HLS Holiday Manager
Software Manual

SMS messaging

Last Updated: 10th May 2013

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Introduction

The introduction of SMS (Short Message Service) messaging options was a huge leap forward for Companies wanting to earn a competitive advantage within any service related industries.

For holiday lettings especially, being able to send instant SMS messages to customers and business contacts alike can be a huge benefit. With SMS, holiday letting agents have the ability to confirm a holiday booking, instruct maintenance contractors, contact holidaymakers etc. instantly to a mobile phone for just a few pence each time! It also enables specific targeting marketing campaigns to be carried out, for a fraction of the cost of a mailshot and can be on their mobile phone within a few minutes, rather than have to wait days for the post to arrive. Imagine how effectively a late cancellation could be marketed out to guests that have previously stayed in this location!

HLS Solutions were very keen to be able to offer this business critical service automatically within the software. After significant research, we are delighted to have selected two market leading Companies within this competitive industry who can provide this service for our customers. The Companies we have selected are **Icetrak** and **Dynmark**, and their contact information can be found below, and later in this document.

The software has been configured to allow either Company to be selected as the supplier of SMS services, however it should be noted the software is purely acting as a tool to allow the messages to be sent, and a suitable contract with one of these providers will need to be established first.

Contact Information:

Icetrak:

Contact:	Denise Rigby
Email:	drigby@icetrak.net
Tel:	0845 456 0577
Website:	www.icetrak.com

Dynmark:

Contact:	Sam Kearsey
Email:	sam.kearsey@dynmark.com
Tel:	01242 257938/01242 266 630
Website:	www.dynmark.com

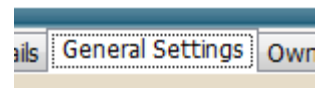Full details each Company's services can be found in the relevant sections later in this document.

SMS configuration

Once you have obtained your account details from your chosen supplier, it is time to configure your unique settings in the software.

First click on System settings button from the main screen

Then select the "General Settings" tab.

Click on the Setup Provider button within the SMS Setting section.

Select either **Dynmark** or **Icetrak** from the list as your chosen provider.

Both screens have links to the relevant website and email address, from which you can view their Company information. Once you have established an account with either/both suppliers, they will provide you with the information you need to complete this section and start sending messages.

Enter your main Company email address, the username provided by the provider, the password/pin number, the contact mobile number and your Company domain name.

