sense

Texting for Talent

How Text Messaging is Transforming Candidate Engagement ⭐

Hi Parker, I wanted to check in and make sure you're all set for your interview tomorrow at 2 pm

Yes! I'm excited to meet the team

Text messaging has quickly become the primary way people communicate with each other using technology. Currently, about 65% of the world's population and 80% of people in North America text — and these figures are expected to trend upward as 77% of the global population is projected to own a smartphone by 2025.

While text messaging with friends and family members is part of everyday life, messages from people outside of one's social circle have traditionally been perceived as spammy. Because of that connotation, and the fact that recruiting technology has long lacked texting capabilities, many recruiters have resisted making text messaging part of their candidate engagement strategy.

However, as reaching talent through phone and email has become increasingly difficult in recent years, agile recruiters have turned to text messaging to get candidates' attention at critical times in the hiring process. Most have discovered that candidates are receptive to text messages and welcome a new way to connect with recruiters that aligns with their everyday communication and technology usage habits.

Research from Sense and Talent Board found that engaging and communicating with passive talent is the top challenge recruiters face today.

When done correctly, text messaging helps recruiting teams reach more candidates, accelerate hiring, reduce drop-off, and boost productivity, all while providing candidates with the experience they want and deserve. In this ebook, we'll provide everything you need to know to foster a greater connection with candidates through text messaging, including:

Chapter 1

How texting compares to phone and email

According to Sense and Talent Board research, the majority of talent leaders (28%) said text messaging is the most successful communication channel for engaging candidates (followed by phone at 24% and email at 23%). But surprisingly, only 29% of talent leaders said it's their primary channel, with 61% relying mostly on email and 53% relying mostly on phone.

We can glean two major takeaways from this data:

1. **Candidates prefer you contact them via text rather than through phone or email** (since it's the channel they're most likely to engage with recruiters on).

2. **Recruiters have yet to take advantage of texting despite understanding its potential** (likely because most recruiting technology lacks texting capabilities, forcing recruiters to use their personal phones to message candidates).

Most successful communication channel

💬	▬▬▬▬	28%
☎	▬▬▬	24%
✉	▬▬▬	23%

Most used communication channels
(Multiple selections allowed)

💬	▬▬▬▬	29%
☎	▬▬▬▬▬▬	53%
✉	▬▬▬▬▬▬▬	61%

It is worth noting that texting is the most successful channel by a narrow margin, so recruiting teams should have an omnichannel engagement strategy that includes a combination of texting, phone, and email. But as organizations modernize their recruitment processes, it makes sense for text messaging to be the centerpiece of that strategy since it offers the main benefits of both phone and email.

- **Texting vs email** – Text messaging gets faster responses than email due to its sense of urgency. Candidates often see an email from a recruiter and plan to respond later or even lose track of it as their inbox fills up.

- **Texting vs phone** – Text messaging is less intrusive than a phone call since it doesn't require the candidate's immediate attention. Even more, many people ignore calls from numbers they don't recognize.

- **Takeaway:** Texting gets a candidate's attention without requiring them to drop everything and communicate with you at that very moment.

Text message usage by generation

It isn't surprising candidates favor text messaging when you consider that Millennials and Generation Z now account for about half of the workforce. But the reality is people of all ages are active texters to some extent. A 2020 study from Adobe on digital trends broke down the percentages of each generation who prefer text messaging as their main means of communication.

At the moment, text messaging gives recruiting teams a competitive advantage. However, as more people who came of age in the mobile phone era enter the workforce, engaging talent with text messaging will become a necessary part of every organization's recruiting strategy.

84%
Gen Z
prefer text messaging

73%
Millennials
prefer text messaging

63%
Gen X
prefer text messaging

43%
Baby Boomers
prefer text messaging

Chapter 2

From "hello" to hire

The role of texting at different stages of the candidate journey

Hi! This is Reva, your personal digital recruiter. Thank you for your interest in Blueway Logistics. What's your first and last name?

Jordan Brown

Hi Jordan! What kind of roles are you interested in?

Warehouse Supervisor

Text messaging is a fast and direct way to connect with candidates, gather necessary information, and keep them updated about their status. But it's more than just a candidate communication channel. Innovative recruiting teams are streamlining the end-to-end hiring process by using text messaging to power candidate outreach, collect inbound applications, schedule interviews, and kick off new hire onboarding.

Let's explore how you can use text messaging throughout the candidate journey to make great hires quicker than ever before.

