



A Comprehensive Guide On WhatsApp API For Customer Support

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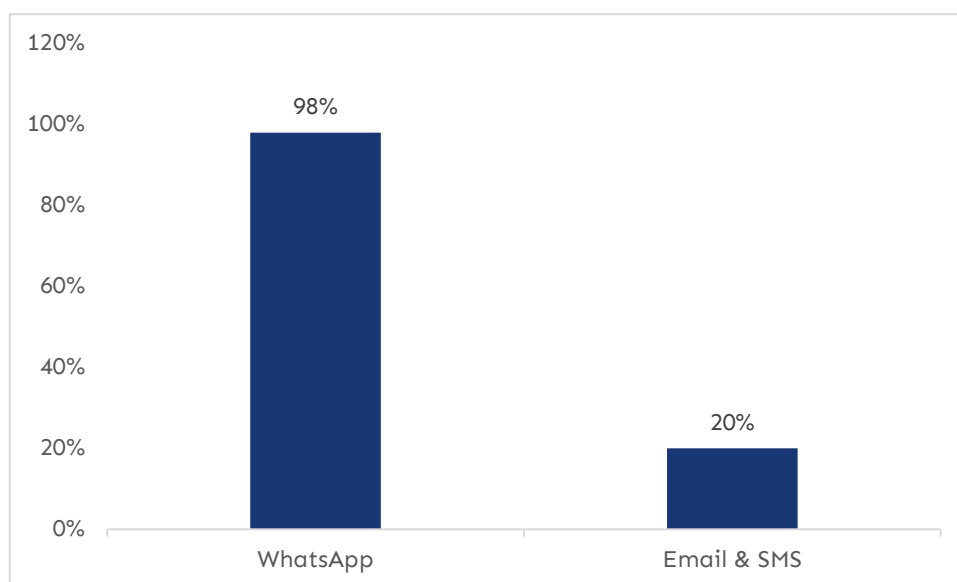
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Introduction

As the world's most popular instant messaging app with a whopping two billion users worldwide, not using WhatsApp for customer service support represents a loss in the chance to retain happy customers and grow your business.

In today's omnichannel world of posts and chats, consumers want to communicate with businesses in a similar way they interact and engage with their families and friends. Messaging apps are the key to connecting with consumers. Billions of messages are sent out through [WhatsApp](#) every day. By communicating with customers through an app they regularly use, you can ensure that a notification from your business on a customer's mobile screen will definitely be opened and read.

As per the most recent [WhatsApp](#) usage data, the messaging app handles close to [65 billion](#) messages every day, about 41 million messages per minute. Another report by Mailchimp shows that WhatsApp has a robust message open rate of [98%](#), meaning that out of every 100 messages sent, 98 messages are read. This puts WhatsApp right at the top as the online activity that consumes the most number of minutes per day anywhere in the world.



Message Open Rate: WhatsApp vs Email & SMS

Source: [AiSensy](#)

With [WhatsApp](#) turning out to be the default messaging app for people across the world, it can take your business communication to a whole new level. On average, users opens their WhatsApp [23-25 times a day](#). This unlocks myriad opportunities for businesses to communicate with customers.

With the WhatsApp Business app, small and medium businesses (SMBs) can easily leverage the reach, ubiquity, and immediacy of WhatsApp to share useful information with customers on the go. But if you are a mid-sized or large business (MLB) looking to boost sales and enhance global customer support cost-effectively, the WhatsApp Business API is the one-stop-shop for your business.

In this guide, you'll learn what [WhatsApp Business API](#) is and how you can use it to improve customer support services. We will also walk you through some of the use cases and case studies to help your business.

But let's first understand what WhatsApp Business API is.

What Is WhatsApp Business API?

[WhatsApp Business API](#) enables businesses to automate conversations and send bulk notifications through chatbots. The API makes it easy to connect with audiences, offer personalised experiences, increase sales, and even garner customer loyalty – cost-effectively and at scale. WhatsApp API is so versatile that you can even run ads and build shopping experiences directly into WhatsApp conversations.

However, the API cannot be directly downloaded. The [WhatsApp Business API](#) was made available across 28+ countries in 2019 through verified Business Solution Providers (BSPs). The API packages offered by BSPs allow engagement, notifications, sorting, automating and responding to customer messages at scale.



WhatsApp Business App Vs WhatsApp Business API

[WhatsApp](#) provides two solutions for businesses of every type and size: a business app and an API. WhatsApp Business app is a free-to-download account that helps small businesses connect with their customers. With this account, SMBs can showcase their products and services through a catalogue and answer customer questions throughout their shopping experience.

In addition to selling and customer support, businesses can [generate leads](#), deliver important notifications and collect feedback from customers. The app also allows you to set up 'away messages to let your customers know that you are not online and will get back to them shortly.

However, WhatsApp Business app has limited functionality, which is why we have WhatsApp Business APIs.