If this Company is going to be your chosen provider, click in the tick box to select this Company.
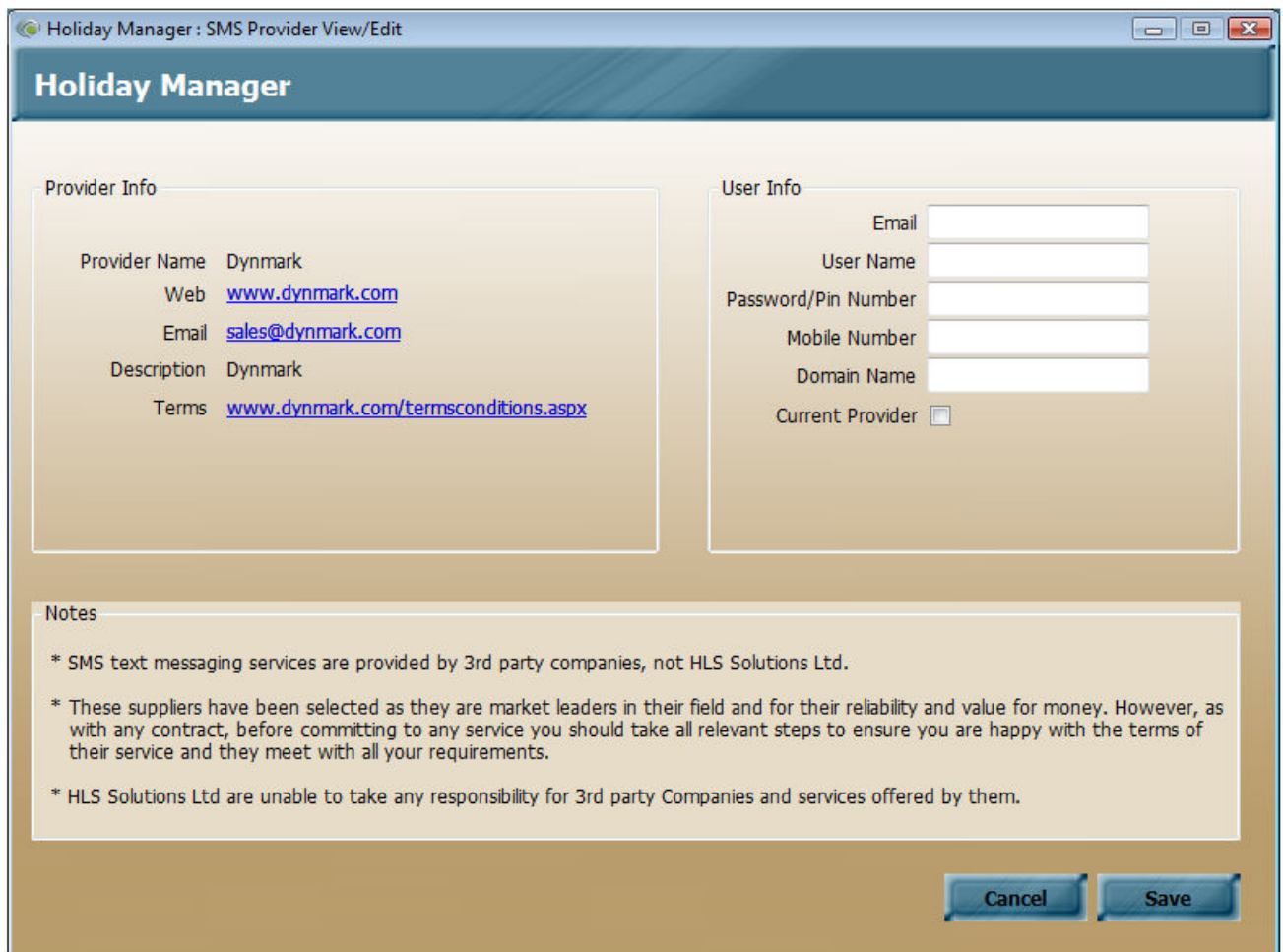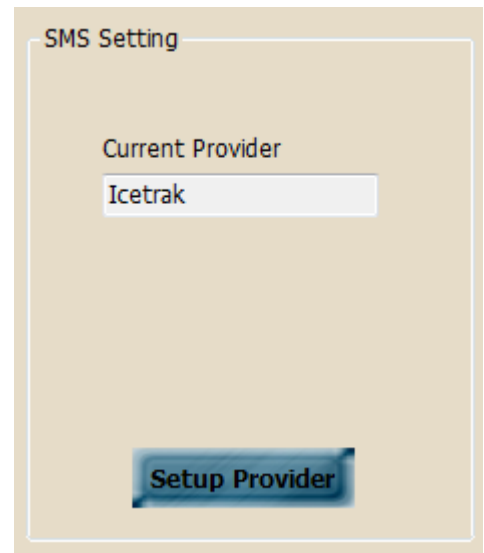
If you mention HLS Solutions when you are setting up an account, both **Icetrak** and **Dynmark** can provide you with a limited number of test credits, which is highly recommended for testing and choosing the right SMS service provider that you wish to use long term.
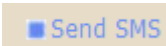
If you have any questions or require any assistance with the SMS service the customer service departments for both Companies are excellent, and will be able to provide you with any assistance you need.

