

- WHITEPAPER -

How telecommunications can improve customer outreach across retail quarters



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INTRO

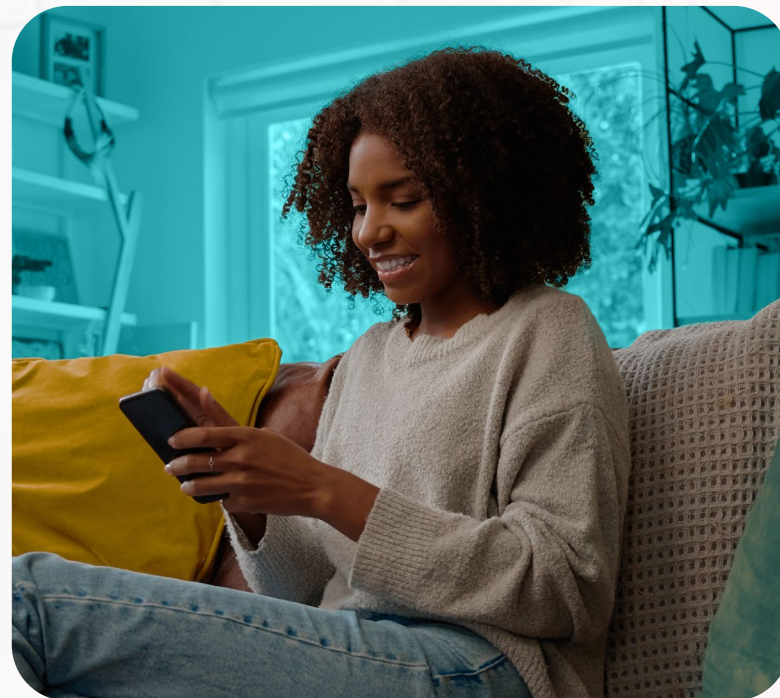
Customer outreach is the best way for telecommunication companies to nurture and maintain the relationships that lead to brand loyalty and retention.

While it may keep bottom lines healthy, customer outreach isn't something you jump into overnight, requiring strategic foresight to ensure your messaging is timely and appropriate.

Thankfully, telcos can build campaigns around major events that happen during the same quarter each year and are excellent recurring opportunities for outreach.

This consistency affords companies a long runway to plan their campaigns to be timely, appropriate, personalized, and useful; and once complete, they can tweak their campaigns for better results next year.

The driving force behind these campaigns is that many telco customers don't know what services, information, or offers are available to them at any given time. Without that knowledge, companies risk losing customers who would have stuck with them had somebody reached out with the right information at the right time.



This underscores the importance of pre-planning outreach campaigns - you need to know your customer's needs, even before they do. With recurring quarterly events, each message is an opportunity to get to know a customer better, so that you're constantly nurturing the relationship and building the bridge from casual customer to brand ambassador.

This whitepaper will review some of the major quarterly campaigns that telcos can use to plan their yearly outreach, illustrated with real-life examples from major telco companies, and then discuss specific strategies to make those campaigns more effective.

Q1: CARRYING THE MOMENTUM FORWARD

The most critical campaigns of Q1 capitalize on the influx of business from Q4. With the purchase volume from Black Friday and end-of-year holidays, the start of the year sees telcos with their largest annual cohort (of new customers and existing customers with new purchases) who are all in the initial zero-to-three-month window from purchasing.

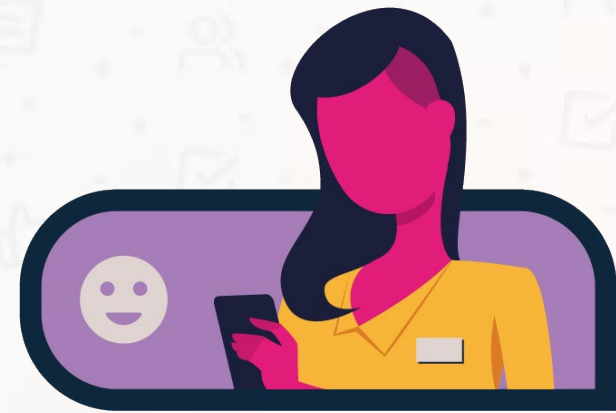
Welcome campaigns

With so many end-of-year transactions, customers are ready to hear from you by the end of January or early February, making welcome campaigns your top priority in Q1.