Source candidates with mass texting

Sending mass text messages to a group of candidates is a great way to source talent for a job opening. It is far more efficient than calling candidates individually, as it allows recruiters to instantly share their opportunity with an entire talent pool at once.

Mass text messages can be sent to dormant candidates in your Applicant Tracking System (ATS) who are qualified for a new role or to candidates who have shared their contact information with you (for example, at a career fair or hiring event). When a candidate texts back and says they're interested, you can then engage them in a one-on-one conversation.

Using mass texting campaigns helps high-volume hiring organizations quickly and efficiently source plenty of quality candidates.

Alex Y.

Jordan Kimmel

Cameron Devers

Hi Alex, my name is Taylor Robinson and I'm a recruiter for Healthcare Solutions. We're hiring for a Lab Technician role that I think you'd be a great fit for. Are you interested in learning more?

Yes, it would be great to learn about the Lab Technician role

MILLER
BROTHER
STAFFING

"The more people you reach, the more likely you are to place someone. With mass texting, we can reach about 500 people a day, which is about three times more than we used to reach with phone calls. That means we're filling more positions and working much more efficiently."

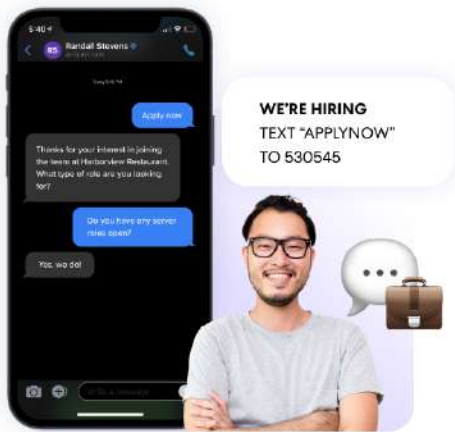## Javar Manning

Recruiting Manager
Miller Brother Staffing

👩🏻‍💼 **250k** candidates reached

⏰ **13K** recruiter hours saved

💼 **1,000** placements with Sense

Offer a simplified application experience with text-to-apply

Text-to-apply allows candidates to easily apply for a job by texting a dedicated number. They're able to apply right from their phone the moment they see you're hiring (as opposed to needing to return to their computer to search through openings and complete an online application). After the candidate texts the number, an AI-powered chatbot instantly replies and collects their application details by asking them a few simple questions. As they respond, all their application details are automatically entered into your ATS.

Text-to-apply is ideal for retailers, restaurants, and other businesses that advertise that they're hiring in brick-and-mortar locations, as well as staffing firms and hiring companies that source candidates at career fairs and hiring events.
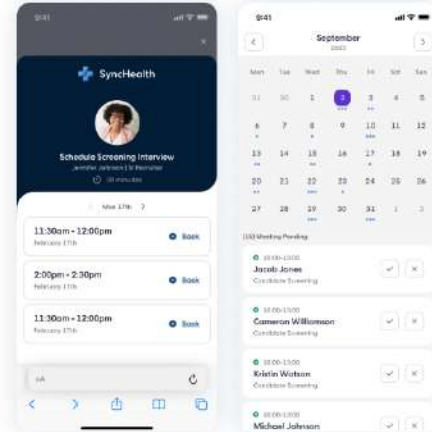
Instantly schedule interviews via text

Automatically scheduling interviews through text speeds up the hiring process by removing the back-and-forth email or phone exchange between the recruiter and the candidate.

After a candidate applies via text, the AI-powered chatbot instantly screens them against the role requirements. If they're qualified, the chatbot will share dates and times for an interview based on the interviewer's availability. The chatbot can even schedule round-robin interviews based on the availability of the hiring team. It can also automatically reschedule the interview if the candidate asks and will send reminder texts to reduce interview no-shows.

With text-to-apply and AI-powered screening and interview scheduling, qualified candidates can be ready to meet with the hiring team within minutes of learning about your opportunity.
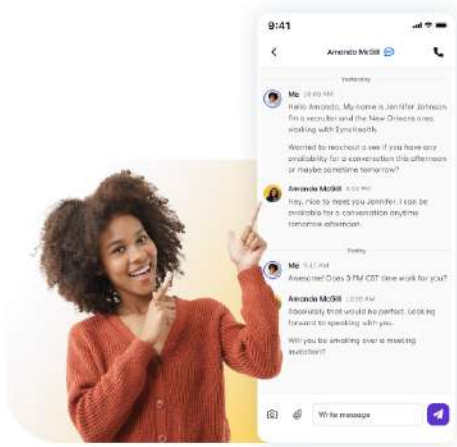
Keep candidates updated and engaged through text

By sending automated updates, reminders, and check-ins via text, recruiters keep candidates informed and engaged throughout their hiring journey. And even though these texts aren't written and sent by a recruiter, the candidate can still respond and communicate with an AI-powered chatbot — which is capable of intelligently answering their questions and providing additional information in a conversational, human-like tone.