Using SMS

Once you have successfully configured your SMS settings within the program, you are ready to start sending SMS messages.
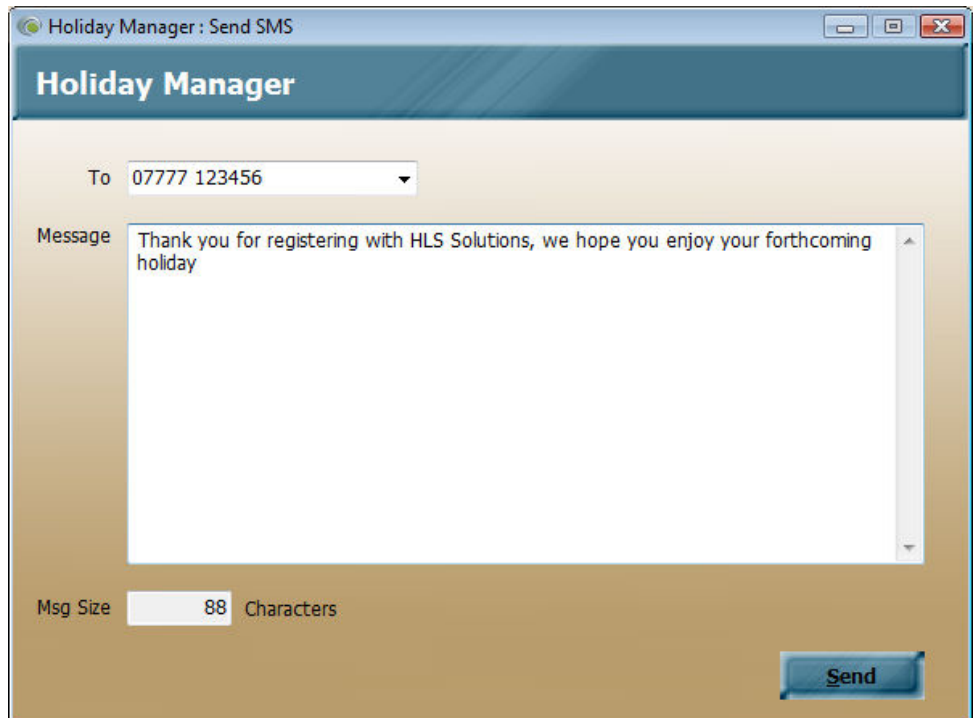
There are two main ways SMS messages can be sent, either as an individual one-off message, or as an automated template.

Sending Individual Messages

If you wish to send a one off message, you can simply click on the "Send SMS"   ■ Send SMS   option, which is located on all of the information screens next to the contact numbers.

This will open up the following screen, with the relevant mobile number populated. Simply click in the message box and type your message and click send when finished. The "Msg Size" will provide you with a running total of the number of characters in your message.

Once you have finished your message, click on the "Send" button to send your message.

SMS Templates

SMS templates work in exactly the same way as you would use a letter template. You create the content of the message that you wish to send, and save this as a named template. This template can then be produced automatically from the system upon selected events and sent to the linked recipients. You can also use merge codes to pull through selected information and personalise the messages.

To setup or amend an existing template, click on the "Template Setup" button from the main menu screen.

To create a new template, select the "New" option from the SMS section.

Complete the template information by choosing a relevant name for the template. Select what type of record is going to be the recipient of this SMS message, either Owner, Property, Holidaymaker or Maintenance Company.

Type in the message that you wish to send, including any merge codes that you wish to use. For a full list of the merge codes available please refer to the Word Processing and Merge Code manual.

