



Conversational Marketing With WhatsApp Business API: Why Do Marketers Need It

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Introduction

What does a customer expect from a brand today? Personalized, convenient and speedy interactions from their favourite brands create an impact on the customers. Conversational marketing has made this experience possible through many channels. It enables businesses to foster customer relationships and improve online customer experience by communicating and customizing interactions online.

Live chats, chatbots and messaging apps are used to enable these personalized conversations. Chatbots, in particular, have made conversational marketing more accessible. The two solutions are usually grouped as the same thing, but chatbots are just a part of conversational marketing.



Any form of two-way communication, like email and phone calls, can be part of a conversational marketing strategy. Although today, messaging channels are the most popular way to get in touch and reach out to customers. Over <u>85%</u> of smartphone users prefer mobile messaging to emails or calls, according to Soprano Design. More than half of consumers (<u>55%</u>) flat-out ignore marketing emails because they get so many of them.

Consumers want to interact with their phones, and want instant responses from businesses, which is part of the reason why messaging apps like WhatsApp are so popular.

According to <u>WhatsApp usage data</u>, 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 <u>98%</u>, 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.

With <u>WhatsApp</u> 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 open their WhatsApp <u>23-25 times a day</u>. This unlocks myriad opportunities for businesses to communicate with customers post taking opt-in confirmations.

This guide will unpack the mysteries of marketing through WhatsApp. We will discuss the key benefits of using WhatsApp for marketing, and some industry-wise use cases and examples.

But first, let's understand what <u>conversational marketing</u> really is.

What Is Conversational Marketing?

<u>Conversational marketing</u> is a customer-centric and dialogue-driven approach to marketing. It is based on one-to-one interactions in real-time across multiple channels. It has become the go-to strategy for driving customer engagement, improving customer experience, and growing revenue.

Marketers want to have one-on-one conversations with their customers through the Awareness-Interest-Decision-Action (AIDA for B2C) sequence to learn what they are looking for and develop a stronger, long-term relationship with them. Hence, the importance of conversational marketing in a customer journey cannot be emphasized enough.

The framework to follow while implementing a conversational marketing strategy can be broken down into three steps:

Engagement of the customer

Generating and capturing leads via personalized chats.

> Understanding customer requirements

Analyze the leads collected and nurture them by dissecting the information collected.

> Recommendations to be made

Making the right next move/ suggestions to lead the customer through the sales funnel.

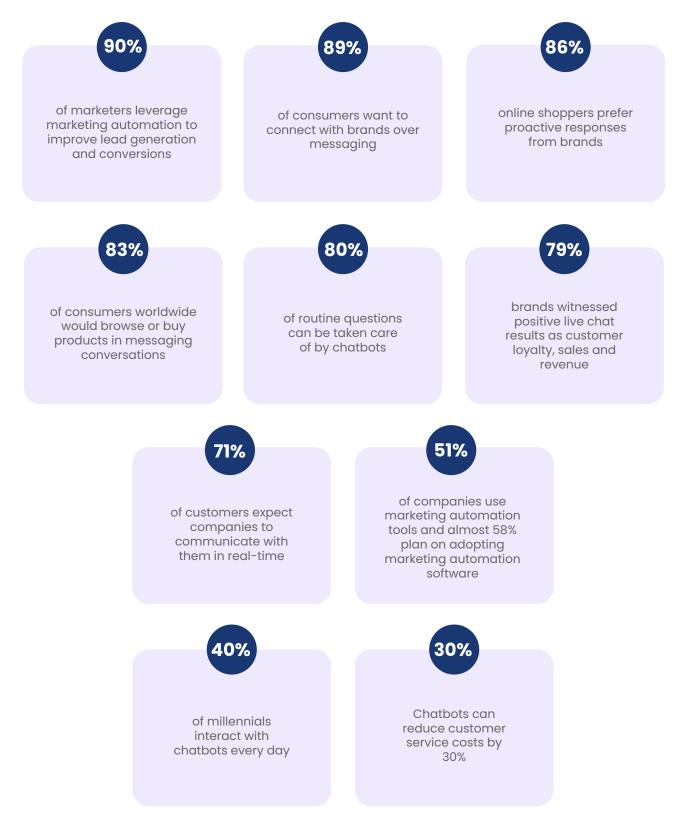
Conversational Marketing VS Traditional & Inbound Marketing

Traditional marketing is mostly used to talk about offline advertising strategies such as publishing in newspapers, sending emails or covering street walls with posters. Whereas, conversational marketing aims at engaging the customers by way of conversations. Conversational marketing remains close to other digital marketing strategies as you need a digital interface to interact with customers and Conversational Artificial Intelligence (AI) to power it. To simply put, conversational marketing creates a sense of specificity and personalization for the consumer. By creating this personalized consumer experience, brands are more likely to hit their targets, generate sales, and rake in profits.



