



Hermes Parcelnet:

100 Million Bitly links, 100 Million Better Experiences

How do you become the second largest package, or “parcel,” delivery service in the United Kingdom? By blending fast, ultra-reliable services with flawless customer experience at every step for every package you deliver. All 335 million of them.

“The Hermes business stretches from huge corporate retailers sending millions of parcels a year, all the way down to individuals sending one thing a month,” explains Eoin Kenneally, Head of CX – Digital Transformation and Insight. “No matter the company size, everybody gets consistent communication about their items being shipped. It’s allowed us to democratize what we are doing and the way we are doing it to make the experience more engaging.”

The transition didn’t happen overnight, but less than two years ago, Hermes Parcelnet made a firm commitment to becoming the carrier of choice for consumers in the U.K. This meant overhauling their digital footprint to support a more consumer-friendly experience. At the top of the list was the need for a simplified, easy-to-use shipment tracking experience using SMS messaging.

“It was a bit of a no-brainer,” said Eoin on the company’s decision to go with Bitly. “There was no one else who could handle the scale and the volume we were looking at.”

Transforming the SMS experience

Prior to implementing Bitly, the limited character count for SMS tracking messages was mostly absorbed by Hermes tracking codes appended to a long link. This left little room for branded messaging. Worse, these long tracking urls would sometimes “break” in the middle into two messages, rendering them useless to the consumer.

“If we look at our historical SMS messages, they were a bit messy,” said Kenneally. “We had to squeeze in a 16-digit barcode and domain. It did not give us a lot of space to be able to craft any other communication.”

By leveraging Bitly's powerful, trusted API to deliver an improved end-to-end communications experience, Hermes has become a preferred choice for convenient, flexible and affordable delivery services for thousands of businesses of every size.

This is where Bitly stepped in. Leveraging Bitly's powerful API, Hermes was able to swap out long URLs for custom branded short links in SMS tracking communications. Each SMS message could now deliver not only a more informative, branded message, but the Bitly-enabled short links also connected directly to shipment tracking information and services.

The result? With the end-to-end SMS experience transformed, Hermes saw an unprecedented uptick in customer engagement. For one Hermes client that sends over 10 million items a year, a full 60 percent of customers receiving an SMS notice are selecting the option to direct their items to be left with a neighbor or put in a safe place, dramatically improving successful delivery rates.

"Getting the barcodes, postcode number—all those things—sorted for consumers up front meant adoption rates for the delivery options became very high," said Eoin. "When we go back to our clients and say, '60 percent of your customers have come through and used the service,' it shows there is a huge consumer appetite for it, and there was now no blocker in the way of using it."

Trusting Bitly with Huge Scale

Even on a quiet day, Hermes can expect to send hundreds of thousands of items, and generate hundreds of thousands of links. During the peak season, the volume can reach two million items a day. That kind of scale is one of the major reasons Hermes chose Bitly.

"It was a bit of a no-brainer," said Eoin on the company's decision to go with Bitly. "There was no one else who could handle the scale and the volume we were looking at. On any given morning, we needed to generate a quarter of a million links. It's a difficult prospect to make sure that they work 100% of the time."

By leveraging Bitly's powerful API and trusted, scalable infrastructure to deliver an improved end-to-end communications experience for millions of consumers, Hermes has become a preferred choice for convenient, flexible and affordable delivery services for thousands of businesses of every size, as well as millions of consumers.

"Bitly has allowed us to take control of what we are saying to our consumers with a very simple, 'just click this and we'll do everything else,'" explained Eoin. "You don't have to do any work. It's amazing."