

Short codes for two-way messaging

- Give customers an easy way to talk to you
- Reach a mass audience
- 'Own' a marketing asset that's recognisable and easy to remember
- Address the younger generation
- Take the pressure off call centres
- Generate revenue from polls, competitions and more

What is an SMS short code?

Short codes are premium numbers that are shorter than standard mobile numbers – usually four, five or six digits.

The most important benefit of a short code is that it enables two-way communications. Customers can talk to you. They can simply compose a message on their device, type in the SMS short code number and then send. The fact that codes are short makes them memorable. Consumers also associate them with business use cases rather than personal accounts.

Just as important, it is possible to charge a premium fee for messages sent to a short code. For this reason, they are often used for value-added services.

Enterprises have two main options when purchasing a short code. They can buy their own dedicated number on an annual rental. Or they can share a number with other users (usually by renting for a specified fixed period).

Why use SMS as a communications channel?

SMS is easily the best way to stay in touch with your customers. It's ubiquitous. Virtually all Africans have a mobile phone. And SMS doesn't require a data connection: even the most basic feature phone can receive a text. This makes text a much better option than email, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger etc.

SMS is also personal. Customers take notice of texts. Surveys show that most SMSs are read and replied to in minutes. And it's asynchronous. People can reply to a text in their own time – unlike a phone call.

Why choose SMS short codes for two-way text communications?

Short codes give enterprises the most instant, wide reaching and cost effective channel for hearing from customers. They are easy to set up and promote. Enterprises can publish and promote their four digit codes anywhere – from social media accounts to a TV ad to a billboard to a leaflet. Even on a paper receipt.

Meanwhile customers don't need any education to engage. They simply send a text to a short code as if they were responding to a friend or contact.

This makes short codes excellent for customer service use cases. Users can engage by texting 'yes' to sign up for a service or to receive more information. It takes the pressure off call centre staff, and is much more cost-effective than making/receiving thousands of voice calls.

Short codes charged at premium rates can also generate value-added service revenues. The public can use them to make music requests, send greetings to family and friends, enter text-to-win competitions, take part in interactive voting and enter polls.

How it works

At Alchemy we aim to make it easy for any enterprise to secure either its own dedicated short code – or one it shares with others.

First you will need to set up web-based SMS. Just go to www.alchemytelco.com, click on register, fill in your business email details, create a password and click send.

Once you have registered, you can choose an Alchemy dedicated or shared shortcode to save time or request us to acquire a short code on your behalf and comply with all PURA regulations.

Next, you need to get your audience to engage with your code – and then manage the results. The more people who see your code the better. One way to generate activity is with your own SMS outreach. You can use Alchemy's web-based SMS dashboard to push out bulk text alerts to your database. But you can also advertise your codes on any medium and build your database with every new user that replies.

Tracking responses is easy. From your dashboard you will see all interaction in real time. You can even set up SMS auto replies from your purchased bulk SMS balance to every response, and use the messages to advertise other services.

We make the accounting process easy. We request data (monthly hits) from the telcos, and then invoice and collect payment for premium texts on your behalf. Reconciliation usually occurs on the second week of each month and payment thereafter.

Why choose Alchemy?

Alchemy is the most experienced and trusted SMS provider in the Gambia, Senegal and Sierra Leone, which means we can acquire and set up short codes quickly and affordably.

No other company in the region can do this.

Our dashboard is easy to use. From there you can see records of all activity. You can also send 155-character messages at 500 messages per second.

The Alchemy service is highly interoperable, offering many complementary mobile-related services such as:

- Web-based SMS – please see our [Web-based SMS Guide](#)
- APIs your developers can use to integrate our SMS services with your business systems for, automated alerts and notifications, one time passcodes, two-step verification etc – please see our [API Guides](#)
- VoIP softphone contact centre services – please see our [Contact Centre Brochure](#)

How much does a short code cost?

Once you have secured a code, it's up to you how much you charge customers to reply to it. We have shortcodes costing D3, D5 or D10 dependent on availability. Toll free and other options may also be available.

The telcos will take a share of up to 50 per cent on your revenues. There is no need for revenue sharing with Alchemy. We simply charge a flat monthly service/maintenance charge.

The following chart shows the key metrics for a short code that charges users D3. (Gambia)

Operator	Short code	Price	Operator's Share	Operator's Amount	You Receive Client's Amount
Africell	18xx	D3	50%	D1.50	D1.50
Qcell		D3	40%	D1.20	D1.80
Gamcel		D3	40%	D1.20	D1.80
Comium		D3	40%	D1.20	D1.80

[Contact Us Now](#)