

# GETTING STARTED GUIDE

GROUP TEXT MESSAGING FROM CREATIVE MESSAGING SOLUTIONS LLC

## WELCOME!

This guide is divided into three sections.

1. The Introduction to Group Text Messaging section describes exactly what it is that we do.
2. The Quick Start section is an abbreviated version of the next section, and will tell you the essentials you need to know to start communicating using our services.
3. The Reference section contains all the details about using our services.

We know you don't like to read manuals, so we've kept it simple and brief. Chances are you won't have to read the whole thing. It's pretty easy.

## INTRODUCTION TO GROUP TEXT MESSAGING

In a nutshell, our group messaging services allow you to create lists of the mobile<sup>1</sup> phone numbers of your members, customers, or friends, then easily send SMS text messages<sup>2</sup> to everyone on your list. You can send messages from our Web site or from your own mobile phone. You can send one message from your phone and reach literally hundreds of your group members in seconds! Because people carry their mobile phones with them, text messaging is ideal for sending important, time-sensitive messages. And since the message is delivered directly to the phone in their pocket, you don't have to wait for your group members to get home, turn on their computer, and check their email to get a message from you.

If you're new to text messaging you should ask your mobile phone carrier<sup>3</sup> if you have any limits on the number of text messages sent or received, and what the cost is of additional messages. You're going to be sending and receiving more text messages now and you don't want a surprise when the bill comes. Most carriers have inexpensive plans that include hundreds of text messages each month.

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<sup>1</sup> In the US we usually refer to mobile phones as "cell phones", referring to the cellular nature of the network they communicate on. Everyone else calls them "mobiles" or "mobile phones". We use the non-US terminology because it sounds more sophisticated. We're really just talking about your cell phone.

<sup>2</sup> SMS Text Messages are brief (about 160-characters) messages that can be sent directly from your mobile phone to another mobile phone. It's like email but much shorter, much quicker, and much easier to send and receive.

<sup>3</sup> For some reason we call mobile phone companies either "carriers" or "operators". When we refer to your carrier, we're talking about the company from which you get your mobile phone service.

## QUICK START

If you haven't already gone through the ordering process to register at our site and set up your initial groups, that's the first step. Once you've done that....

1. If you didn't **name your groups** when you registered, you can do that by logging into your account and choosing "Assign/Rename Groups" from the menu on the left of your screen.
2. Now you can **invite people to join your group**. Tell them to text your group name to 564646 (which spells "JOININ" on the keypad). So if your group is called MyGroup, have them simply send the word MyGroup to 564646. They will receive a confirmation message, to which they have to reply YES to complete the sign-up process. Standard message charges apply.<sup>4</sup>
3. You should **join your own group** so you can verify your messages are getting through and so you can understand the process you're asking your members or customers to use.
4. If you are not going to be the one in charge of sending messages to this group, you can **invite someone else to manage the group**. They will be able to send messages to the group but won't have access to any of your billing information. You do this by logging into your account, selecting "Add/Remove/List group managers", and entering the person's email address. Once they accept your invitation they will be able to send messages to the group. You can invite the same person to manage several groups, have several managers for each group, or just have one manager for each group. Of course as the account owner, you can send messages to any group and can change account settings.
5. Now you can **send messages to your group** either from our Web site or from your mobile phone. To send a message from the Web site, log into your account and select the Messages button or select "Send Message" from the menu on the left. Select the group you want to send to and enter your message. To send a message from your phone, text SEND then the group name then your message to 564646. So to send a message to MyGroup from your phone you'd text this to 564646:

SEND MYGROUP Don't forget the meeting tonight at 7PM!

6. Depending on the nature of any promotional offer you might've used to register at our site, you probably have some free message credits that come with your plan every month. When you run out of message credits you can **purchase message credits** at our site by logging into your account and choosing "Purchase additional message credits" from the menu on the left.
7. As your needs change you can **purchase additional groups** at our site by again logging into your account and choosing "Purchase additional groups" from the menu on the left. You can also **rename and re-use your current groups** if your need for them runs out.
8. If your credit card expires or you need to **change your billing information** for any reason, you can do so by logging into your account and choosing "Edit billing information".

