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# THE CUSTOMER SERVICE GUIDE TO WHATSAPP BUSINESS



A guide to building your business  
around the customer

WhatsApp is the world's most popular chat app. It's used by over two billion users to send 65 billion messages every day. Acquired by Facebook in 2014 for \$19 billion, the app has cemented its position as a messaging leader. People use it to connect with friends and families and share text, photos, videos, documents, location, and voice messages. And because of WhatsApp's massive popularity, customers are eager to use the app to talk to companies for support and shopping needs.

In 2018, the company launched WhatsApp Business, a tool designed to help small, medium, and enterprise businesses interact with customers and showcase their products and services. Over five million companies have flocked to the new service since then. Rather than emailing or calling the support service, customers can now use their favorite app to get answers to various questions.

WhatsApp Business is based around several core functionalities:

- **Document delivery:** Send tickets, invoices, and other documents directly to the customer's phone.

- **Live location tracking:** Share locations in real time to improve delivery services.
- **Media:** Send images, video, files, gifs, and other types of rich content.
- **Messages:** Automate, sort, and quickly respond to messages.

These features enable companies to communicate with customers in many different ways. They can provide quick support and resolve issues in one-on-one conversations. But businesses can also use WhatsApp Business to send e-receipts, schedule appointments, onboard customers with educational videos, send real-time financial transaction alerts, and more.

These interactions are based on asynchronous messaging. Customers can interact with companies over hours and even days, and won't have to hold the line or wait for the agent to find an answer on a live chat. They can message the company and get back to the conversation when they have free time again. For instance, customers can start a conversation on Friday and pick it back up on Monday. Ultimately, WhatsApp is all about communicating with customers on their terms.



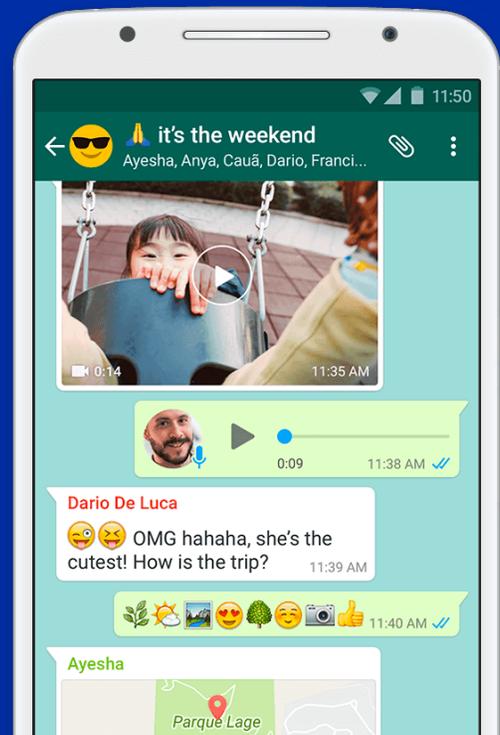
Wish eCommerce uses WhatsApp to allow customers to track their order delivery status in real time.

## Booking.com

Booking.com sends communications when a user books a hotel, flight, or car via WhatsApp.

# ULTIMATELY, WHATSAPP IS ALL ABOUT COMMUNICATING WITH CUSTOMERS ON THEIR TERMS.

And to reinforce the sense of security, the app assigns verified accounts with a green checkmark to signal their validity and inform customers that they're contacting the right account. More importantly, end-to-end encryption protects all messages and no third party can access them. This makes it possible to share sensitive data such as payment details or trade documents.



# HOW WHATSAPP CAN CHANGE YOUR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

01

## **MESSAGING IS CONVENIENT AND PRESERVES CONVERSATION HISTORY**

Messaging is the future of communication and, by extension, of customer service. WhatsApp is at the center of this transformation. It's used by people in over 180 countries to connect with family and friends in a fast and reliable way. So it comes as no surprise that customers want to connect with businesses using an app they already trust.

Companies that embrace messaging as a communication channel will be able to provide superior customer service. People will enjoy the convenience of being able to chat with companies in similar ways they talk with their peers. Businesses will get to meet customers where they are, enabling them to send a message, return to whatever they were doing, and respond again when it's their turn. And because messaging with WhatsApp is asynchronous, it preserves conversation history, which can be useful in providing context into the conversation, solving problems in the future, or offering more personalized services.

## **SHIFT TRADITIONAL PHONE CALLS TO DIGITAL INTERACTIONS**

Messaging apps are near-ubiquitous and companies are witnessing a rapid shift to digital communications. In fact, the shift is so profound that phone conversations will make up merely 12% of customer service interactions by 2022, down from 41% in 2017.

And according to a Facebook-commissioned study by Nielsen, over half of the people would rather message than call customer service.

That's why a growing number of companies across industries are expanding their digital customer service to WhatsApp. By doing so, they'll enable customers to message them privately instead of venting frustrations on public social media posts.

