

Running a grassroots sports club—whether football, netball, cricket, or any other sport—is a rewarding but challenging endeavor. One of the common administrative headaches is communicating efficiently with your members: players, parents, volunteers, and supporters. Broadcasting important updates like game reschedules, volunteer calls, or weather cancellations means many clubs turn to SMS messaging as a reliable direct channel.

But how much does SMS really cost for a club with about 500 contacts? And when you factor in a typical club's existing tool stack, subscription bloat can quickly inflate your running costs. In this post, we'll break down **club texting costs**, explore **SMS platform pricing** models, and weigh the pros and cons of pay-per-send vs monthly tiers. Finally, we'll look at how free tools for forms and registrations can complement your messaging strategy without adding unnecessary expenses.

Understanding Your 500-Person Club List

When we say ~500 people, we're talking about a broad group that includes not just active players but also parents, guardians, extended family members, volunteers, and supporters. Each message you send reaches hundreds of recipients who expect timely and relevant updates throughout the season.

Keep in mind:

- Not everyone on the list will read your emails regularly—SMS has a far higher open rate.
- Compliance with SMS marketing rules is critical; always get opt-ins and provide opt-outs.
- Each season, your contact list might grow or shrink slightly as members join or leave.

Subscription Bloat in Grassroots Clubs

A common issue I see—and one that genuinely frustrates me—is *subscription bloat*. It happens when clubs layer on multiple paid tools without fully evaluating cost-benefit or overlapping features. You might be paying monthly fees for:

- A club management system
- A separate SMS broadcast platform
- Email newsletter software
- Volunteer scheduling apps
- Online registration forms
- And maybe more...

All adding up to a hefty expense with fees recurring every season, regardless of how often you actually use each service. Worse yet: Some tools charge you just for storing contacts, even before you send a single message. I **hate** that. Grassroots clubs need to prioritize simple, flexible systems that scale with their actual use.

Typical Club Tool Stack Costs

Tool Purpose	Typical Cost (per season)	Common Pricing Model
Club Management Software	Member database, registrations \$200 - \$600	Flat fee or per-member pricing
SMS Platform	Broadcast messages, alerts \$150 - \$400	Pay-per-send or monthly tier
Email Newsletter	Newsletters, announcements	Free - \$300 Monthly tier based on contacts
Volunteer Rosters	Scheduling helpers	Free - \$150 Free or subscription
Online Forms & Registrations	Signups, waivers	Free - \$200 Free tier or per-form fees

From my experience, many clubs end up spending around \$800-\$1,200 per season on various subscriptions just to keep admin and communications running smoothly. That's why understanding each component's pricing can help optimize spend and avoid paying for unused features.

SMS Platform Pricing Models Explained

When it comes to SMS platforms for grassroots clubs, pricing generally falls into two approaches:

1. **Pay-per-send** — You buy credit for each text you send (e.g., \$0.03 to \$0.07 per SMS); no monthly fees or tiers required.
2. **Monthly subscription tiers** — You pay a flat monthly fee for a set number of messages and/or contacts, with overage charges possible if you exceed limits.

Each model has tradeoffs:

- *Pay-per-send* offers maximum cost control if your message volume fluctuates seasonally or you only send occasional broadcasts.
- *Monthly tiers* provide predictable budgeting but can lead to wasted fees if you don't use your message quota fully.

Crunching the Numbers for 500 Contacts

Let's say you want to send 4 broadcast messages per season—covering:

- Season kickoff reminders
- Volunteer callouts
- Game updates
- End-of-season info

Each broadcast reaches 500 recipients, so total messages sent are about 2,000 (4 messages × 500 people).

Pricing Model	Per SMS Cost	Total Messages	Estimated Cost	Per Season	Benefits	Drawbacks
Pay-per-send	\$0.04	2,000	\$80			

- Only pay for what you use
- No monthly fees
- Costs can spike if sending more messages
- Minimum top-up amounts sometimes required

Monthly subscription (e.g., 2,500 messages/month)	~\$75/month	10,000 (limit)	\$225 (3 months)			
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- Predictable monthly cost
- May include extra features like contact management
- Overkill for seasonal bursts
- Paying for unused messages outside the season

Note: Costs are rounded and can vary between providers and regions.

Why Pay-Per-Send Often Makes Sense for Grassroots Clubs

From my nine years consulting with grassroots clubs:

- SMS messaging is often seasonal, meaning you have peak months—and quieter off-season periods.
- Committees tend to change every AGM, which can disrupt predictable budgeting and platform management.
- Pay-per-send models keep costs low when you're only sending a handful of broadcast messages per month or season.

