

# The Ez Guide To Short Codes

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# Introductory Note

If you are reading this paper you probably have heard of a short code. If not, there is a good chance that you have seen one in action. Have you ever texted in votes to *American Idol*? Have you texted your choice for Super Bowl MVP to the network broadcasting the game? In both cases you have already used a short code.

Perhaps you have searched the web for a simple, concise explanation of what a short code is, and how your business or organization can use one to power a mobile marketing campaign. Chances are the information you found was overly complicated, and filled with technical jargon. Furthermore, it did not explain to you, in practical terms, how a short code can benefit your business or organization.

That complex technical information is great if you are a software developer. Unfortunately, it is not very helpful if you are a decision-maker considering whether a short code is right for your business or organization. And that is why we put together this Ez Guide To Short Codes.

# About Ez Texting

Since 2006, Ez Texting has led the mobile marketing industry in providing a simple, affordable text messaging platform for small to medium-sized businesses. We proudly offer the only US-based turnkey online solution that allows clients from all industries – education, hospitality, religion, politics, non-profits, technology and more – to develop and execute a text messaging campaign within minutes.

Own a fast-food franchise and need to send instant coupons to hungry customers? Organizing a weekly soccer league for your kids and want a quick way to communicate with fellow parents? Looking for a way to capture incoming leads for your sales team? Look no further.

Using our powerful platform, clients can setup SMS alerts, voting, contests, polls and much more. Get instant feedback from your members right to your Ez Texting inbox with our true 2-way messaging capabilities. And with the easy-to-remember shared short code 313131, setting up keywords is a breeze. We also offer advanced API and dedicated short code options.

Ez Texting currently supports messaging to the US and Canada for a rapidly growing client base of over 40,000 users.

# What Is A Short Code?

A short code is a special five or six digit phone number\*. Mobile phone users can send a text messages to a short code to request information, join alert notification lists, vote in a poll and much more. Most people use the simple phrase *short code*, but you might see *Common Short Code* or *CSC*. These all refer to the same thing.

The *common* means that a short code is recognized by all major wireless carriers in a particular country. This uniformity makes short codes extremely powerful marketing tools. Think about it. Virtually every American can text the same short code, regardless of their phone or their carrier. With a short code you can launch a relatively inexpensive national marketing campaign.

Short code-powered mobile marketing campaigns are extremely effective. Why?

1. **Consumers are in control** – When they see your short code, the consumer initiates contact. They text your short code and you reply to them.
2. **They start a conversation** - Short codes facilitate true two-way communications between consumers and your organization. Whether you respond manually or with an automated response, you are conversing with the consumer.

You can stop reading right here, and continue to the next section, which explains the difference between shared and dedicated short codes; otherwise keep reading for a quick overview of the administration of short codes.

Common Short Codes (CSCs) are managed by the Common Short Code Administration. Neustar, Inc. manages short codes in the US, under an agreement with CTIA – The Wireless Association. Neustar operates [www.usshortcodes.com](http://www.usshortcodes.com), a website that allows individuals and organizations to apply for short codes. It is then up to each individual cellular carrier to approve that short code powered program for use on their network. This is a complicated process, and because of that, most individuals and organizations must work with a partner like Ez Texting to handle their application.

\* Wireless carriers sometimes use three or four digit short codes for special services that are only available on their particular network. Three or four digit short codes are not *common* and they are not commercially available.

# Comparing Shared Short Codes & Dedicated Short Codes

Before we go any further we need to explain the difference between shared and dedicated short codes.

**Shared Short Codes** – Mobile marketing firms like Ez Texting maintain shared common short codes, which they allow their customers to utilize. In the case of Ez Texting our shared short code is 313131. A shared short code is ideal for a small business or an individual looking to setup an inexpensive, locally focused mobile marketing campaign. A customer will select a unique keyword, which is a term that individuals can text to the shared short code. This unique keyword matches the person who sent the text message to the customer using that keyword. Ex: *Text the letters EZ to 313131 to join our sale alert service*

A keyword on a shared short code is inexpensive (\$25 a month at Ez Texting) and easy to setup. In fact, you can do it yourself when you setup an account with Ez Texting. Visit [www.eztexting.com](http://www.eztexting.com) to try it out. You can get going with a keyword on our shared short code 313131 in minutes.

