

POINT OF VIEW

Why One Number Is Smarter Than 150

Rethinking 2-Way SMS for Multi-Location Brands

The Question We Keep Hearing

"We use 150 phone numbers in Podium, one per location. Can SmarterSends do the same thing?" The short answer is: no. But before you move on, hear us out because the real question isn't whether you can have 150 numbers. It's whether 150 numbers are actually helping you build better customer relationships and drive more revenue.

Understanding the Old Model

Platforms like Podium were built for a specific use case: local, reactive, one-to-one conversations between a customer and a specific store location. In that world, a dedicated phone number per location makes intuitive sense. The customer texts "the Naperville store" and a team member responds.

But here's where it breaks down: that model was never designed to do what modern marketing automation platforms are designed to do. It was not built to collect, unify, and act on customer data at scale. It was not built to power segmentation, trigger automated journeys, or feed intelligence back into a CRM or ESP. It was built for conversations, not for growth. That model leaves money on the table.

The Hidden Costs of 150 Numbers

On the surface, one number per location sounds logical. In practice, it creates a web of operational complexity that most brands don't fully account for until they're already deep in the weeds.

Compliance & Consent Fragmentation

Every phone number requires its own consent management process. With 150 numbers, you have 150 separate consent chains to track, document, and audit. A customer who opted in at one location is not automatically opted in at another. TCR and carrier requirements for 10 DLC registration multiply with each number, and the compliance exposure grows proportionally.

Data That Never Connects

When a customer interacts with your Naperville location via its dedicated number, that conversation lives in that location's silo. It doesn't automatically connect to their purchase history, email open behavior, loyalty profile, or last web session. You have 150 conversations happening in parallel, and none of them are talking to each other.

The result: your marketing team can't use SMS behavior to inform email campaigns. Your CRM can't trigger SMS based on a purchase. Your automation platform sees a fraction of the customer story because the SMS channel is fragmented across 150 disconnected endpoints.

Operational Scale

Think about what it takes to launch a systemwide promotion. You're not sending one message from one number, you're managing 150 sending channels, 150 sets of unsubscribes, 150 compliance logs, and 150 points of failure. This sounds like overhead nightmare.

The multi-number model was designed for local conversations. SmarterSends is designed for modern intelligent marketing at scale. These are fundamentally different, and they require fundamentally different architectures. One is a disparate strategy and one is a cohesive strategy. One requires endless management, the other is simple and dynamic.

The SmarterSends Approach: One Number, Total Intelligence

SmarterSends is built on a different philosophy. Rather than replicating the Podium model at scale, we have architected our platform around the way modern marketing automation partners are designed to operate.

Our approach uses a single short code or a single 10 DLC number. That single number becomes the unified SMS identity for your brand across all locations. Every conversation, every opt-in, every response, every signal... it all flows into a single customer profile inside your marketing platform.

Why This Works with Your Platform Partners

The platforms SmarterSends integrates with are not built to manage 150 individual phone numbers. They are built to manage customer journeys, not location directories. When you work within their architecture rather than against it, you unlock their full capability:

- Automated journeys trigger from SMS interactions, not just email clicks
- Segmentation can include SMS engagement as a first-class signal
- A/B testing works cleanly across your entire audience
- Unsubscribe and compliance data is managed centrally, not per-location

Consent Becomes a Strategic Asset

With a single number, consent is captured once and tied to a customer identity, not to a location. That means:

- A customer who opts in online can receive SMS regardless of which location they visit
- Consent portability follows the customer across their entire relationship with your brand
- Regulatory compliance (TCPA, CTIA, carrier rules) is managed in one place, with one audit trail
- Re-consent and suppression logic runs once, not 150 times

The Consent Advantage

Brands using fragmented multi-number setups routinely discover compliance gaps and deliverability issues during audits, because consent was captured at the location level but campaigns are deployed at the brand level. A unified number eliminates that mismatch entirely. One number, one consent record, one source of truth.

