

Best Practices for Conversational Messaging in Recruiting



Overview

In the world of recruiting, speed is essential. The faster you can communicate with candidates, the faster you can qualify applicants and fill positions. You need the fastest communication method available in the industry. You need conversational messaging.

The response time for a typical message is just three minutes. Your candidates will respond six times faster to messaging than to email, and 10 times faster than voicemail. Don't waste valuable time waiting for responses – keep the process moving with conversational messaging.

Messaging can work magic for recruiters in countless ways. It can:

Reduce Your Time-To-Hire

More responsiveness from candidates leads to increased efficiency for you, and faster placement increases client satisfaction.

Turn Passive Talent Into Active Candidates

Good candidates may already work for your competitors, but you can discover how to motivate them to join you instead. Messaging helps you build a personal relationship with passive candidates, and they'll become more responsive.

Attract More Millennial And Gen Z Candidates

To recruit today's candidates, you have to demonstrate understanding of their generation. Younger candidates prefer communication through messaging, and using it will get you results.

Fill Temp Positions Faster

Agility is key when placing temp workers. With messaging, the hiring process becomes responsive and conversational, and your client satisfaction soars.

To make the most of messaging as a recruiting tool, it's vital to understand best practices in the industry. Read on to discover essential keys to success that our current recruiting clients think you should know.

First, we'll learn how to reduce time-to-hire using conversational messaging.

Messaging: Your Secret Weapon For Slashing Time-To-Hire

Over 83% of talent leaders say that recruiting and retaining talent is their top organizational priority, according to the 2017 LinkedIn Global Recruiting Trends Report. According to Indeed, the cost-to-hire a new employee can range from \$4,000 to \$20,000, depending on the hiring level, and the average time it takes to fill a given position is anywhere from 10 days for service positions to 60 days for university professors. Budgets are getting tighter across the board, and you may be unable to hire more recruiters to attract the talent your organization needs.

For any recruiter, time-to-hire is a top performance metric, and 56% of talent leaders expect an increase in hiring volume. Using messaging, you can reduce cost-to-hire and boost efficiency, even at higher volume.

Hiring Efficiency Benefits Both Companies and Candidates

Reaching candidates by phone is time consuming for you and for them. They often don't pick up the phone, especially if they're currently employed and on the clock during business hours. Once you reach a candidate by phone, verbally explaining job details can be repetitive and inefficient.

Email isn't much better. Email response rates are plummeting, and your outreach will likely get lost in the chaos of your candidate's inbox. Both phone and email communication require back-and-forth responses with lag time between each one, and they can lead to a drawn-out, frustrating hiring process.

Messaging is less overcrowded, so your communication will stand out and be noticed. It's also unobtrusive. Your candidates can easily message you throughout the day, so you'll be chatting with them in real time.

Messaging offers you powerful tools to streamline your workflow. You can segment your database to automatically message all candidates who qualify for a position. In your outreach, you can invite them to reply using keywords to express their interest.

Messaging lets recruiters quickly create short lists by filtering for interested candidates who match the position requirements. Once you've culled your list, you can setup automated messaging based on workflows from your CRM. Your conversation with these candidates will begin before your competitors have found them.

Candidates also demand an efficient hiring process. A study by Robert Half found that 39% of candidates won't stick around for a long hiring process before losing interest and moving on.

Passive candidates are also attracted by streamlined processes. Your talent pool of passive candidates is a valuable resource, and proactively building relationships with potential talent will bring them to your company when the right position becomes available. Messaging makes it easy to network with passive clients. You might schedule bi-weekly texts sharing valuable career tips, encouraging candidates to rely on you for advice. Understanding your clients' needs and proactively connecting with your talent pool will help you accelerate the time-to-hire when your next client request comes in.

Reducing Time-to-Hire Through Messaging: A Success Story

To help us explain how our customers use messaging to assist in recruiting talented candidates, we have created two agencies, Top Talent and Top Temps. They are based on the experiences of a number of our successful customers. By using our fictitious agencies as models, we are able to share great ideas with you and also protect our customers' privacy. The accounts in this whitepaper are based on real-life stories.


A recruiting firm called Top Talent was on the hunt for sales people to join a consumer durables company. For this small firm, placing phone calls to hundreds of candidates would never lead to the results they needed within the timeframe their client had specified.

