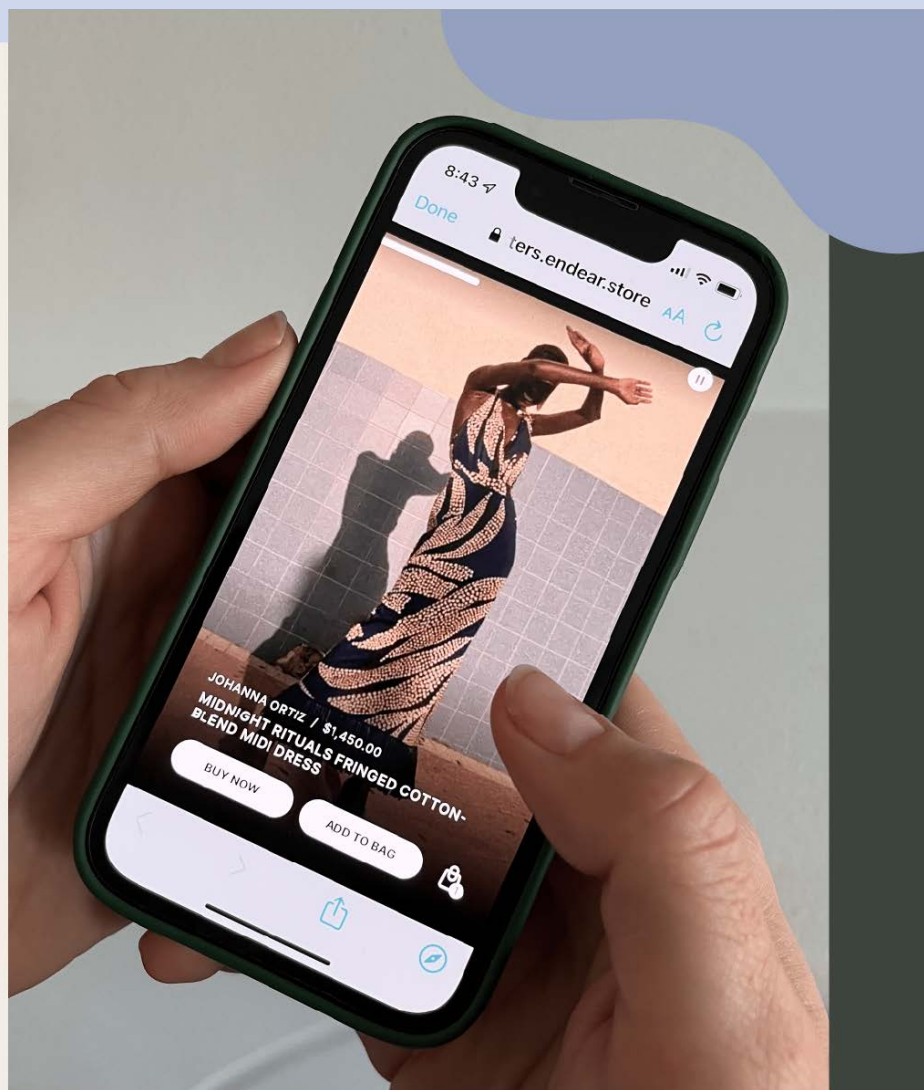




The Do's and Don'ts of Personalized SMS Marketing



Back in the stone age, you'd stroll into a store, speak to a knowledgeable rep about some need you'd have, and that person would walk you over to the product they most recommended that fulfilled that need. Then you'd pay for it in cash and load your new item into your car that ran on \$1.09 gas.

That was a long time ago.

Today's shopping experience is very different, and today's brand marketers both in retail and in direct-to-customer (D2C) ecommerce face a difficult task when recommending the right products to the right people. Marketers face a much more fragmented, larger audience that makes it hard to get to know each person's likes and dislikes in order to recommend that perfect product.

