COST FORENSICS BRIEF · C-05-2026

What a metered messaging stack actually costs, and what it can tell you about your revenue.

Prepared for a high ticket coaching operator from one month of their own billing summary and their raw messaging logs. Published with the client's permission. All client identifiers, phone numbers, account SIDs and contact records have been redacted. **No cost figure has been altered.**

CLIENT	REDACTED	BILLING PERIOD	**May 2026**
PREPARED BY	**Rob Rammuny, Scale With Data**	METHOD	**Invoice + raw log reconciliation**

Method

We did not model this and we did not estimate it. We pulled the invoice. Two sources were used and nothing else: the provider's own monthly usage summary for the billing period, and an export of 60,009 raw outbound message records covering 26,378 unique contacts. Every dollar figure below is taken directly from the invoice. Every count is taken directly from the logs. Where a number is arithmetic rather than measured, it is labelled as such.

What was removed for publication

Client and brand names, all phone numbers on both sides of every message, account and sub account identifiers, contact records, message bodies, and the provider's account reference. What remains is the cost structure, which is the only part that generalises.

1. The invoice

One month. One provider. One operator.

Text messages, billed per segment	7,510,772	**$40,600.36**
Voice and dialer: minutes, SIP, AMD, recordings		$2,801.78
Premium support		$1,757.65
Phone numbers, held	340	$383.95

Number lookups	26,338	$62.40
Assorted smaller line items		$3,237.59
Total paid, one month		**$48,843.73**

Messaging was **89% of the bill**. The dialer, the thing most operators assume is the expensive part, was under six percent. Not one line on that invoice can tell you whether a single sale happened.

Blended cost per message

$40,600.36 across 7,510,772 billed segments is **$0.0116 per segment**. Note the unit. A segment is 160 characters of plain text. One emoji drops that ceiling to 70 characters, so a friendly message costs double a terse one, and a booking confirmation carrying a link can bill four times.

2. What the meter charges for

One dead number. 83 messages. Zero delivered. All 83 billed.

Inside the log export, a single unreachable handset received 83 outbound attempts across the period. Every one failed. Every one was charged. This is not a defect in the provider, it is the billing model performing exactly as designed: **you pay to send, not to land.** Multiply that pattern across a list nobody has validated in two years and the number stops being an anecdote.

Recipient:
REDACTED

The second pattern is repetition. **Nearly one in three contacts** in the sample was messaged more than once within the window examined. Under per segment billing, every one of those follow ups is a fresh charge against a lead you have already paid to reach. The operator is billed most for exactly the behaviour that closes high ticket deals.

3. The same traffic under flat pricing

Scale With Data prices messaging per line, not per send. One line covers **1,500 unique contacts per month with unlimited messages to each of them**, at $250 per line per month, with no setup fee. The figures below are arithmetic from that published rate against the volumes in the client's own logs.

50,000	$40,600	$8,333	**$32,267**
100,000	$40,600	$16,667	**$23,933**

200,000	$40,600	$33,333	**$7,267**
243,600	$40,600	$40,600	**Break even**
300,000	$40,600	$50,000	**Metered wins**

Where flat pricing loses

Past roughly **243,600 unique people per month**, the metered pipe is cheaper and we would tell you so. We are publishing that threshold rather than burying it, because a comparison that cannot be lost is a comparison nobody should believe. The decision reduces to one line: **if your average contact receives more than about 17 messages a month, or you reach fewer than about 244,000 unique people a month, flat pricing wins.**

4. The finding that is not about cost

Set the money aside for a moment. Across the entire period, **not one line on that invoice could be connected to a closed sale.** The provider bills for transport. It has no view of the payment processor, no view of the call recording, and no concept of a verified sale. The operator was spending roughly forty five thousand dollars a month on outreach with no mechanism capable of answering whether any of it produced revenue.

That is the more expensive problem. A messaging bill can be renegotiated. A year of spend you cannot attribute cannot be recovered, and every forecast built on top of it inherits the same blind spot.

Summary

1. $48,843.73 paid in one month, 89% of it messaging.
2. $0.0116 per segment, charged on delivery attempts rather than deliveries.
3. 83 billed messages to one dead handset, zero delivered.
4. Nearly one in three contacts billed more than once.
5. Flat pricing is cheaper below roughly 243,600 unique contacts a month, and dearer above it.
6. No line on the invoice can attribute a dollar of revenue.

Prepared by Rob Rammuny and Brady McCarty, Scale With Data. Figures are reproduced from the client's own billing summary and message logs and have not been adjusted. Redactions cover identifying information only. Published with the client's written permission.

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