During the last few quarters, recruiters had noticed email response rates plummeting as potential candidates ignored their outreach. These obstacles sent Top Talent on a search for alternatives, and they soon learned about the traction messaging was gaining in the industry. They put messaging to work for their firm, and it paid off exponentially.

First, they created a filtered list from their database containing candidates with sales experience. Then, they composed a message with details about the position, personalized with candidate names. Using a keyword-based flow, they invited interested candidates to reply and set up a phone call.

Top Talent then set up a workflow to trigger scheduling messages, confirming the phone appointments and sending reminders to reduce no-shows. Their workflow also notified team members when a candidate replied to a text.

David, a candidate for the sales position, experienced a seamless recruitment process. Here's how it looked:



Hi David, Ron from Top Talent.
We have an opening with
Big Buy, for sales managers
with 2+ years of relevant
experience. To know more,
text MORE to 38393.


David had been in sales for a couple of years at his current job, but he wasn't finding any growth opportunities there. He was looking to improve his career path, but while out on his sales route, he was having trouble getting enough internet connectivity to check email and connect with recruiters. One day, he received a message from Top Talent on his on phone.

David was excited by the opportunity to work for Big Buy, and he immediately replied MORE to the message, triggering another text.



Thanks for your interest,
David. A Top Talent team
member will call you within
a day.


Ron

A blue rounded rectangle with a white border and a small green tab on the left side, representing an incoming SMS message.


Hi Pam, David (Phone number) has sent a text with this content.

When David replied, Ron's colleague, Pam, received an alert.

Pam instantly messaged David a screening question.

A blue rounded rectangle with a white border and a small green tab on the left side, representing an outgoing SMS message.

Hi David, This is Pam from Top Talent. If I may ask, what makes you passionate about sales?

A blue rounded rectangle with a white border and a small green tab on the left side, representing an outgoing SMS message.

Hi David, Good time to talk? Otherwise, please text me a time when I can call. Thanks, Pam.

David replied with a satisfactory answer and the process continued.

Pam could tell David was a good fit for the client, so she set up an appointment with David and messaged him with all the details.

Speaking with Pam helped David understand the culture at Big Buy, and he recognized the position as a good match for him. The conversation moved at lightning speed, so Top Talent was able to quickly set up David's interview with the client.

David aced the interview and got the job two weeks later. During this period, Pam kept him engaged and optimistic by messaging with updates about the client's decision-making process.

Top Talent's client loved this streamlined hiring cycle because their time-to-hire had previously been around six weeks, and David was hired in three! Top Talent enjoyed an improved client relationship, and everyone involved reaped the benefits of conversational messaging.

Clearly messaging can power your success in attracting, engaging, and placing quality talent faster than ever before.

Breaking Barriers With Passive Candidates Messaging

Every recruiter knows that it's easier to attract a candidate if they're actively searching for a job. However, most of the talented candidates your clients want are already employed – often with competitors. Messaging can break through barriers to get the conversational ball rolling with passive candidates, and keep it in motion until you place them in a new role.

Why Passive Candidates Matter


Passive talent is the best solution to your talent shortage. After all, 70% of potential candidates are passive talent, according to a recent LinkedIn study. These candidates are hard to engage, since they're not looking for you. They won't pick up calls from unknown numbers while at work, and they'll let your email go straight to the trash folder. You need a fresh new way to engage these candidates, and conversational messaging is the answer.

Messaging: Your Secret Weapon For Slashing Time-To-Hire

1. Learn more about your candidates

If your candidates have written whitepapers or blog posts, reading them can teach you a lot about their subject matter expertise. If they belong to a professional community online, you can join to see how they interact with other members. Doing some preliminary work will help you write more personalized messages when you make your initial contact.

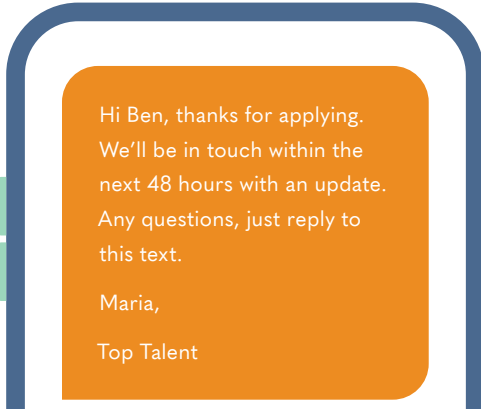
Success Story: Converting Passive Talent to Active Talent Through Conversational Messaging