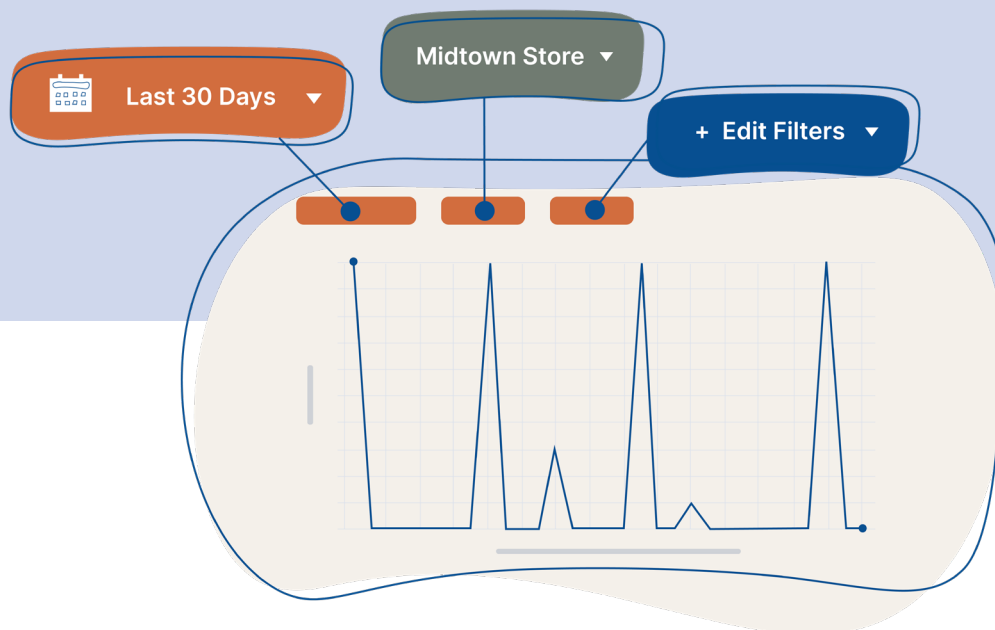
And yet, that's the ultimate goal and what drives the most successful conversions. According to Harvard Business Review, **personalized marketing can deliver 5X to 8X the ROI on marketing spend, and can lift sales by 10% or more.** With those types of returns, it's worth it to put in the effort to personalize your product recommendations to every customer.

Let's consider the dos and don'ts of how to achieve and communicate this type of personalization.

Do: Leverage consumer data to segment your customers

Personalization all starts with great customer data. At this point in the retail game, most brands utilize a CRM like Endear to capture audience data and actions across their online and brick & mortar presence. Today's CRMs incorporate tightly with ecommerce platforms like Shopify, so all of the first-party data that's being generated by users on your online store is being captured for an important purpose: **segmentation**.

The better the audience data, the thinner each audience segment. For example, your CRM data should be able to show you the customers who recently purchased an orange sundress within the last three months, and who also live within a five-mile radius of a store. This tight segment can then be targeted with a personalized promotion of a matching accessory that can only be discounted if they physically come into the store.



Being this hyper-relevant is key to product recommendations that convert because your customers understand and feel just how well you know them. And it all starts with the data in your CRM.

Don't: Rely only on 3rd party data

As more and more marketers are painfully aware, both Apple and Google have scaled back the use of cookies to track customers online as web browsing shifts to a more private experience. Due to these changes, it's increasingly difficult to recommend the right products to the right people, especially on social media, which runs on 3rd party data.

It's time to go all-in on leveraging 1st party data.

You can do so by growing your email list and collecting phone numbers so you can enact targeted SMS campaigns that can increase conversation and engagement across all your channels. This is where a good omnichannel CRM can come in handy, helping you collect and unify all the 1st party data your brand collects, even data your sales associates are collecting through face-to-face customer interactions inside your stores.