Automated text messages save recruiters countless hours while ensuring every candidate has an outstanding experience.
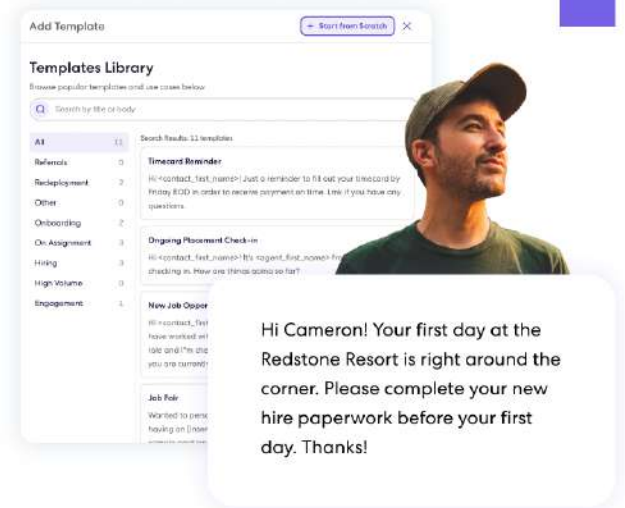
Onboard new hires through text

After a candidate accepts an offer, recruiters can use texting to kick off the onboarding process before their start date. This can include sending links to paperwork to complete or information they should know to prepare for their first day. Some recruiters even send automated check-ins after the new hire's first day to make sure everything went smoothly.

Recruiters typically lose touch with soon-to-be-employees before their start date, which contributes to candidates backing out of an accepted offer or even ghosting the company entirely. Keeping in contact via text has a significant impact on reaffirming the candidate's commitment while improving the efficiency of the onboarding process.

HEALTHTRUST

"Not everybody has a chance to answer the phone all day, every day – candidates might be at work. Sending a text is easier and more effective. We introduced it everywhere from point A to point Z, and saw a difference in response volume and speed almost right away."

Tathiana Rivera

Enterprise Operations Specialist
HealthTrust

98%   message delivery rate

905   outbound messages sent in six months

44%   response rate

Chapter 4

Texting at scale

Using a Talent Engagement Platform to seamlessly integrate text messaging into your recruiting process

While we're all used to texting on our personal phones, it's simply not possible for recruiters to keep track of dozens (or even hundreds) of conversations from a single mobile device. And even if it were, those conversations would still be siloed on each team member's phone, preventing collaboration among the team and visibility into the exchanges with candidates that are happening.

A Talent Engagement Platform like Sense provides a centralized hub for communicating with candidates via text messaging, and comes with numerous texting features that help recruiting teams reach more candidates, keep track of messages, and improve their candidate engagement strategy.

Collaborate with shared inboxes

With shared inboxes, all candidate text messages are visible to the entire recruiting team. Recruiters can respond to a candidate when the main point of contact is unavailable or check to see if a candidate is already communicating with a colleague before they reach out. Messages in a shared inbox can be color-coded based on conversation type (e.g., mass text/1:1 message, SMS/WhatsApp) and can be filtered for easy management.

Shared inboxes allow recruiters to see all the text message conversations that are happening and work together to engage candidates and fill roles with the right talent.

Drive more responses with messaging templates

Creating and uploading templates ensures that recruiters send consistent, on-brand text messages that are still personalized for each recipient. Well-crafted templated messages prevent texts from being mistaken as spam and are more likely to grab a candidate's attention. You can also A/B test different messages to pinpoint the content and calls to action that perform best.

Text message templates can be easily uploaded to your Talent Engagement Platform with placeholders that are automatically populated with the candidate's name, location, the job title for the role, and other relevant details. These details are seamlessly pulled from your ATS and inserted into the template, making each message feel as if it was written specifically for the individual candidate.

Automate candidate communication with an AI-powered chatbot

While text messaging is an ideal channel for engaging talent, it's difficult to respond to every message from every candidate. But given the sense of urgency associated with text messaging, falling out of touch for too long makes for a poor candidate experience.

Fortunately, an AI-powered chatbot can be your always-on recruiting assistant. When a candidate engages in certain text message conversations (e.g., responding to a mass text about a job opening, selecting an interview time, etc.), the chatbot will instantly respond, answer their questions, and advance them through the hiring process.