<u>Conversational marketing</u> is often considered a part of an inbound marketing strategy. Inbound is the 'pull' tactic of attracting consumers through their preferred channels. On the contrary, conversational marketing is the method of actually conversing with customers in these channels. It is how businesses interact with their customers by providing them with the power of when, how and where they communicate with brands. Both are, by nature, customer-centric and go hand-in-hand.

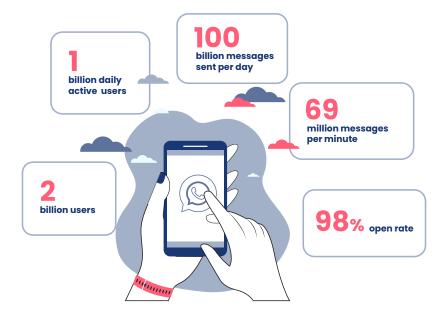
Conversational Marketing Statistics You Need To Know



Source: emailmonday, Salesforce, IBM, LivePerson, MarketingDive, TransFunnel

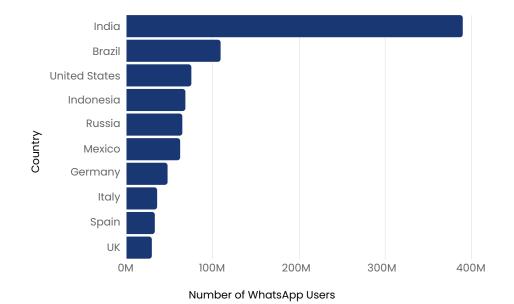
Why WhatsApp?

Over the last few years, the popularity of WhatsApp has increased manifold. Thanks to rich media sharing options and wide global adoption, WhatsApp has become more than a messaging app.



WhatsApp as a marketing tool is excellent because of its reach. Its users include people of all ages, profiles and socioeconomic status'. And it is available in over <u>180 countries in 60 different</u> <u>languages</u> and has massive potential as a marketing tool.

Launched in <u>November 2009</u>, WhatsApp stood as a perfect alternative to sending SMS and costly phone bills as it allowed communication over WiFi. Along with text messages, one could also make voice calls, send photos or videos globally. Due to its popularity, <u>WhatsApp was acquired by Facebook in 2014 for \$19 billion</u>. Currently, there are 3 type of WhatsApp accounts – <u>Messenger</u> App, <u>Business App</u>, and <u>Business API</u>. Its interactive and highly personalized mobile messaging techniques can be beneficial to marketing.



Top 10 WhatsApp countries ranked by largest audiences

Source: BacklinkO

WhatsApp Business App Vs WhatsApp Business API

Before we deep dive into WhatsApp marketing, its important to understand the capabilities and difference between the WhatsApp Business App and WhatsApp Business API since these two are different services.



WhatsApp Business App

The free-to-download app is ideal for small and medium businesses to connect with their customers and promote their offerings in a convenient, low-friction and user-friendly way.

In addition to selling and providing customer support, businesses can generate <u>leads</u>, deliver important notifications vand collect feedback from customers. The app also allows SMBs to set up away messages to let their customers know that they 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

Designed for medium and large businesses, the <u>WhatsApp API</u> provides a means to leverage WhatsApp popularity (i.e. global reach) to augment their marketing and customer support functions, and to give their sales a welcome boost.

The API is not an app, so it does not have a front-end interface, and cannot be simply downloaded. Instead, companies must either work with Facebook directly to add the API to their business, or work with a WhatsApp partner like Gupshup.

The best advantage of the API is the fact that businesses can design and make WhatsApp bots to automate the most common process and requests which their customers experience. WhatsApp chatbots can help businesses collect feedback or make consumers to fill out forms through conversations. Most importantly, businesses can seamlessly extract the submitted data move them down the sales funnel and increase the chances of conversion.