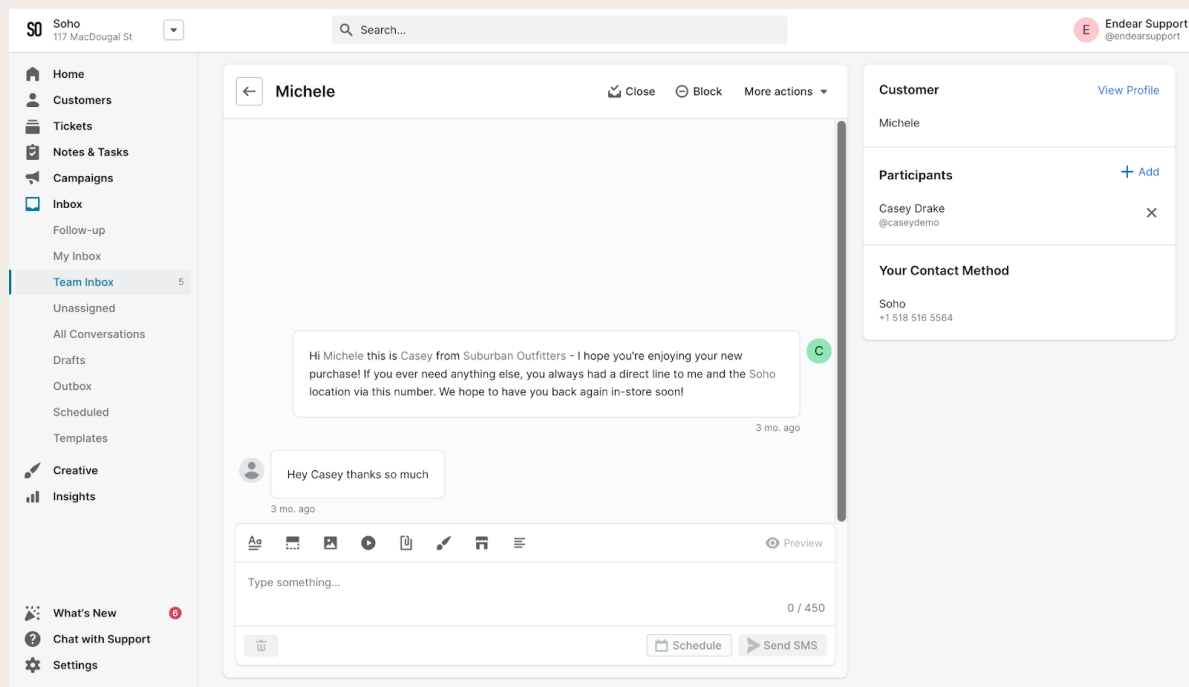
Don't: Allow customers to chat into the void



The less-than-stellar comment left on this social post is the result your brand will get if you don't engage in 1-on-1 conversations with your customers. A failure to communicate not only amounts to a lost sale, but perhaps even a lost customer as 1 in 3 customers will walk away from a brand after just one bad experience.

Instead...

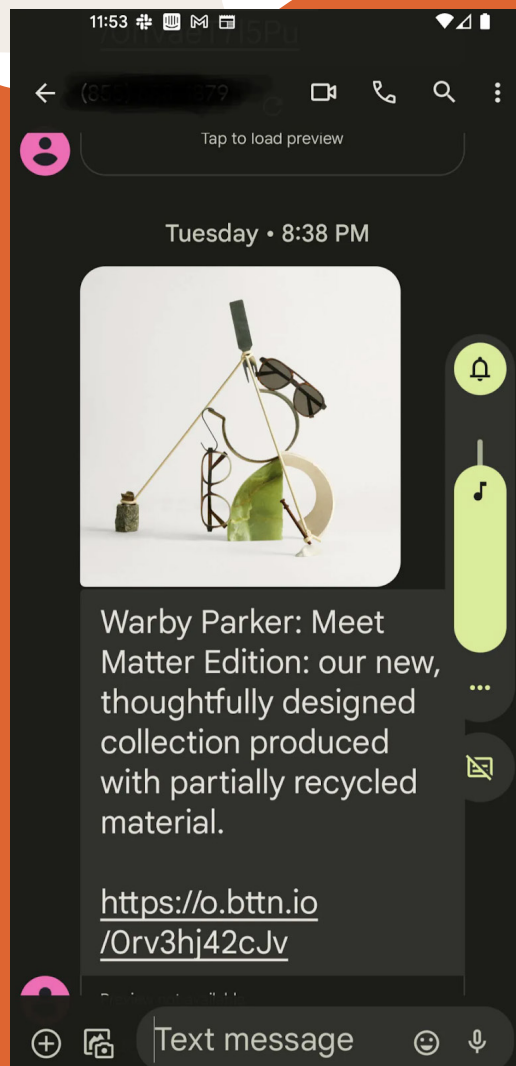
Do: Engage in personal, 1-on-1 conversations



Clients who use Endear to send out SMS messages that are conversational see as much as an **111% increase in order frequency from their customers**, especially when the brand's team engages in a back and forth conversation over text. They answer questions, gain more information, and suggest even more personalized products.

