

# Recruitment Guide

How SMS can support the modern consultant



text  
local



# UK employment market

The old school recruitment industry is a multi-billion pound industry under pressure from advances in technology that could see apps replace consultants in the job search process. To ward off the increasing challenge posed by apps, consultants must not only remain relevant, but deliver an exemplary value-add service to attract and place the best candidates. Advances in technology have resulted in the headhunters becoming the hunted!

In the same way technology is conspiring against recruitment consultants, it can also be their ally. The modern-day job seeker is time-short, constantly on the go, and typically addicted to their smartphone. The good news

for recruitment consultants is that there is no shortage of people looking to change jobs in 2018 – an estimated 6.4million, and they all have mobile phones – most probably a smartphone – which can act as a direct channel of communication for the consultant.

Right now, recruitment consultants potentially have their work cut out to not only remain relevant but to be seen as an important cog in the job-seeking process. Understanding how job seekers behave and provide a deeper and more engaging level of assistance presents a massive opportunity for consultants – something that an app or website cannot offer.



In 2016-17, over 100,000 recruiters helped almost a million people find a new permanent job and are responsible for 1.3 million agency workers in the UK labour market on a daily basis.<sup>(1)</sup> In the same timeframe, total revenue from permanent and temporary placements reached £32.2 billion. £28.2 billion was generated from temporary placements while approximately £4 billion was generated through permanent placements.

The average length of a temporary agency worker assignment was 17 weeks, while only 1% of assignments lasted 52 weeks or more. Clearly, temporary placements

remain a very lucrative income stream for recruitment consultants.

In 2018, a total of 6.4 million employees will look to switch jobs. Based on previous years, recruitment consultants will account for one-third of those employees looking for a new opportunity. But that means two-thirds of candidates are disintermediating the recruitment consultant from their employment search altogether.

The rise of technology and apps points to a scenario where that will only get worse for the consultants, unless of course they can utilise the former to compete with the latter.

## Key UK employment statistics



By developing a mobile-first strategy, consultants can tailor their communications to the type of candidate, from full-time, part-time, contingent (formerly categorised as a contractual worker), and unemployed. This will need to involve separate SMS strategies for the different needs of candidates.

The unemployed will want as much information as possible delivered as soon as possible, the part-time and full-time switchers will want the right information delivered to them at the right time, and the contingency workers will want to be kept abreast of upcoming opportunities when their existing placement or role expires.

1 Source: Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC); <https://www.rec.uk.com/news-and-policy/press-releases/uks-32.2-billion-recruitment-industry-helped-millions-of-people-find-work-in-201617>

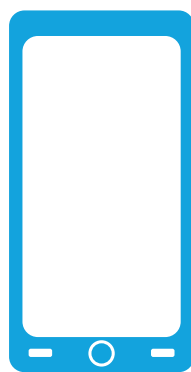
2 Source: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/january2018>

3 Source: <https://www.churchill-knight.co.uk/blog/2016/08/the-contractor-industry-now-makes-up-15-of-the-uk-s-workforce/>

# The consultant and the smartphone

The UK is a smartphone society, with 85% of the UK on a smartphone reliant on connectivity and apps. The first port of call for or an employee seeking new job opportunities, a lower-than- expected pay rise, or a

troublesome line manager, for example, will be to locate a job search web site, as well as download the relevant job search apps as they seek a fresh start. The smartphone is now playing a critical function in this process.



SMARTPHONES

85%



FEATUREPHONES

10%

The smartphone is driving the job-seeking process. Research reveals that 89% of job seekers believe their smartphone is a necessary component of job-hunting. Similarly, 45% of job seekers use their smartphone to search for vacancies daily. And 59% of job seekers claim they save jobs on their smartphone ready to apply for them later using a laptop or desktop.

Most important of all, a candidate now expects to be able to search, view, and apply for a job straight from their smartphone and 5% don't have a mobile phone.