A WhatsApp business API has become a valuable customer engagement tool for businesses – with <u>over 5 million businesses</u> WhatsApp to engage and serve customers. As WhatsApp continues to expand the range of services it offers businesses, it is increasingly being seen not just as an engagement tool but a platform to enable conversational commerce as well. This has given rise to the concept of 'WhatsApp Commerce' – offering and selling products and services to customers using WhatsApp as the primary channel.

With <u>WhatsApp Commerce</u>, businesses can leverage the captive user base on WhatsApp and move beyond delivering important notifications and providing on-time support. It revolutionizes the future of shopping, enabling them to engage with consumers, market, sell and manage products in WhatApp, and deliver a seamless buying experience to users.



WhatsApp: A Disruptive Direct Response Marketing Channel

The direct response marketing technique is designed to encourage consumers to take action to business offerings; in a personalized two-way communication with business on WhatsApp. Until now, WhatsApp has been a relatively untapped marketing tool, yet the engagement rates on WhatsApp are distinctly higher in comparison to SMS and email.

Many businesses are adopting WhatsApp to implement cost-savings in customer support as it offers rich text messaging as well as supporting attachments. Most importantly, it is secure by design.

Furthermore, it enables marketers to convey promotional content, brochures, catalogues, videos etc., and attract customers to get them interested in your products by tapping on to the easy usability of the product. The marketing team can also conduct surveys and polls with customers in real-time using WhatsApp.

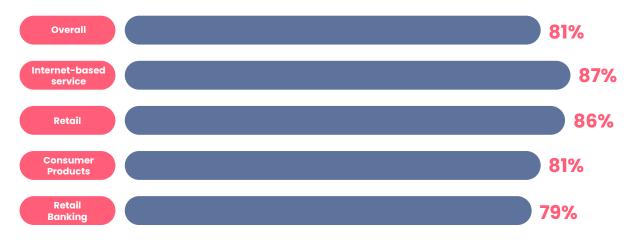
50 million businesses are using WhatsApp for commercial purposes	80%	of SMBs in India who believe WhatsApp helps grow business	WhatsApp Business was downloaded 18 million times Google Play & App Store in 2021
	84%	of SMBs in India who believe WhatsApp helps communicate with customers	175 million beople send messages to a business account on WhatsApp every day

Source: FreshDesk, BacklinkO

WhatsApp Chatbots: A Game-Changer

Whatsapp <u>Chatbots</u> allow conversations between brands and consumers through a familiar experience and creates meaningful experiences. As compared to chatbots on websites, WhatsApp <u>chatbots</u> can aid you in reaching consumers with significantly more flexibility and frequency. This is primarily due to the way most users operate on WhatsApp – they are perpetually active and available to reply most of the time.

We are in the midst of the experience economy. Consumers are much more demanding of brands and businesses than they used to be. In fact, many consumers put the experience of interacting with a business higher on their value ladder than the price tag. The advancements in technology made everything faster and easier. Hence, today consumers expect personalized attention, instant assistance as well as memorable interactions. WhatsApp chatbots have given businesses the opportunity to keep up with growing consumer demands and automate while keeping personalization at heart.



Percentage Of Consumers Willing To Spend More For A Better Experience - Sector-Wise

Source: Landbot.io

The ability to automate key business processes while maintaining a human touch on the most popular messaging channel in the world make chatbots one of the WhatsApp marketing tools with the tremendous potential.

Benefits of WhatsApp Marketing Strategy



Real-Time Customer Service And Support

<u>WhatsApp Business API</u> offers ubiquitous messaging that's quick, efficient and reliable on a platform used by many consumers. With WhatsApp, alerts and updates can be received in real-time. Most importantly, any urgent queries that need answering can be answered in a timely and direct manner, with no middlemen involved and slowing down the process.

Two-Way Communication

Primarily, WhatsApp serves as a great channel for notifications and alerts like purchase confirmations, customer support, new product alerts, etc. However, it also enables businesses and customers to interact with each other proactively via reliable two-way messaging. It also allows a more direct way to engage with customers and have two-way conversations that generally take place in a physical store location or over the phone.



Personal And Trusted Channel

WhatsApp API enables businesses to get more personal and authentic with messaging. WhatsApp is a powerful tool for businesses to reach their customers directly and authentically. Businesses can create a profile that can be used to send personalized promotions, updates and more. Customers can see at a glance when a business has been verified, which gives them confidence in the business and the product.