This sort of engagement takes time and effort, but a CRM with built-in personalized SMS and email communication features can help small teams manage more conversations than ever before. And keep in mind, even an automated response would have helped the situation in the example above where the customer was frustrated with the lack of any response at all. At the very least, it will buy your team time to respond when they can to ultimately deliver that real conversation that drives sales.

Don't: Recommend without personalization



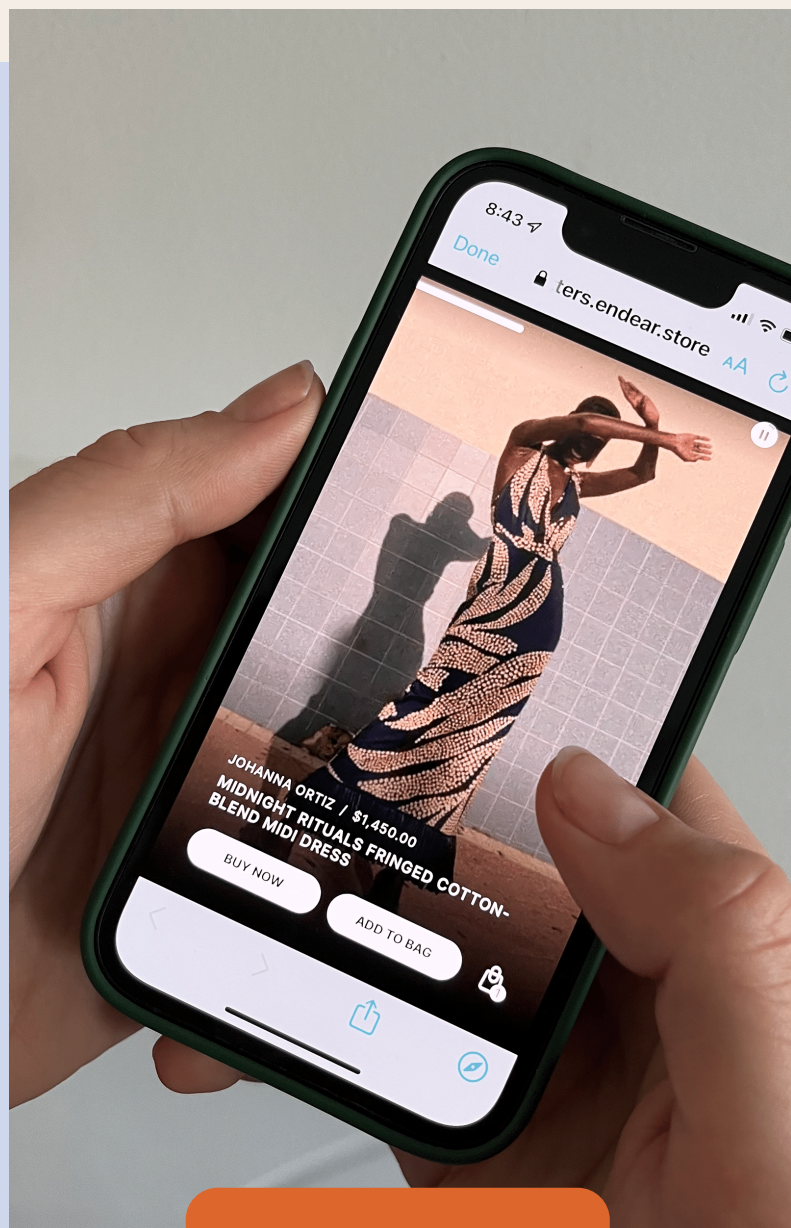
This SMS product recommendation may as well be a banner ad. The content doesn't have any personalization explaining why they decided to recommend it to this person, at this time. Keep in mind, the majority of customers said it is worth giving companies access to their personal data **if it means a better user experience.**

So why even collect the data if you're not going to personalize the promotions? Instead...