That's all there is to it! There are other features of your account which you can access by logging in and using the menu on the left of the screen.

If you have questions, consult the Q&A section below, look at the Support FAQ on our site, or contact Tech Support using the email address provided in the Support area of the site.

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<sup>4</sup> "Standard message charges apply" is language we're required to use every time we tell someone to text something to us. It simply means that whatever the user's mobile phone carrier charges for text messaging applies to this message. We think that's pretty obvious, but by contract we have to say it. So you'll see this statement frequently at our site and in our documentation.

## SERVICE REFERENCE

This section contains more detailed information about our service and how it works. It's actually quite simple and the Getting Started section above is sufficient for most people's needs. This section just fills in the gaps with additional details.

## ABOUT OUR COMPANY AND GROUP TEXTING SERVICES

Creative Messaging Solutions LLC operates as a couple different Web sites which offer similar services. [www.ChurchTextingManager.com](http://www.ChurchTextingManager.com) is our group texting service targeted at churches. [www.TextingManager.com](http://www.TextingManager.com) focuses on business, whose needs are different from those of churches. At this point, the functionality of both as documented here is basically the same.

We operate an SMS *short code*, which is a 6-digit number (ours is 564646, which spells "JOININ" on your keypad). Messages sent to that number are routed to our server. We pick apart the message to see what it says – whether it's a request to join a list, leave a list, send a message to a list, or a plea for help. We then act on that message appropriately.

We also operate Web sites that provide an interface to this functionality. From our Web sites you can sign up for our services, then log into your account to send messages and review your account status.

The software we've created to run all this maintains a database of groups created by our customers and the phone numbers of people who have requested to join those groups. It also keeps track of every message ever sent or received and thus keeps track of account balances. Every month when your plan is up for renewal, it automatically charges your credit card and notifies you by email if it encounters a problem.

Our database server, on which your financial and other confidential information is stored, is isolated from the Internet and is only accessible via a private network that can be accessed only by authorized people and machines. Within the database, your credit card information is stored in an encrypted format that prevents anyone who might get access to it from being able to use it. Our Web servers, email servers, and database servers are all leased solely by us – there are not other Web sites or companies who have access to those machines.

## TERMINOLOGY

Our customers sign up for **accounts** at our site. An account contains all the **groups** that you purchase. Groups are lists of mobile phone numbers. Our site lets you send **SMS text messages** to all the people in your group(s), either from your **mobile phone** (aka cell phone) or from our Web site.

Groups have **owners**. The owner of the group is the person who originally created the account and set up the billing information. All billing is to a credit card number which is kept on file on our database server, and which can be changed by the account owner. Account owners can create new groups, rename existing groups, and delete groups.

Group owners can assign **managers** to each of their groups. Managers have the right to send messages to the members of groups that they manage but cannot purchase new groups or have access to any financial information for the account. A single person can own or manage any number of groups, and a group can have any number of

managers. Theoretically, the owner of an account could make every member of the group a manager, allowing everyone to post messages to the other members of the group.

You need to have sufficient **message credits** in your account to send messages to members of your groups. A small number of message credits comes with each group you purchase. These are **expiring credits** which go away at the end of your billing month if they are not used. You can purchase additional **non-expiring message credits** in blocks of 1000. These credits do not expire at the end of the month.

If you find that you're sending a lot of messages every month (more than 2000), you can make a **message commitment** to purchase a minimum number of messages credits every month. These are expiring message credits. That is, if you don't use them before the end of the month, they go away. This usually isn't a problem, since you wouldn't commit to messages unless you plan to use them.

So an account has two possible types of recurring credit card charges each month: Your **monthly plan** is the package of groups you own that renews each month. These usually come with additional expiring message credits, too. The other type of recurring charge is for your message commitment. Many organizations will not have a message commitment because they don't have the message volume to support it.