Side-by-Side: How the Models Compare

Podium Model	SmarterSends Model
One number per location (150+ numbers)	Single short code or 10 DLC for the brand
Consent managed per location	Consent unified in the customer profile
SMS data siloed by location	SMS data flows into marketing automation platform
Manual coordination for brand-wide campaigns	Brand-wide campaigns deployed from one channel
150 compliance footprints to manage	One compliance footprint to manage
Conversations disconnected from purchase/email data	Conversations enrich the full customer profile
Local, reactive engagement model	Scalable, automated, data-driven engagement
Works for service; limited for marketing	Built for marketing and service workflows

Bridging the Gap Between Marketing and Selling

Here's the bigger picture that gets lost in the "how many numbers" conversation: 2-Way SMS is not just a customer service tool. **It is a revenue channel.** And to treat it as a revenue channel, the data it generates has to connect to the systems that drive revenue decisions.

What Happens When SMS Data Becomes Actionable

When a customer responds to an SMS promotion, that response tells you something meaningful: intent, interest, purchase stage. In the multi-number model, that signal stays in the location's inbox. In the SmarterSends model, that signal becomes part of the customer's profile and can immediately trigger downstream actions:

- Follow-up email with the product they asked about
- Loyalty reward triggered by the conversation
- Sales alert to the store associate for high-value customers
- Suppression from a competing campaign to avoid message fatigue
- Attribution data that connects the SMS interaction to a purchase

This is the definition of bridging marketing and selling. The conversation that happens at the local level between your brand and your customer becomes input into the larger commercial relationship. That only works when the data is unified.

Think of it this way:

A customer who texts back "yes, I'm interested" is raising their hand. With 150 numbers, that raised hand is visible only to one location's inbox. With SmarterSends, it's visible to your entire marketing platform and it can trigger the next best action automatically.

Answering the Objections

We understand this represents a meaningful shift in how teams think about SMS. Here are the questions we hear most often and how we answer them.

The Objection	Our Response
<i>"Our locations need their own number so customers know who they're talking to."</i>	Customers don't build relationships with phone numbers. They build relationships with brands. The message content, personalization, and response logic can be entirely location-specific. The number is just the pipe; the experience is what matters. <i>Note: iOS 26 introduced an "unknown numbers" tab. Those 150 numbers in the Podium setup are all unknown, whereas messages to a single short code, which has already been opted into, will not get shuffled off to a separate tab.</i>
<i>"We've been using Podium for years. Switching feels risky."</i>	We're not asking you to abandon what works for local service interactions. We're asking you to layer a more powerful, data-connected channel on top of it for marketing and automation. These can coexist but the growth opportunity lives in the unified model.
<i>"What if a customer at one location gets a message from the other location?"</i>	Audience segmentation handles this. Your marketing platform already knows which location a customer is associated with. Messages are targeted to the right audience at the right time the number is unified but the audience logic is precise.
<i>"Does this create compliance risk if one number covers 150 locations?"</i>	It actually reduces compliance risk. One registration, one consent framework, one audit trail. The complexity of managing compliance across 150 separate numbers is significantly higher and more error-prone than a single unified setup.
<i>"Our IT or legal team will push back."</i>	We're happy to walk through the technical and compliance architecture directly with your team. A single short code with centralized consent management typically receives a faster sign-off than a multi-number configuration because the risk surface is smaller and more transparent.

The Bottom Line

The question isn't whether SmarterSends can give you 150 phone numbers. The question is whether 150 phone numbers are the right architecture for what you're actually trying to accomplish.

If the goal is to use SMS as a growth channel, to capture intent, enrich customer profiles, automate intelligent journeys, and drive revenue across your entire base of locations, then a fragmented multi-number model is working against you.

SmarterSends gives you one number, total clarity, and a direct pipeline from every SMS interaction into the marketing platform where decisions get made. That's not a limitation. That's the design.

The New Way of Thinking

Stop asking: "How do I replicate my location structure in my SMS channel?" Start asking: "How do I make every SMS interaction feed intelligence back into my marketing platform so it drives the next best action?"

Ready to see it in action?

We're happy to walk through a live demo or model out what a unified approach would look like for your brand.

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