For a recruitment consultant to be able to tap into this behaviour, they have to adopt a mobile-first strategy that drives engagement and interaction with job seekers. While this makes it highly probable that any candidate will have a smartphone, the consultant must bear in mind that 10% of the population have a featurephone and will not be reliant on apps.

The only ubiquitous technology or channel that will enable them to reach every candidate is SMS. To ensure recruitment consultants can go the extra mile and deliver a value-add service to accompany the candidate every step of the way along their journey, they must consider developing an SMS strategy.





# Key smartphone statistics, 2017

TOTAL  
SMARTPHONES

66.61  
MILLION<sup>(4)</sup>



SMARTPHONES



ANDROID  
35,234,534



BLACKBERRY  
333,030



IOS  
24,177,951



WINDOWS  
6,527,381



OTHER  
333,030

JOB SEEKERS



89%

of job seekers believe smartphone  
is essential for job-hunting

45%

of job seekers search daily on  
their smartphone

59%

of job seekers save potential jobs  
on their smartphone

4 Source: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/january2018>





## Learning to adopt the technology

Recruiters must adopt technology to keep up with the devices being used to search for jobs by candidates. The online environment is now fundamental to the world of recruitment. The rise of mobility means the user experience must remain sacrosanct regardless of the time or location. Job search websites must render to the size of the screen on which they are being viewed without affecting the user experience. Apps must represent a streamlined, simple and easy to use version of any sister

website, because that is what smartphone users are accustomed to. The same rules apply to the recruitment industry. Traffic generated from smartphones now accounts for the majority of traffic on most of the big job search websites. A poor experience, where a candidate has to zoom in and out to read a job ad, for example, is likely to guarantee that person will not return to the site, as the choice is with the job hunter.



# A better understanding of platforms

It's not just tech that poses increasing challenges to the recruitment consultants. Employers and candidates alike are using an increasing number of platforms to attract and apply for roles. Social media has become a key platform in the recruitment process. According to EdenScott Recruitment, 41% of global firms were using social media to market their business in 2013-14, and a projected 90% of firms will do so by 2020. The importance of social media to a business is inevitably resulting in companies using the channel as a recruitment vehicle.

Recruiters are embracing channels such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn to find suitable talent. And doing so very successfully, according to data from OnRec.com, which claims 14.4 million job seekers have found employment using social media, while 73% of companies have successfully hired candidates over social media.

In the UK, LinkedIn has over 20 million business users signed up and with access to its recruitment services. This makes social platforms the ideal platform for consultants to develop and cultivate their own connections and pool of candidates. What's more, consultants can use platforms such as LinkedIn to target passive candidates – those not looking for a new role – with potential opportunities.

While the marketplace dictates that consultants use multiple platforms to connect and recruit candidates, they will need to ensure they use the most efficient means of communicating with them at all times following the initial introduction – SMS. Messages via social media can easily be overlooked as their delivery does not reside on the screen.

## Social media recruitment top stats

**73%**

of companies successfully hired a candidate with social media

**42%**

of companies claim quality has improved using social media

**31%**

of companies saw an increase in employee referrals when using social media.

**83%**

of job seekers are active on Facebook, 40% on Twitter, and 36% on LinkedIn



**93%** of companies use LinkedIn for recruiting



**66%** use Facebook



**54%** use Twitter

**SMS**

Regardless, SMS is the one channel that has ubiquity across every device allowing the consultant to communicate with any candidate – provided they have opted-in.



# Opt-in regulation is changing: About GDPR

An on-going relationship with a candidate will require the recruitment consultant to fully understand changes in the opt-in process.

To ensure SMS can deliver a supplementary service, the opt-in process is critical. A recruitment consultant cannot communicate with a candidate unless they have their express permission to do so. And this is about to become much clearer. On 25th May 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) will come into effect and replaces the Data Protection Directive, which has become out-dated because of the rapid advancement of technology since its introduction in 1995.