Hi Ben, Maria from Top Talent here. I read your paper on gaming design- I loved it. Gods of Gaming wants a team lead in developing games. More here:
(URL)

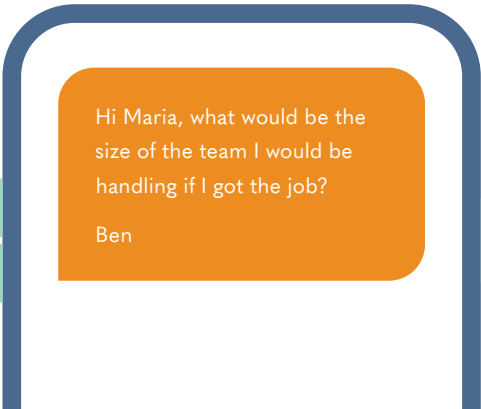
Here's a message that Maria, a technical recruiter at Top Talent, sent to a developer named Ben.

The URL contained the job description and a short form for Ben to submit if interested in the position. When Ben returned the completed form, he got an automated acknowledgement letting him know when to expect an update.



Hi Ben, thanks for applying. We'll be in touch within the next 48 hours with an update. Any questions, just reply to this text.

Maria,
Top Talent



Hi Maria, what would be the size of the team I would be handling if I got the job?

Ben


Ben reached out to Maria with a question about reporting roles.



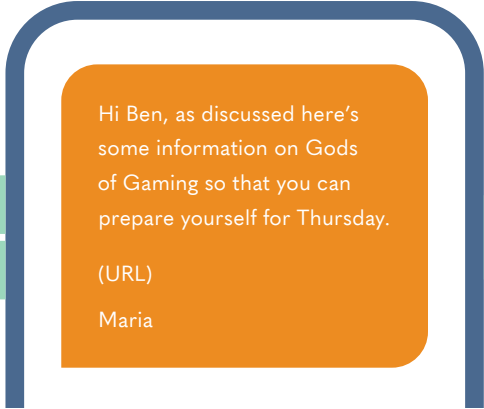
Hi Ben, it would be a team of 10.

Maria had already discussed job details with the client, so she was able to message back instantly with the answer.

Maria messaged Ben with an update the next day, building trust by following through on the timeframe she promised.



Good news, Ben you're one of 20 shortlisted candidates. Let's work together to put our best foot forward. When can I call to discuss?
Maria



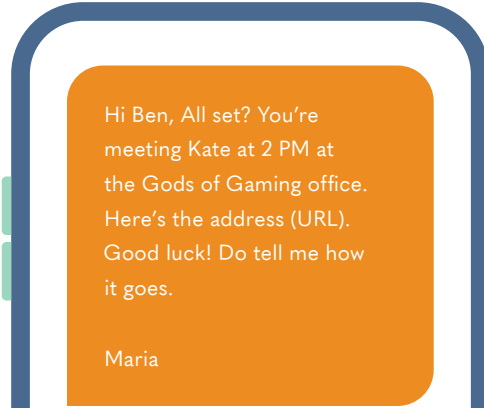
Hi Ben, as discussed here's some information on Gods of Gaming so that you can prepare yourself for Thursday.

(URL)

Maria

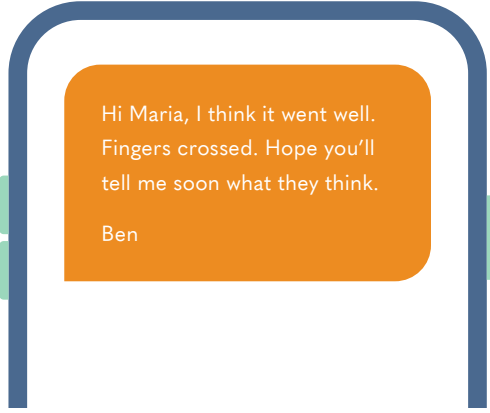
Maria let Ben know he should start preparing for the client's test, and she sent a URL where Ben could download pre-interview documents.

Maria reduced the chances of a no-show by reminding Ben of the interview time and place.



Hi Ben, All set? You're meeting Kate at 2 PM at the Gods of Gaming office. Here's the address (URL). Good luck! Do tell me how it goes.

