

# Conversational Text Messaging is Key to Stork Driver's Business Growth



When asked how his company uses text messaging, Steven Shapiro, CEO, of Stork Driver didn't mince words:



Texting is the key to our business. We use SMS-Magic for everything.



## Overview

Steven Shapiro and his partner found a gap in a growing market when they noticed a shift in business models for car ownership. They wanted to become part of that evolution of transportation. As a result, Stork Driver was founded to lease cars to rideshare drivers in New York City. The company's fleet now includes 400 cars and client drivers, and is growing fast. In December 2017 the company added Arlington, Texas as its second city with its partner Via Transportation, Inc., and has plans to expand to two additional cities in the first half of 2018.

## Business Challenge

Stork Drivers' clients are rideshare drivers. They are mobile, spending the majority of their time driving cars. The company quickly realized that communicating with prospects and customers via email was not effective. Texting is the solution. "Our market is just naturally text savvy—and our clients cover all age ranges," says Shapiro. "We found that a lot of emails would go unanswered with the excuse from customers that they didn't get it or the message went into their spam folders."

In the beginning, Stork Driver chose SendHub for its texting platform. That platform was not integrated with Salesforce CRM and became an efficiency drain. The CRM is used to track all leads, cars, and drivers—forcing the staff to jump between its texting platform and CRM to manage operations.

As the company's fleet grew from 25 cars to 400, they knew they had to find a texting platform that integrated with Salesforce to continue to be hyper-responsive. They needed a simple, integrated solution to engage and onboard new drivers efficiently, manage relationships with their existing clients, and to manage their fleet. "We knew we had to find a solution that could marry the two into one," says Shapiro. It was just too hard to track everything when the staff had to move back and forth between the two systems.

## Answering the Challenge

When they set out to search for a texting solution that integrated with Salesforce CRM, the first place Shapiro turned was to his Salesforce sales rep to ask for suggestions. Then he engaged with his Salesforce consultant to implement whatever new solution they'd choose. Shapiro also attended a Salesforce event in New York City to look at available solutions. He also consulted with one of the company's key partners for ideas.

Through this research, Shapiro settled on a short list of solutions that included Salesforce LiveMessage, SMS-Magic, Twilio, and their existing vendor, SendHub. The company conducted multiple trials to determine best fit.

When asked about his criteria for selection, Shapiro listed five factors that played a role in the selection:

1. Ease and completeness of integration with Salesforce CRM
2. An intuitive user interface the staff could adopt and understand quickly
3. Ability to use voice, as well as texting, with a single phone number
4. Ease and speed of implementation
5. Total cost of ownership

When asked about his 3<sup>rd</sup> criterion, Shapiro said, "People's number one reaction when they get a text from someone and want to talk to them is to call them back on the number the text came from. If they call back and get a voice recording that this is a text only number it ends that engagement right there."

## Making the Selection

During the evaluation, Shapiro quickly narrowed down his list to two choices, SMS-Magic and one other vendor. Initially, Shapiro chose the other vendor because he felt it would better integrate with Salesforce, even though he admits the SMS-Magic interface was easier to use and the platform is a more complete product.

That's when the trouble started. Very soon into the implementation, Shapiro and his implementation partner ran into problems. They discovered that changes in the other vendor's product were happening on the fly and that the product wasn't ready for implementation or the volume of Single, Bulk, and automated messaging that Stork Driver would require the platform to support. The company decided to change course and re-engage with SMS-Magic due to worries that this vendor's platform would keep changing randomly and causing more problems for his team to deal with.

Shapiro turned to SMS-Magic. "I found that SMS-Magic was a finished product—a working product—with overall functionality that was better than any other vendor out there." He also noted that the Desktop was much easier for his team to use and that SMS-Magic's pricing methodology provided more clarity for assessing total cost of ownership. The final factor was that SMS-Magic enabled voice and integrated with Stork Driver's existing VOIP service, satisfying that important 3<sup>rd</sup> selection criterion.

## How Stork Driver Uses Messaging to Drive Business Growth

Stork Driver uses texting across the business for marketing, sales, and operations.

According to Shapiro, "As soon as someone becomes a lead in Salesforce, from that point on, we are communicating with them via text."

## Using Messaging for Marketing

Stork Driver receives a list of leads from one of its partners every Friday. The list averages between 40 and 60 leads that fit in different buckets. They use bulk texting to communicate with these different leads. First, they send a simple message introducing themselves. Depending on which bucket they fit, an automated nurturing sequence is then triggered for further engagement to move them forward in the pipeline until they submit an application or do not meet the company's criteria.

## Using Messaging for Sales

Potential drivers need to complete an application form on the company's website. The form includes a field for the lead's mobile number and an opt-in for texting.

As soon as a lead submits the application, an automated reply text is triggered asking the lead to message pictures of their driver license via MMS.

"MMS works better than email," says Shapiro. "They don't deal with email well or seem to use it much." Texting is right in front of them and they are much more responsive.

Stork Driver uses messaging to drive the entire relationship with their prospective drivers, from application to setting up appointments and reminders. Texting is also used once the prospect becomes a client driver to send automated reminders for payment collection, service appointments, and other key information.

## Using Messaging for Operations

Every month 50-60 vehicles in the Stork Driver fleet need to undergo a state emission inspection. The company has automation set up for the first of the month with the rule that if a car has an inspection expiration date in that month, a particular message will be sent to its driver. The company has a number of events like this set up with automated triggers.

In their messages, Stork Driver directs customers to either call or text for more information. Shapiro explains, "We're trying to keep things out of email. It just seems like a less efficient way of doing things."

## Highlighting the Business Value of Conversational Text Messaging

When asked about the payoffs from using text messaging as the main channel to run the business, Shapiro points to the following outcomes:

- Noticeably higher engagement with leads and clients
- Ability to engage directly with more clients due to the efficiency of texting
- Solving many issues more quickly, eliminating the need for a more time-intensive phone call
- Increased staff efficiency and productivity
- Customers like that we're easily available via text
- Our business is growing

When we asked what the future looks like with messaging, Shapiro is looking forward to the SMS-Magic Converse launch in Q1 2018. "When I saw Converse, it was a big game changer," said Shapiro. "That Converse Desktop will allow us to see everything in one view is going to make a big difference."

With Converse, Stork Driver will be able to pivot from the messaging conversation to the related Salesforce object without having to leave SMS-Magic. With that capability, Shapiro concludes, "People would never have to leave their conversations. They'll always have it up on their screen."



"Our clients are mobile, and we need a good way to interact with our customers and keep them engaged. SMS-Magic provides Stork Driver with the tools necessary to stay engaged and have real-time feedback. Throw on top of that full integration with Salesforce, SMS-Magic provides Stork Driver a productivity enhancing tool that saves us an enormous amount of time."

- Steven Shapiro  
CEO, Stork Driver

#### About SMS-Magic

SMS-Magic is a proven, global messaging platform for Salesforce, with over 1500 clients across 55 direct carriers, including small, midsize, and enterprise accounts. 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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