GDPR is the new European Union (EU) regulation that combines and strengthens

data protection within the EU. It will cover all countries that process or hold the personal data of EU citizens, whether that country is a part of the EU or not.

At the core of the GDPR regulation are the principles of transparency and accountability. Consultants will have to be clear with candidates about how their personal data is being collected, used and shared. The new regulation recognises that both parties have rights, and although a step change for data protection, GDPR ensures clarity for each party regarding their rights. In effect, GDPR is expected to deliver equilibrium between the two parties – consumer (data subject) and business (data controller).

25th May 2018 GDPR Becomes Regulation





## The opt-in process

When a candidate posts their CV to an online job wall, registers with a job search app, connects via social media, or submits their CV to a recruitment consultant, by virtue of legitimate interest they are opting-in to receive relevant communications associated with their job search via the channels outlined in their application, whether email or home phone, or mobile.

But there are other means of generating an opt-in. They can apply for a job based on an advert they have seen in a magazine, newspaper, billboard or on public transport, such as placing a keyword using a shortcode on the advert. In doing so, the candidate is sharing their contact details and opening the line of communication with the recruitment consultant.

Regardless of how the opt-in arrives, it is essential for the consultant that they become involved in the recruitment journey as soon as possible. What's more, a savvy consultant will look to gain the explicit consent for the types of communication that will be used during the course of their relationship. This can shape the SMS strategy adopted by the consultant, such as types of message, frequency, when to send, etc.

But the challenge remains it's a relationship that could be as short as a couple of months, to an on-going one spanning years.

On average, placing a full-time candidate in a new role typically lasts 43 days. The recruitment consultant will need to develop an opt-in process dependent on the work being sought by the candidate, and confirm they are happy to receive relevant SMS.

For part-time and contingent workers — which will require an on-going channel of communication beyond the present appointment — the consultant will again require consent from the individual that they are happy to continue receiving communications.

Either way, it is essential that the consultant keeps an audit of each individual consent, and meets on-going privacy regulations by continuing to send relevant SMS to each candidate, and double-checking they can continue to send SMS every 6 months.

Provided each message gives the recipient the option of stopping and opting out, the consultant is adhering to the data protection laws.



# Candidate profiling

The opt-in is the first step in developing a candidate profile by the recruitment consultant. By linking interactions and engagement with a company's CRM, this can be used to develop the candidate's profile and provide a more focused value-add service by the consultant.

The changing dynamics throughout the UK workforce, with 15% now considered contingent workers, means a constant flow of change, with candidates looking for placements, for example, before their existing contract has expired. Maintaining a level of engagement with that individual will ensure that the consultant is up-to-speed on the candidate's profile and can target highly-relevant upcoming contracts.

Each response from a candidate to a message sent helps build a deeper understanding of that individual. At any point, provided the consultant has consent, the consultant can ask the candidate to complete a short SMS survey.

Where linking interactions and engagement with a company's CRM really can come into its own, is improving efficiencies in the recruitment process. Developing a deeper understanding of each candidate allows the consultant to ascertain at the touch of a button who is actively

seeking employment, and who would be considered passive.

If a candidate has been uncommunicative for a period, for example, this could be because they have landed a job via alternative means, or they have not been actively seeking employment for a period of time. Similarly, with social media increasing the pool of candidates for consultants, accessing their database to identify active or passive candidates will ensure they approach only relevant candidates about the role.

A simple text-based survey could determine if the candidate requires the consultant's assistance in which case the user profile can be updated accordingly. Most important of all, this will also ensure each communication reflects the changing needs of the candidate.

Following a placement, the consultant could send texts to ensure the candidate is happy in their new role, or can ask when they would consider looking for their next role? Any response must be applied to that customer profile. Sending the wrong message at the wrong time, could prove costly and damage that relationship long-term.



