

# Australian Institute of Business Increases Enrollment with Messaging



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- Kerry Kingham

Head of Student Recruitment, AIB



## Overview

Australian Institute of Business (AIB) is a private higher education institution in Adelaide, South Australia, that's been helping students earn their MBA for 32 years. They are the largest MBA provider in Australia. The business school has offered undergraduate, graduate and doctoral programs in management to nearly 10,000 students so far from over 70 countries. Their programs can be completed via online learning.

## Business Challenge

AIB's contact rate via phone was low. They invest a great deal in attracting leads, but only 50% of their outbound calls were being answered. Since the business school only calls leads who have expressed an interest in their program, it is important to contact them quickly, when their interest is high. "But if we're only speaking to about 50% of leads by outbound calls, there's a huge pool of leads that we were just not able to connect with," says Kerry Kingham, Head of Student Recruitment, AIB.

## Answering the Challenge

AIB realized that it was unrealistic to call busy working adults who were potential students and expect to have an in-depth conversation with them during their work day. They asked potential students about their preferred mode of communication and many said messaging.

Career advisors initially texted students from their personal mobiles and when they got responses, AIB looked for a more structured solution. The business school's IT department shortlisted texting solutions that integrated with Salesforce and had reporting. SMS-Magic met both these criteria as it integrates with Salesforce easily and messages are tracked by automatically linking them to leads and contacts in the CRM.

*Please note:*

*In the conversations below, green represents an automated conversation and yellow represents a 1:1 conversation.*

## How AIB Uses Messaging

AIB sends text messages potential students, as well as those who sign up for their course. Text messaging is also used for student retention, appointment setting, reminders, and other important information.

### Messaging Potential Students

AIB focuses on working adults as their target segment. "Many of them are quite time poor. We use SMS, as well as email, to reach out to students because we find that if they're sitting in front of a computer at work, they may not have the time to take a phone call. But if we send them an SMS they quite often respond more to that," says Kingham.

"Since traffic controllers are usually on the job site, email is not a sufficient or efficient way for them to respond for a job that begins the next day. With text messaging, they can just reply yes on the spot," says Jordan.

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The business school uses digital advertising on social media and search websites to drive leads to their website to complete a form. This creates a lead in Salesforce and assigns a course advisor to follow up. The advisor tries calling the lead. If there's no answer, they use text messaging to schedule an appointment with the lead. Each advisor calls 70 leads a day.

The same advisor communicates with the lead through enrollment, building a personal relationship. Students spend over AUD 30,000 on the course and their consideration cycle can be up to six months, so their relationship with the advisor is important for conversion.

Text messaging helps strengthen this relationship. It is suitable to nurture students who need more information in addition to phone calls, like text reminders.

SENT

Really excited for you, Jane. Only two more days to go before you begin your course. Remember to give me a call if you have any questions. Tim, AIB

## Messaging to Set Appointments

Since students are working adults they often need to book a certain time when AIB can call them back. Each of the 32 advisors has their own booking link that they can paste into a text and send out to students.

"We get a much better open rate and response rate for a lot of students on SMS, because they're used to messaging. They use it for gym reminders, doctors, hairdressers. They've always got their phone with them, even if they can't take a phone call," says Kingham.

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Students who have already researched the course online prefer to communicate with advisors over text message rather than email, as they focus on document submissions and deadlines. AIB sends a link to the application form via text to students who prefer to communicate via text.

## Messaging for Getting Documents

"What we find really works well for SMS is toward the end of the enrollment period when we're just waiting for students to send documents back or we just want to remind them of cut-off dates coming up. The career advisors send out a lot of SMSs then because there are one-off questions that don't need a detailed email or a phone call and can be answered easily over SMS."

"Nine times out of ten a phone call won't get picked up, because people are at work during the day. Career advisors then send an email and if that doesn't get a response, they'll send an SMS, which usually does get a response. The SMS is just enough to prompt students to actually complete the task," says Kingham.

SENT

Hi Samantha, I need to contact your reference but I don't have the correct phone number. Could you please get that to me? Thanks, Ben, AIB

RECEIVED

I'll send it to you tonight, Ben. Thanks, Samantha

AIB has also found that if leads are at work, it's hard to read and respond to a personal email. "Students have to log in to their Gmail or go to their phone and do it. Most people are working in open plan offices now, so they aren't keen on having their personal email up on the computer screen in front of them. Students feel they can quickly slip back an SMS and not have to actually stop what they're doing at work during the day," says Kingham.

## Messaging Students for Re-enrollment

AIB sends messages for time-sensitive issues like orientation modules. "Everyone's used to seeing the preview of an SMS on their phone and that encourages you to open it and do something about it," says Kingham.

Students in the course are too busy to have long phone conversations, so a well-timed reminder text works well. Advisors message a majority of 2,500-3,000 students each semester to get them to re-enroll and choose their next four subjects.

SENT

Hi Chris, don't forget to complete your orientation module tonight. Otherwise, we'll de-enroll you in the morning. Thanks, Ben, AIB

SENT

Hi Dana, it's time to re-enroll. Would you like these four subjects- Business Statistics, Human Resources, Advertising Management and Marketing Management? Can I send you a timetable? Thanks, Ben, AIB

RECEIVED

Sounds good Ben, please send to my email. Thanks!

SENT

Great, I'm mailing you your timetable then. Just open it and click Yes I Accept so that I can process your re-enrollment.  
Thanks, Ben, AIB

## Messaging for Student Support

AIB's student support team messages students as well, to remind them to download the online exam software and other upcoming deadlines. They find it more reliable than phone calls, which people may not pick up and they might not listen to their voicemail either.

SENT

Hi Pat, please download your online exam software if you haven't done so. Your Business Logic exam is in a week. Call +61 8 8212 8111 for help.  
Thanks, Ben, AIB

## Highlighting the Business Value of Messaging

**Better student engagement.** Text messaging "increased contactability and engagement with our students by 5-10%," says Kingham.

**Reduction in consideration cycle time.** Texting has helped AIB convert students faster and reduced their staff's effort in doing so.

**Cost-effective.** Text messaging is a cost-effective way of contacting students compared to calling. Also, it's "something you can do on the spur of the moment," says Kingham.

A management degree is a significant investment for a student and AIB also spends a great deal to attract new students. Texting helps the business school engage with more students and increase enrollment.

## About SMS-Magic

SMS-Magic is a proven, global messaging platform for Salesforce, with over 1800 clients accessing 59 direct carriers. SMS-Magic enables Salesforce users to engage buyers and win and retain more new customer revenue, while creating strong customer relationships that drive sustainable competitive advantage. SMS-Magic is the most positively reviewed messaging application on Salesforce AppExchange.



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