[WhatsApp Business API](#) enables mid-sized or large businesses to communicate with their customers globally. Given these businesses have a large customer base, it's impossible to answer and communicate with each of them manually. [WhatsApp Business API](#) automates the conversations and sends bulk notifications. The WhatsApp for Business API comes with requirements of infrastructure, scalability, maintenance, and upgrades of the ever-changing API. In contrast, WhatsApp Business requires a dedicated and operational SIM card with data and a smartphone.

	WhatsApp Business	WhatsApp Business API
ACCESS	Free and open to download for everyone	Can only be accessed and set up through BSPs like Gupshup
SIZE OF ORGANIZATION	Small-size business	Medium and large size business
PROFILE REQUIREMENTS	A business profile	A business profile with a verified Display name and Business Information
AUTOMATION	Limited functionality, can only automate welcome and away messages	Complete automation with smart chatbots
PRICING	Free	Charged per message sent or template used
FLEXIBILITY IN COMMUNICATION	Regular text with attachments and emojis feature enabled, flexible communication, no approval required	Operates with text and rich media messages, requires prior approval from WhatsApp
SERVICES	Label messages under categories like Existing customers, New customers, Payment related, etc	Ancillary services like fallback channel, human agent switching, etc.

WhatsApp API For Customer Support

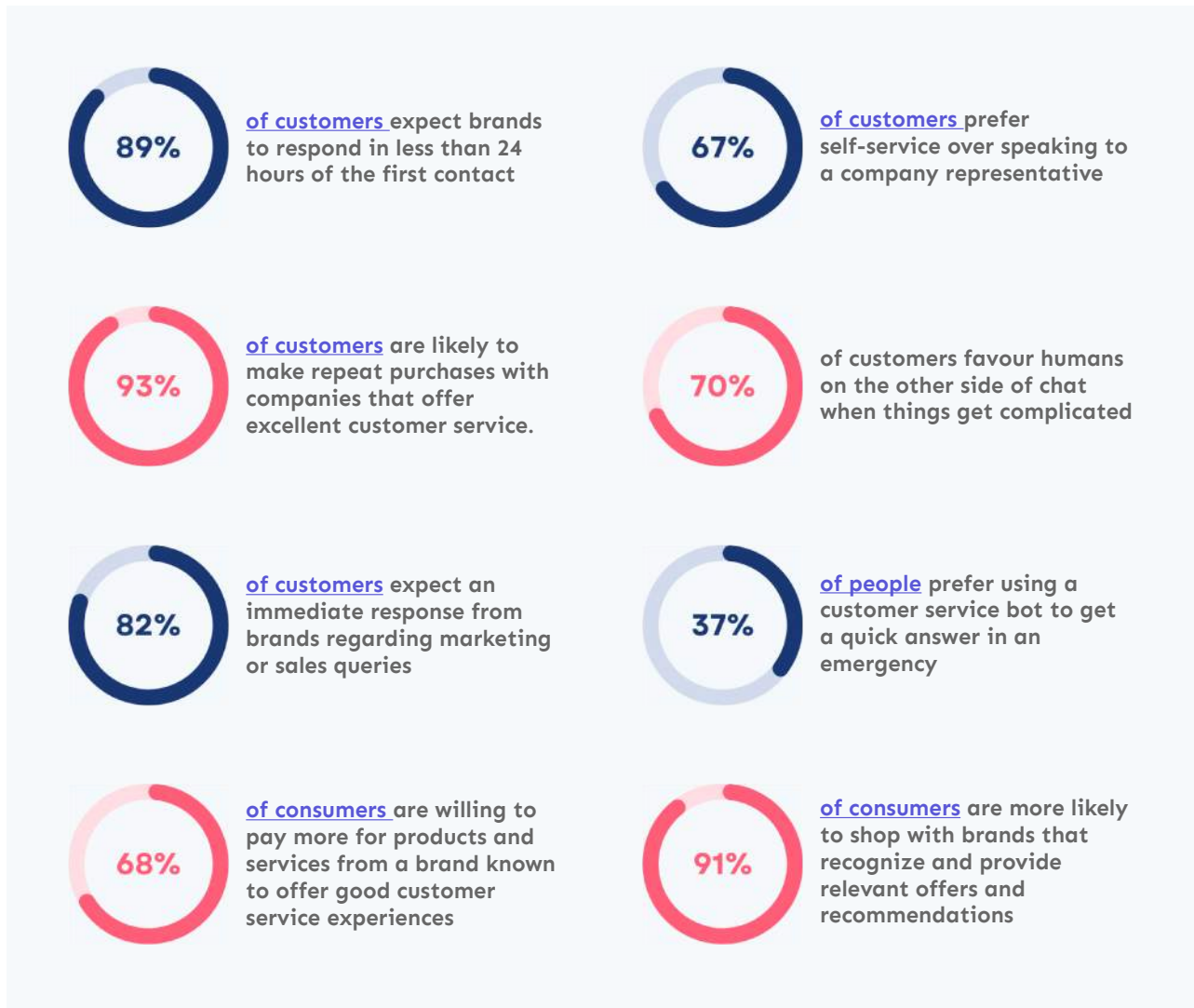
[WhatsApp](#) is one of the most powerful communication tools available today. And yet many businesses refuse to see its potential for brand-customer communications!

