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Why the Automobile Industry Needs Conversational AI

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The buying patterns for automobiles have changed over time. Gone are the days when people would walk into a showroom and ask the dealer for recommendations. Buyers today research meticulously online about vehicles, before committing to a purchase. According to a Google report, 92% of car buyers spend almost 14 hours on the internet researching about weighing their options based on a variety of parameters such as brands, features, interiors, pricing, and so on. 2/3 of the people make their decision based on their findings online. But there are multiple issues to be dealt with; web experiences are clunky and the mobile apps are difficult to navigate. While the buyers are tech-savvy, most dealerships are not, which leaves lacunae in user experience and customer engagement. Personalization, narrowing down the choices based on buyers' preferences, insurance options, integration of payment gateways for seamless payment are quintessential components for business communication in a modern world replete with geeks. But how does one go about it? The answer lies in creating a channel that facilitates seamless communication between the buyer and the seller in the most intuitive fashion. And why not? Messaging has emerged as the most sought-after mode for business communication and naturally leveraging the messaging platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Instagram, and more to create chatbots that add a human touch to the conversations is a way forward. Messaging apps are indeed the platforms for the development of new-age digital assistants; Conversational AI lends more credence to it.

What is Conversational AI?

Conversational AI includes everything concerning the automation of the conversation between users and computers, with a human touch. Artificial intelligence (AI) is deployed to recognize speech patterns in different languages, voice input, and more to decipher the user's intent and respond appropriately in a manner that is closest to human conversation. Typically, conversational AI is implemented using chatbots on a messaging platform.

Popular trends indicate that industries such as e-commerce, education, healthcare, and a few others, are at the forefront of adopting conversational AI. However, when it comes to the automobile industry, a report by Capgemini suggests that less than 50 percent of the top players have deployed conversational AI in the form of chatbots or voice assistants for consumers. Essentially, there is a huge untapped market that needs to be catered to.

While all these present an interesting side of the ways in which technologies such as the conversational AI could add more dynamism to the automobile domain, how exactly does a dealer go about? What are the specific use cases that a dealer must deploy conversational AI to help the customers?

Conversational AI for Automobile Industry

Some of the purposes for which the automobile dealers can use conversational AI are:

Lead Generation and Conversion

As in the case of every business domain, providing personalized services to the customer is critical even in automobiles. Every person requesting information about a vehicle is classified as a lead; classifying every lead and segregating based on some business criteria for moving them further down the sales funnel. While chatbots can help businesses in generating the leads, bot platforms can assist them in segregating them for further nurturing.

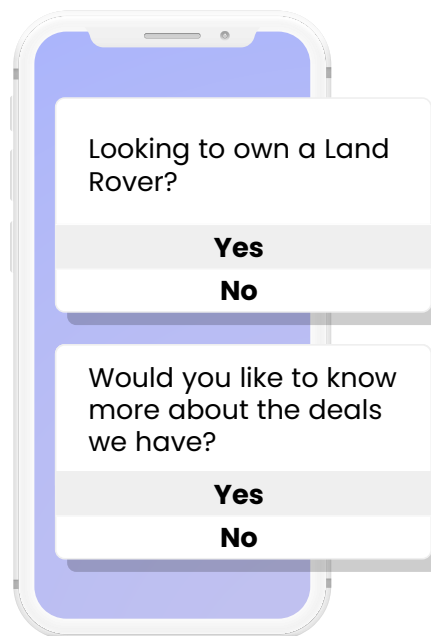**The example in Figure 1 illustrates a case of chatbots being used for lead generation.**

> Looking to own a Land Rover?
>
> **Yes**
>
> **No**
>
> Would you like to know more about the deals we have?
>
> **Yes**
>
> **No**

Figure 1: Lead Generation Through Chatbots

Choice of Vehicle

Finalizing the vehicle to purchase is not an easy task, for one needs to ponder over multiple aspects pertaining to usage, mileage, cost, EMIs among others. Conversational AI helps dealers collect information about customers' preferences and recommend products based on them. Figure 1 illustrates the case of a chatbot recommending a vehicle based on customer preferences.
NOTE: The number of parameters that can be added to filter out the vehicle options for a customer are not limited to the ones displayed in Figure 1.

Instant Loan Calculations

Buyers looking to raise a loan for the vehicle purchase would be keen on knowing the EMI amount, as it impacts their monthly budgets. The dealership can deploy chatbots that help buyers calculate the exact amount they would be spending to repay the vehicle loan.