At the bottom of the screen will be a character counter to display the message size. Please note, if you are using merge codes within this message the message counter can only be used as a guide, and is likely to differ considerably when the relevant information is merged.
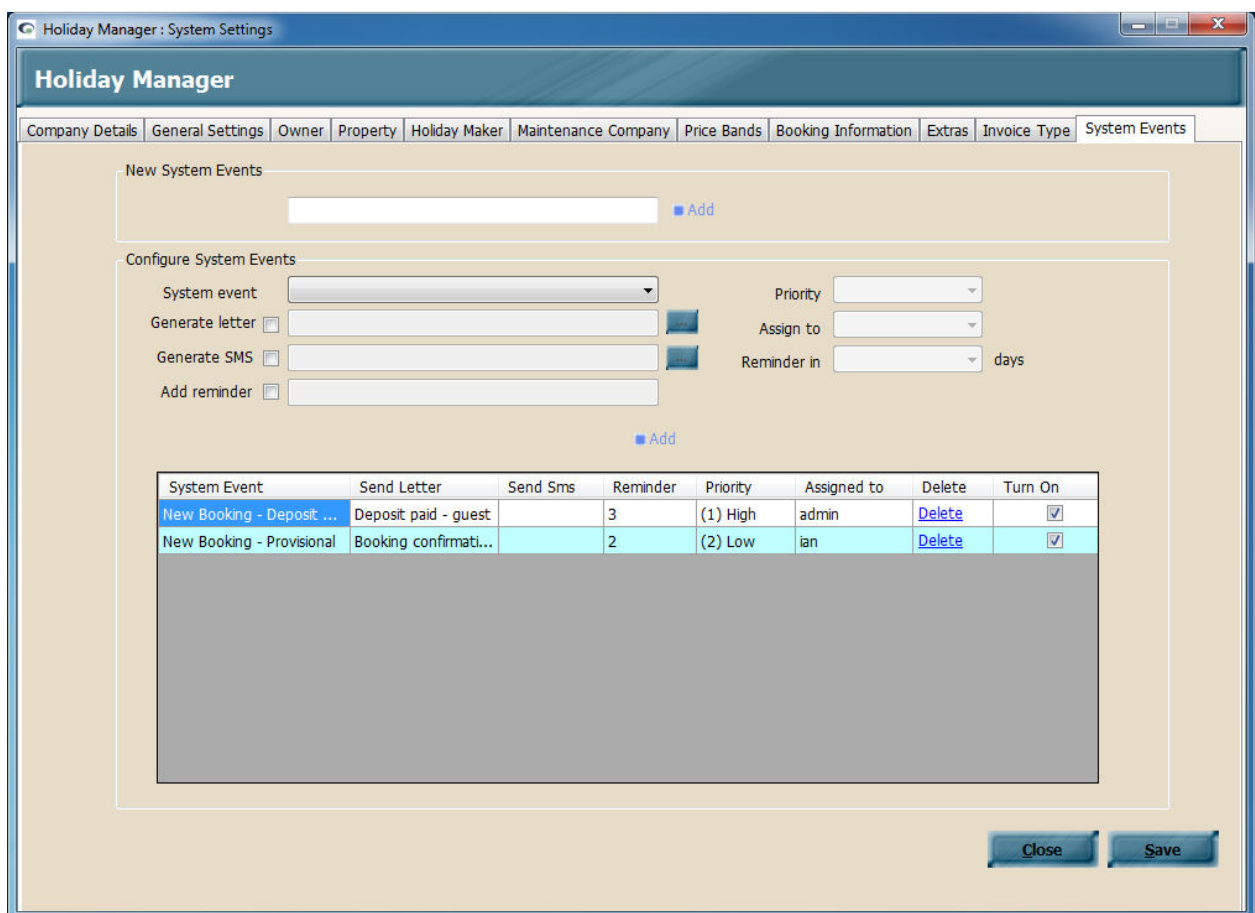
Once saved this template can be amended, or attached to selected System Events as required.

System Events and SMS

Just as you can set letters or reminders to be sent when certain System Events are triggered, you can utilise the system to send automatic SMS messages.

Unlimited messages can be sent to any record that is linked to the System event. The system can also merge personalised information by using the merge code functionality.

To setup a new System Event you need to access the System Settings part of the program. The System Events setup can be found on the last tab along the top of the screen.

Choose the System Event you wish to trigger the SMS message by clicking on the drop down list and choosing the appropriate event.