Meeting customer expectations increases customer satisfaction and improves retention rates of your business. Through [WhatsApp Business API](#), brands can stay connected with customers via timely, meaningful, two-way conversations - no matter where they are.

From handling customer queries to showcasing products, sending notifications or giving updates, a variety of tasks can be done through WhatsApp to enhance customer experience with a brand. Your company can benefit from end-to-end encryption features and use them to redefine communication with customers.

With WhatsApp [chatbot](#) messaging, you can strengthen your customer support and take business communications to an altogether new level of engagement.

Talking about meeting customer expectations, WhatsApp Business API can help you meet some of these important customer expectations:



The Need For WhatsApp API For Business

Leveraging [WhatsApp Business API](#), brands can talk to customers anywhere in the world on their preferred channel to:



Engage In Personalized Conversations

WhatsApp API enables businesses to easily access a readymade, powerful communication channel to engage in personalized interactions with any customers, anywhere in the world. Chat with them on their preferred channel, and personalize every conversation by leveraging key attributes like customer name, location, or contextual cues based on purchase or conversation history.



Send Timely Notifications And Updates

With the WhatsApp API, businesses can easily send timely alerts, updates, reminders, confirmations, and recommendations. Send product shipping status, appointments reminders, booking or payment confirmations, verification codes, limited-time discount codes, special offers, and more. Utilize inbuilt template messages, so you don't have to design messages from scratch.



Run Ads For Marketing And Promotions

Once you implement the API with an intuitive [platform like Gupshup](#), you can easily run ads that click to WhatsApp from Facebook or [Instagram](#) to converse with potential customers, and gently guide them towards a sale. You can also re-engage existing customers with enticing personalized offers and tailored recommendations that they have opted-in to receive.



Build Shopping Experience Into WhatsApp To Drive Incremental Sales

WhatsApp API is a great way to drive incremental sales by building a shopping experience into WhatsApp conversations. Answer customer questions, provide product options and address pain points to make a smooth buying experience for the customers. By engaging on a channel that customers are already familiar with, you can help them out, while (gently) moving them towards conversion, checkout, sales, and even repeat purchases.

The Need For WhatsApp API For Customers

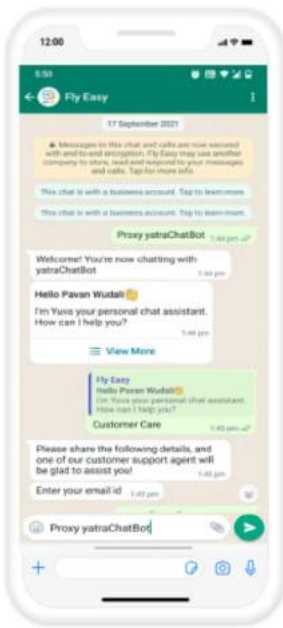
Customers now want faster and more accurate responses, multiple interactions touchpoints, 24x7 availability and personalised communication. A [Hubspot Research](#) suggests that 82% of consumers look for an immediate response from brands on marketing or sales questions. And this group rates immediate response as important or very important for the businesses they deal with. [WhatsApp chatbot](#) is the answer to all their requirements.

Let's look at what makes [WhatsApp](#) the most preferred messaging channel for customers:

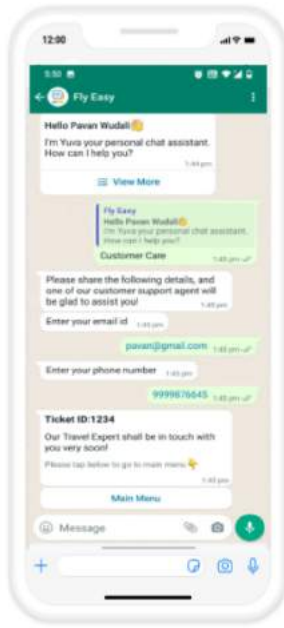


Quick Response

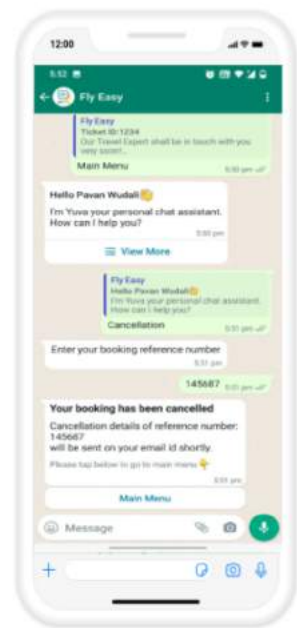
Today, customers want a quick and real-time response from the company. They prefer sticking to the brand that provides them resolution promptly. With emails and other communication methods, responses are delayed. Whereas, with [WhatsApp chatbot](#), customers can instantly find answers to simple questions and solve issues on their own. This improves customer experience and satisfaction ten-fold.



