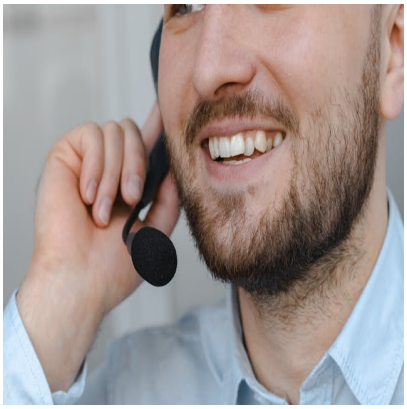

# Why Is It So Hard To Connect With Prospects Today?

## Description

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This article discusses the different rules and laws that affect how businesses may connect compliantly with consumers in their calling, texting, and emailing campaigns.

Connecting with prospects is harder than it has ever been. Despite following time-proven campaign strategies, contact rates have declined. It doesnâ??t matter if youâ??re calling, texting, or emailing. So, what is causing decreased connections? Rest assured, prospective clients still have a need for and want to learn about your products and services. The real reason is the ever-growing list of rules and laws that carriers, platforms, and the government put in place to protect consumers and limit spam.

Even when businesses have full permission to contact prospective clients, messages may not make it through. Calls get blocked, texts are filtered, and emails get pushed to spam folders. To avoid this, businesses must ensure their calling, texting, and email systems are properly set up. This starts with an understanding of the major rulings and how they can cause contact rates to drop.

## TCPA â?? The Foundation For Calling & Texting

The Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA) laid the foundation for telemarketing regulations. Today, it is the primary law that governs calling and texting. It was designed to prevent unwanted

telemarketing and specifically, robocalls. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) defines robocalls as calls with a prerecorded or artificial voice message and/or those placed with an autodialer (rather than a human manually dialing). This law controls the kind of dialing system you use and whether you have permission to use it with your data. These are some of the key parts of the TCPA that you will want to familiarize yourself with:

- **Automatic Telephone Dialing System (ATDS) rules** â?? The TCPA prohibits you from using an autodialer or a prerecorded message *unless* the consumer gave you prior express consent through a form. It is important to note that most customer relationship management systems (CRMs) are not considered autodialers. While outreaches may be made through CRMs, a 2021 court ruling (Facebook vs. Duguid) clarified that CRMs are not autodialers because they do not dial random or sequenced numbers.
- **Do Not Call (DNC) rules** â?? The FCC created the Federal Do Not Call list in 2003, allowing consumers to enter their phone numbers to stop receiving unwanted *sales* calls. This does not apply to political, charity, survey, or informational calls. Telemarketers are required to check the DNC list every 31 days. For anyone on the list, you must remove their phone number from calling campaigns and avoid calling them. But, there are two exceptions to this rule. You may call someone on the DNC list if you have written consent with TCPA language. You may also call them if you have an established business relationship (EBR) with the consumer, meaning they have purchased from you in the last 18 months, or they made an inquiry or filled out a form in the last 3 months
- **Other best practices** â?? While not specific *rules*, there are a few best practices that you can follow to ensure you remain compliant with TCPA. Only place calls between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. local time. Maintain an internal DNC list and remove opt-outs immediately.

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For best compliance, make sure to follow *both* autodialer and DNC rules. Even manually dialed calls can violate TCPA if you ignore DNC rules. Your phone and text campaigns must always be built on proper consent, clean DNC-scrubbed lists, and responsible calling patterns.

## STIR/SHAKEN â?? Caller ID Authentication

Even if your calls are legal under TCPA, they still may be blocked or labeled â??spam likelyâ?• by Caller ID authentication. The FCC developed the STIR/SHAKEN framework that has become an industry-standard Caller ID authentication technology. It was designed to protect consumers from fraudulent or spoofed phone numbers. STIR (Secure Telephone Identify Revisited) is a technical protocol that *signs* each call with a digital signature. SHAKEN (Signature-based Handling of Asserted information using toKENs) is the carrier framework that *checks* this signature to confirm that it is authentic.

Under STIR/SHAKEN, carriers give a grade of A,B, or C to each call based on their level of confidence that the caller is who they say they are. These grades, called attestation levels, are defined as:

- **Level A (full attestation)** â?? The carrier knows the caller owns the phone number and is authorized to use it. These would include verified businesses that are calling from their registered phone numbers.
- **Level B (partial attestation)** â?? The carrier knows the caller, but they canâ??t verify that the caller owns and is authorized to use the phone number.
- **Level C (gateway attestation)** â?? The carrier canâ??t verify the caller or the phone number. These calls are most likely to be filtered, flagged as spam likely, or blocked entirely.

Attestation levels matter because if a carrier does not trust your number, your calls will never reach consumers. Your contact rates will suffer. Behaviors such as rotating numbers, high-volume dialing, and using phone numbers that are not registered to you will all result in diminished trust.

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For the most successful outreaches, only use phone numbers that you own. Avoid spoofing or large-scale, rapid dialing. Align with carriers that are known to be STIR/SHAKEN compliant. And, register with CNAM (Caller Name) or branded Caller ID, setting up the display name that a consumer will see on their phone when you call them rather than just seeing a phone number. CNAM allows you to enter a 15-character company name, while the newer branded Caller ID lets you also show your logo and reason for calling.

