# PlanOmatic Uses RingCentral Messaging APIs to Make Sure Photographers Get the Picture

## Company profile

PlanOmatic serves the real estate industry with photography, floor plans, and interactive home tours.

## Website

planomatic.com

## Office

Denver, Colorado

## Size

49 direct employees, plus 130 photographers in the field (contract employees)

## Founded

2005

❝*For spring 2015, our acceptance rate was 60 to 70%, but this past spring [2016] it was closer to 95%.*❞
—**Chad Gagnon, COO**

PlanOmatic creates interactive floor plans, virtual property tours, and other innovative marketing tools to help real estate professionals connect with home buyers. But for all the novel technologies PlanOmatic brings to real estate, the process starts with excellent photography that shows each property in the best light.

Working with the RingCentral platform APIs, PlanOmatic has created a system of mobile notifications to improve its process for getting photographers to the right place at the right time.

A RingCentral customer since 2014, PlanOmatic uses the RingCentral Office® cloud-based business phone solution at headquarters and provides extensions to its contract photographers. Using the RingCentral mobile app, photographers working nationwide can call in to the office or be reached in the field as easily as if they were in the main office in Denver.

More recently, PlanOmatic has begun using the messaging capabilities of the RingCentral API platform to send automatic notifications as soon as an appointment is confirmed.

### Email notifications were missing the mark

Before exploring the possibilities for mobile messaging through the RingCentral API, PlanOmatic would send the notifications via email. The problem with that? "Emails get overlooked, especially when they are routine," says Alex McRitchie, a software engineer on the team. "Whereas with sending them text messages live, they get it immediately. So it's a better way of notifying them about appointments being scheduled and rescheduled."

The notifications are fairly simple—date, time, photography service, location, and contact information—making them a good match for mobile messaging.

Photographers also make use of PlanoPAD, a PlanOmatic mobile app to view their schedules and look up more details about their assignments. But the notifications provide the essential details.

### Mobile messaging keeps photographers on track

Between November and December 2015, PlanOmatic developed a notifications app that integrates with the RingCentral platform. Working in Ruby on Rails and using the Ruby SDK, the development team had an app capable of sending SMS text messages "in a couple of days, and from there it was just fine tuning," McRitchie says.

Notifications to photographers are triggered automatically once an appointment is scheduled in PlanOmatic's scheduling system. Because the photographers are assigned RingCentral extensions rather than dedicated phone numbers, notifications to them are sent via RingCentral's Paging feature rather than SMS. That means the messages pop up on users' phones as push notifications to the RingCentral mobile app.

Standard SMS text messages are used for a number of other purposes, such as alerting the development and operations teams if a server goes offline, McRitchie says. Rather than only creating an integration for a single application, the developers created an internal notifications API that other applications can call to send notifications via either SMS or RingCentral Paging.

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> ❝*PlanOmatic doesn't miss a single appointment with RingCentral messaging.*❞
>
> **—Alex McRitchie, Software Engineer**

### PlanOmatic taps into RingCentral APIs and reporting

While there was no crisis that prompted the change from email to mobile messaging, everyone agrees mobile messaging is more convenient, McRitchie says.

In addition to sending automated messages through the API, employees routinely use RingCentral messaging as a form of work chat or manually send SMS messages to photographers in the field to update them about a change in an assignment.

In addition, Chief Operating Officer, Chad Gagnon, says PlanOmatic capitalizes on core RingCentral features, such as reporting through the administrator's dashboard. By tracking the acceptance rate for calls answered rather than missed, and sharing that information with employees, PlanOmatic was able to significantly improve its performance according to that metric. "Spring tends to be our busiest time," he explains. "For spring 2015, our

acceptance rate was 60 to 70%, but this past spring (2016), it was closer to 95%." Once employees could see how they were doing by this measure, he found, "people would recognize our performance and adapt accordingly," he says.

Having done one API integration, McRitchie says he would look for opportunities to tap other capabilities of the platform. For example, he would like to be able to detect the numbers of incoming calls and match them to customer records, giving sales representatives quicker access. That is a common CRM integration with the RingCentral platform, but McRitchie says he is not sure when the PlanOmatic development team would find time to tackle it.

Meanwhile, PlanOmatic is getting "tremendous use" out of RingCentral messaging just because "people in general will look at their text messages before they will look at their email," he says.

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