Simple Registration



Service Menu

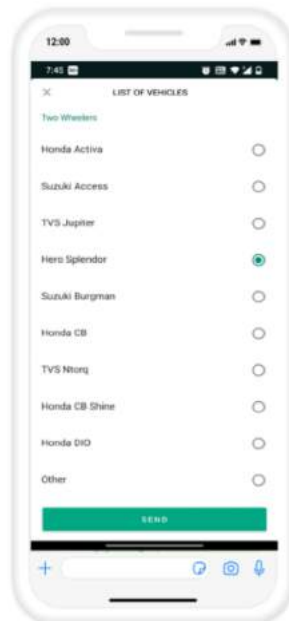
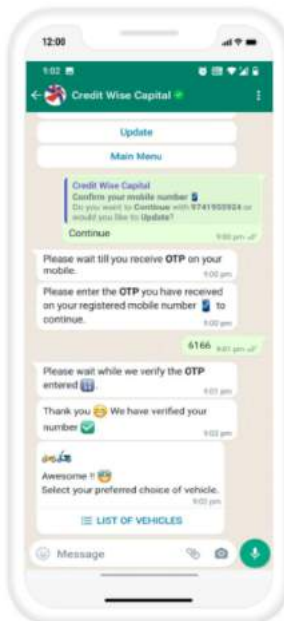
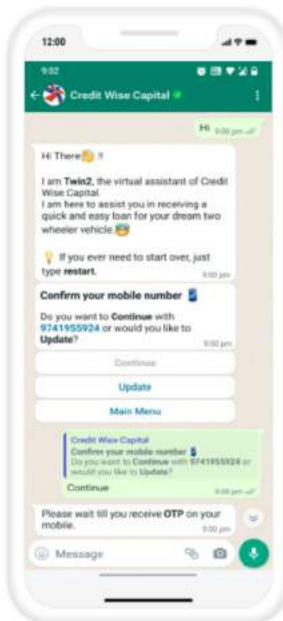


Confirmation

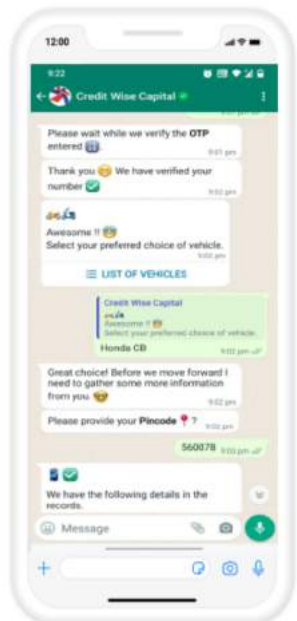
Product Recommendations



[WhatsApp](#) helps customers to connect with brands in real-time where they can instantly buy the products they need. Based on the customer's requirement, a brand can also send automated pictures, videos, and price range of the products.



Category Selection





Timely Notifications And Delivery Updates

With a medium like WhatsApp, customers no longer have to connect with the customer service team to get updates about their product delivery or check the website repeatedly. WhatsApp messages are received without any delay, and given the high usage, customers check these notifications instantly.



Secure Communication

WhatsApp is known for its end-to-end encryption. Because of this secured experience, customers prefer to interact with brands on this platform without having to worry about privacy issues. At the same time, important business information also remains confidential.

WhatsApp Templates For Customer Messaging

WhatsApp templates are used to send notifications to customers both in and after the 24-hour customer service window. WhatsApp has some strict guidelines on what you can send via their platform. The platform allows inbound and outbound messages.

Outbound messages are typically sent via set messaging templates. These outbound messaging templates have some restrictions. The WhatsApp team uses automation and a manual review to review these templates and is relatively strict about their policies.

The image displays three smartphone screens, each representing a different WhatsApp template:

- Outbound Campaigns (EFPN Sports):** The screen shows a message: "Your OTP for the transaction is 5679. Please do not share it with anyone".
- Inbound Campaigns (Kiara Fashion):** The screen shows a customer message: "I want to return my shoes. They don't fit me well". Below it is a response: "Thanks for reaching out. Please select one of the options below:". At the bottom are two red buttons: "Get Replacement" and "Get Refund".
- Outbound + Inbound Campaigns (Gupshup):** The screen shows a message: "Hi, we appreciate your interest in Gupshup. We tried reaching but could not get through. Just reply with 'Call' & our team shall call you.". At the bottom is a red button labeled "Call".

A template has several fields businesses will need to fill. It's important to understand each of these fields and what they do. If you don't, you won't be able to follow template guidelines.

WhatsApp Message Formats

Let us understand the different types of WhatsApp message formats in use:

> Text Messages

Text message templates are simple message formats used for standard notifications that are reusable by a business.

