

2020 CCW Nashville - Drips





Drips is the first conversational texting® company of its kind, founding a new category and leading the way for some of the biggest brands in the world to use automated, humanized conversations at scale. Drips engages in tens of millions of completely humanized conversations with zero client-side human resource operators. The result is improved lead-to-call conversions, a better customer experience and reduced overall lead generation cost without having to hire or fire agents. Jonathan Pogact, VP of Marketing for Drips, elaborated on the benefits.

How does your solution make it easier for businesses to manage leads?

We exist to bring brands, agencies (their clients), service providers and resellers back into contact with prospects who have raised their hands about a product or service. We live in a world where consumers have more choices than ever and rather than merely interacting with by the old way of ongoing calls from a contact center, we enable them to communicate in a way that the prospect prefers, such as through conversational texting.

We use context to determine how to establish communication: where did the lead come from, what have they opted in to receive, what are their expectations. Did they connect through social media, such as Facebook or on the client's website, which we might acknowledge when getting back to them. We want to make sure that the message coming from the business is familiar to the consumer and puts them at ease. We only work with businesses that obtain consent, so the prospect is aware that theirs is a request that is being followed up on. This is done in a variety of ways. We could be the first touchpoint after a person has submitted an online request for an insurance quote. Sometimes we act to support or augment contact center operations in cases where they have unsuccessfully tried to reach the individual on several occasions. This is important because sometimes prospects are either too busy to pick up a call or are unavailable because they are at work. Texting allows the prospect to be empowered to respond when it is most convenient for them as opposed to when it is best for a contact center agent.

Does the Drips team send the texts themselves or advise the client on when to send them?

We have our own AI that has overseen hundreds of millions of conversations to date, so we understand when someone says something like 'I'm in a meeting at work right now.' Since we have the necessary data, we can reach out to them to see what the right time for them might be to communicate via text. Sometimes, it takes hours, days or even weeks to set a time when it's convenient to have a two-sided conversation over the phone.

2020 CCW Nashville - Drips

Is there any reason that texting is more effective than calling? Is it different for specific industries or the type of conversation that happened previously?

The context does have a great influence. It's important to know that we support contact centers and are not limited to text only. We do implement IVR phone calls in our text messaging cadence. The first message a consumer might get in our Drips campaign would be an IVR phone call. If they don't agree to take the call (press 2 if this is not a great time for you) then they will be placed in the text cadence that is tailored for the campaign based on where the individual opted in from. Some people who have taken proactive action such as requesting a quote might pick up the first call, but that's it. Most people do not respond to calls. This is not a trend that is going away anytime soon. In many cases, my phone will block unrecognized calls through my carrier. We're at a point in time where we want to communicate via our own terms.

Sending SMS at scale can be a challenge, particularly if the company is not experienced and doesn't know how to deal with what we call 'throughput' which is the delivery of an actual message. When a business is sending SMS at high volume, it needs to come up with a strategy or several different strategies. It's part of the reason why our messages are what we call 'humanized,' we don't just send one canned message to hundreds or thousands of people: we hand-tailor our messages using nuanced contextual personalization's and employing multiple methodologies so that each one looks like --and should feel like-- it's coming from a real person.

What's the Perfect Outreach Cadence? How much is too much?

It depends on what the person has indicated that they are interested in learning more about. We only communicate with prospects who have responded to a company's offer or have expressed written consent for that company to follow up with them. If an individual filled out a quote request, they are expecting a call or other message in return. Similarly, if they have completed an application or set up appointment, they are expecting some level of follow-up. We're just providing a better way to respond: one where 98% of people will see it within the first two minutes. We see our approach as "polite persistence." We're not trying to hammer anyone over the head, just following up on requests. We are constantly split testing different cadences and contact points to find the perfect balance.

How does your AI contribute to your effectiveness?

Our AI understands many things. It references previous conversations to make these determinations. Our advantage is the vast amount of data we've seen and the corresponding trove of information we can use to train the AI. In a way, it's similar to Tesla who has a head start in programming their cars because they've seen millions of deer, stoplights, people, other cars, or other objects that help train its system. When their Model 3 drives down the road, it knows what one is and what actions need to be taken. Our AI knows the consumers situation from these previous conversations and can use the data to move conversations along. On the consent side, which is equally important, most SMS systems are short code, offer-based SMS. We've all gotten this kind of message with a link to some offer which also gives the customer the option to use some method to stop receiving them. Most systems have four to six ways to opt out. Our system offers hundreds of thousands of opt-out requests, including a middle finger emoji. This lowers costs, increases conversions and helps keep companies compliant.

2020 CCW Nashville - Drips

When you make that first outgoing call, how do consumers know it's from the company as opposed to a spam call?

That can be a real challenge. They don't and that's why texting is so important. As far as "spam likely" calls, that's comes from reputation management lists that telephony providers monitor actively. We provision our phone numbers as opposed to recycling them to ensure that they haven't been on any spam lists. When we're working with a regional provider, we will make it a local number to give it a local presence. We have found that the combination of an initial phone call followed by text works best. Depending on the company we can reach them even faster than a contact center.

Can you tell our subscribers how your performance-based pricing model works?

The cost has a lot to do with the volume of consumers to be reached. The amount of leads or contacts coming into our system and the kind of environment that the company is working in. For example, an insurance company is very different than a window manufacturer. We customize each campaign and look at multiple ways to price them, typically on a per-contact basis. There is a high level of consultation for each. We want to learn our clients' business. We need to understand what their lead generation process looks like, how the contact center is structured and how your operations side functions. Each Drips' client gets a team, not a tool. Our staff of over 70 includes experts in scripting, industries, quality assurance, subject matter experts, client success and account managers. We want to provide the maximum amount of value. We're a managed service, not a SaaS solution. Companies pay once for the full scale of activities for each individual lead. We've opened up tens of millions of dollars for our clients.