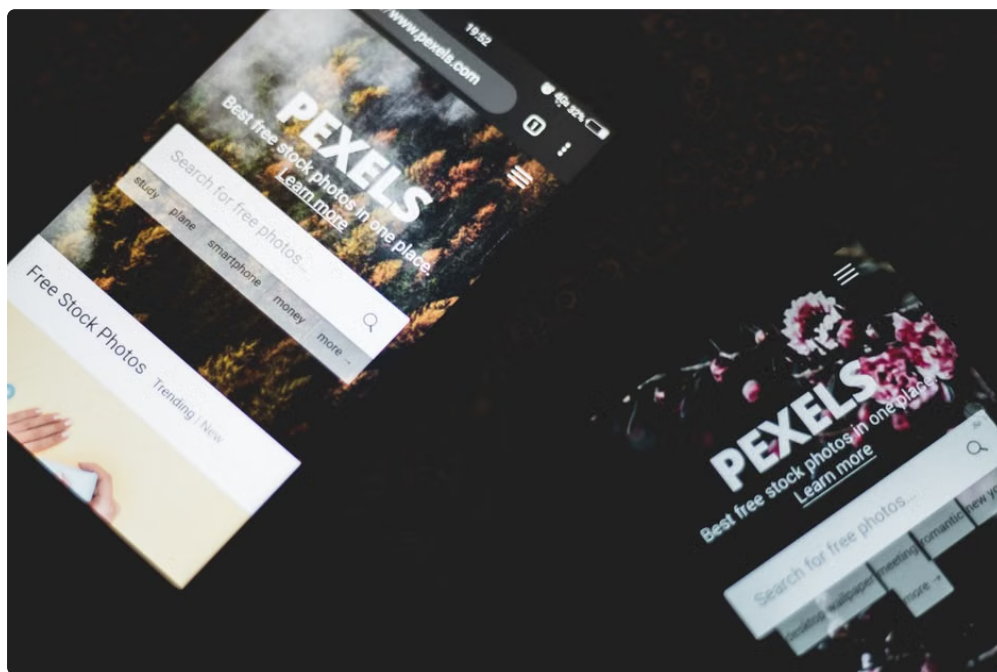
Because clubs rarely send thousands of messages every single month, locking into a flat subscription can lead to paying for [thetechleaders](#) "phantom" messages you never use.

Free Forms and Registrations to Complement SMS Broadcasts

One way to streamline your communications and reduce SMS volume is to leverage free or low-cost digital registration and form solutions:

- Collect player registrations, waivers, and medical info online, reducing paper-handling.
- Capture volunteer signups and availability without back-and-forth SMS exchanges.
- Use forms to trigger email confirmations or app notifications instead of costly texts.

Good tools for this include Google Forms, Microsoft Forms, or open-source form builders, all free to use without contact storage fees. Once you have key member data in digital form, your SMS broadcasts become more targeted and occasional, saving money.



Tips to Manage and Reduce Your SMS Costs

1. **Audit your current tool subscriptions.** Identify overlapping services and redundant features.
2. **Negotiate with providers for seasonal or flexible plans.** Grassroots clubs are valuable customers and may get custom deals.
3. **Segment your contact list.** Only message key groups when necessary, minimizing sends.
4. **Promote opt-in opt-out strictly.** Keep your list lean and engaged to avoid wasting messages on unresponsive contacts.

5. **Use SMS for urgent or high-priority messages only.** Supplement with email and free app notifications for routine info.

Summary: What to Expect Budget-Wise for SMS Messaging

For a club of ~500 players, parents, and supporters sending 3–5 broadcast messages per season:

Scenario	Estimated SMS Cost (per season)	Recommended Pricing Model
Low volume (under 3,000 messages/season)	\$60 - \$120	Pay-per-send
Moderate volume with ongoing monthly use	\$200 - \$300	Monthly subscription tier
High volume or multi-sport club with thousands of messages monthly	\$400+	Tiered plan with volume discounts

Remember: Always do the fee math *per season* rather than per month to get a true sense of cost impact on your club budget. And avoid platforms that charge fees just for storing contacts without usage—you want your money going toward messages that actually reach people.

Final Words

Grassroots sports clubs operate on tight budgets and limited volunteer hours. Finding the balance between effective communication and affordable tools is essential to keep players, parents, and supporters informed without subscription bloat draining resources.

SMS broadcast messaging is a powerful tool, but only if you understand your costs, pick the right pricing model, and integrate it smartly with existing free forms and digital services. Doing so will keep your club's communication running smoothly while your finances stay in check.



If you'd like help auditing your current systems or setting up an optimized communication stack, feel free to reach out anytime.