Support Automation And FAQ

Using the WhatsApp Business API, businesses can reach and respond to their customers faster. With the 'quick replies' feature, businesses can reuse and store frequently sent messages to speed up customer service. This can be useful for many industries and their specific customer needs for instant responses. Businesses can also use chatbots by setting up 'away' messages during slow business periods. This way, customers feel informed; they know when to expect a response, and as a business, it provides the chance to keep the customer posted.



Private And Secure Platform

WhatsApp is a safe and secure platform that is trusted by its users. This is because it has a private end-to-end encryption and doesn't share information with third parties. Unlike other apps, it doesn't have ads, which makes the platform a safe and private place to communicate with customers. Customers can be assured that they are in contact with a verified company by verifying each account.



Leveraged By Different Demographics

Businesses are leveraging WhatsApp by targeting different demographics, such as GenZ and millennials, who rely on technology. These users expect personalized communication from businesses, which is why WhatsApp API allows businesses to communicate with customers. As a result, voice of the customer is heard effectively.



> Unlocks Valuable Customer Insights

With the <u>WhatsApp Business</u> messaging statistics feature, it's possible to gain valuable insights and measure success levels in new ways. It also enables businesses to measure 'messages seen' and status delivery. Features like 'labels' enable businesses to categorize and distinguish contacts and different chat conversations in one place. Broadcast messages can then be sent to anyone tagged with that label.



> Engages Globally

Since WhatsApp comes preinstalled on many smartphones worldwide, the chances are that most customers are probably already using the app. To connect with a customer, businesses need to just set up a WhatsApp Business profile and associate it with their business number. Companies can send <u>appointment</u> reminders, order notifications, product dispatch alerts, product promotional videos, verification codes, boarding passes, two-way customer surveys and generic product/service support messages. It's instant, more personal, and effective in the longer run.

Tricks To Use WhatsApp Marketing To Your Advantage

If you want to improve your chances of getting people to start a conversation with you, you should make sure you're careful when crafting your copy to avoid writing messages that sound like spam in any way.

• When it comes to marketing communication via social platforms, the content needs to be easily digestible for the users who will receive what's being sent out. It's not about who sends it out but about how it's done. And most notably, when it comes to WhatsApp marketing – always make sure your messages come from someone reliable which means having enough time to train your team(s).

• Virtual classified ads have shown to be marketing efforts that are relatively inexpensive if you go about it right. They're still a powerful way to get the word out there when used correctly.

The good thing about classified ads is they can work great in tandem with things like SEO or digital marketing campaigns which means the list of people who have seen your ad will expand overtime at no extra charge. A great tool to use along with Classified Ads has been LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter Ads as they can target specific demographics or locales.

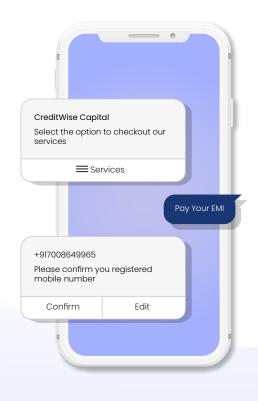
• Customers here are the ones who initiate the action, and then marketers can push them forward by enticing them with a call to action. Brands should mention a default keyword in the link so they'll be able to reach out and start chatting.

• One thing to keep in mind is that people should respond to the offers with the same tone of voice as any other channel (for example by mentioning a default hashtag that everyone can use). A brand's marketing team working on the WhatsApp strategy should work in tandem to create messages that align with the company's brand personality across all channels.

Industry-Wise Use Cases Of WhatsApp Marketing

Now that you know the benefits and tricks of using WhatsApp Marketing, the next question is how to use the channel effectively. Here are the most popular WhatsApp use cases across various industries that are just getting started.

> Fintech



Generate Leads

The main step towards a successful sales funnel is generating ample leads. A WhatsApp chatbot can help communicate with customers and generate high-quality leads.



Try it yourself

Qualify Leads

Leads generated need to be further routed to the correct departments and fructified. Once the leads are qualified, agents no longer have to spend time asking qualification questions and can instead focus on immediately closing the lead.

