



CASE STUDY

Salvation Army Quincy & Kroc Center Use Texting to Keep Members Happy

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What They Do:

The Salvation Army meets physical, emotional, and spiritual needs in the community. The Kroc Center builds community with fitness classes, programming, and a gathering space.

Founded:

The Kroc Center opened in 2011, The Salvation Army in Quincy dates to 1893.

Learn more:

centralusa.salvationarmy.org/midland/quincy
& KrocQuincy.org

ABOUT

The Salvation Army's ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs without discrimination. The Salvation Army helps people in need through their thrift stores, emergency shelter, job training, and more. They're feeding people, building community, and in general doing the most good.

"It's what our membership wants. It's the value we get because the members are happy. And it helps us keep in touch with our members. They were asking for texting for alerts and once we found Rally it was a natural fit."

**Carolyn Carpenter,
Marketing Manager**

The Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center offers workout space, educational classes, youth development, performance venue, and more. It's all housed in a 98,000-square-foot building that sits on an entire city block.

"One minute I will be telling everyone that a class is canceled and the next minute I will be asking for volunteers to ring bells or come to a ukulele class."

BIGGEST CHALLENGES:

"You have an hour and a half?"
Carolyn jokes.

Finding workers:

"That's a hard one. Finding people to stay and continue to work."

Finding volunteers:

"We have struggled the last few years finding volunteers to ring bells to the point where we pay bell ringers—we've actually done the math. ... There's some places where we've decided not to have kettles because we don't have enough volunteers."



Competition:

"We'd love to have more members. ... We have a Planet Fitness coming in just down the road."

WHAT KIND OF TEXTS THEY SEND:

Emergency alerts:

They send out updates for severe weather, closures, and canceled classes. "I'm sure most of the people using Rally are not using it for alerts like we are, but I think it's a unique way that others had not thought about."

Declined cards:

When someone gets a new credit or debit card, the transition isn't always smooth. The card gets declined and their membership is put on hold or canceled. "I can send out a text message to those 20, 30, 40, however many people. We can download that list and then plug it in and send it and usually within a few hours they have people saying, 'Oh my goodness, I got a new card, here's the new information.' We can actually keep members through that which saves us on the back end."

Promoting classes:

The Kroc Center will share new classes through text alerts, and that has sparked enough interest to meet their minimum numbers for a class.



HOW ARE THINGS GOING LATELY?

Struggling:

"We see people needing more help. The number of people going through bread lines is larger. People asking for money, the amount is larger. People's bills are doubling... People are struggling. Hannibal is not a wealthy community to begin with, so they're struggling just as much as everybody if not a little more."

Support:

"Quincy, Illinois is a very unique city. They support us—it's incredible. Our majors have said they've never seen a place like this before and they've been in a variety of cities. Our thrift store—you just wouldn't believe how much we make and then it all goes directly to our direct services or emergency shelter and such. So it's just phenomenal. I've been here five years and I still pinch myself thinking I work for the Salvation Army."

Change coming:

"At the same time, I feel like we're on the cusp of something as well. Something big is going to be happening. I don't know exactly what, but we have an energy." New leadership is part of it—"There's just an air about them and this place and this community that I just feel like we're on the cusp of something really fantastic."



WHY DID YOU CHOOSE RALLY?

Carpenter had been using another texting service provided by their corporate headquarters, but when they were told that was going away, she had just weeks to find a new service.

Care:

"I had other options, but a lot of them didn't seem to care about who we were or what we were doing. ... and [Rally founder and CEO] James did. He walked me through it because it was something I'd never done before. He walked alongside us and helped us figure out what we needed."

More characters:

"A lot of the other places didn't have the number of characters that we can use to text." Most places are limited to 160 characters, but Rally allows up to 300.

Timing:

"Some of the other places told us we couldn't send out text messages before 8 in the morning." That's a problem for a community center that opens their doors at 5 a.m. and often needs to send out closure alerts at 4:30 a.m. It's a safety issue in the winter to stop members from venturing out on slippery and dangerous roads. The 'no texts before 8 a.m.' rule is a compliance issue for marketing texts, but there are exceptions for emergency alerts and Rally allows for that.

TIPS FOR IMPLEMENTING RALLY:

Share the keywords and short codes: "We share it in our member drive. It's in the welcome package they get. It's always on our website. It's always in our program guides and it's always in our class schedules. Then we have signs throughout the facility or TV screens that we put it on and it'll rotate in and out every other week or so."

More communication:

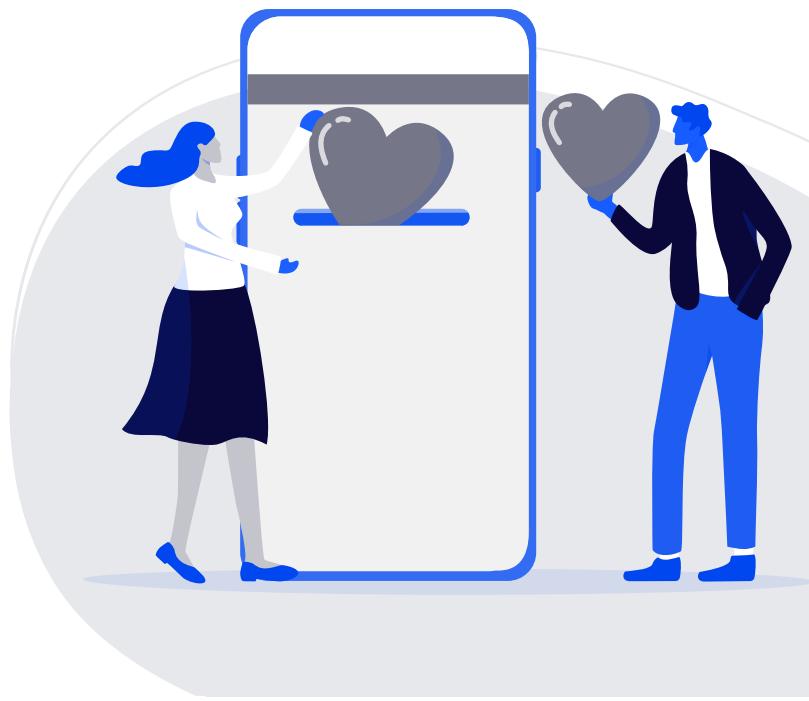
They surveyed their members and found that people wanted immediate alerts. People felt like they weren't communicating enough: "People do get upset when we don't send out a text message."

Reactions:

Carpenter hasn't tried conversations over text and engaging in back and forth, but after COVID-19 she did look at the responses to the first text announcing they would be able to open their doors: "There were so many people that were just so excited to be able to get back to their routine, even though there were some limitations. The number of smiley faces and celebrations and so forth. It warmed our hearts. It made a difficult situation so much better."

Pre-setup timely alerts:

"A lot of the other places didn't have the number of characters that we can use to text." Most places are limited to 160 characters, but Rally allows up to 300.



WHAT'S NEXT?

Could do more:

"I think I've barely scratched the surface of what Rally can do. That's where it gets difficult—for what I need it? It's great. It works. But I know there are more things that on the development side or the giving side where we could be doing more."

Support When Needed:

"Rally's support team has helped me when issues come up. I have this aura with computers—not everything goes right. They're two hours behind us—they're in California and we're in Central Illinois—and I'll have an issue and I don't know what I'm doing wrong or what's happening or there's a glitch, and they just fix it for me. The customer service alone is worth it."



See how Rally can work for you. Go to RallyCorp.com to book a demo.