## **ADDING MESSAGING PLATFORMS IS A WIN-WIN FOR CUSTOMERS AND COMPANIES**

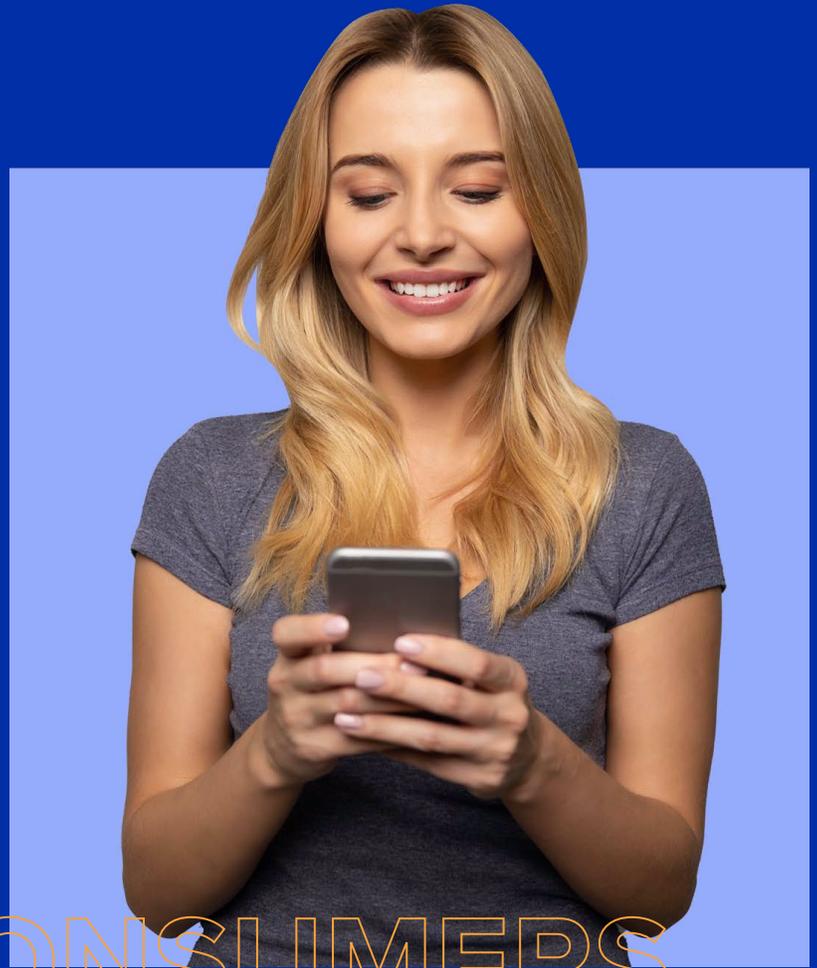
People use WhatsApp to send messages to one another to discuss just about everything. Using the same app to reach out to customer service is convenient and easy. Customers can send messages during or outside business hours and get a notification once they've received an answer. No need to remain on the line like during phone calls or a live-chat and carve out time to make a call. Messaging fits into their day flexibly.

## **EMBRACING MESSAGING APPS CUTS OVERALL COSTS**

Agents can handle multiple simultaneous interactions with customers instead of being tied up to a single phone call. They can use downtime in slow-moving conversations to deal with urgent tickets or resolve simple inquiries. As a result, contact centers can provide better support with fewer agents, improving customer experience and cutting costs at the same time.



Live Chat Exposes  
a Fatal Flaw in Your  
Go-to-Market



90% OF CONSUMERS  
RATE AN IMMEDIATE  
RESPONSE AS VERY  
IMPORTANT FOR  
THE QUALITY OF  
CUSTOMER SERVICE.

# CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE IMPLEMENTING WHATSAPP FOR CUSTOMER CARE

02

## PREPARE YOUR STAFF TO DEAL WITH A NEW COMMUNICATION CHANNEL

Adding WhatsApp to your customer service mix will undoubtedly make customers happier. They'll feel comfortable reaching out to you using a familiar app. This is a welcomed move, but it also leads to several challenges. For one, handling a growing number of WhatsApp inquiries means that your staff will have less time to deal with other communication channels such as phone, email, or social media. The fact that WhatsApp requires businesses to reply to messages within 24 hours doesn't make your job any easier.