Engage candidates on SMS and WhatsApp

Candidates in the U.S. primarily use SMS to text but global candidates tend to be more active on WhatsApp. Using a Talent Engagement Platform, recruiters can text candidates on both SMS and WhatsApp, ensuring every candidate they contact receives their message and is able to communicate on their preferred text messaging platform. By reaching candidates on both SMS and WhatsApp, you can expand your recruiting funnel and meet candidates around the world.

Work effortlessly with a mobile app and Chrome extension

With multiple job openings and a never-ending list of tasks, every recruiter is looking for more efficient ways to work. Using a mobile app and Chrome extension, you are notified of incoming text messages and can quickly respond without being logged in to the platform.

You can also seamlessly launch mass texting campaigns from the Chrome extension. Simply pull phone numbers for qualified candidates from your ATS to the Chrome extension without navigating between screens. With a Talent Engagement Platform, you can respond on the go and simplify your workflows.

Elevate your engagement strategy with messaging analytics

Using messaging analytics, talent leaders can measure the effectiveness of their team's candidate outreach and engagement efforts. You can analyze data on both the campaign and user levels and present it in interactive charts, funnels, and dashboards to reveal trends over time and share big wins with organizational leadership. You can also combine messaging analytics with data from your ATS to inform your overall recruiting strategy, as well as export it to business intelligence solutions for in-depth analysis.

BE ●● THE MATCH®

"Our goal is to be a best-in-class talent acquisition organization. And to do that, we knew we needed to revisit our overall candidate experience and hiring and onboarding strategies, which took us down the path of text messaging."

Kari Elias

Senior Talent Acquisition Manager
Be The Match

73% candidate response rate

226 unique conversations with candidates in 90 days

0 candidate opt-outs

Chapter 4

The texting advantage

How text messaging gives you an edge in today's hiring landscape

AI Chatbot
Sense

June 6th, 2022 @ 3:45pm CST

Hi Avery, thanks for your interest in the Nursing Assistant position. We would like to schedule a 30-minute introductory call with you. Please let me know which of these dates/times work best for you.

Wednesday 9 AM

Wednesday 2:30 PM   Thursday 1 PM

Wednesday at 2:30 pm works great for me!
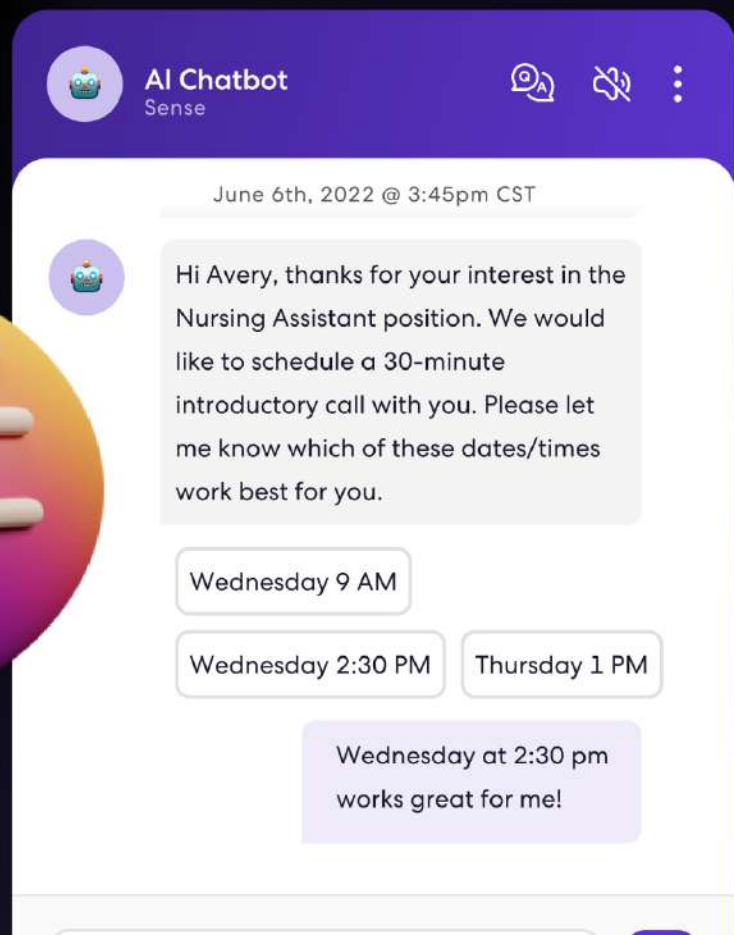
Any recruiter will tell you that hiring has continually gotten more and more competitive over the past few years. The recruiting teams that were early to see the value of texting have come out ahead during this time. They're overcoming common recruiting challenges and experiencing multiple benefits in the most competitive talent market in recent memory.