Do: Curate product collections, and explain why

Your customers want to know why the products you are choosing to show them are relevant to their interests. Instead of the impersonal text from above, what if your business sent an SMS like this instead:

This is a curated collection sent to a customer as a **Shoppable Story**. Endear's own digital take on the traditional product lookbook. Not only is this a visually striking way to showcase curated products, but an Endear Story also works to increase the Average Order Value (AOV) of each transaction by showing products that are tailor-made to be purchased together by your customer.

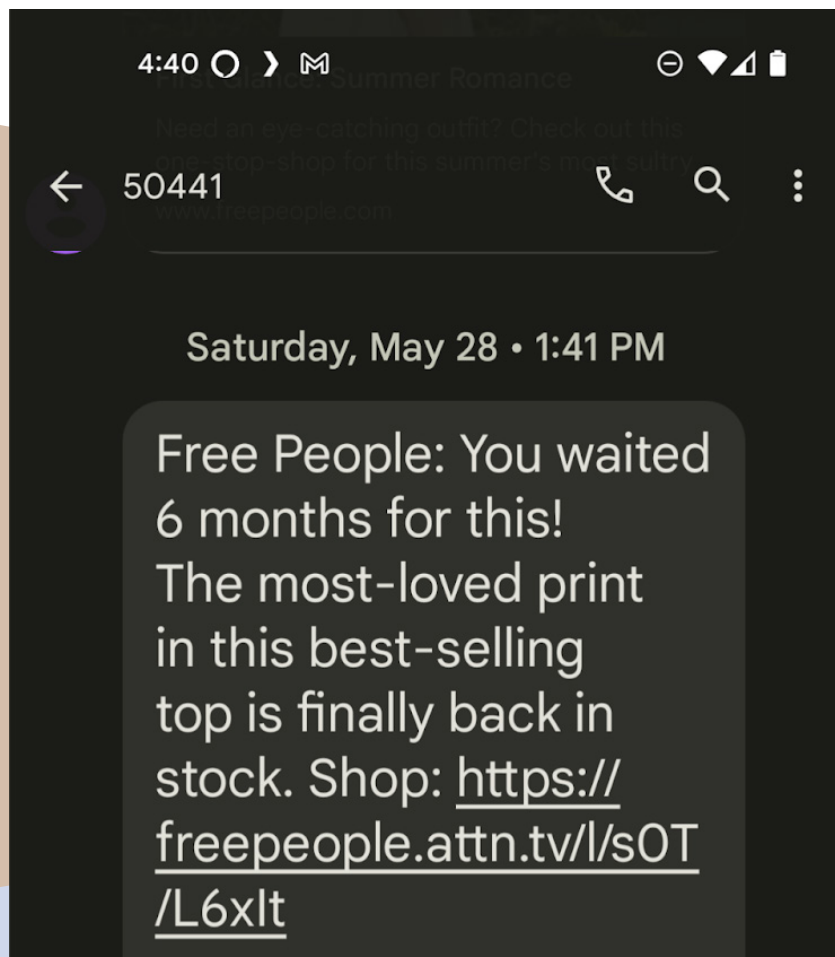


Send a Story

The core idea is to let your customer know these products are a curated selection, making sure they know there's a reason these images or videos ended up in their SMS inbox. This provides that clienteling touch that makes these conversations engaging and successful.

Don't: Send text-only SMS messages

Just because it's called 'text messaging,' doesn't mean you should be so literal. The visual component is massive since SMS messages with visuals are 43% more persuasive than messages with just text.