The period following a purchase or gift is the most relevant moment for customers - and if it's relevant to them, it should be to you too.



Welcome campaigns put you in a great position to nurture and grow relationships by answering customer questions and meeting their personalized needs, while still offering a chance to upsell.



A customer gifted a phone for Christmas may be looking for help using it. Another may want to know what accessories are available for the smartwatch they purchased during your Black Friday deals. Or if a customer bought a tablet for their children, they may need to add to their wireless package.

Q1 is the perfect time to reach out and ask customers if everything is going well with their purchases and what else you can do for them – in other words, a great way to listen to your customers. And by listening to them, you get to know them better, bringing them one step closer to loyalty.

Lingering promotions

Directly related to end-of-year sales are campaigns that remind customers to take advantage of holiday promotions that are still ongoing, as customers are often unaware that many telcos run their holiday promotions until the end of January.

These campaigns help move some of the remaining holiday inventory but also help those customers who didn't have the time or money for an upgrade throughout the holiday period.

Q1: CARRYING THE MOMENTUM FORWARD

After telcos see that certain devices, accessories, and hardware didn't sell as expected, campaigns can let customers know they are just as eligible for offers in January and February as they were in December or November.

Peripherals campaigns

Peripheral campaigns focus on great lines of products that just happen to sell less than phones. These would be tablets, wearables, watches, any product that can be gifted and needs to be activated and connected to a wireless network.

There is some crossover with welcome campaigns here, but telcos can also build more specific campaigns for peripherals that focus on the device itself. This means running individual campaigns for different devices and targeted to individual customers but, as a wider strategy, encapsulates the entire range of gift purchases.

Referral campaigns

Referral campaigns take advantage of the increased contact telcos have with new and old customers who made holiday purchases. These are separate from and happen after device activation and are a logical extension of a successful welcome campaign.



After you help solve device issues or answer questions, companies can leverage that trust to build a referral list.

Existing customers may not know that most telcos have credit offers for referring business. When a telco has established a healthy relationship with their customer, customers feel confident recommending products to family and friends, especially if they benefit from a referral credit.

Referral campaigns not only help develop the existing relationship with a customer, but open companies up to a range of customers who previously went under the radar or were unavailable.

While smaller telcos may lack the resources to do so, two of the largest telcos in North America continually operate simultaneous outreach campaigns during Q1. These include the aforementioned welcome and referral campaigns, alongside much more specific Q1 campaigns, such as hardware upgrade, early renewal, and add-a-line campaigns - anything that will promote brand loyalty and customer longevity.

With such large client bases, these telcos can share customer data enterprise-wide to better personalize outreach and strengthen the effectiveness of each campaign.

Q2: KEEPING IT STEADY

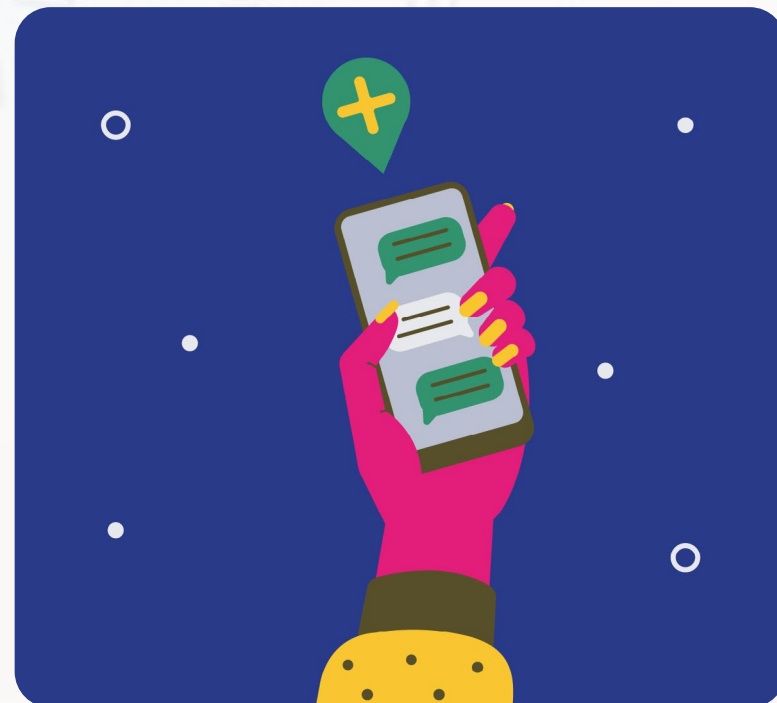
Regarding foot traffic to brick-and-mortar stores, Q2 can be a slow period, especially after the bustle of Q1. But the surge in demand from Q4 and early Q1 means your second quarter can be just as busy and your campaigns just as fruitful.