## Setting expectations

By using SMS, a recruitment consultant is effectively signing up to adhering to the principles of SMS messaging. The power of SMS means that 90% of all text messages will be read within 3 minutes. While this means candidates can no longer say they did not see the SMS — which often happens with email — by the same token, if a candidate responds to a shortcode, or replies via a text, the consultant will need to respond with reciprocal speed. The consultant needs to ensure that any response to a candidate via SMS is swift.

By responding to an ad using the shortcode, the candidate can receive the job specification or application direct to their smartphone instantaneously. There is no waiting around to review a possible job specification, which is often the case with an app.

Once messaging expectations have been set between the consultant and candidate, it is up to the former to maintain them throughout the period of their relationship, whether short-term or long-term.

# Types of messages

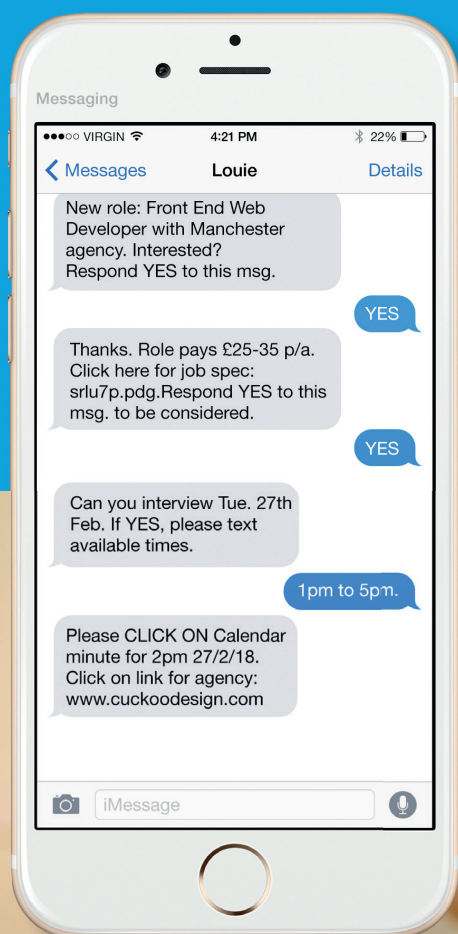
SMS crosses device boundaries, overcoming the different OS of smartphones, and the technology divide with featurephones. Unlike emails, consultants know that the likelihood of an SMS being read is close to 100%. But perhaps most beneficial of all, is the immediacy and discretion that SMS brings.

SMS brings the job search into the here and now, and ensures under-the-radar job seeking while at work. It allows a candidate to engage and interact with a recruitment consultant while sat at their desk in the office, and puts an end to the days of the awkward "I can't talk now", or leaving the office to take the phone call. Any such actions will inevitably arouse suspicion among your colleagues.

But it's how SMS can assist the job search process. Upon opt-in, and setting the communication-type parameters, consultants can send a variety of SMS messages to assist the candidate's journey from an SMS with a job spec attached to as they come in.

Once the candidate has an interview, the consultant can use SMS to share top tips before attending the interview, and share advice on what the interviewer is looking for, as well as sending instructions or attaching a map on how to get to the office. SMS survey feedback from previous interviews can help the consultant to refine the SMS prior to the next interview.

Consultants can also send interview appointment reminders. These can be vital for the consultants too, to confirm their candidate will attend the interview. A no-show could damage the recruitment consultant's relationship with the client and result in losing the account. Following an interview, the consultant can use the SMS survey to capture the candidate's feedback, which can also be used as a way of capturing additional personal information, and refining their profile.





# When to send

It is important the consultant understands when the candidate wants to receive an SMS. Every candidate is different, but sending a job spec at the wrong time will likely frustrate and agitate the candidate, and could damage the relationship. Sending the right message,

at the right time, will be well-received by the candidate and enhance their confidence in the consultant. Almost two-thirds of candidates want to receive SMS while at work, between 09:00-17:00, with the optimum time between midday and mid-afternoon.