For each System Event you can select unlimited letters, SMS messages or setup a reminder to come up in a selected Daily Tasks list.

Use the tick boxes at the side of the letter, SMS or reminder in any combination to select the actions you want to happen for this System Event. To select the letters or SMS messages you want to be triggered, click on the relevant locate button and select the message(s) you want to send.

When you are happy with the combination of events you have setup click "Add" to add to the list
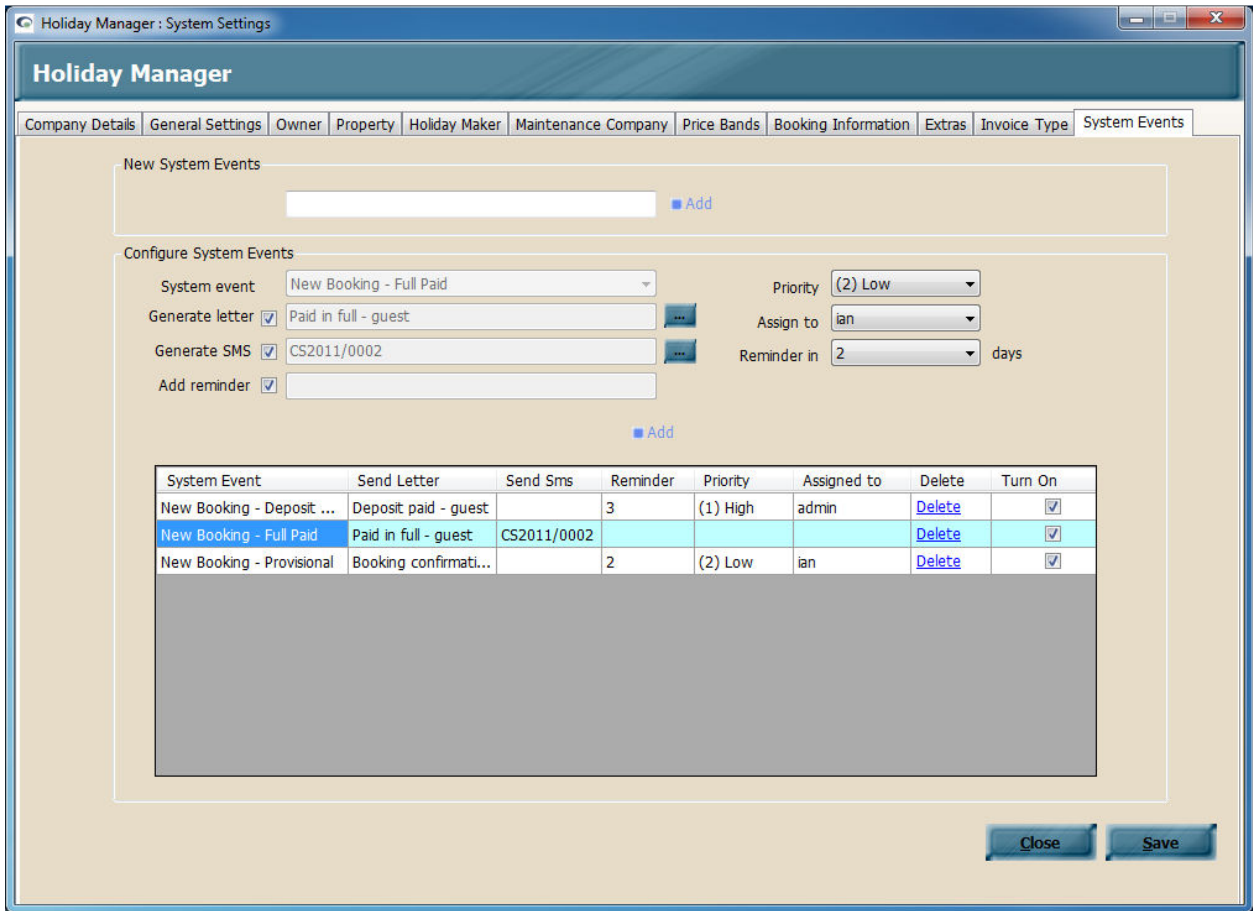
Whenever this System event is triggered in the future the relevant combination of events will now be generated, whether this is a letter, SMS or a reminder added to the Daily Tasks, or a combination of all three.