Device-specific launch campaigns

Customers tend to be loyal to a brand's ecosystem, so every major company's new device launch is an opportunity to help customers upgrade.

Both Google and Samsung release their new series of flagship handsets during mid-to-end of Q1, the same time that you should kick off your campaign. But as reviews come out and sales pick up steam, the bulk of your campaign will take place throughout Q2.

Running these campaigns in both quarters captures both early adopters, who want the latest and greatest device, and the "deal hunters", who are less eager to pay release prices and will wait for promotional offers. Regardless of segment, customers should be targeted in a three-to-six-month window which spans some of Q1 and all of Q2.



Add-on campaigns

With the influx of Q4 customers and residual customers brought in from Q1 campaigns, Q2 is a great time to run add-on campaigns, reaching out to customers with promotional discounts to see if they need additional services or features.

Add-a-line campaigns offer promotional discounts for customers to add another line for family members or friends who are ready to get a device or use other providers. And after Q4 and Q1 customers settle into their new products and services, they may also realize they need additional data packages or broadband services to best operate their devices.

Q2: KEEPING IT STEADY

Open Enrollment

Customers who want insurance on their devices usually need to purchase it at the same time as the device or shortly thereafter. Many customers will turn down this insurance, only to regret the decision later. While Q2 often being a slower period for overall revenue, it acts as a great time to open up insurance enrollment to older devices outside of that buying window. Oftentimes customers who purchased or were gifted devices in Q4 will be looking for this option.

Holiday campaigns

There are quite a few lower-key but still important events in Q2, including Mother's Day, Father's Day, and school graduations.



While not moving numbers like Black Friday or end-of-year holidays, running campaigns around these dates is still important. Letting customers know that you have holiday promotions is critical to capture the people that don't know what to get their mother, father, or graduate. The last thing that should happen is to have a willing customer and no options to give them.

These awareness campaigns convey to customers that you're there for them if they need you. And even if no sale is made, they are an easy way to stay in touch and strengthen the relationship.

Customers often start reviewing what their next device will be long before they actually purchase it, so one major North American telco uses Q2 to run early renewal campaigns that target those who may be looking for a better deal or to upgrade.

By reaching out to them with personalized one-to-one texting, the campaign aims to get early decisions from valued customers. Demonstrating that you know your customer's needs – again, even before they do – makes people feel taken care of and helps build trust.

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Q3: NEW BEGINNINGS

After a somewhat slower but no less targeted Q2, campaigns ramp up again in Q3 and focus on two major events: back-to-school and the latest iPhone launch.

Back-to-school campaigns

As summer recedes, telcos should start running their back-to-school campaigns in August. Whether upgrading to a more powerful phone to handle their busier lives, switching to a tablet to streamline note-taking, or buying a smartwatch to make it to class on time, students starting a new school year are often shopping for new devices to meet their changing scholastic needs.