If you can't justify the monthly expense of group ownership, you have the option to select our **Pay-As-You-Text**. Under this plan you don't pay anything for your group, but the cost per message is doubled. You cannot assign managers to your groups and you don't have access to some other functions of the site. You also cannot select the name of your group, nor can you change it. So your group will have a random name like FG62MT. Under this plan there are no recurring charges. You just have to purchase message credits in blocks of 250. Once you've purchased at least one block of message credits you can start using the system. There will be no further charges until you run out of message credits, at which time you can choose to purchase more (we don't automatically charge your card for message credits; you must choose to buy them).

Once you've set up your groups and managers you need to ask your members to **join** your groups. This is done through a **call to action (CTA)**. The call to action is simple: "Text MYGROUP to 564646. Standard message charges apply." (Where you replace "MYGROUP" with the name of your group, of course.) We ask that you follow this format for your CTA. Some carriers require the "standard message charges apply" language, and so we ask that you use it. This is part of our **Terms and Conditions** which is found at our Web site and is reproduced at the end of this document.

When your members text your group name to our short code (564646) they will receive a **confirmation message**. This is part of the **double-opt-in process**. The subscriber is required not only to ask to join your list, but must also reply with "YES" in response to the confirmation message. This assures us (and you) that we (and you) have permission to send them subsequent text messages.

You manage your account (and send messages to your groups) by **logging in** to your account at our site. Once logged in you have access to a variety of account management tools that include **reporting** on your message credit balance and messaging history and have the option of purchasing additional groups and message credits.

You and your subscribers have a number of **commands** or **keywords** that can be sent to our short code to perform certain operations. For example, if you text HELP to us we will reply with our Tech Support email address, Web address, and will tell you about the STOP command. The STOP command is used to **unsubscribe** from a group. Other commands include INFO (returns owner information about the group), STATUS (sent by an account owner or manager, returns your message credits balance), and GROUPS (returns a list of groups you belong to).

Of course the value of group text messaging is in getting your urgent messages delivered to your group members quickly, easily, and reliably. However, you might find it valuable to display the messages you send on your organization's Web site. This is valuable for those who don't have mobile phones, or simply as a way to keep people up-to-date on what's going on. We call this feature **microblogging**. When you enable microblogging for a group, you'll be given some HTML code you can paste into your Web site that will cause a window to be displayed that contains the most recent messages sent to your group. There is no charge for enabling microblogging.

By default, the groups you create use the double opt-in process described above to add members. They are enabled for one-way communication – broadcasts from you to your group. There are additional features, however, that enhance the value of your groups through customization and the ability to both send *and received* messages.

You can assign a custom **welcome message** to your group. When a person successfully subscribes to your group they will receive your welcome message. This message can be anything you'd like – it could explain the purpose of the group, tell the member how to reply to messages he receives from your group, or it could just be a friendly “welcome”.

An **announcement-only** group is similar to one with a welcome message, but in this case there are no members. Anyone trying to join the group simply gets an announcement. This can be used to deliver fixed information on request. For example, a church might use an announcement group to give the times of its meetings and contact information for the church office. A business could use it to deliver this week's specials or hours of operation.

**Replies** can be enabled for a group. This allows you to receive any replies that your members might send in response to your broadcast messages.

**Voting campaigns** can be set up for a group. When a vote is in progress, incoming messages to the group are interpreted as votes. As an owner/manager, you can view a graphical or tabular representation of your vote as it is in progress.

Each of the enhanced features listed here (welcome messages, announcements, replies, and voting) consume message credits. In general, any message we send or receive at your request costs one message credit. You should read about the details of these features to make sure you understand these charges.

## REGISTERING FOR AN ACCOUNT

You register for an account at our site by purchasing your initial groups. You can purchase any number of groups, in blocks of 3. When you purchase groups you are immediately billed for your first month. Each month thereafter, you'll be billed for another month of service.

During the process of registration you'll provide information about your organization (its name and your name) and billing information (credit card number and billing address). You will have the option to change this later by logging into your account.

