

Tips for choosing an SMS Provider

Message Quality

With SMS you really do get what you pay for and the routing of messages can make the difference between an SMS being delivered within a few seconds; arriving with a delay; or in some cases, going astray. Usually low-cost SMS Gateway's will use foreign routes which are unreliable and can be closed down with out notice.

Kapow! – As the UK's first SMS Gateway we have built strong partnerships with carriers worldwide and only ever add a route to our systems once it's been thoroughly tested. We then monitor all routes continuously so that YOU receive the best service available at all times. Delivery reports are a standard feature with our service and the average message delivery time is under 4 seconds.

Back-up Routes

An SMS Gateway with various good quality back up routes will ensure that your message is delivered, even when issues occur on preferred routes (which is inevitable unfortunately). An SMS Gateway could boast about their one great carrier route, but if that's the only route available you will experience down-time as soon a problem occurs.

Kapow! – We utilise and monitor various carrier routes and SMSC's, plus we have relationships with other quality aggregators to ensure that your messages are constantly being routed in the most efficient way.

Message Cost

Many SMS Gateway's sell on a 'credit' basis, and you will need to check how many 'credits' a message costs per destination. Never assume that a credit is worth one message unless this is clearly specified. Some Gateway's may sell 'credits' cheaply, but on close inspection you'll see that a message to some networks/destinations cost 1.5 or 2 credits for example.

The cost of an SMS does vary per destination and if you are sending outside of the UK, or to more than one destination, you will need to consider whether you are receiving the most competitive rate for each.

Kapow! – We sell credits where one credit is worth 1 SMS to any destination. This enables you to send to the UK and worldwide at a simple competitive rate, meaning that you know the charges upfront and can estimate costs easily. If you are sending the majority of

messages outside of the UK you will need to contact us for a competitive quote per destination.

SMS Credit Validity

The rate of SMS fluctuates from month to month, and year to year. For this reason it is common in the industry for SMS credits to expire after a set period (usually 12 months). Years ago the UK networks suddenly added a 3p interconnect fee for sending to each network, which impacted on Gateway's greatly and caused many to go out of business overnight, so in a way the credit validity period protects the buyer.

Kapow! – Our SMS Credits are valid for a period of 12 months from the date of purchase. If any credits remain at the end of this period you will be able to extend them for a further year, at a minimal fee (20% of the list price). SMS is cheaper when larger volumes are purchased and we encourage users to purchase their annual usage in advance so that they benefit from a lower unit rate.

Additional costs

Check for any set-up costs, monthly fee's and monthly minimum's.

Kapow! – We don't charge any set-up or running costs. You simply purchase additional SMS when you need them. The only additional cost you may wish to take up is a one off fee of £50 which enables you to brand messages with your Company name or telephone number. By default the 'from-id' is set to 'kapow.co.uk'.

Contracts

Some SMS Gateway's may lock you in to a 12 or 18 month contract to secure your business.

Kapow! – There are no contracts for sending SMS. We want you to be happy with our service and choose to continue using us with out any pressure or tie-ins.

Customer Support

Many SMS Gateway's base the importance of a client on the volumes they send and the value they can bring. It is not common for SMS Providers to follow up reported issues with individual numbers/messages, as to them they are happy just as long as the majority of messages are delivered.

Check what type of support is available. Some Gateway's allow support only via email which is not ideal if you experience a time critical issue. You'll also want to know that the

response times to your queries will be quick.

Kapow! – From your initial query, or sign up, you will be allocated a dedicated Account Manager who will discuss the service with you and assist with all queries. Having one point of contact who is familiar with you and your business often makes dealing with any queries quicker, simpler and often a pleasure.

Each client is important to us and we follow up every single query until the issue is resolved successfully. If a single message isn't delivered we are more than happy to check in to this and feedback to you. No issue is too small.

During office hours we provide support via telephone, email and live chat. If there are any service critical issues outside of office hours a message can be left with an advisor (using our normal number) and an on-call Technician will be made aware of the issue and investigate.

Interfaces

How you send your messages is of course a very important factor. Depending on your needs you will want to consider the following;

Are the on-line tools easy to use with additional features available?

How can you integrate the SMS service in to your website/system?

How can delivery reports be accessed?

Message Reporting

Kapow! – As the original SMS Gateway in the UK we invented the interfaces used for sending SMS via the web. These interfaces are now commonly used by other Gateway's and include sending via; HTTP, email, on-line webform and CSV upload. The interfaces were designed, and have been updated over the last 16 years, to be easy to use and flexible.

On-line Tools: Our on-line tools are perfect for those with no technical knowledge and are intuitive and easy to use with features including a Groups/Contacts book and personalised templates for texts.

Integration: Developers will find that in most cases the service can be integrated in to existing systems with just a few lines of code.

Delivery Reports: Delivery reports are available on-line via your account and for developers they can be accessed via http.

Reporting: Message logs are available on-line as well as being available via HTTP.

Testing

Most SMS Gateway's running a quality service will provide you with a few free credits for testing their interfaces and the quality of service. It's important to test a service until you are satisfied that they provide the coverage and interfaces you need.

Kapow! – Please contact us for some free test credits which we will be more than happy to provide. We regularly recommend testing the service before purchasing as we want you to be 100% happy with your choice of provider.

Coverage

This is the list of destinations and networks a Gateway can reach. It is not usually possible for delivery to be guaranteed as it's often the case that multiple routes are in place, each with their own coverage. However, a coverage list is usually a good guideline. Check the date that the list was last updated as some Gateway's do not update the information regularly.

Kapow! - We have great coverage worldwide and our coverage list is available [here](#). We suggest sending a few free tests to specific destinations before purchasing.