> Media Messages

Businesses can send images, documents, PDF files, etc., using media message templates.

> Interactive Buttons

Interactive buttons include elements that enable the capture of user input or redirect them outside the WhatsApp interface. There are two types of predefined buttons:

Call-to-Action: Businesses can redirect the user to a URL.

Quick Reply: Users can tap and submit their response.

> Product Messages

A WhatsApp product message is an interactive message in which you can showcase your products and services. The number one benefit of this feature is that customers can shop without having to leave the chat. There are two different types to choose from; single-product messages and multi-product messages:

Multi-Product Messages: can be used when your customers want to browse multiple products or services and can display 30 offerings in one go.

Single Product Messages: are best used to showcase one specific product or service to a customer.



Guidelines For WhatsApp Messaging Templates

Some specific guidelines need to be followed while creating a messaging template for WhatsApp to be approved.

Message Template Name

Make your message template name clear. For example, instead of using a name like "template_014," use "bus_ticket_details."

Clarity

As someone outside of your business will be reviewing your message templates, providing more clarity gives reviewers context around how the message template will be used.

Add Samples

Add a sample when submitting a template, wherever possible. Even all appeals for rejected message templates require a sample. You can appeal a rejected message template through Direct Support.

Language Support

When a business wants to have the same template content in various languages, create the template under one template name and include all the multiple languages in a single submission.

Provision For Deletion

Delete templates you don't plan to use. There's a limit of 250 templates per WhatsApp Business Account ([WABA](#)). If you need a message template to reopen the 24-hour window, we suggest starting with mentioning the previous conversation thread.

Parameters

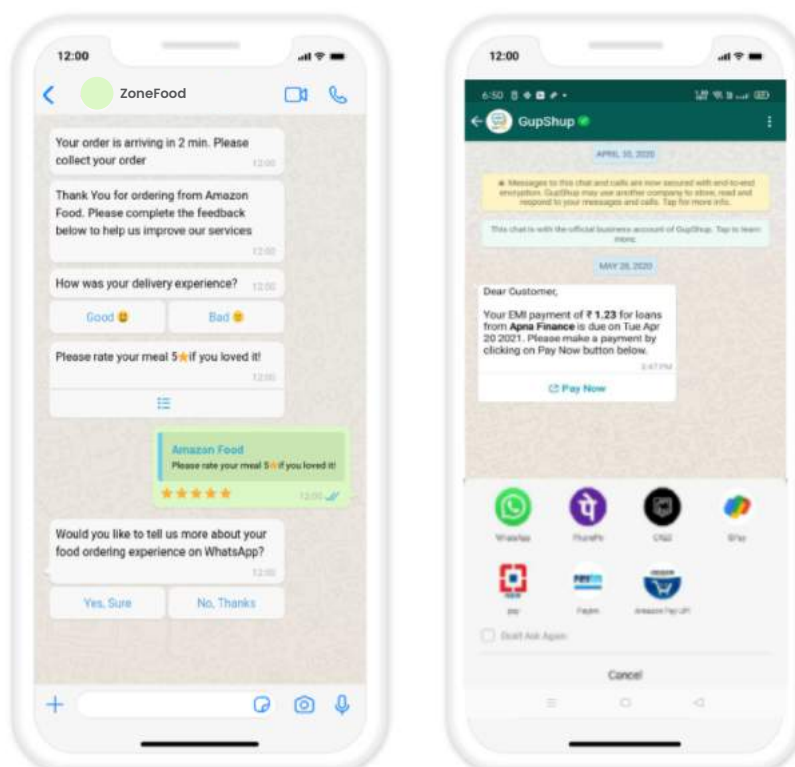
Parameter values can't have newline characters. Create as many templates as options to display multiple options like a list, and if the number of options varies by customer (e.g., travel quotes, items in an order). Or make one template with a Quick Reply button like "Show More."

Personalization

Create templates that are 1:1 in nature for a personalized experience. Also, avoid acronyms.



Here are some examples of WhatsApp messaging templates



What Is WhatsApp Business Opt-in?

WhatsApp is particular about the quality of customer engagement on its platform. Because of this reason, they have taken a step to prevent brands from spamming sending messages without their consent and spamming them with irrelevant messages.

Before you initiate WhatsApp messaging with your customers, they must first consent to receive WhatsApp messages with an active opt-in. This opt-in must be done via a third-party channel you already use to communicate with your customers, for example, your company website, app, SMS, store etc.