Appendices - Provider Information

Icetrak

Why Icetrak?

If it's important to you that your business messages are delivered reliably, securely and quickly and you absolutely need to know that this is the case (or if not, why not) then Icetrak is the choice. The following information covers what we believe are the extra "value" that Icetrak can provide.

Icetrak <u>does not</u> provide ring tones, logos, phone covers. Spam SMS campaigns, unsolicited faxes, direct marketing are the domain of our competitors and make up none of our business.

Icetrak is business messaging for our business clients. This means when you send us your messages to be delivered they will not be queued up behind 10,000 "You've won a free holiday" promotional text messages or a 50,000 number fax shot promoting fad diets or worlds cheapest print toner.

We aim to answer <u>and deal with</u> all client support calls immediately. If we cannot do this we guarantee you will not wait more than one hour before we respond, (Monday to Friday 09:00 to 17:00).

Icetrak offers inbound and outbound services for both SMS and fax messaging.

Icetrak monitoring software automatically detects unusual incidents that may lead to delivery problems. All "out of the ordinary" failures are automatically reported to our technical support team as they arise so although you will be notified within a few minutes, we will already be aware and will be investigating and working towards a solution.

Icetrak owns all its own software and is in a constant development cycle to ensure that it continues to offer new services and enhancements to existing services. We readily acknowledge that the best people to guide us on product development are the people who use the services, our partners and our customers. Recent developments include picture messaging, detailed delivery reporting, sending emails from mobiles using text messaging not WAP.

The Icetrak messaging service is implemented across two UK data centres with multiple delivery channels in to an international fax network of over 30,000 fax lines and multiple sms channels linked in to the GSM network. Exceptionally high levels of resilience and failover are built in as standard.

Many low cost service providers have only one channel for delivery so the risk of failure or congestion is much higher than with Icetrak.

The phone (and fax) numbers you send messages to are secure within the Icetrak service and are not used for any other purpose than to deliver the message and report back. After 7 days all records are permanently deleted from the servers.

Icetrak is designed so that you can keep your data within your own applications and only send the information to Icetrak when you actually want to send some messages. This means you don't need to constantly upload your data to us and maintain multiple copies of your data across a web link.

To support your focus on managing costs, Icetrak features extensive delivery reporting and customers can

choose from individual email notifications per message or consolidated end of day reports. Monthly billing details every message sent, by user, department, cost code.

Monthly reports are provided in Excel format so customers can easily sort and analyse the information for costing and budgeting across departments, offices, regions. No extra charge is made for providing exactly the level of reporting required and customers can change their choice of reports at any time.

SMS Text Messaging:

Icetrak only use established UK carriers for delivery of text messages. This means your messages will be correctly time stamped. Low cost, low quality of service off-shore service providers deliver messages via networks from all around the world and cannot guarantee 100% delivery or correct timings.

Icetrak pay all network interoperability charges so your service and messages will not be terminated without notification by any of the UK carriers.

We only confirm "delivery" when the message is delivered to the handset NOT when the message is delivered in to the GSM network.

Fax Messaging:

The Icetrak fax service has a capacity of over 30,000 fax lines. This provides an extremely high level of throughput coupled with resilience. Faxes are delivered promptly regardless of the level of use across the service.

Icetrak handles all of the retries on "busy" and each users profile can be adjusted to suit the delivery of their faxes. As an example, a user might be experiencing an unusually high level of fax failures due to "busy" on certain numbers. These failures will have been automatically logged by the system and an alternative retry pattern will be put in place to improve the delivery ratios.