Support for Service Requests

Customers could be given the liberty to schedule their vehicle maintenance activities through a chatbot based on which the dealer can pick up the vehicle.
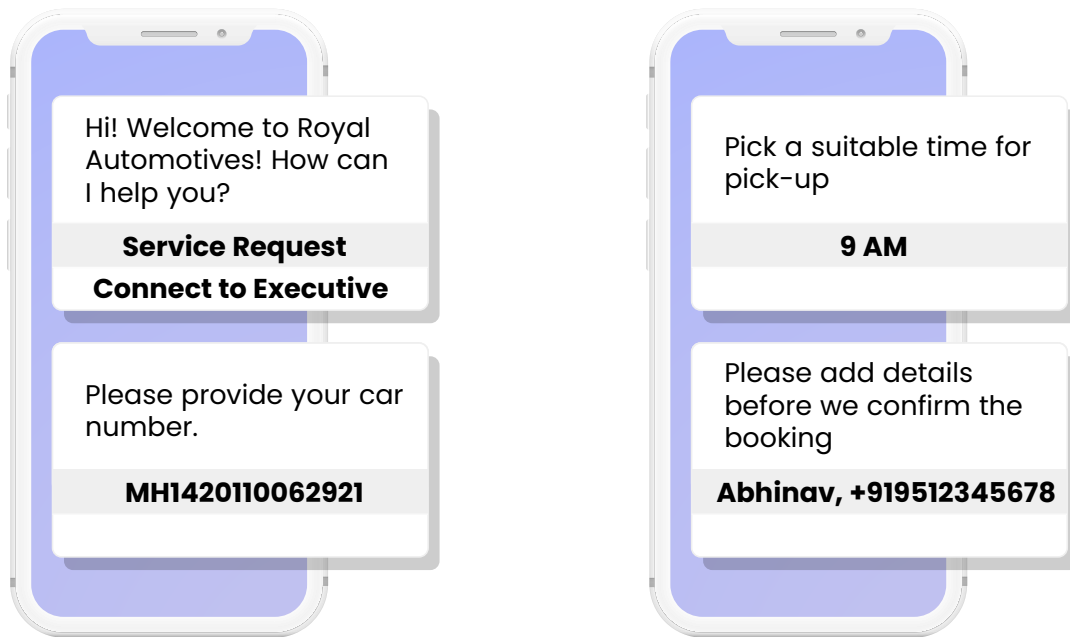

Figure 2: Booking Service Requests Through Chatbots

Insurance Reminders

Reminders regarding the payment of premium towards the vehicle insurance can be sent to the owners. One-click bill pay for seamless payments through the chatbot can be enabled to provide the best possible user experience.

Instant Road Service

Vehicle breakdowns are an emergency and customers can't be forced to speak to an agent, lest there are none available at the time to attend to their needs. Service providers need to be instantly accessible and chatbots can be of immense help. Here is an example of a service provider helping a customer stuck on the road, with not just the vehicle repairs but also dropping him at his destination while the vehicle is attended to.

NOTE: There are several other use cases in the automobile industry, where chatbots can be deployed to improve the operational efficiency as well customer service.
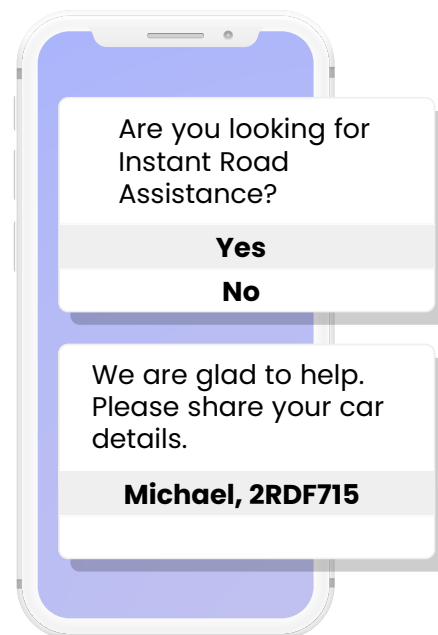

Figure 3: Booking Service Requests Through Chatbots

Messaging Platforms for Chatbot Development

While there are several platforms available for development of chatbots, two of the most popular ones include WhatsApp and Instagram. Gupshup can also help you develop bots on other platforms such as Telegram, RCS, GBM, and more.

WhatsApp

As the third most used social network in the world today, WhatsApp emerges as a strong contender for conversational AI-enabled chatbot development because:

> It has over 2 billion users spread across 180 countries

> Over 175 million people send messages to at least one WhatsApp Business Account everyday

> WhatsApp boasts an open rate of 99 percent, followed by a response rate of 40 percent

> 68 percent of users feel WhatsApp is the easiest way to contact a business

> 71 percent feel more confident about a business messaging on WhatsApp

> WhatsApp supports sharing of rich data such as images, videos, audio, documents, location and more

The WhatsApp Business API empowers medium and large businesses to sell and interact with customers in any part of the world at scale. Businesses can leverage the API to connect with numerous chatbots and agents along with backend support systems such as the CRM, ERP, and other marketing platforms apart from websites and contact center software.