Maria


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Hi Maria, I think it went well.
Fingers crossed. Hope you'll
tell me soon what they think.

Ben


Ben texted back with a post-interview update.

Maria kept Ben informed about the interview results and decision timeline.

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Hi Ben, you did good. Kate
will tell us in a week about
their decision. Sit tight.

Maria

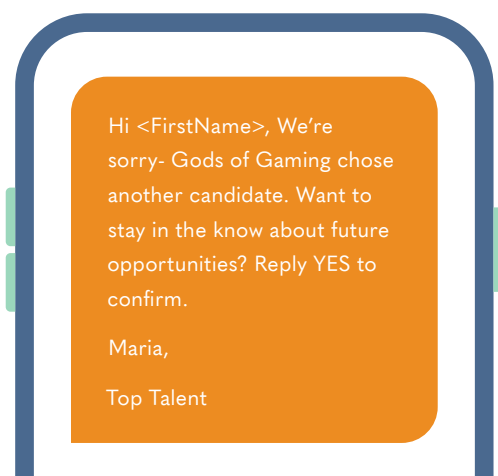
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Congratulations, Ben you got
the job! Good time to talk?

Maria

Maria followed up with Kate to learn that Ben got the job, and she sent Ben a congratulatory message.

Maria could then instantly update other candidates about the filled position and motivate them to stay in Top Talent's messaging database. Most replied with a YES keyword!

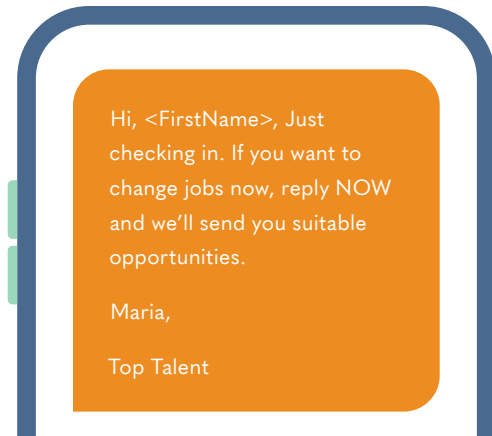
A blue-outlined speech bubble with rounded corners, containing an orange message box. The message box has a light green tab on its left side.

Hi <FirstName>, We're
sorry- Gods of Gaming chose
another candidate. Want to
stay in the know about future
opportunities? Reply YES to
confirm.

Maria,
Top Talent

Building Value For Passive Talent Through Messaging

You need passive candidates because your CRM likely doesn't contain the right talent for many of your placements. More than a third of North American firms make less than 25% of their total placements from candidates already in their ATS or CRM, according to a 2017 Bullhorn study. In order to attract that passive talent, you have to give them reasons to stay in touch with you!



Top Talent sent career tips to everyone in their database, keeping them engaged and bolstering name recognition. When Top Talent contacted a candidate about a position, the candidate already knew their name. Messages like this one kept their passive talent engaged.

Maria could then easily restart conversations with them, with no icebreakers or introductions required. She was able to fill more open positions and reduce time-to-hire, thanks to the relationship-building power of conversational messaging.

Conversational messaging can turn your passive clients into active recruits in many different ways. It can also help you effectively reach candidates from the younger generation—millennials and Gen Z—by catering to their preferences and speaking their language.

Attract Millennials and Gen Z With Messaging-Based Recruitment

According to Pew Research Center, millennials are now the largest generation in the United States and they will comprise 75% of the workforce by 2025. Their values and motivations are different from older generations, and outdated recruitment methods won't work for them. Recruiters know that competition for millennial and Gen Z talent is fierce, with quality candidates in short supply. You need to attract this talent before your competitors beat you to it.

What Younger Candidates Want

Millennials and Gen Z are interested in more than just a paycheck. They value intangible benefits, like flexibility at work as much as their compensation package. A 2016 Gallup study found that more than half of millennials value opportunities to learn and grow as a top consideration when applying for a job.

Messaging can help you offer them intangible perks, starting with the recruiting process. Real-time, continuous, convenient and personal communication appeals to the younger generations values. Millennials and Gen Z prize convenience and speed in daily interactions, and this outlook explains why they love messaging. In fact, a recent survey found that most millennials and Gen Z if forced to choose, would pick a text-only phone instead of a voice-only phone.

As a Recruiter, How Can You Attract Millennials and Gen Z for Your Clients?