Icetrak can add cover pages automatically to your faxes and we can overlay your body text and "key" details onto your corporate cover page. Many organisations must ensure that every fax leaving the corporate domain goes out with an appropriate cover sheet for compliance reasons or to ensure terms and conditions of sale are always transmitted.

For organisations looking to reduce their reliance on fax machines but still have a requirement to fax "original paper" documents, Icetrak has integrated their fax services with the latest multi-function devices from companies such as Hewlett Packard and Xerox. These products offer print, copy, email, scan (and now Icetrak fax) from the one device which reduces cost of ownership and can streamline the document management processes associated with fax.

The Icetrak inbound fax service delivers fax to email as "pdf" attachments to be read by Adobe Acrobat Reader. Other inbound services employ proprietary image viewers that have to be installed on each client PC and associate with many other file types.

Icetrak features inbound voice to email as well as fax. The one Icetrak number handles both fax and voice. Customers can choose to have one or both services.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q.   Who are Icetrak?

A.   We are messaging specialists, independent of HLS Solutions who selected us to provide the text messaging that works in conjunction with their Holiday Manager system.

Q.   What does it cost to use the service?

A.   You pay Icetrak a monthly licence fee of £10 to cover as many users and offices that you want to use the service and then you just pay for the messages you send us. There is an optional (£5 per month) charge to have each of your messages delivered with your company's name identified as the sender when your contact receives the message.

Q.   How much does a text message cost and how do I buy them?

A.   Each message costs 8p. You buy them in advance from us in values of £100 and upward. There are volume discounts available for volume purchases in values of £500 and £1,000 where the message price reduces to 7.5p and 7p respectively.

Q.   What are the support charges?

A.   There aren't any. If you have any problems with the Icetrak side of the service, ring or email us and if we can't deal with your request immediately, we will respond within one hour (Monday to Friday 08:30 to 17:30).

Q.   Do I have to use my messages up in a certain time?

A.   No. Your messages are held for you to use at any rate you want.

Q.   What happens when I run out of messages?

A.   You shouldn't run out. When your credit levels drops to £25 we will send you an email asking you to top up with another purchase. We recommend that you buy enough messages to last you for 4 to 6 weeks. Once your account is set up and paid for, we will invoice you for future purchases on 7 day payment terms.

Q.   How do I keep track of how many messages I am sending?

A.   Each month you will be sent an Excel spreadsheet itemising each message sent, who sent it, which number it was sent to, date, time etc. This is a very useful report because you can use it to identify if you are regularly sending messages to invalid numbers in your Holiday Manager database.

There are other reports that can be set up for you on a weekly or monthly basis to highlight who is using the service more than others or who is being more effective in the content of their texts. For more details please contact Icetrak Customer Services.

Q.   How do I know if the text message has been delivered?

A.   We will set up your Icetrak account so that each time a message fails to get delivered we send you an email notifying you of the failure and the number so you can take appropriate action. There is no extra charge for this notification. If you do not want an email for each failure as they happen, we can send you a daily report for all failed messages in the previous 24 hours. If you want both that's fine!
Icetrak messages are reported as "delivered" when they arrive at the phone; some services report "sent" when the message is delivered to the phone's network NOT the phone.

Q.   Why would a message not get delivered?

A.   A number of reasons. People change phones regularly so the number they gave you 3 months ago could now be invalid. The phone owner could be changing numbers and the network's central numbers database might not yet reflect the change. The phone could be switched off (shift work, holidays abroad) or out of reception - we will continue to re-try for up to 24 hours before failing. Or, the phone's text message memory could be full.

Q.   How long does it take to deliver my messages?

A.   Once we receive the email from your system, the process only takes a few seconds to prepare and send your messages. Then, typically it's no more than 20 to 40 seconds to connect and send through to the mobile phones provided they are switched on and in reception.