New university students traveling all over the country will also need internet access, so your back-to-school campaign should focus on more than just handsets, tablets, or wearables. A mobile broadband campaign can target both new device connectivity and specific line items like routers, packages with faster download speed, or a mobile internet hub for more remote locations.



iPhone launch campaigns

The iPhone launch is a significant event for just about everybody: telcos and customers, the media and tech industry. Since its inception, the event has served as a major annual benchmark of tech innovation, consumer demand, and economic growth.

Most people already know about Apple's yearly launches, so iPhone campaigns should be less about awareness and, given the rush on its release, more about informing customers that your inventory will have the latest model in stock.

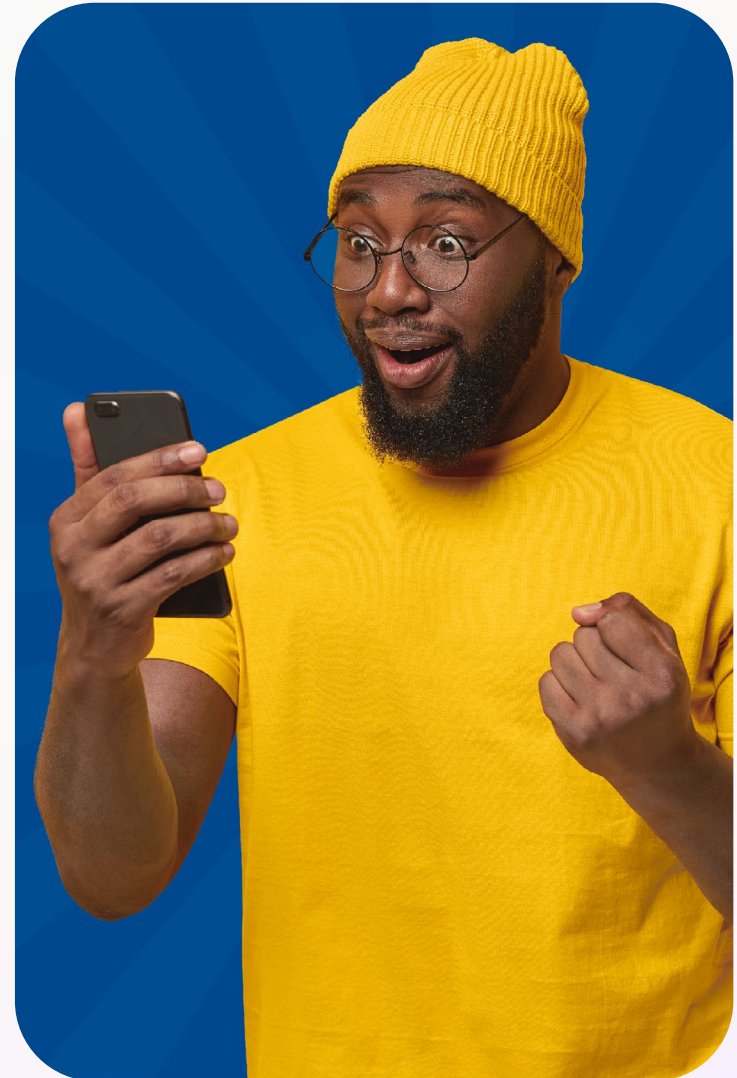
Doing this effectively requires starting a bit early. While the official launch kicks off in Q3, telcos should use the summer months to capture customer segments who may be interested in a new iPhone and use those lists for more targeted outreach in the fall.

Q3: NEW BEGINNINGS

Your messaging can alert early adopters, and customers with older models who are close to renewal, that you'll soon be receiving the new devices and invite them into the store to pre-register for purchase.

The biggest hurdle telcos face during an iPhone launch is securing enough devices. By signing up your most eager segments for preorders so they can get the exact color, size, and model they want, your campaign is actively investing in meaningful relationships.

All of Staflo's telco clients run iPhone launch campaigns to get early adopters in stores. Using a business texting platform, they leverage customer data to segment their base and send out personalized messages to those most likely to be interested in the new iPhone, at scale and in an easy, seamless, and non-intrusive way. These one-to-one conversations show customers their needs are top-of-mind and help gauge demand before launch date. As the conversations unfold, telcos create a reliable list of early adopters who can be targeted for and helped with preorders.