You can name your groups during registration or you can wait until later. You can also choose to name some groups and leave others blank. It's up to you.

If you anticipate a low volume of messages each month you can choose our Pay-As-You-Text plan. Under this plan you don't pay anything per month for your groups but you pay double for each message you send. There is no

recurring charge each month. You choose when to restock your balance of message credits, which you purchase in blocks of 250.

There are limits on Pay-As-You-Text accounts. You do not get to pick your group name, nor can you rename your group. So your group will have a random name like 7FJ2DS. You cannot assign a manager to your group, so only the account owner can send messages to the group. You won't have access to all the account management features of the site.

Pay-As-You-Text plans cannot be up-converted to standard monthly plans, nor can monthly plans be down-graded to Pay-As-You-Text. If you wish to make that transition you have to close your account and re-open a new account.

## ADVERTISING YOUR GROUP

Once you have named your group (either during registration or by logging into your account and doing it from your "My Account" screen) you can invite people to join it. This is as simple as asking them to text your group name to our short code, 564646 (which spells "JOININ" on the keypad). They'll be asked to confirm their request, which they must do by replying "YES" to the confirmation message.

When you print the "call to action" to join your group, we ask that you include the phrase "standard message charges apply". This is required by the carriers. It reminds people that they are going to be charged by their carrier for text messages they send. We think this is obvious, but it doesn't hurt to remind people. So your call to action for MYGROUP might look like:

Text MYGROUP to 564646 to join. Standard message charges apply.

We suggest that you join your own groups. This familiarizes you with the process and also helps you monitor the activity in your group (especially if you have other managers who can send messages to your group).

## LOGGING IN TO YOUR ACCOUNT

Once you've registered for an account you can enter your username and password (created during registration) in the upper right corner of the site to log into your account. Once logged in there will be a couple changes to the row of buttons across the top and you'll have a new menu on the left side of the page.

At the top you'll find My Account, which will always take you back to the Welcome Page for your account, and Messages, which takes you to the page from which you can send messages to your group.

On the left side you'll find a number of links:

### Messages

- Send Message – This is where you send messages to your group. You can also do this directly from your phone – see below.
- View All Messages – Shows you all messages sent and received from or to your groups.
- View Received Messages – Shows only *replies* to the messages you've sent to your group. You must have replies enabled in order to receive replies.
- View Sent Messages – Shows only *messages you sent* to your group.

- View Deleted Messages – You can delete messages from the lists above in order to keep them organized. Those messages aren't actually removed from our server; they're just moved to this list of “deleted” messages. You can view those messages here.

### Account Information

- Account balances – Shows you your current message credit balance and the number of subscribers in your groups. It also has a brief history of recent transactions on your account.
- Edit account information – This is where you go to change your password or the name and contact information for the owner of the group.
- Edit billing information – This is where you go to change your credit card information for recurring payments.
- Add/Change monthly message commitment – If you send a large number of messages each month it might be more economical to commit to a minimum number of messages. You can do that here.
- Close account – Allows you to close your account and request a refund of unused message credits
- Purchase additional message credits – Additional message credits are sold in blocks of 1000. Pricing is based on your monthly message commitment.

### Groups

- Group settings – This is where you enable and disable enhanced features like voting, microblogging, replies, and announcements.
- Purchase additional groups – You can add groups to your monthly plan here.
- Remove groups – This function is for doing the opposite of purchasing additional groups. That is, you can remove groups (in blocks of three) from your recurring monthly charge. If you just want to re-use a group for another purpose or stop using a group, use “Assign/Rename groups”.
- Assign/Rename groups – This is where you go to name or rename your groups.
- Add/Remove/List group managers – Use this operation to invite someone to be a manager, remove a manager, or just see who your managers are.

### Voting

- Add/List/Edit Voting Campaigns – This is where you set up a new vote or view the results of previous voting campaigns.