When collecting opt-ins, you must:

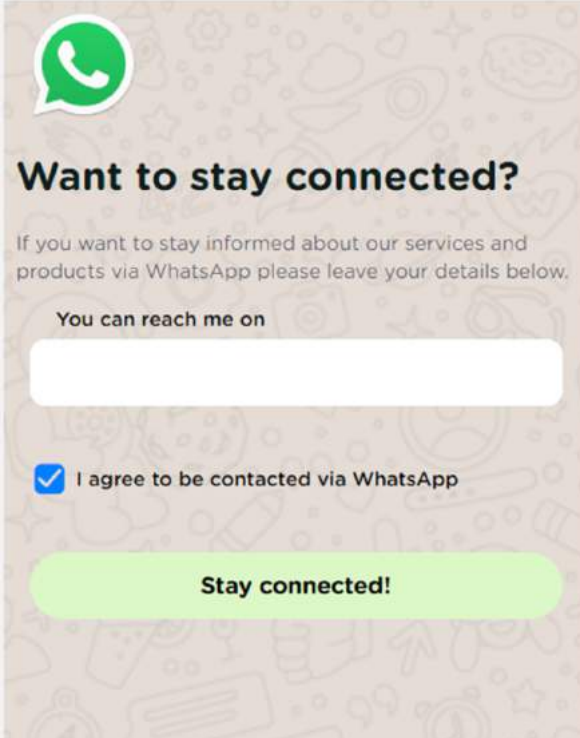
- Clearly state that a person is opting in to receive messages from your business over WhatsApp
- State the business' name that a person is opting in to receive messages from
- Comply with applicable laws

There are some criteria for third-party opt-in, you must follow:

- The opt-in must have a visual element (like a checkbox) next to the WhatsApp name and logo
- It must be clearly explained what information will be received, and that the information will be shared via WhatsApp

Without gaining consent, WhatsApp does not allow sending outbound messages to customers. Customers must also be given similar measures to stop receiving messages and opt-out/de-consent of the WABA service. The service for opt-out works on the same endpoint as opt-in, with slight differences in parameters passed in the API.

Here's a template for what WhatsApp Business opt-ins should look like



The image shows a WhatsApp Business opt-in form template. It features a green WhatsApp logo at the top left. Below the logo is the heading "Want to stay connected?". Underneath the heading is a paragraph of text: "If you want to stay informed about our services and products via WhatsApp please leave your details below." Below this text is a white input field with the placeholder text "You can reach me on". Below the input field is a blue checkmark icon followed by the text "I agree to be contacted via WhatsApp". At the bottom of the form is a green button with the text "Stay connected!". The background of the form is a light beige color with a pattern of faint, light-colored icons related to communication and social media.

5 Ways To Collect Opt-Ins From WhatsApp Business

Collect opt-ins via any third-party channel your business uses to communicate with your customers.



Improve Customer's Experience (CX) With WhatsApp Business API

WhatsApp Business API can be utilized as a touchpoint for various steps in the customer journey. With WhatsApp, customers can directly contact your business at their convenience and similarly, you can reach more customers across the globe. Let's understand what you can do to improve customers' experience using WhatsApp.

Think of WhatsApp across the customer lifecycle



Firstly identify different phases of a customer's journey and the common friction points in each phase. Where are they asking questions, what kind of queries do they have and how you can solve them better.

Pre-purchase (Discovery)

- › Less information on product and service
- › No price information
- › Options to compare products
- › How to ask for help to make a decision

Purchase (Buying)

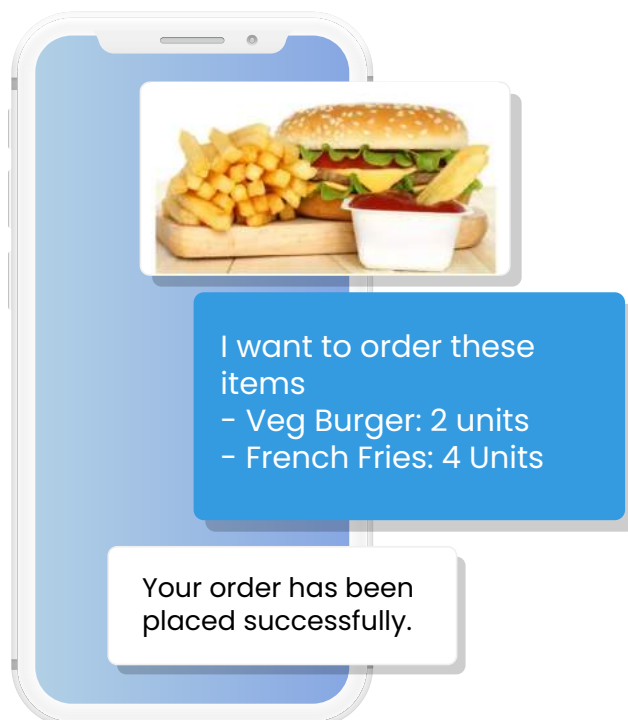
- › Viewing Products in a catalog
- › Adding to the cart
- › The wrong item added to the cart
- › Problem during the checkout process
- › Completing payments
- › Payment failure
- › Looking for an offline store

Post-purchase (Support)

- › The product doesn't meet expectations
- › Return/refund
- › Need channel for feedback
- › How to set up/ install
- › Delivery updates



Once you identify these pain points, you can create message templates and set up quick replies to help them solve their queries/problems promptly and accurately.