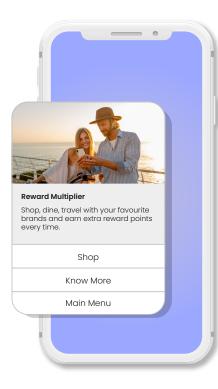
Answer Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

There may be many generic questions that customers might have around the plethora of products offered by a fintech company. Answering queries faster and efficiently ensure that customers proceed through the sales funnel quicker. Also, by answering generic queries and FAQs, a WhatsApp chatbot helps improve CSAT (customer satisfaction) and NPS (net promoter survey) scores drastically.

Share Documents

Document submission is a vital process in any fintech onboarding process. WhatsApp chatbots allow the transfer of high-quality images, documents, and othe rich-media elements. End-to-end encryption ensures a secure transfer of data.





Upsell By Sending Offers and Discounts

As is widely known, WhatsApp does not allow promotional outbound messages. However, if there is a response from the customer end to an outbound message, a company can send further messages offering discounts and promotions post the users' opt-in.



Try it yourself

Answer Complex Queries

While low-level queries can be automated, certain issues need to be handled by agents. Certain queries need to be addressed by specific departments and handled efficiently. Smooth bot-to-agent handoffs enable live agents to answer tricky or complex queries faster.

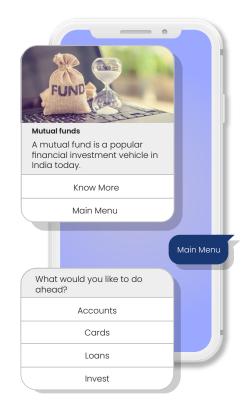
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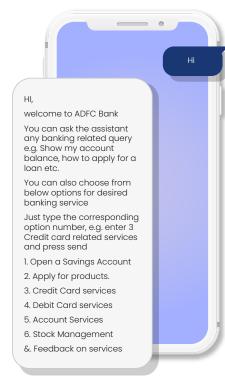
Lead Generation Process

WhatsApp chatbots can enable banks to generate high-quality leads. Adding a simple click-to-chat feature on the most preferred chat app, companies can engage their prospects through the WhatsApp bot. As soon as the customer begins the conversation, their name and phone number are automatically picked up. The user familiarity with WhatsApp API further helps bank and financial institutions firms to engage them much faster, thus pushing them further down the conversion funnel.



Try it yourself





Onboarding Customers

WhatsApp chatbot for banking and financial institutions can be used to start a conversation with potential customers while they are applying for a loan or visiting the website. You can offer the required help and onboard them eventually.

Sending Informational Updates

WhatsApp chatbots for banks can also be used to send real-time requests and information to the customers. Among these updates are:

- Automating FAQs Did my cheque/trans action clear? What documents do I need to submit and where? How can I apply for a loan
- Troubleshooting help



Following Up With The Prospects

Once you have collected the details of your prospective leads, they can now be moved to the qualification stage. A simple nudge and a push via WhatsApp can help boost your conversion rates substantially.

> Edtech

Lead Generation And Qualification

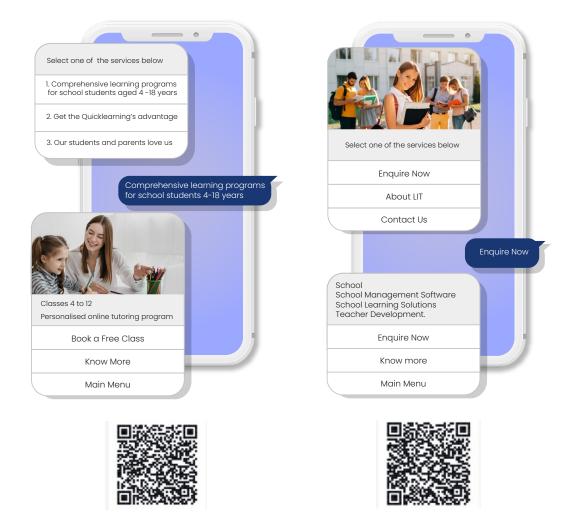
WhatsApp provides convenience and human connections that make it perfect for one-on-one conversations to generate and qualify leads.

Instead of nurturing leads through landing pages or online ads, educational institutions can redirect them to WhatsApp to share relevant information through direct, two-way communication. Such conversations are more likely to garner access to prospects that institutions can follow up on to increase registrations and enrollment.