## ASSIGNING MANAGERS

The account owner controls the billing and settings for the account, including adding and removing groups, renaming groups, and purchasing message credits. While the account owner can send messages to any group in the account, it's seldom the case that you want one person in charge of all messages for all groups. So we provide a way to assign *managers* to each group.

Group managers can send messages to their groups but they cannot add, remove, or rename groups. They have no access to billing information and cannot purchase message credits or add groups to the account. They do have access to message credit balances and can see how many messages have been sent to their own groups.

Note that since all groups draw from the same message credit pool, all group managers will see the same message balance. This is not the message balance for the *group* but rather for the *account*. It's up to the organization and

the account owner to set whatever policy or message quotas each group is allowed to use in any given time period.

To assign a manager, log in as account owner and select “Add/Remove/List group managers” from the menu on the left. Enter the email address of the person you want to invite to be a group manager. That person will be sent an email with instructions on how to accept your invitation. When they follow the link in the message back to our site they'll create their own username and password for logging in.

You can ask the same person to manage several groups, even groups in different accounts. You can invite several people to manage one group, or invite no managers for your groups.

## SENDING MESSAGES

Account owners and managers can send messages to their group by logging into their account on our site and choosing the Messages button. Select the group to which you want to send a message, then enter your message and press Send.

Messages are limited to 140 characters. The form keeps track of how many characters you've used and won't let you type too many.<sup>5</sup>

You can confirm that your message was sent by checking your account balance. You should also get the message yourself, assuming you're a member of your group.

You can also send messages directly from your mobile phone. Assuming you've entered your mobile phone number during account registration (or entered it by selecting “Edit account information” from the left-hand menu on the My Account page), you can use the SEND command followed by your group name to send a message to your group. So you would text something like this to 564646:

SEND MYGROUP Don't forget our meeting tonight at 5:30!

Your subscribers will receive:

MYGROUP: Don't forget our meeting tonight at 5:30!

## PURCHASING MESSAGE CREDITS

You need to have sufficient message credits to send a message. If your group has 75 members, you need 75 message credits to send one message to your group. If you don't have sufficient credits you'll be warned before sending. If you are sending from your phone, though, you won't get any notice (hence the need to be a member of your own group).

If you are the account owner, you can simply go to the “Purchase additional message credits” link on the menu and buy another block of 1000 messages using either the credit card on file or another one that you enter at the time of purchase. If you are a manager of the group, you'll need to contact the account owner to purchase additional message credits.

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<sup>5</sup> Text messages are normally 160 characters long but we have to insert your group name into the message so the recipient will know who it's coming from. We reserve 20 characters for that purpose.

If yours is a Pay-As-You-Text account, you'll purchase messages in blocks of 250. Otherwise the process is the same.

## PURCHASING ADDITIONAL GROUPS

If you are the account owner, you can add groups to your account in blocks of three. (Group managers do not have the ability to purchase additional groups.)

If yours is a Pay-As-You-Text account, you cannot add additional groups. You can, however, open another Pay-As-You-Text account with a different username.

When you purchase additional groups you will use the credit card you have on file to pay for them. You can use a different card by changing the credit card on your account, but then all subsequent recurring billing will be against the new card.

Billing for groups is done monthly. The billing date for your new groups probably won't correspond to the billing date(s) for existing groups unless you happen to purchase them on the same day.

## CUSTOM WELCOME MESSAGES

When someone sends the JOIN command to join your group, they will first receive a confirmation message asking them to text YES to confirm they want to be a member. After they do this, they will get a standard message from us that tells them how to get support and how to leave the group. We're required by the mobile carriers to send that message.

However, you can add a custom welcome message that follows ours. This message might tell them more about your group, when your meetings are, how to contact the owner, etc. To add a custom welcome message to your group go to Group Settings, select the Edit button next to your group, and select the welcome message option. Enter your welcome message and apply the changes.

You will be charged one message credit for each welcome message that is sent.

## ANNOUNCEMENT-ONLY GROUPS

Announcement-only groups do not accept members. If someone tries to join they just get an announcement message, which you define on the Group Settings page in your account on our site. There are two or three good uses for this feature and probably others that you can imagine.