	2018	2019	2020
0700-0900	533,066	564,213	582,371
0900-1200	2,081,362	2,375,810	2,645,763
1200-1500	2,590,204	3,001,082	3,395,199
1500-1700	1,555,528	1,806,818	2,050,577
1700-1900	1,733,509	1,940,340	2,123,152
1900-2400	628,789	661,633	678,730
0000-0700	120,125	141,411	162,513
Any time	1,115,090	1,022,304	876,827
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,357,674</b>	<b>11,513,612</b>	<b>12,515,132</b>





## Opt-in by numbers

In 2018, almost 10.4 million potential candidates in the UK would welcome job-based communications to assist with their job hunt. This suggests there are more people interested in moving jobs compared to the recognised number of 6.4 million, in other

words, one-third of opt-ins remain passive, but would consider switching if the right role was presented to them. This highlights that a consultant's role is never complete, and the need for on-going communications is required.

	2018	2019	2020
18-24	1,882,787	2,012,683	2,108,630
25-34	2,914,931	3,257,079	3,557,908
35-44	1,491,966	1,636,731	1,761,596
45-54	2,333,663	2,657,641	2,941,160
55-64	947,102	1,061,190	1,165,016
65+	787,224	888,288	980,823
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,357,674</b>	<b>11,513,612</b>	<b>12,515,132</b>



# Using SMS in recruitment: the benefits in TEN points

1. Send updates on job applications throughout the day
2. Less intrusive than a phone call and can't get lost amongst the traffic like an email
3. Retains the P2P relationship of a SMS, but just between applicant and consultant
4. Confirm receipt of key documents
5. Can ping on SMS details of new jobs with basic details to gauge initial interest
6. Send reminders ahead of appointments / job interviews, to confirm time, location
7. Use to remind applicants of key facts about job ahead of interview
8. Use keyword short code on job advertising to capture new applicants
9. SMS is one of main mediums of comms, but allows the applicant to choose, thus creating a stronger, but more individual relationship
10. Act as prompt to send key documents, respond to quick questions when in negotiation phase.

## Conclusion

SMS provides efficiency and streamlining in the job seeking process for both the consultant and candidate. For the candidate, they can be discrete and job search in real time from their office. For the consultant, SMS can streamline their role by using SMS to engage and interact, reducing time on the phone talking, not to mention the cost of the call, allows the consultant to increase the level of engagement across multiple candidates. But it also means, the consultant remains as relevant as ever in the job seeking process.

A personalised SMS to a candidate humanises an otherwise dehumanised digital process. This is where a consultant can make a real difference. It's often said the smallest things make the biggest difference. And in this case, it is 160 characters.

As consultants compete against the ever-growing tide of tech, they are increasingly competing against one another. The value-add provided by a humanistic overlay via an SMS is becoming critical.

# About mobilesquared

mobilesquared provides intelligence and insight on the mobile sector. They've been analysing the mobile space for two decades, so their expertise has been earned, not learned. Their instinctive ability to ask the right questions uncovers invaluable nuggets of insight, which they interpret to help shape truly effective strategy and content for their clients. Their experience is recognised by the industry – they sit on judging panels for the prestigious GSMA Awards, EMMA awards, and the MEFFYs.

For more information, go to [www.mobilesquared.co.uk](http://www.mobilesquared.co.uk).

