional triggered campaigns

In addition to the out-of-the-box triggered campaigns that are available when creating a campaign, you can also create a campaign driven by a Bluecore audience. These can be used to send a specific campaign to reminder customers when:

- **Birthday**: Send a short message with an offer just for them to celebrate their big day. Don't forget a call-to-action with a link to your website.
- **Anniversary**: Make your customers feel special by recognizing the day or month of initial signup. Entice them to take a specific action with a coupon or earn a specific reward.
- **New Arrivals and Price Decrease**: Express a sense of urgency to your customers when a product they've been waiting for is now available or the price has dropped.