The most obvious use of an announcement-only group is to provide fixed, static information to people who inquire about your organization. For a church this might be the location of the church, times of services, and contact information. For a business it could be current specials, hours of operation, and location.

A less obvious use of this feature is to close the membership of a group. When you turn a group into an announcement-only group, it does not lose any of its current members; it just won't accept any new members. So if you have a group consisting of only the members of a particular committee, once those people are signed up you can convert the group to be announcement-only. This will block it from receiving new members and will allow you to send a nice message to those who attempt to join the group explaining that the group is closed to new members.

Another use of this feature is to close the group during voting (see the discussion of voting, below). This isn't absolutely necessary but is an option. You might also want to use a group purely for driving content to a microblog on your Web site (see the discussion of microblogging, below). Enabling the announcement feature for the group keeps people from joining it so you can limit its use to just your microblog.

Each announcement that is sent costs you one message credit. So while this is a useful feature, be aware that it consumes message credits.

## MICROBLOGGING

“Microblogging” is pretty much what it sounds like. A blog (short for “Web-log”) is a chronological list of articles you write on a particular topic and post on a Web site for the world to see. A microblog, then is a blog where each entry is very, very short. Services like Twitter and Facebook are essentially fancy microblogging mechanisms.

When you enable microblogging for your group, you'll be given some HTML code you can paste into a Web page to cause a window to appear on the page containing the last few messages sent to or received by your group. This is your microblog

There are a couple motivations for this feature. First, you might have people who don't have mobile phones but who would benefit from seeing the messages you send to the group. They could view these in your microblog on your organization's Web site.

Second, you could use the features of our site to simply fuel a microblog. You can create a group, turn on microblogging, embed the HTML in your site, then post messages to the group to cause them to be posted on your site. You don't even need to have any members in your group to make this worthwhile, though you'll probably have some people who want to be notified every time you update the microblog. Those people can join your group and receive the postings directly.

There is no charge to enable microblogging on your account. In fact, if you have no members of your group, there would be no charge for any of the postings that go to your microblog.

## REPLIES

When you send out meeting announcements or other informative texts, people will often respond without realizing that they're replying to a broadcast message and there's no guarantee that anyone will see their reply. This can be a problem. For example, you could post a meeting reminder to the group. Someone could reply asking for a ride to the meeting. You'd like to receive those replies.

You can enable replies for your group by going to the group settings page on our site. When someone replies to one of your messages, we'll do our best to route the message back to you. This isn't a perfect process, because SMS messages do not contain any kind of a header (like email does) that contains information about the original sender. As a result we have to apply some heuristics to make an intelligent guess about routing replies.

Replies are viewed by logging into your account and going into the Received Messages page. You can choose to have replies forwarded to your phone, and you can choose to have them show up in your microblog.

You are charged one message credit for each reply you receive and another message credit if you have it forwarded to your phone.

## VOTING

Text messaging provides a quick and easy way to do polling of your members. Results can be viewed in real time as the votes come in. Once you've defined a voting campaign (see below) you simply ask a question of your members and tell them to text their selection to your group. You can view a graphical or tabular list of results in real time as the text messages are sent to your group.

Any group can be used for voting. In order to allow you to use the same group over and over for voting, voting is enabled by defining a "voting campaign" with a start date/time and end date/time. This way you could ask one question during a 9AM meeting and another during an 11AM meeting using the same group without the answers from one meeting being misinterpreted as answers from the other meeting.

To define a voting campaign, go to Group Settings and then the edit button for the group you want to use for voting. Enter the question you want to ask your group, select the type of response you expect, and then the beginning and ending times of the voting.