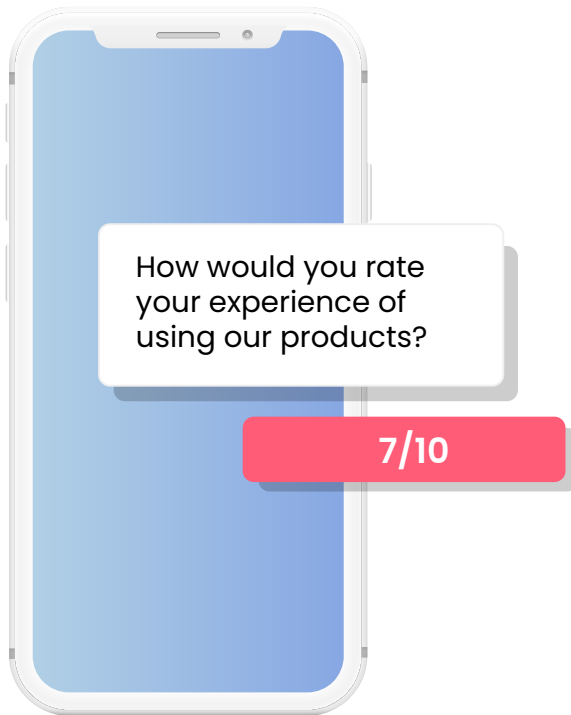
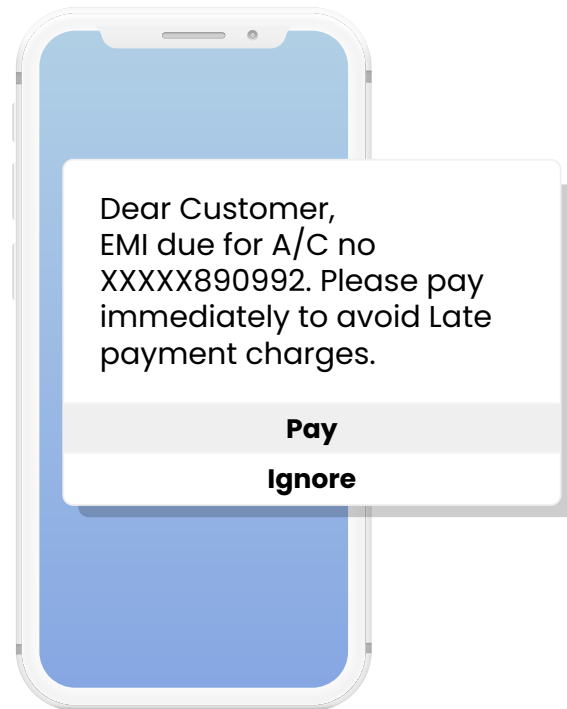


Pre-purchase use cases:

- › Personalized promotions
- › Product offers and deals
- › Lead generation
- › Product launches
- › Up-sell and cross-sell
- › Sales assistance
- › Pricing enquiries

Purchase use cases:

- > Cart abandonment reminders
- > Product recommendations
- > Omnichannel payments
- > Product purchases and bookings
- > Referral programs
- > Loyalty and gift cards management



Post-purchase use cases:

- > Order tracking
- > Delivery updates
- > Back in stock alerts
- > Purchase Invoices
- > Customer support
- > Product feedback and reviews
- > On-demand order, return and refunds status

WhatsApp For Customer Support: Use Cases

Many use cases exemplify how WhatsApp can be a powerful tool for supporting and being there for your customer 24/7. Let's understand five important ones:



Multimedia Messaging Options

Businesses can better help customers when the messages contain images, videos and other multimedia elements. Customers are better able to explain their issues with a product or service. This, in turn, helps the business resolve the issue quickly and efficiently by escalating to the correct department.



Follow-Ups And Regular Reminders/Notifications

If a business sells products that particular customers buy regularly or on a recurring basis, they can periodically send product notifications, offers, and discount notifications. Post-purchase relevant reminders, follow up on services, etc can be handled automatically.



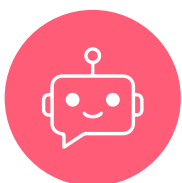
Call Options

There's always the option to jump on a call when needed. Texting is always the mainframe agenda, but customers and businesses alike can indulge in a quick call to resolve an issue faster, with permissions granted suitably both ways.



Automated Messages

One of the prime messaging features of [the WhatsApp business](#) is its automated messaging systems. Businesses can set up automated 'away' and 'welcome' messages and create templates for 'quick replies', which could be sent out as prompt customer support messages.



[Chatbots](#) To Automate Conversations

The most common questions or queries can be handled with [WhatsApp chatbots](#) with ease and utmost efficiency. The bot can actually help offload more than 70% of the customer query load, which indirectly frees up your live agents to focus on more complex customer issues.