**Dedicated Short Codes** – If your business or organization is looking for a more robust, custom-tailored solution, then you will want your own dedicated short code. A dedicated short code is your own common short code, which you lease from the Common Short Code Administration (CSCA) and setup through an aggregator; you will never deal with the wireless carriers directly. There are a number of factors you should consider:

- **Cost** – Leasing a dedicated short code will cost either \$500 dollars per month for a random code, or \$1000 dollars per month for a vanity code. A vanity code is a series of numbers (which may correspond to a word on typical phone's keypad) that you choose. Fees must be paid in three month increments at a minimum.
- **Complexity** – Setting up a dedicated short code is a multi-step process that will typically take 2 to 3 months to fully provision, test and certify across all the major carriers. When you register a short code with the CSCA you must pay for the first three months of your lease. At that time you will submit a short application detailing what you intend to do with your short code. This application is only for their records. Once you have completed this step, you must submit a detailed application to the individual wireless carriers for approval. If one or more wireless carriers turn down

your program application you will still be charged for your short code. This is a long and cumbersome process, so most businesses and organizations turn to an experienced partner like Ez Texting to assist them with their application processing. Ez Texting will work with you every step of the way, making the application process simple and seamless.

# Getting Started With A Dedicated Short Code In Six Steps

At Ez Texting, we are more than just a vendor - we are an experienced partner who will walk you through the process of obtaining your own short code every step of the way, from start to finish. To begin, a dedicated specialist will speak with you. Our specialists will answer all of your questions, and, if you are interested, offer you mobile marketing advice and insights. A dedicated short code is a powerful marketing tool, but it is also a major financial commitment. We want to make sure that a dedicated short code is right for your business or organization. Our goal is to make mobile marketing as easy as possible, so we have broken this process down to six simple steps.

- 1) **Pick A Partner** – Unless you have the expertise to go it alone you will rely on a firm like Ez Texting, often in this context called a Mobile Application Service Provider (MASP). You are going to have an ongoing relationship with this firm. At first they will assist you with your application. Once you are approved they will also provide you with the appropriate software to connect to their aggregator, who will deliver your messages to the cellular networks. The cellular networks then deliver your message to their subscribers. By working with a partner like Ez Texting you do not need to worry about all of these intermediary parties.
- 2) **Decide Whether You Want A Vanity Short Code** – If you want a vanity short code you will want to make sure that no one has already leased that short code. You can do this yourself, at [www.usshortcodes.com](http://www.usshortcodes.com), or your MASP can check for you. Remember, a vanity short code costs \$1000 dollars per month, whereas a random code only costs \$500 dollars per month.
- 3) **Lease Your Short Code** – Leasing a short code with Neustar, Inc. is a relatively short and simple process. You can do this yourself, though most businesses and organizations prefer to have their MASP submit this information. As soon as Neustar approves your lease application (typically two business days) you must pay for the first three months of your lease.
- 4) **Complete Your Service Approval Form** – This is the most important step to obtain your own short code. Your Service Approval Form (SAF), also called a Program Brief, is submitted to each of the wireless carriers. They all reserve the

right to deny your application. Because of this it is important to work with an experienced MASP like Ez Texting who will make sure that all aspects of your SAF are compliant with the carriers' regulations.

Your Service Approval Form includes a detailed description of your plans for implementing your short code. Prior to submitting this form, your website must be active and include links for customer support and terms & conditions.

Carriers typically take three to four weeks to review and approve your program. If any of the carriers do not approve your SAF they will provide comments and information that you will rely upon to revise your application. In the case that an program is denied it is typically because it did not conform to Mobile Marketing Association [guidelines](#).

- 5) **Provisioning & Testing** – After accepting your program, each carrier will provision the short code on their network for testing. At this point your application should be ready to test, with all test keywords and compliant message flows in place. Ez Texting will submit requests to each carrier when you are ready to test on their network. Testing typically take up to two weeks to complete, though some carriers take as long as six weeks to finish testing.
- 6) **Carrier Approval & Launch** – Following a successful campaign test, each carrier will approve and certify your short code on their network and you may take your campaign live. This is typically within a few days of successful testing, but can take up to two weeks.

This process can be overwhelming, and that is why firms like Ez Texting are here to help. We have guided many companies through the do's and don'ts that make for a successful, compliant application; our efforts ensure that approval and provisioning time is kept to a minimum. And because you must continue to pay for your short code lease while you wait for certification, our expertise will save you time and money.

**Ready To Turbo-charge Your Mobile Marketing Campaign With Your Own Dedicated Short Code?**

**Visit [EzTexting.com](http://EzTexting.com) And Let Us Take You From Conception To Application, All The Way To Message Delivery.**

**Or, Give Us A Call Today And Ask To Speak To A Dedicated Short Code Specialist**

**(Monday to Friday, 9am - 6pm)**

**Tel: (212) 255-4663**