Let's explore the different advantages these recruiting teams are experiencing after making text messaging a core part of their recruiting strategy.

📨 Generate more responses

Since text messaging is one of the most direct ways to get in touch with candidates, it drives higher response rates than phone and email. Well-crafted and personalized messages that don't feel generic are especially effective for capturing candidates' attention and getting them to respond.

2X increase in response rate

🚀 Generate faster responses

Given the urgency of text messaging, the channel also generates faster responses than phone and email. Candidates are highly likely to respond quickly (and often instantly) to a text message from a recruiter, resulting in a streamlined hiring process and reduced time-to-hire.

3X faster responses

Hey Ryan, we're super excited about your first day at Harborview Restaurant on Friday. Don't hesitate to reach out if you have any last-minute questions or concerns, Thanks!

Thanks for checking in! No questions at the moment

🌟 Improve the candidate experience

Candidates continuously say that poor communication from recruiters is a major source of frustration. Automated text messages keep them updated at each stage of the hiring process, so they never feel like you've fallen out of touch. And if the candidate has any follow-up questions, the AI-powered chatbot will instantly respond and provide them with the information they're looking for.

2.5X increase in NPS

💼 Source more candidates

Mass texting groups of qualified candidates helps recruiting teams source more talent and ultimately make more hires. It's a more efficient approach than reaching out to candidates one-by-one and messages can still be personalized to feel as if they're meant for each individual recipient.

3X more hires

📈 Increase recruiter productivity

Text messaging powered by a Talent Engagement Platform helps recruiters save time and increase productivity. Features like mass texting, automated messages, templates, shared inboxes, and more are all designed to help teams meet their recruiting goals while working faster and more efficiently.

50% increase in productivity

🏅 Re-engage past candidates

Your ATS/CRM is full of candidates who have already expressed interest in working with you but that talent has grown dormant over time. Connecting with these candidates via text re-engages and reactivates them at scale. You can send messages that keep your organization top-of-mind or even share opportunities with past candidates who are qualified for new roles.

70% database reactivated

✋ Reduce candidate drop-off

Candidates lose interest when they stop hearing from recruiters for even a few days — and by the time you do follow-up, they've already moved on to another opportunity. Text messaging reduces drop-off by keeping candidates updated at crucial times in their hiring journey. It's also easy to quickly respond to candidates' questions and concerns via text which goes a long way in maintaining their interest as you progress through the hiring process.

74% decrease in drop-off

Hi Addison, 👋 Thanks for applying to be a Sales Associate at Oceanside Shops.

Let's start with a few questions about this role. Do you have a reliable mode of transportation?

Yes, I own a car

Great! Can you work weekends?

Fantastic! What's your preferred hourly rate?

Yes.

$25 an hour

Text messaging dos and don'ts

While text messaging can be a game-changer for your candidate engagement and overall recruiting strategy, there are some important dos and don'ts to keep in mind. By following these best practices and avoiding these common pitfalls, you can ensure your text messaging efforts are successful and effective.

✅ Do

- Get opt-in before texting a candidate (include an opt-in check box on your application)
- Write texts that are short and concise
- Use templates to ensure consistent, on-brand messaging
- Include the candidate's name to make the message feel personalized
- Allow the candidate to respond via text
- Reply quickly to candidate responses
- Make it easy for candidates to opt out of receiving text messages

⛔ Don't

- Text candidates who haven't willingly provided their phone number
- Write lengthy text messages that look like a wall of text on a phone screen
- Use emojis or non-alphanumeric characters (e.g., @, $, etc.) that can cause your text to be interpreted as spam
- Send generic messages that lack personalization
- Send text messages from a no-reply number that the candidate can't respond to
- Make the candidate wait days or even hours for a response
- Continue to message candidates who have asked you to stop texting them

Ready to make text messaging 💬 part of your talent engagement strategy? 🎯

The Sense Talent Engagement Platform helps you reach candidates on their preferred communication channel — text message. With multiple text message features, your recruiting team can accelerate hiring, reach more candidates, and provide an outstanding talent experience — all while overcoming hiring challenges and exceeding your recruiting goals. Find out why hundreds of talent-centric organizations including Amazon, Dell, Kelly Services, Kindred Healthcare, and Sears rely on Sense to engage talent.

Request a demo at:

www.sensehq.com