How to Get Started

To get started with your WhatsApp Business App, you need to first set up your account. The WhatsApp Business app is available for free to download for [Android](#) as well as [iOS](#) mobile device users.

Let's understand the process in a step-by-step fashion:

Step 01 > Search for 'WhatsApp Business' on your Google Play/App Store.

Step 02 > Accept the 'Terms and Conditions', and tap 'OK'.

Step 03 > Once the app gets downloaded on your mobile device, add the required information like business phone number, business information, etc.

Step 04 > View the business settings and set your parameters/requirements.

Step 05 > Set up the [WhatsApp pay](#) option. This is required, in case you want to send and receive payments via WhatsApp itself.

Your [WhatsApp Business account](#) is now set up. You can get started by sending messages to your contacts; notifying them of your new business number.

Some more important points to keep in mind include:



INFORMATION IS KEY

Keep your business profile information factual and detailed. Include details like business hours, website, location, description, etc.



CREATE GROUPS

You can create different groups for different purposes. For example, regular customers for regular discounts, new product samples for new customers, etc.



MESSAGING TOOLS

Use messaging tools such as away messages, greeting messages and quick replies to secure and maintain customer engagement.



MESSAGE BROADCASTING

Broadcast messages, greetings, notifications and offer announcements should be sent to customers to create awareness of your products and services. This will also aid in boosting your brand recall.



CHAT LABELS

Label your chats for better tracking of customers. You can even add custom labels and keep segregation or add users to groups.

CASE STUDY:

Khan Academy

Khan Academy offers practice exercises, instructional videos, and a personalized learning dashboard that empower learners to study at their own pace in and outside of the classroom.

Solution:

Gupshup built a conversational messaging solution on WhatsApp for Khan Academy. Khan Academy integrated Gupshup's WhatsApp API (Application Programming Interface) with their app, which offered a rich, personalized messaging experience for students, teachers and parents.

Results:

- Better engagement with parents, teachers, and students
- Reached a wider audience (new and existing users)
- Delivering information like assignments, guides, learning tools, etc, more efficiently
- Onboarding students and improving teacher engagement.



CASE STUDY: NoBroker

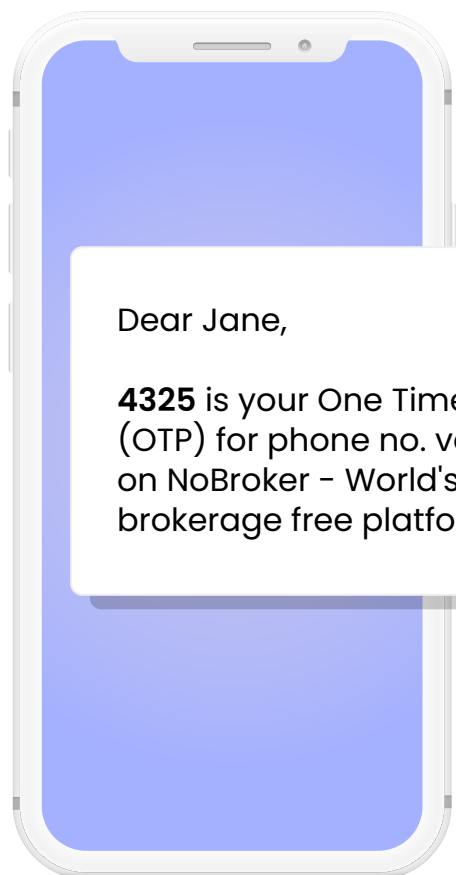
NoBroker realized that 80% of the owners prefer WhatsApp over Email to share their property photos which has given a big boost in interactive engagement on the NoBroker platform.

Solution:

- Single API
- Opt-in and Opt-out Management
- Omni-channel Notifications
- Rich Conversational Messaging

Results:

NoBroker decreases their lead time of property activation from 21 hours to less than an hour with a smaller call centre team.



How Gupshup Plays a Role

WhatsApp is the most popular messaging app in many countries with a penetration rate of over [50%](#). So if your business is operating in one of these countries, you have an immense opportunity to connect with customers, promote your product and services, provide timely, personalized support through a medium they already love and support.

The easiest way to get WhatsApp API for your business is to partner with a WhatsApp-approved BSP like Gupshup. With Gupshup, you not only get hassle-free, fast setup; you also get pay-as-you-use pricing, world-class technical support, and zero worries about long numbers, short-codes, or country-specific telecom regulations.

Gupshup is the highest category partner for WhatsApp, having onboarded over 900+ enterprises and 10,000+ SMBs for WhatsApp Business and can enable early access to new product features ahead of other partners.

Connect with customers on their terms, increase brand recall, and boost sales and profits. With the WhatsApp API, your midsize or large business can do all this and more.

#LetsGupshup to get started.

[Talk to Us](#)

[Get Started](#)



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