Q4: COMING FULL CIRCLE

We're now back to the very busy Q4 and its various holidays that fuel telcos all year, including Thanksgiving, Black Friday, end-of-year holidays, Boxing Day, and even New Years'.

Each holiday is an opportunity to build a specific campaign around one of its aspects – showing your gratitude with a gift to a loved one on Thanksgiving, starting the year off fresh with a new device for New Years', taking advantage of unmissable Black Friday deals– but can also be approached from a broader perspective.

Who's on your list campaigns

The holidays are a time for giving, putting people in a spending mood. And because it can be easier to get people to buy for others than for themselves, one of the most effective cross-holiday campaigns is “Who's on Your List”.

With so much gift-giving, you can reach an impressive number of new and existing customers with this campaign, especially when you likely offer at least one



product or service for nearly everyone on a person's gift list. This means customers can be targeted for a range of products and purchasing options, from simple online transactions to being invited into the store to discuss bigger or more complex offers.

Given the broad nature of this campaign, offering an omnichannel approach for purchasing also meets increasing customer demands for a more convenient and flexible journey that takes up less of their time, especially during a busy holiday season.

Holiday referral campaigns

Referral campaigns can and should be run throughout the year. But referral credits are especially enticing at a time when people are looking to simultaneously purchase a gift and save money during a spendthrift holiday period – a triple-win situation where telcos get a new customer, the new customer receives a memorable gift, and the existing customer receives a discount.

THE IMPORTANCE OF STRATEGY

As one of telcos' most important priorities, quarter-specific campaigns need to be meticulously planned and executed. Doing so, try not to lose track of the campaigns that can be run at any time, including referral and welcome campaigns, as well as those that offer discounts to hyper-specific segments like the military or first responders.

Regardless of timing, however, here are some common, reliable tips and tricks you can use to drive the success of any campaign:

Leverage your data. Telcos have access to vast amounts of quality data about a customer's preferences, life situation, and purchasing history. This data can help you build targeted campaigns that include the personalized outreach that customers prefer.

The right person at the right time with the right message. Customer outreach will serve you best when it is personalized and timely. Your best response and conversion rates will come when your message is sent at an appropriate time and contains relevant information.

Go omnichannel. In today's digital world, customers want flexibility and convenience to shop in the manner

they choose, so ensuring your campaigns lead to a seamless omnichannel experience is essential. And channels that are easy to use and non-intrusive, like business texting, create a customer experience worth coming back to.

Strategy, strategy, strategy. Always being a few months ahead of your customers' buying habits requires strategically pre-planning your campaigns and is the best way to ensure successful campaigns. Invest in the right tools. Deploy the leading outreach tactics and tools that customers prefer. For example, with its industry-leading open, response, read, and conversion rates, one-to-one business messaging far outperforms email on all metrics defining your quarterly campaigns' success.

Get help. With even more data and experience at their disposal, platforms that specialize in building campaigns with personalized messaging can help you plan your campaign strategies with their innovative outreach tools.

All of these best practices aim to achieve one overarching objective - knowing your customer better than they know themselves so you can better guide them along their purchase journey and to your campaign goals.

Intimately knowing your customer means you will always be two steps ahead. Whether it's information or new products, knowing a customer's needs in advance increases their "stickiness" with each message and lays the practical and emotional groundwork for trust and loyalty. If consistently taken care of, they will happily settle into a steady, trusting groove and eventually rely on your outreach to remind them when they need to start shopping again.

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QUARTERLY CAMPAIGNS: MORE THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS

If planned and executed with their needs in mind, each quarterly campaign is another chance to connect with customers, new and old.

More than that, the sum effect of your quarterly campaigns outweighs any short-term profit bumps that come from them. Their recurring nature is a solid scaffolding upon which to build the most effective processes that turn new customers into brand loyalists.

And with its years of experience and cutting-edge tools specifically designed to grow and scale effective outreach with business texting, Statflo can help you plan and optimize each of your quarterly campaigns for maximum impact at minimal cost.



To learn more about Statflo
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