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Testing two versions of an SMS campaign: a simple A/B test with contact groups

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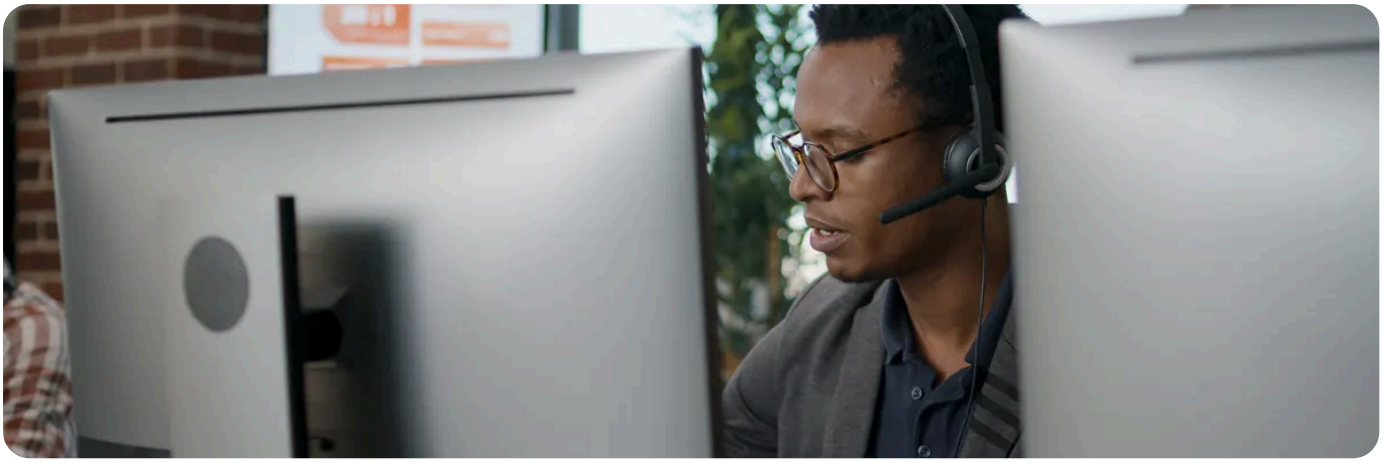
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RLX Holdings (Pty) Ltd. · Group RLX Holdings
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Testing two versions of an SMS campaign: a simple A/B test with contact groups

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The short answer: an A/B test means sending **two versions** of the same campaign to **two similar groups**, changing only one thing, and seeing which brings more responses. In the SMS Center you do it with two contact groups and two campaigns. The winning version then goes to the rest of the list.

What to test

Change only this	Version A	Version B
The offer	`[COMPANY]: 15% off everything until Sunday.`	`[COMPANY]: buy 3, pay for 2, until Sunday.`
The customer's name	`[COMPANY]: the new collection is in.`	`Hi {$contact_first_name}, the new [COMPANY] collection is in.`
The deadline	`Valid until Sunday.`	`Today only, until 8pm.`
The time	Same message at 10am	Same message at 3pm
How to take it up	`Show this SMS at the till.`	`Order at [WEBSITE].`

If you change two things at once, you cannot tell which one made the difference.

Step by step

1. **Export the group** you want to test, under Contacts, in the Import and export tab.

2. **Split the list at random** into two halves in a spreadsheet, for example even rows on one side and odd rows on the other. Do not split alphabetically or by date: the groups need to be alike.

3. **Import each half** into a new group: "Test A" and "Test B".

4. **Give each version its own signal**: a different code (for example SUMMER-A and SUMMER-B) or a different UTM link. Without it you cannot count. See **how to measure a campaign**.

5. **Create two campaigns**, one per group, at the same time (unless time is what you are testing).

6. **Count the responses** to each version until the offer ends, and compare.

Test on a sample, then send the winner

With a big list, you do not need to split all of it. Take two equal samples, send A and B, wait for the result and send the winning version to the rest of the list. With a small list, split the whole thing in half and use what you learn in the next campaign.

How to read the result

Compare the response rate (responses ÷ messages sent), not the raw number of responses, if the groups are different sizes. With few numbers, a small difference can be chance: if version A got 12 responses and B got 10, run the test again before drawing conclusions. A big difference that repeats over two or three campaigns is a rule for your list.

Test length too.
If the short version (1 part) does as well as the long one (2 parts), you use half the credits on every campaign from then on. See **how many credits an SMS uses**.

Both groups should only include people who agreed to receive offers.
A test is no reason to send to new numbers or to people who opted out.

RECOMMENDED

Want to find out which message works best with your customers? See SMS Marketing.

See the SMS Marketing page →

SEE ALSO

- Measuring an SMS campaign: offer codes, UTM links, redemptions and cost per customer
- SMS campaign copy, before and after: turning weak messages into ones customers act on
- Segmenting SMS campaigns with contact groups: by purchase, area, interest and activity
- SMS contacts and groups: importing a CSV list and keeping it clean
- Personalised SMS with the contact's name: variables, examples and pitfalls

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TAX NO. (SARS)	943 907 6234
REGISTRATION NO. (CIPC)	2025/667953/07
REGISTERED OFFICE	1111 Olive Street Saint Louis 63101, Missouri, United States
CONTACT	info@mozout.com · +27 78 823 3325 · www.mozout.com
OPENING HOURS	Monday to Friday - 08 AM to 04 PM Saturday & Sunday - Closed

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