Your client's brand can help you attract more of their desired talent. Millennials and Gen Z want to work for companies that stand for values they share, with a company culture that supports them in reaching their personal and career-oriented goals. Most companies understand the importance of building an employer brand, but many lack the resources they need to gain exposure with younger talent. You can strengthen your relationship with clients as a partner and advisor, not just a recruiter, by sharing the collateral they do have through conversational messaging.

Involve hiring managers in developing your sourcing strategy for recruitment. Together, you can create a candidate persona. Based on the company's values, you can draft an Employee Value Proposition to ensure that the talent you source fits into the company culture and brings the right skills to the table.

These tools will empower you to craft a winning sourcing strategy. While email and social media can be useful tools, recruiting via messaging can help you to attract and engage millennials and Gen Z using a channel that's effective, unobtrusive, and integrated into these generations day-to-day lives.

Engage Millennials and Gen Z Candidates Throughout the Hiring Process Via Messaging

During the hiring process, you can keep the conversation going by sending valuable content. By sharing videos of employees narrating a day in their lives, providing links to your client's career site, or sharing information about sustainability or charity initiatives, you can build value for your client and motivate millennial and Gen Z candidates to align themselves with that company.

Often, millennials and Gen Z grow frustrated by long waits as the hiring process moves forward. Messaging allows you to schedule and confirm interviews and provide directions and interview tips that candidates value. Many of these messages can be automated for ease on your end, and by keeping in touch with your younger candidates during the wait, you can reduce the chances they'll walk away.

How One Firm Engaged Millennial Talent With Conversational Messaging

Top Talent, our example recruiting firm, was wasting too much time calling potential candidates who weren't picking up the phone. Staff members were tired of repeatedly dialing the same numbers and leaving voicemails that went unanswered.

One of Top Talent's clients, Fast Movers, was a consumer goods company looking to hire talented millennial talent. They needed to staff a new office opening in six months, which happened to be a month after many college graduations.

Top Talent knew that presenting Fast Mover's brand effectively would be key to attracting younger employees in the competitive market surrounding the new office. Clearly, traditional channels like email and phone calls wouldn't deliver stellar results.

Messaging to Position an Employer Brand For Millennial talent

Top Talent worked alongside Fast Movers' hiring managers and human resources executives to create a candidate persona. They used exit interviews and research to identify what candidates wanted, and they discovered the gaps between Fast Movers' employment opportunities and their desire for younger talent. Using these best practices, Top Talent helped this client close the gaps and build a powerful workforce.

1. Getting candidates to Opt-in to a Messaging Program

Top Talent visited campus job fairs within a 50-mile radius of the new office, inviting students to opt in for message updates about available positions at Fast Movers. Students could reply with a keyword to be automatically logged in the Top Talent CRM as leads. Then, Top Talent messaged a URL where students could complete their profiles. By identifying candidates' personality, skill, and cultural fit, Top Talent created a shortlist for assessments and interviews.

Instead of messaging with standard job descriptions, Top Talent opted to show rather than tell. Millennials loved receiving MMS videos of Fast Mover employees discussing company culture and a day-in-the-life of the role.

2. Brand Positioning By Reducing Time-to-Hire

Although Top Talent's past recruiting efforts had involved phone or email, their messaging campaign created a much better impression of their brand among candidates. They set up interviews faster and provided interview coaching to reassure candidates and improve interview performance. Sending reminder messages helped ensure candidates kept interview appointments and also kept them informed and engaged throughout the hiring process.

After each candidate interviewed with Fast Movers, Top Talent surveyed their feedback about the process via messaging. They also messaged Fast Movers to gather details about next steps and what candidates could expect. By also messaging the hiring managers at Fast Movers, Top Talent ensured speedy replies from them. Throughout the process, Top Talent showed candidates that Fast Movers was a professional, responsive and innovative company.

3. Messaging to Sustain Future Prospective's Engagement

Top Talent maintained relationships with quality candidates who didn't apply in this current round. By maintaining them in a viable client pool, Top Talent predisposed them to apply when new positions with Fast Movers or similar clients became available. Messaging new graduates strategically with helpful career tips helped them hone interview skills and remain a valuable resource over time while they launched their careers.

Overall, tailoring your recruitment outreach to millennials and Gen Z requires added effort and thought. However, this added effort will pay off in significant dividends, and messaging makes it doable.

