



Poll Everywhere

Communication Best Practices Guide

The Call To Action

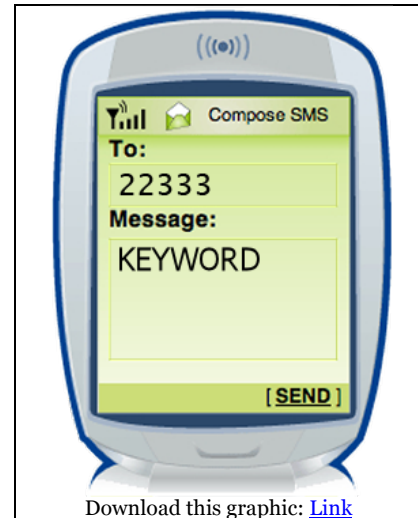
The Call To Action, or “CTA”, is how you communicate the participation instructions. Your audience may find text message (“SMS”) voting either daunting or second nature, so it is up to you to decide how to ease their discomfort and encourage them to participate.

In Presentations

Effective presenters tend to do three things to encourage participation.

1. Explain what’s going on

- a. “Now I’m going to ask for your opinion. We’re going to use your phones to do some audience voting just like on American Idol. So please take out your cell phones, but remember to leave them on silent.”
- a. “The way you will be able to participate is by sending a text message. If you don’t know how to do that, just ask your kids! Or have your neighbor help you figure it out.”
- b. Use the demo graphic at right on a slide. “You simply send a message to the five digit number 22333. In the body of the message, you’ll type a keyword exactly as you see it on my presentation in a moment.”



2. Address their concerns

- a. “This is a just standard rate text message, so it may be free for you, or up to twenty cents on some carriers if you do not have a text messaging plan.”
- b. “The service we are using is serious about privacy. I cannot see your phone numbers, and you’ll never receive follow-up text messages outside this presentation. There’s only one thing worse than email spam – and that’s text message spam because you have to pay to receive it!”

3. Use a demo or practice poll

- a. We recommend using a Free Text Poll with a reply message. Set up the Free Text Poll to ask “Let’s Practice: Text in your first name!” They will know they have succeeded when they see their name appear on the poll, and receive a confirmation message back.

In Print

There are many ways you can clearly present voting instructions in print

Multiple Choice Poll – Tech Savvy Audience

If you have a small set of options, use discrete sentences.

Text **OBAMA** to **22333** to vote for Barack Obama

Text **MCCAIN** to **22333** to vote for John McCain

For polls with many options, use a tabular format.

Which presentation or performance was the best?

To vote for:	What to Text:
Reman Shen	Text 1001 to 22333
Scissor Sisters	Text 1002 to 22333
Spongebob	Text 1003 to 22333
Tom Thompson	Text 1004 to 22333
The Outsiders In	Text 1005 to 22333

Multiple Choice Poll – Novice Audience

For an audience who may not be familiar with sending text messages, we recommend using the mobile phone example graphic provided above to augment a table. Also consider appending the following statements, depending on your graphic space available. More reassurance tends to boost participation rates.

- Standard texting rates apply
- Capitalization doesn't matter, but spaces and spelling do
- Your phone number is completely private
- Most phones can type numbers in text messages by holding down a number key

Free Text Poll

The following Calls to Action work well in print for Free Text Polls.

Concise:

Text **ASK** (your question) to **22333**

or

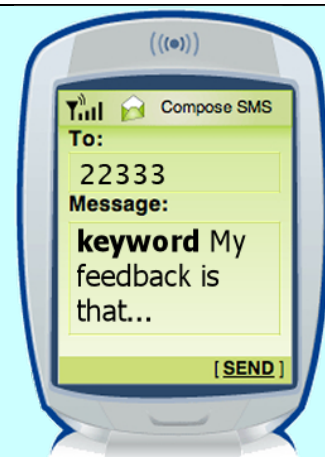
Text the word **ASK** followed by your question for the presenter to **22333**

Verbose:

We want to hear what you have to say! Give us your feedback and we'll enter you in a drawing for a \$50 Starbucks gift card.

Begin your message with the keyword "**ithink**", followed by a space and your feedback. For example, "`ithink The day was too short.`"

We are spam-free - You will not receive unsolicited or promotional text messages from us. Prize winners will be notified by text message.



Download this graphic: [Link](#)

Visual Cues

Differentiated typographic styles can help communicate the difference between instructions, short codes, and keywords. Use a bold, capitalized, non-serif font against a serif font to set off keywords and texting numbers.

Text **ASKJOHN** and your question to **22333**

In print (not on the web), underline is also effective and can be used in place of capitalization.

Text a **keyword** to **22333** to vote! Choices:

red

blue

green

Quotations are also effective; our experience suggests that most people will not be confused and worried, “Should I include the quotes in my text message?”

Text “**askjohn**” and your question to **22333**

So many ways to participate

If you’ve enabled these features on your polls, people can participate in a variety of ways:

- <http://poll4.com> - looks great on a web-enabled phone’s web browser, and works just like texting but without the SMS fees. Learn more at: <http://www.polleverywhere.com/smartphone-web-voting>

- Direct links to a poll. The same link you use to view your poll can be shared.

http://www.polleverywhere.com/multiple_choice_polls/LTc1NDgzOTIzNA

Add “/web” on the end to see the one-click web voting page that we host for you

http://www.polleverywhere.com/multiple_choice_polls/LTc1NDgzOTIzNA/web

Other people will not see your menus and controls – they will only see the poll itself.

- Twitter. See <http://www.polleverywhere.com/twitter-powerpoint-slides>
- Embedding on your own web page as a widget. When viewing any poll, click “Share and Publish” in the right hand sidebar to get the embed code.

Common Mistakes

- Presenters tend to rush polls because there is a natural tendency to be uncomfortable with the silence while waiting for people to learn how to text. Uncomfortable texters will give up because of feeling rushed.
- Putting too many polls in a row. We find that audience participation on “just for fun” polls tends to drop off after four or more back-to-back polls. For the best participation, make sure polls are spaced out in the presentation, and that the audience will be interested in learning their own consensus. For example, one poll with funny/silly answers works well, but a few in a row and audiences lose attention.

If people have high incentives to participate, fatigue is not an issue. Examples include text message scavenger hunts, prizes for participation, professional education credits, and quizzes / tests. -