There are four types of responses that are supported:

- **Numeric** – Responses are expected to be integer (whole number) values between -999,999,999 and 999,999,999. No commas or decimal points are allowed. Results will be shown as a bar chart (number of votes received for each number). In the tabular results you will also see the highest value, lowest value, and average value entered.
- **Multiple Choice** – Responses are expected to be upper or lower case letters from A-Z. The answers can be discontinuous. That is, you don't have four choices they don't have to be labelled A, B, C, and D. You can do that if you'd like, but you can also use letters that correspond in some way to the answers (i.e. R for red, Y for yellow, and B for blue). Results will be shown as a bar chart.
- **True/False** – Responses are expected to be upper or lower case T or F (or the words True and False, or any word that starts with T and any word that starts with F). Results are displayed as a pie chart showing the percentage of each response.
- **Yes/No** – Responses are expected to be upper or lower case Y or N (or the words Yes and No, or any word that starts with Y and any word that starts with N). Results are displayed as a pie chart showing the percentage of each response.

To vote, instruct your members to text your group name followed by their choice. So if you're doing a Yes/No vote in group ABCVOTE, they would text either **ABCVOTE Y** or **ABCVOTE N** to 564646 to vote.

If a person is already a member of the group in which you're conducting the vote, it's *possible* that a response of only Y or N would be sufficient (i.e. no group name). However, it must be the case that they're not a member of any other group that is accepting votes, or if they are a member of more than one voting group, that yours is the most recent one that has sent them a message. In short, it's best if everyone sends the group name along with their vote. But if someone forgets, we'll do our best to route their vote to your group.

In order to handle situations where someone replies "Red" instead of "R" or "Yellow!!!!!!" instead of simply "Yellow", we actually only look at the first letter after the group name in their response. So if your voting group is

called ABCVOTE and someone texts ABCVOTE D and another person texts ABCVOTE DEFINITELY C, both of these texts will be treated as a vote for option D.

When viewing results you can choose whether you want to view *all* the votes that came in or only one vote per respondent. If you choose the latter, the most recent vote from each member is the only one that counts. If you are only accepting one vote per member you can tell your members they can change their vote by simply texting their answer again.

It is important to note that voting disrupts some of the normal operations of your group. In particular, we normally accept a message that starts with your group name as a request to join your group. Many people have automatic “signatures” that get applied to all their outgoing text messages. If we get **ABCVOTE Nate Smith, President** on any normal day, we would ignore Nate's fancy signature and assume he wants to join your group. But if you're conducting a vote, we will interpret this as a “NO” (for Yes/No votes) or “N” (for a multiple choice vote).

If Nate really wants to join ABCVOTE group during a voting campaign, he merely needs to use the full JOIN command, as in: **JOIN ABCVOTE Nate Smith, President**. This will override the voting and do the normal double opt-in process to make Nate a member of the group.

To circumvent all these problems, you can dedicate a group to voting and don't allow people to join it. Make it an announcement-only group that sends an announcement that says “This group is used for voting and no votes are active today.” Nobody will be able to join and there will be no confusion. On the other hand, this will cost you a few message credits and isn't absolutely essential. Under normal circumstances you can use any group you'd like for voting and it won't be a problem.

## REMOVING GROUPS FROM YOUR ACCOUNT

Because groups are purchased three at a time, they must be removed in groups of three. Contact us at [support@TextingManager.com](mailto:support@TextingManager.com) with a list of groups you want to remove from your account.

Groups will be removed effective with your next billing cycle. There are no refunds for unused groups nor groups that are requested to be removed before the end of the billing period. You can continue to use your groups through the end of the billing period.

## CLOSING YOUR ACCOUNT

Contact us at [support@TextingManager.com](mailto:support@TextingManager.com) to close your account. You are entitled to a refund of unused non-expiring message credits (those message credits you purchased separately from any free, expiring message credits we add to your account as part of your monthly plan). Your monthly plan fees are not refundable, so your monthly plan actually closes effective with the beginning of the next billing period.

## GETTING HELP

Select the Support button at our site to review the most commonly asked questions we receive about our service. We find that over 90% of the questions we're asked are already answered on the Support FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) page.

There are also question-mark icons throughout the site. These provide specific, context-sensitive help on particular features of the site.