## 10DLC â?? Business Texting Through Local Phone Numbers

With the massive uptick in business texting, it was only a matter of time before carriers felt more controls were needed to stop spam and make business texting more trustworthy. In 2020, three carriersâ??AT&T, Verizon, and T-Mobileâ?? created 10DLC (10-Digit Long Code). 10DLC is a U.S. approved business texting channel. It allows businesses to send SMS (standard text messages) and MMS (multimedia messages that include images, video, audio or longer text) from a regular 10-digit phone number but with greater deliverability and throughput rates than normal texting.

Before beginning any texting campaigns or sending follow-up texts, businesses will want to do three things to use 10DLC:

1. Register your company/brand.
2. Register your campaign type (e.g., marketing, customer care, notifications).
3. Link the phone numbers you will be texting from to each approved campaign.

Using 10DLC is important because texts from unregistered phone numbers risk being filtered, throttled, or blocked. Texts that have misleading messages, high opt-out rates, or unrecognized URLs will also trigger filters.

For the most successful text outreaches, get a written opt-in from consumers, or if you are buying leads, make sure they are opt-in leads. Tell them who you are and why you are texting them. In your messaging, avoid using shortened URLs or all-caps text. And, make sure consumers can opt-out easily (e.g., â??reply STOP to unsubscribeâ?•).

## A2P Messaging â?? Carrier Classification of Texts

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Shortly before 10DLC was introduced, carriers began formally classifying texts in an effort to enforce rules for application-driven texting. These are the two classifications they adopted:

- **A2P (Application-to-Person)** â?? This refers to automated messaging that goes out to large audiences. It includes any text that has been sent from a software platform like GoHighLevel, Twilio, LeadConnector, dialers or CRMs. Even if a human presses the â??sendâ?• button on the application, it is still classified as A2P.
- **P2P (Person-to-Person)** â?? Normal texting between two people is considered P2P.

Businesses may choose to send A2P texts for any number of reasons, including marketing, follow-ups, alerts, appointment reminders, and more. Regardless of the campaign type, *all* A2P messages must go through 10DLC registration or you will see your delivery rates drop to zero. If you are planning to text in bulk, make sure you follow 10DLC rules.

## CAN-SPAM â?? Email Deliverability

Rules are not just for calling and texting. Even email campaigns have to follow rules. The Federal Trade Commission passed the CAN-SPAM Act in 2003 to establish rules on the content and opt-outs of unsolicited emails. Specifically, it requires businesses to make sure their emails to consumers:

- Avoid deceptive subject lines and misleading headers
- Show a valid physical mailing address
- Are identified as advertising

- Provide a clear way for consumers to unsubscribe from future emails and respect all opt-outs in a timely manner

But content rules aside, perhaps the greatest challenge today is email deliverability. There are many reasons that emails end up in spam rather than reaching their intended audience. Businesses may not have permission (through an opt-in form) to contact the consumer. The email may use a clickbait subject line or overuse terms like â??free!â?• The sender may have a bad reputation or blacklisted domains. For many though, the lack of authentication is the greatest reason.

To raise deliverability and avoid spam folders, businesses need to make sure their emails are authenticated by:

1. **SPF (Sender Policy Framework)** â?? SPF checks *who* is sending the email. It tells inbox providers which servers may send emails on your behalf. This stops spammers from sending emails using your domain from any unauthorized servers.
2. **DKIM (DomainKeys Identified Mail)** â?? DKIM checks the *message integrity and authenticity* by digitally signing your email so consumers will know the message is actually from you and hasnâ??t been modified.
3. **DMARC (Domain-Based Message Authentication Reporting & Conformance)** â?? DMARC *enforces rules*. It tells email providers whether to accept, reject, or quarantine messages that fail SPF or DKIM.

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For successful email outreaches, check all three boxes for SPF, DKIM, and DMARC. Avoid buying cold call lists, instead purchasing opt-in leads for email campaigns. Keep your email contact list updated. And, use tools like MXToolbox to monitor your email campaigns.

## Why Contact Rates Are Dropping Across All Channels

With so many rules, it is easy to see why businesses today struggle with contact rates in nearly every communication channelâ??phone, SMS, and email. Contact rates drop when:

- Carrier trust declines, and STIR/SHAKEN flags your calls.
- Text campaigns arenâ??t registered, and 10DLC blocks your texts.
- Text messages are sent from software, and A2P messaging rules kick in
- Emails lack authentication, and SPF-DKIM-DMARC prevents your emails from being delivered
- Consumers did not consent to your outreaches
- Large numbers of consumers opt out and/or file complaints

The reality of outreach strategies today is that it is less about volume, and more about gaining compliance, trust, and permission.

## Conclusion

To conduct high-performing marketing outreaches today, businesses must ensure that their campaigns adhere to:

- **TCPA**, which controls calling and texting and requires consumer consent
- **DNC rules**, which can block your outreaches even with manual dialing
- **STIR/SHAKEN**, which stops Caller ID spoofing and blocks untrusted numbers
- **10DLC**, which regulates business texting and requires registration
- **A2P messaging** rules for texts sent via an application
- **CAN-SPAM**, which regulates email content and opt-outs
- **SPF, DKIM, and DMARC**, which controls email authentication and delivery

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Poor compliance in any of these areas will prevent your calls, texts, and emails from getting through to your target audience. But, once you understand these rules and set up your systems properly, you will see better connection rates, higher conversions, and more predictable campaign performance.

If you would like more information on how you can compliantly grow your sales, give The Leads Warehouse a call at **1-800-884-8371** or visit our website at https://theleadswarehouse.com.

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