Q.   Can people text back their replies to our text messages?

A.   Yes but you will need the Icetrak 2-way service. This is ideal for people to confirm back their interest in a property, their response to your credit control text without inviting them to call the office when a simple Yes or No response is all that is required. Icetrak will email back to the originator of the text the text reply as well as anybody else who sent a message to that phone in the last 24 hours. For more details please contact Icetrak Customer Services.

Q.   How can we ensure that the person who owns the phone knows it is us who are sending the messages?

A.   The optional Sender Identification (see above) is one method – this puts your Company name on the phone screen as the Sender so before they open and read the message they know it is from you. If you don't want the Sender ID option, we can put whatever "prefix" you want at the beginning of every message you send out. Typically this would be your company name and office phone number which saves you typing it in each time. We can also personalise the prefix for each sender so they can have their own direct dial or mobile number for the contact to reply to. There is no charge for this.

Q.   How can I control and manage my text messaging costs?

A.   You need to know how to use the HLS Solutions system effectively. Sending out too many messages will cost more and also create more work in terms of incoming calls and administration some of it wasted and unnecessary. Sending out too few messages may limit the impact of the service and mean you will end up spending more time on repetitive phone calls than you need to.

Key to this is monitoring everyone's use of the service - how many messages they send, how many fail, why and what content do they put in the message that works well for some but not others. The weekly and monthly traffic reports provide a lot of useful information that can be quickly analysed by managers and acted upon.

For companies wanting to limit the amount they spend on text messaging, we can implement a "quota" that restricts the amount of messages sent. This can be a monthly figure that you do not want to exceed for example £200 a month across the company. Or, you can apply it at a per user level for example no more than 100 messages per week or 400 messages per month and so on.

As you continue to use the service, you may wish to make changes to the quotas, reports, who receives them and at what frequency. The Icetrak Customer Services team is on hand to discuss and implement these changes.

Q.   How can I manage my costs across all the offices?

A.   We can set up billing codes for each user within each of your offices. Your monthly traffic statement will then summarise your costs per billing code.

Q.   What if I decide I don't want to continue with the service?

A.   We'll refund any unused value of pre-purchased messages – no questions asked.

Q.   Can I try it before I decide whether or not to buy?

A.   Yes of course. Contact us and we'll set you up with a free trial with up to 100 free messages.

For more information contact:

Icetrak Customer Services
Icetrak Limited
6 Malvern Gate
Bromwich Road
Worcester
WR2 4BN

t: 0845 456 0561
f: 0870 889 5000
e: customer.services@icetrak.net

Dynmark

Start Sending Messages Instantly

Dynmark Direct e-txt is an award-winning messaging application for low cost bulk SMS that can be set up within minutes.

Incredibly easy to use, e-txt provides a simple, single window application for deploying SMS campaigns. It is ideal for smaller organisations that want to take advantage of our competitive rates per message without having to pay set-up fees.

Dynmark Direct e-txt allows the user to set up a free account online which can instantly be used to send messages to individuals and groups alike.

Features of Dynmark Direct e-txt include:

- **Access and manage your e-txt account online**
- **Manage contacts and groups** and run searches on contacts and groups
- **Outlook style interface** to view and manage inbound messages
- Create rules to **manage inbound numbers more effectively**
- **Set up email to SMS** and SMS to email
- Access **detailed delivery reports**
- **Create templates** for frequently used messages

A versatile application, Dynmark Direct e-txt is regularly used for a variety of mobile marketing and CRM purposes. For example, bars and nightclubs promote their latest offers and events, football teams send the latest news to players and fans, and other organisations use unique long numbers and short codes to advance their customer interaction and generate new leads.

Another popular application of e-txt is appointment confirmations or reminders, whereas others use etxt internally to manage staff working remotely and to organise shifts.

Dynmark Direct e-txt is also available in a downloadable PC version, offering additional features, and comes with a range of plugins for MS Outlook and CRM systems.

For more information, please contact us on sales@dynmark.com. Our bulk SMS credit prices can be viewed on the **pricing page** on our website.