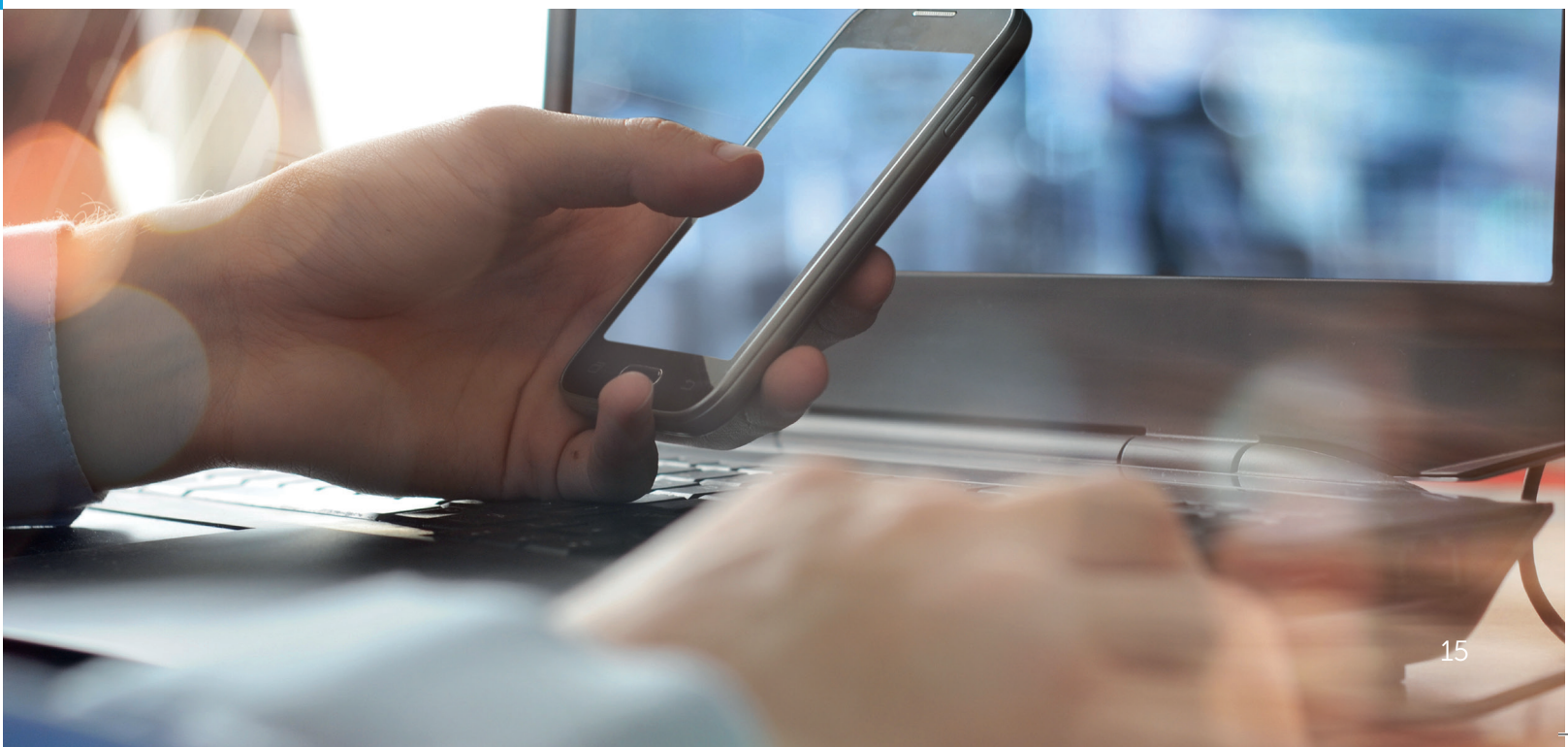


# About Textlocal

With over 165,000 users and more than a billion messages sent, Textlocal are the industry leaders for cloud-based SMS services in the UK and beyond. On top of boosting loyalty with SMS offers, their award-winning platform offers unique features such as the ability to insert website links, attach files, forms or vouchers, all with easy to use campaign tracking tools to measure effectiveness.

Textlocal have been listed as a Media Momentum Top 20 fastest growing digital agency for consecutive years, awarded a DMA Honours for innovation, as well as being awarded a place in the Deloitte Technology Fast 50 and Sunday Times Tech Track 100.

For more information, go to [www.textlocal.com](http://www.textlocal.com).







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