Engagement Campaigns

With a WhatsApp chatbot, institutions can keep in touch with prospects interested in a course, workshop or degree, and gently move them towards conversion. They can send regular updates, announcements/notifications, share news, and keep them interested with rich media, quizzes, games, etc. Without being too salesy or aggressive, they can keep prospects active and engaged, even if they're not quite ready to convert fully



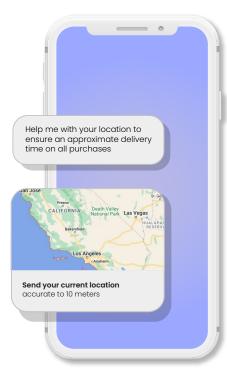
• Re-Engage Alumni

Once a student completes a course or obtains a degree, the institute can connect with them via a WhatsApp chatbot. They can send placement updates or information about new classes, ask them to mentor current students, and even request donations to the Alumni Fund. Some of the alumni may return as students, while others can help boost the institution's reputation via word-of-mouth referrals and feedback.

> Retail, D2C & eCommerce

Answer FAQs

Customers have questions and most of them might be quite generic. These can range from basic product query to details about a particular product. Chatbots can handle these queries quite efficiently and guide customers through documentation on the same.



Placing Orders

A WhatsApp bot can assist customers place orders by funneling them in through ads. Collect leads from interactive ads on Instagram, Facebook and browsersusing "Contact Us" CTA and guide them through the process.

Monitor Abandoned Carts

Abandoned carts are those customers whom a business loses at the last step. These are customers who have shown some interest in the purchase but backed off at the last moment. WhatsApp chatbots target these customers and re-engage them to make a transaction.



Referrals, Discounts And More

Customers love discounts and recommendations. WhatsApp chatbots can make recommendations based on the shopping traits and preferences of customers. Offering them a discount or an exciting offer on the same can increase sales.

>F&B/Restaurant



For the first time, BiryanibyPound is offering 40% discount on all orders. Type ORDER to get the offer

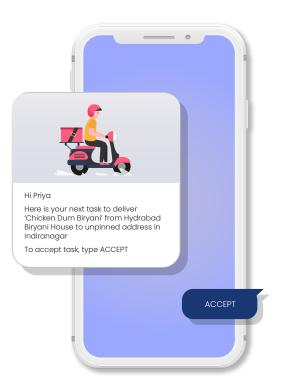
Offers & Discounts

Effortlessly send transactional and promotional messages including discounts and offers to improve customer engagement.

Answer FAQs

Leverage the 'Quick Replies' feature on WhatsApp Business API to take care of frequently asked questions.





Leverage Rich Media

Deliver notifications with rich media to opted-in customers using the notifications template feature on WhatsApp Business API.

Track Engagement

Track customer engagement in the form of read receipts, clicks, shares and location

Personalize Notifications

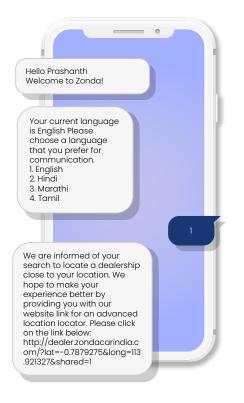
Send automated personalized notifications to inform customers of your latest and most popular dishes.

> Automotive

Inquiry To The Car-Dealer

The customer can reach out to the car dealer via a WhatsApp chatbot for any services related issue. They can request booking appointments, servicing, fixing of any part, and more. The person can also enquire about the nearest servicing station to visit for any servicing issues.





Reaching Out To Customers

After the customer visits the site or fill-up a form, they can be contacted via a WhatsApp chatbot. If there are any offers or discounts, they can be informed. The customer can be asked to book a slot for visit or book a test drive etc.

Vehicle Advisory

While buying a car, customers look for a lot of information, details and consultation. It can be difficult for human agents to quickly understand those requirements for every prospect and provide them with valuable advice. A WhatsApp chatbot can do this effortlessly. It can talk about car configuration, share pricing tables and offer other details to help a prospective customer reach a buying decision. Chatbots validate details of lead while discussing models, mileage, and financing options. This personalized consultation helps customers to schedule a test drive.

Logistics

Lead Generation

Consider a customer who would like to send a package using TDTC Logistics. When they text the company's WhatsApp chatbot, their name phone number is automatically collected through the latter's logs. This means all that TDTC has to ask for is an email address. Fewer questions and a friendly interface equal higher fill-up rates and more customers. Generate more customers, round the clock, with no human support using a WhatsApp chatbot.



