



# Weight Watchers Las Vegas Uses Text Messaging to Improve Member Retention

## About Weight Watchers

As a pioneer in the health and fitness industry focusing on weight management, Weight Watchers has evolved over the years from friends getting together to discuss weight-loss strategies in the early 1960s to now having millions of members all over the world.

The core of what makes Weight Watchers so successful is the meetings and workshops that help coaches motivate members as well as members motivating each other.



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**“I could have never imagined what messaging was capable of and the relationships that could be built with it.”**

- Heather Avila, Chief Operating Officer

## Introduction

In this case study, we will highlight how Weight Watchers Las Vegas transformed their communication strategy to improve retention while building stronger relationships with members.

# Changes in the Health Industry

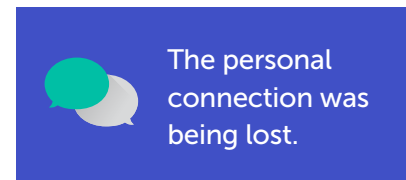
As a third generation franchise owner of Weight Watchers in Las Vegas and also a member, Chief of Operations Heather Avila, has seen it all when it comes to the evolution of the fitness and weight loss industry.

“The industry landscape has changed dramatically,” she said in a recent webinar. “While we had a few competitors in the past, there are a sea of competitors out there

with the biggest one being people who try to do it on their own. And logical things are available like apps, different trackers and social media tools. But we are trying to communicate that it’s really about the human connection and those relationships are built in our workshops.”

Much of Weight Watchers’ success, Heather said, relied on members actively attending

meetings and workshops to support each other in their weight-loss journeys. In recent years though, attendance had been falling as new competition grew and it became harder to reach members through traditional phone calls and emails.



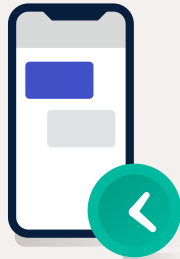
## A New Way to Engage Members

In an effort to help retain members and keep them motivated to attend workshops, an advertising agency that Heather was working with proposed the idea of sending out weekly motivational text messages to members.

This idea was a good first step to improving communication but was limited in that there was no data on who viewed the message and it was only a one-way push message, meaning members couldn’t respond to those messages.

Heather quickly realized she needed a more robust solution that would enable her to create more personal conversations with members and also be available to answer their questions whenever they needed.

**The Challenge**



- 1 Create more personal conversations with members.
- 2 Be able to answer member questions around the clock.

# Personalizing Messages

After partnering with Zingle and deploying its messaging-based customer engagement platform, Heather started introducing more text communications to new members as well as existing ones. By collecting key information like name, location and meeting ID, Heather and her staff were able to personalize meeting and workshop reminders to all her members in an automated way.

"We continued with messaging the way we were doing it before and then so much more," Heather said. "I could have never imagined what text messaging was capable of and the relationships that could be built with it."

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**"Zingle has truly revolutionized how we communicate with members."**

## Weight Watchers Uses Text Messaging To:

- 🕒 Send Class Reminders
- 💬 Answer Questions
- 🤝 Deepen Relationships
- 👥 Communicate with Staff
- 📌 Motivate Members
- 🏆 Celebrate Milestones
- 👤 Nurture Leads



## The Impact of Messaging on Member Retention

Before having a texting service, members would often forget to attend classes and Weight Watchers had spots open they could otherwise be filling. With real-time text notifications sent directly to each member, Weight Watchers Las Vegas has seen far fewer missed appointments and been able to retain more members.

Texting has also provided a quick and easy way for members to ask questions and get immediate support, which helps build that personal relationship so important to the brand and with coaches.

"Those messages are being sent directly to many of our members, but they don't realize it is a mass message going out to everyone in that particular workshop because it really does feel personalized," Heather said, adding that they also use it for staff communications. "It's a quick and efficient way for us to also communicate with our staff whether it's a quick change on a promotion or a reminder for a staff call."

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“Zingle has really deepened our relationship with members in a profound way.”

Weight Watchers hasn't just used messaging to send informational reminders. With the customer support team headquartered in Las Vegas and members spread across Nevada and Utah, Heather said it was hard to have natural conversations with members on a daily basis like they do now with texting. Members can text to say they are struggling or to celebrate a milestone.

“We've never had that before,” she said. “People don't want to call into a phone number and sit through a dial prompt and wait for someone to pick up to say, ‘Hey, I just lost two pounds.’ It has really deepened our relationship with members in a profound way.”

## Build Relationships that Last

Due to the success she saw with texting, Heather replaced all of the phone numbers listed on marketing materials, signs and even the company van to show the texting number to non-members who might be interested in joining. Heather gets more leads now and is able to better nurture those potential members in a fast and more personalized way.

Overall, the use of texting has opened up a whole new communication channel that supported Weight Watchers members and helped add new ones in a way that was not possible with phone calls or emails.

“It's developing that deeper relationship with our members so that they can be more loyal to our brand and find more success with us because they know we're there for them,” Heather said.

The screenshot displays the Medallia Zingle interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Medallia Zingle', 'Inbox' (with a notification badge), 'Contacts', and 'Zings'. The left sidebar lists navigation options: 'All' (51), 'Unassigned' (21), 'My Inbox' (Assigned to me), 'TEAMS' (Marketing: 11, Workshops: 3, Coaches: 1, Support: 5, New Members: 10), 'TEAMMATES' (with a search bar and list of names: Mitch Milner, Sandy McCullen, Tara Flores, Jenny Richards), and a 'Search' bar. The main content area shows a list of messages under the heading 'Open (51)'. Three message cards are visible: 
 

- Holly Jacobs (HJ):** "Can I save SmartPoints I don't use?" with a 'New Member' button.
- Linda Choi (LC):** "When is the workshop next week?" with 'New Lead' and 'Workshop' buttons.
- George Hodge (GH):** "So happy about 5 breakfast wins 🥳" with 'Coaching' and 'On Track' buttons.

## About Medallia Zingle

Medallia Zingle empowers businesses to engage, support and respond to customers in more meaningful and impactful ways. Zingle's guest engagement platform combines artificial intelligence and machine learning with workflow automation and mobile messaging, allowing brands to easily deliver exceptional customer experiences in real time. Leading brands across different verticals, including hospitality, food & beverage, retail, and more, use Zingle to increase efficiency, improve operations and delight their customers. Find out more at [zingle.com](https://zingle.com).

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**Contact** Email: [sales@zingleme.com](mailto:sales@zingleme.com) Call: 877.946.4536 Text: 858.877.9200

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