Messaging can help recruiters attract and engage permanent candidates, but it can also help to address the unique challenges faced by temporary staffing agencies. In fact, messaging is uniquely positioned to overcome these specific obstacles.

Messaging For Faster Temporary Placement

Temporary employment continues to be a growing field with 48% of recruiting firms expecting temporary placements to increase, according to Bullhorn's 2017 North American Staffing and Recruiting Trends Report. Along with the demands of ordinary recruiting, temporary placement requires even more agility.

Temporary recruiters need to reply promptly to candidates, check the availability of positions, and swiftly place work orders. Messaging is the quickest way to get candidate responses and increase your revenue.

As our client, Geneva Milne, director of technology, Therapy Travelers says, "We have been able to decrease our payroll processing times and increase our recruitment numbers with this terrific tool."

Messaging's Unique Benefits For Temporary Staffers

1. Meet sudden demand spikes faster

Many industries require more personnel at certain times of the year than others. For example, retailers often need extra staff October through January due to the holiday season. It typically takes a staffing agency five days to find candidates, but batch messaging can reduce this turnaround to a single day.

2. Satisfy clients with quality talent

Temporary staffing agencies often have to prioritize speed over quality. However, when there's no time to check whether candidates have given accurate information about their skills and experience, unpleasant surprises can surface. Messaging can help you conveniently collect documentation from candidates and offer relevant tests to demonstrate their skills.

3. Maximize candidate engagement through powerful client pools

Temporary staffing exists to meet short-term needs, but temporary staffing agencies need to strategize for success in the long-term. You work hard to find quality candidates. When you maintain a conversation with them, it's easier for you to meet your next client's needs. Automated messaging can offer interview tips and other valuable content, scheduled to go out to candidates at periodic intervals.

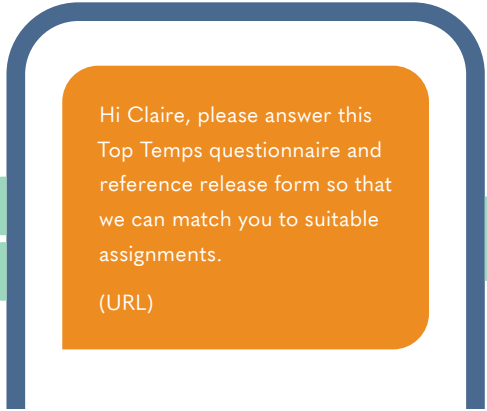
How Messaging Boosted a Temporary Agency's Success

Top Temps wanted to increase its candidate pool size and quality, so that it could meet client demands faster. The agency decided to give messaging a try, and advertised a texting program called Know First on its website, allowing candidates to sign up for job notifications.

Know First offered two-way communication, since candidates could also alert Top Temps when they were available for assignments.



Thanks for joining Know First. Please message us a photo of your resume and identification for our records or email them to knowfirst@topemps.com


A blue-outlined speech bubble with a light blue vertical bar on the left side, containing an orange message box.

Hi Claire, please answer this Top Temps questionnaire and reference release form so that we can match you to suitable assignments.

(URL)


Next, Top Temps asked Claire to complete a reference release form allowing her former employer to contact Top Temps, plus a questionnaire to help Top Temps identify her skills.

Claire's answers suggested she would be a good fit as a temporary secretary, so Top Temps offered her a typing test.

A blue-outlined speech bubble with a light blue vertical bar on the left side, containing an orange message box.

Thanks for answering the Top Temps questionnaire, Claire. Could you please take this typing test?

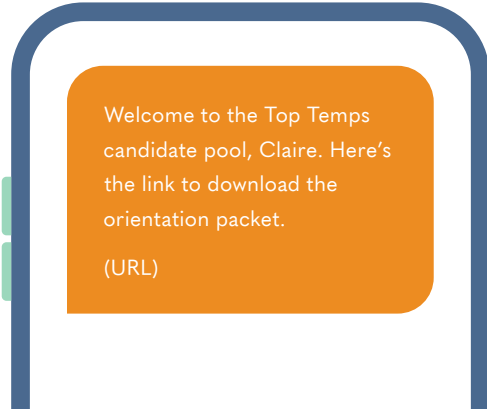
(URL)

A blue-outlined speech bubble with a light blue vertical bar on the left side, containing an orange message box.