Lead Qualification

Once TDTC Logistics knows who's asking, it's time to find out what they need. Gather details like location, requirements, and weight; improving funnel efficiency and reducing your dependency on human resources. Automated lead qualification helps in saving time, energy andultimately your bottom line.



Reminder And Notification

Proactively send customers updates, reminders and notifications about their orders. Capitalize on WhatsApp's high delivery, read and reply rates and allow your customers to take charge of their orders.

Examples Of Brands Using WhatsApp for Marketing

<u>Nivea Switzerland</u> developed a WhatsApp chatbot for Mother's Day. The target group could retrieve unique content such as videos, pictures, sayings and forward them to friends and mothers.

<u>Unilever</u> promoted their new line of washing powder and liquid in Brazil using clever WhatsApp marketing. They kicked off their WhatsApp Business campaign by putting up thousands of posters all around the city of Sao Paola, encouraging users to get in touch with a WhatsApp number that was listed. Once the users sent a message, a WhatsApp chatbot gave advice on how to care for the cloth and introduced the new products using multimedia content such as audio messages and memes. At the end of the chat, customers received a 50% discount on the latest products as well as free shipping.

How To Get Started

To get started with your WhatsApp Business App, you need to first set up your account. The WABA app is available for free to download for <u>Android</u> as well as <u>iOS</u> mobile device users. Let's understand the process in a step-by-step fashion:

- Search for 'WhatsApp Business' on your Google Play/App Store.
- Accept the 'Terms and Conditions, and tap 'OK".
- Once the app gets downloaded on your mobile device, add the required information like business phone number, business information, etc.
- View the business settings and set your parameters/requirements.
- Set up the <u>WhatsApp pay option</u>. This is required, in case you want to send and receive payments via WhatsApp itself.

Your WABA 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.

Messaging Tools

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

Chat Labels

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

Create Groups

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

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.

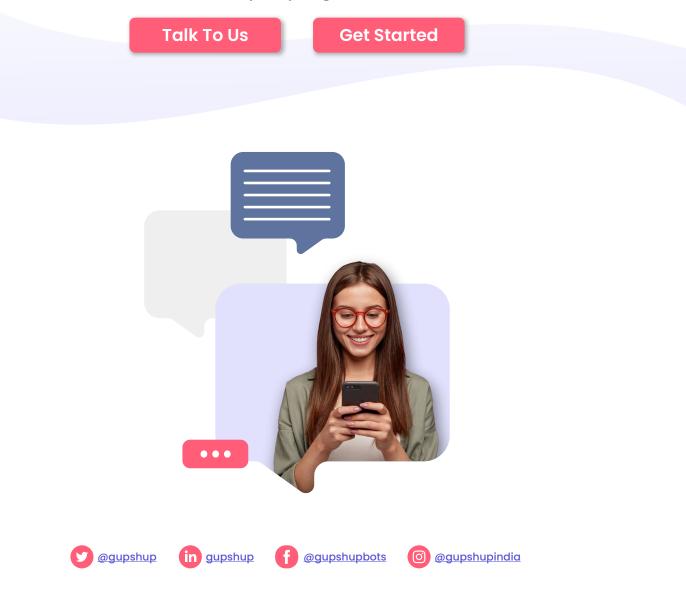
Gupshup's Role

WhatsApp is on a trajectory to become one of the most powerful marketing tools on the market. Additionally, consumers are looking for comfortable and frictionless communication with their favourite brands. Hence, catching the rising wave of chatbot marketing on WhatsApp can give your business a significant competitive advantage.

Whether you work in any industry such as BFSI, Fintech, Edtech, E-commerce, F&B amongst others, WhatsApp Business API can enable you to create a more personal and pleasant experience for your customers.

Gupshup's industry-leading tools combined with its experienced experts lead to great results for you. Our team can convert your vision into a well-developed chatbot suited to your specific requirement in a matter of days. We have been living and breathing conversational messaging for years now and we have built and enabled thousands of bots for our customers. Build once, run anywhere, and deploy your bot on 30+ messaging channels including WhatsApp, <u>Google Business Messages, Telegram</u>, Messenger, and more.

#LetsGupshup to get started.



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