

FIVE VERSIONS OF ONE REMINDER

Run your own bandit: test, keep the winner, bench the rest.

COMMENT



PASTE THIS INTO CHATGPT

You are a copywriter for a small business. Write 5 versions of ONE customer reminder.

My business: [what you sell, in one line]

Who gets it: [e.g. past customers who haven't booked in 60 days]

The one action I want: [e.g. book a visit, reorder, finish checkout]

Channel and length: [e.g. SMS under 160 characters / email subject + 2 lines]

My voice: [e.g. warm, a little dry, no hype]

Facts you may use: [real offers, real deadlines, real stock]. Use nothing else.

Rules:

1. All 5 versions ask for the same single action. Only the angle changes.
2. Use a different angle for each: friendly nudge, specific benefit, light humor, honest urgency (only from the facts above), short question.
3. Do not invent discounts, deadlines, scarcity or testimonials.
4. Stay inside the length limit.

Output a table: Label (A to E) | Angle | Message. Do not pick a winner. I will test them.

3 STEPS

1 FILL THE BRACKETS

Pick one reminder and the one action you want (a booking, a reorder, a finished checkout). Replace each [bracket] and paste the prompt into ChatGPT.

2 SEND EACH VERSION TO A SMALL SLICE

Split your opted-in list into slices, one per version (for example 5 slices of 10%), and send A to E at the same time. Count the action, not just opens.

3 KEEP THE WINNER, BENCH THE REST

Send the winner to everyone left. Bench the others (rest them, do not delete them). Next week, add one fresh version and run it again.

EXAMPLE (MADE-UP BUSINESS)

THE BRIEF

Maple Mobile Grooming (example). Dog owners not booked in 8+ weeks. Action: book a groom. SMS under 160 characters. Voice: warm, a little silly. Facts: 4 Saturday slots left this month; standard groom \$65.

WHAT COMES BACK

A · Nudge: "Your dog is due for a groom. Want us to pencil one in? Reply YES and we'll find a time. - Maple Mobile Grooming"

B · Benefit: "A fresh groom means less fur on your couch. \$65 standard, and we come to you. Reply YES to book. - Maple Mobile Grooming"

C · Humor: "Your dog called. Says the fluff is getting out of paw. Reply YES to book a groom. - Maple Mobile Grooming"

D · Urgency: "4 Saturday slots left this month. Want one for your dog? Reply YES. - Maple Mobile Grooming"

E · Question: "Ready to book your dog's next groom? Reply YES for a time. - Maple Mobile Grooming"

THEN

500 opted-in clients: send each version to 50 people (5 slices, 250 total). Next day, count the YES replies. The winner goes to the other 250.

THE HIDDEN LAYER BEHIND THE OWL

- Humans write every Duolingo reminder. A machine only picks which one you get.
- For years the pick was random. Then Duolingo moved to a bandit algorithm: every reminder is a lever, and a lever pays out when you finish a lesson.
- Recently used reminders get demoted, so none of them wears out. New ones are tested on small groups first.
- Trained on about 200 million reminders over 34 days: +2% new-user retention over a strong baseline.

Duolingo blog, "Hi, it's Duo: the AI behind the meme"; Yancey & Settles, KDD 2020.

RUN YOUR OWN BANDIT: CHECKLIST

- ☐ One reminder, one action to measure (click, booking, reorder).
- ☐ Five versions, same ask, different angle. Label them A to E.
- ☐ Send only to people who opted in, and keep an unsubscribe in every message.
- ☐ Send each version to a small slice (for example 10% each). Same day, same time of day.
- ☐ Count the action (bookings, clicks, replies), not just opens.
- ☐ Keep the winner and send it to the rest of the list.
- ☐ Bench the others. Rest them a few weeks, then retest. Do not delete them.
- ☐ Rest the winner too after a few rounds. A message that worked yesterday works less today.
- ☐ Every week: add one fresh version, bench the weakest, run the next round.
- ☐ Log it: version, number sent, number who acted.

Slice sizes and rest times are starting points, not Duolingo's numbers. On a small list, two versions a few actions apart is a tie: run another round before you pick.