Congratulations, Claire, you passed the Top Temps typing test. Can you come in tomorrow at 10 AM for an interview? Reply CONFIRM to confirm.


Claire aced the test, so Top Temps messaged her to set up an interview time.

After Claire's interview, Top Temps shared an orientation packet with her, explaining the timesheet system, payment schedules, and other pertinent information.

A blue-outlined speech bubble with a light blue vertical bar on the left side, containing an orange message box.

Welcome to the Top Temps candidate pool, Claire. Here's the link to download the orientation packet.

(URL)

A blue rounded rectangular bubble with a white border and a small green tab on the left side. The text is in a sans-serif font.

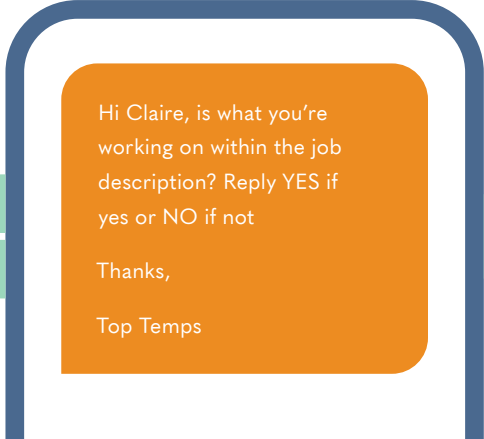
Hi Claire, There's an opening
for a temporary secretary for
six months starting Monday.
Reply AVAILABLE if you're
interested. Thanks,
Top Temps

When a temporary secretary job opened, Top Temps filtered candidates with the relevant skills in their database (including Claire) on Friday and asked about their availability in a batch message.

Once Claire was hired, Top Temps sent her automated weekly reminders to fill her timesheet every Friday evening, ensuring timely pay.

A blue rounded rectangular bubble with a white border and a small green tab on the left side. The text is in a sans-serif font.

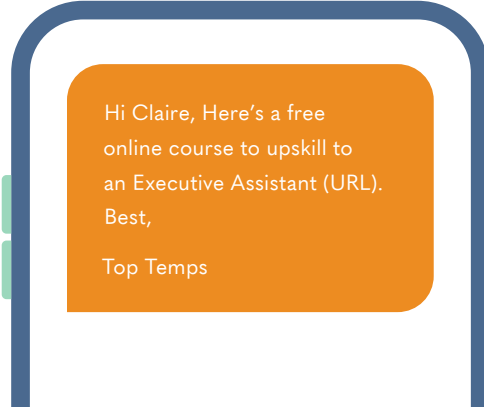
Hi Claire, Please fill out your
time sheet for this week (URL).
Thanks,
Top Temps

A blue rounded rectangular bubble with a white border and a small green tab on the left side. The text is in a sans-serif font.

Hi Claire, is what you're
working on within the job
description? Reply YES if
yes or NO if not
Thanks,
Top Temps

Top Temps also sent Claire an automated follow-up message after she'd been on the job for a couple of weeks, ensuring the position was as the client had described.

Claire had a great experience with Top Temps and opted to remain in their texting program. After her assignment was over, Top Temps sent her biweekly automated messages with valuable industry-related information.

A blue rounded rectangular bubble with a white border and a small green tab on the left side. The text is in a sans-serif font.

Hi Claire, Here's a free
online course to upskill to
an Executive Assistant (URL).
Best,
Top Temps

The Bottom Line

Messaging is well worth the time it takes for any recruiter to implement, since it can significantly impact your company's success. No matter which segment of candidates you're targeting, you can use messaging to reduce time-to-hire, convert passive candidates to active talent, attract and engage millennials and Gen Z and successfully recruit for temporary positions. Only your creativity will limit how you use messaging to find and place talented candidates quickly, increasing satisfaction levels for everyone involved. Get started today and watch the results speak for themselves!

About SMS-Magic

SMS-Magic powers conversational messaging for businesses around the world. We help sales, marketing and service teams win the trust of their consumers by building enduring relationships and a differentiated brand experience. For more than a decade, we have been a trusted messaging leader working with customers across many industries, including healthcare, service centers, real estate, higher education, staffing, wellness, non-profit, and more. Our customers range from small and mid-size businesses to large, global enterprises. SMS-Magic's commitment to our customers is this: We will deliver the most advanced, simple-to-use messaging platform available, so you can focus on the personal touch that sets you apart from your competition.



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