Templates could be defined to communicate with customers over WhatsApp for:

> Notifying customers about vehicles being due for service

> Information about the launch of new vehicles and features by the customers' favorite brands

> Documents list to apply for vehicle loans, and so on

Instagram

Instagram has truly emerged as one of the most widely used social media platforms, with over 1 billion active monthly users, who on average spend 29 minutes a day. On an average, brands put up an average of 27.9 posts a month. Further, 50 percent of Instagram users follow at least one company. Hence a bot built on a brand's Instagram profile is bound to be an effective customer touchpoint. But how do we go about it?

The Gupshup Instagram Messaging API is available to all business accounts and enables brands to integrate third-party apps with their Instagram Direct Messages (DMs), to automate customer responses at scale. The direct messaging (DM) feature on Instagram paves way for two-way conversations between brands and their patrons with an array of Gupshup's Instagram Messaging and conversational tools. Brands get to promote their offerings on Instagram by leveraging text, rich media, quick responses, and more to boost their sales through improved CSAT scores.

Rich Communication Services

The rich communication services (RCS), in simple terms, is an upgraded version of the SMS that supports the sharing of high-resolution photos, videos, location, group chats, read receipts, suggested replies, among several other functions. Commonly referred to as SMS 2.0, RCS uses the native messaging app (used to send and receive an SMS) of an Android phone. It is the default messaging standard for 5G networks, but functions on 3G and 4G networks as well.

RCS Business Messaging (RBM) is the A2P and P2A communication through the RCS channel that allows brands and consumers to interact with each other for a richer engagement. It uses the rich and interactive features of RCS to enable branded and secure messaging, which automobile brands could leverage to build RCS chatbots, thereby enabling the sharing of high-resolution images of exotic destinations, documents, locations, and a lot more. Payment gateways can also be integrated to provide a seamless experience to the customer.

NOTE: Although RCS works only on Android, Gupshup can help you break the barriers that restrict its availability on iOS devices through the Universal RCS solution. Contact Us to know more.

Click Here for an in-depth understanding about the features of RCS Business Messaging.

Google Business Messages (GBM)

The word "Google" is synonymous with search. The search results—local or organic—could be an effective customer touchpoint that could be leveraged to connect the customers to their favorite brands; in essence, this is the focus of Google's Business Messages (GBM).

In simple terms, it enables the messaging option for a business listing on Google Search, Google Maps, Google Ads, and other brand owned assets such as websites, phone dialers, etc., so that users searching for keywords related to a brand or its business, have instant access to it through chat.

Automobile brands can be on the top of the Google Search results, Google Ads, and Google Maps, which could help customers. For example, in an emergency, customers could simply Google for the nearest service center on either of the three channels and message them through the chat option.

Gupshup offers more than just WhatsApp, Instagram, RCS, and Google's Business Messages.

The Gupshup Advantage in Conversational AI

Gupshup's smart messaging platform allows brands to implement an omnichannel communication strategy for customers on over 30 channels including WhatsApp and Instagram using a single API. Gupshup lets you personalize customer engagement at scale with tools for building conversational AI-enabled chatbots. Three of the tools that Gupshup offers are:

> **No-code AI:** Brands can choose from a list of pre-built chatbot templates, customize its content and instantly publish it.

> **Low-code AI:** Brands can create detailed and advanced conversational chatbots using point-and-click tools.

> **Build a Chatbot:** Brands get to leverage the development lifecycle tools from scripting to analytics for building advanced chatbots.

The other advantages that Gupshup offers to brands are:

> **Seamless Custom Integrations:** Gupshup handholds brands in performing custom integrations of any tool to support business logic, user management, and more

> **Enhanced Customer Engagement:** Gupshup helps brands deliver all the relevant notifications to customers to help them make appropriate decisions during purchase, such as travel recommendations, marketing promos, and upselling.

> **Instant and Frictionless Payments:** By integrating third-party payment gateways with WhatsApp and Instagram, Gupshup allows consumers to make payments without navigating between multiple apps.

Customers can pay from any one of the payment options available or with UPI-driven smart messaging with One-click bill pay enabling customers to make payments instantly within WhatsApp. The 1-click Bill Payments' AI algorithm fetches the payment information from message content automatically and embeds the payment link in messages. Naturally, there is no need for any additional development on the enterprise side.

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