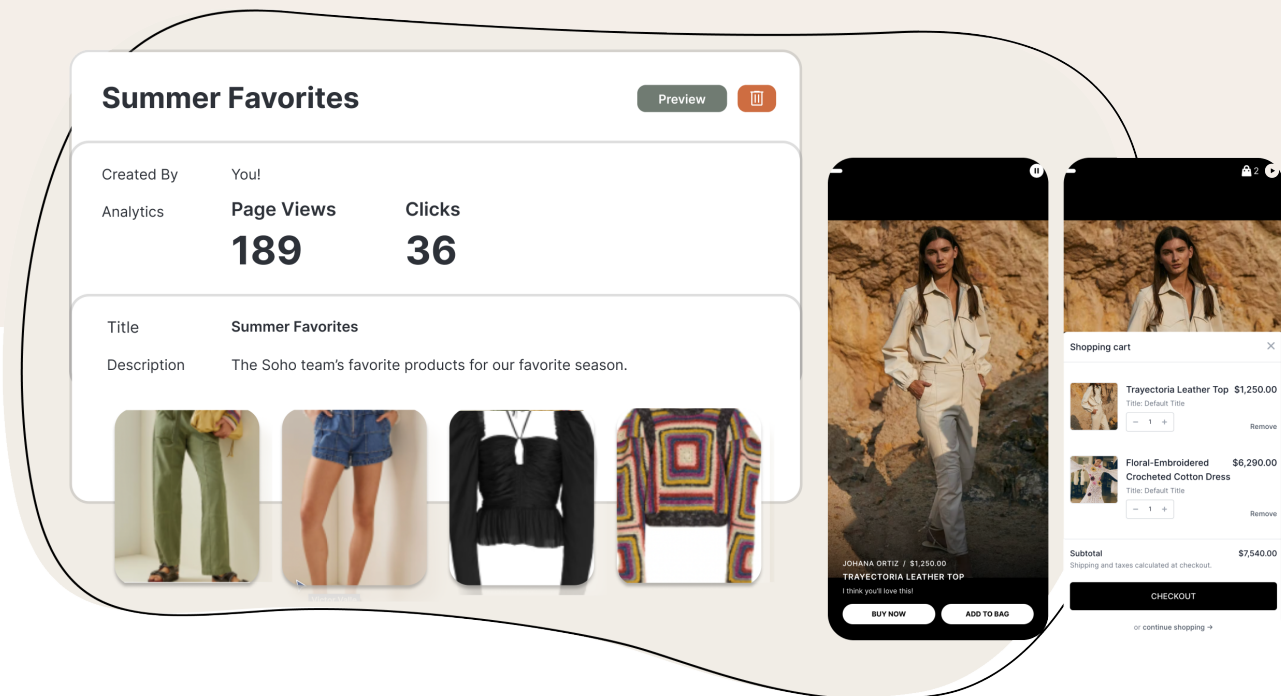
The example above only has a link to the product, missing out on the actual eye-catching part of the marketing message. Make sure your SMS always leads with what will grab the customer's attention the most.

Do: Make it dead-simple to purchase

The more hurdles there are to checking out, the more potential sales you will lose. Especially on mobile devices, any sort of frustration at checkout will often result in abandoned transactions.








While it's commonplace to add a link to the product along with an image, you can do one better by **adding a checkout or cart button directly on the images themselves**. This way, you don't even need a link at all; the visual is what's clickable.

Endear's Shoppable Stories embraces this concept by having the checkout process embedded into each Story. Once it arrives in one's SMS inbox, they can be clicked on and then purchased right then and there.



This method eliminates friction during purchase and provides a better user experience overall that goes right from product recommendation to product purchase.

To recap:

-  **Do:** Leverage CRM data to segment your customers
-  **Don't:** Rely only on 3rd party data
-  **Don't:** Allow customers to chat into the void
-  **Do:** Engage in personal, 1-on-1 conversations
-  **Don't:** Recommend without personalization
-  **Do:** Curate product collections, and explain why
-  **Don't:** Send text-only SMS messages
-  **Do:** Make it dead-simple to purchase

The right product recommendations can be the difference between making a sale and not. Furthermore, if your brand can keep providing excellent recommendations, you will add value to your brand marketing that leads to more customer interactions with your messages, more signups for emails & SMS, and ultimately a more loyal base of happy customers.