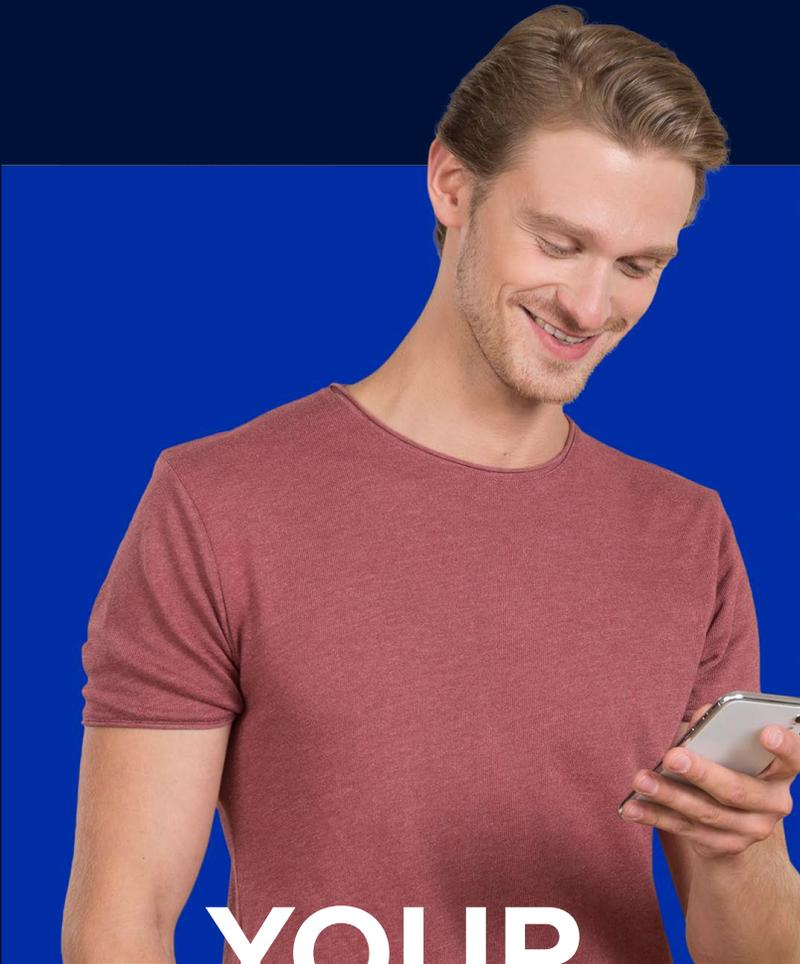
Ideally, you would have the optimal number of people replying to messages. If that's not the case, consider assigning shared coverage of various communication channels to meet expectations of response times. Agents familiar with support via messaging platforms can do the heavy lifting until the rest of the team is trained and capable of providing equally excellent support.

**Chatbots, in particular, can be of significant help. These AI-powered tools can make agents more productive by automatically qualifying customers and assigning inquiries to the correct member of your team.** They can solve basic inquiries like password resetting and also send automated messages that set expectations on when the user will hear back. Agents would then have more time to spend with complex and revenue-generating interactions before dealing with those of lower priority.

## INTEGRATING WHATSAPP INTO YOUR COMMUNICATION STACK

Adding WhatsApp to your communication stack will make your customer service more complex. Agents will have to manage conversations from messaging, email, live-chat, social media, and phone calls, switching between various interfaces and channels. Integrating WhatsApp seamlessly into your day-to-day operations will thus pose a challenge. One way to go about that is using an omnichannel digital customer engagement platform, like RingCentral Engage Digital™, to let agents answer inquiries on multiple fronts from a single interface. That would reduce response time and increase productivity.

Your communication stack should ideally support smart routing. This feature analyzes incoming WhatsApp messages based on predefined criteria and routes them to the right people responsible for responding. For instance, if customers need help with billing problems, their request would be forwarded to agents specialized in handling these types of inquiries. Or a WhatsApp message might be in Spanish, in which case it'll be routed to an agent fluent in this language.



**YOUR  
COMMUNICATION  
STACK SHOULD  
IDEALLY SUPPORT  
SMART ROUTING.**

## **PROMOTE YOUR NEW SUPPORT CHANNEL TO CUSTOMERS**

Now that you have procedures in place for dealing with WhatsApp inquiries, it's important to promote your new service. But the app doesn't offer advertising opportunities and users must reach out to you first before you as a business are allowed to reply. This means that you need to develop external entry points for potential customers to contact you via WhatsApp.

To that end, the first step is to communicate your WhatsApp service number through as many channels as possible. Depending on your launch plan, you can promote the service on your website, podcasts, magazines, product packaging, company cars, and other touchpoints with the existing and potential customers.

Another option is the click-to-chat feature, which is a link that takes users directly to your WhatsApp channel and opens up a message window. You can use this link in your Facebook or Instagram advertising or even on Google ads. The link can also be added in email signatures, newsletters, landing pages, behind QR codes on flyers, and many other positions.

Social media can be especially helpful in getting people to contact you via WhatsApp. Small videos posted on Facebook can contain a click-to-chat link, while on Instagram you can put the link in the bio. Influencers can promote the link on stories using the swipe-up-to-chat feature. Also, Facebook allows you to link your Facebook page to your WhatsApp channel. And videos with a link can also be posted on Twitter to inform people of the new support channel you introduced.

## **YOU CAN ALSO COMPARE ENGAGEMENT ON YOUR WHATSAPP SERVICE WITH OTHER COMMUNICATION CHANNELS SUCH AS SOCIAL MEDIA OR EMAIL TO ANALYZE TRENDS AND DISCOVER VALUABLE INSIGHTS.**

### **DEVELOP METRICS TO TRACK THE SUCCESS**

With customers reaching out to you, it's time to define what success looks like and then track and measure relevant metrics. This will enable you to find what's working and what's not and keep improving your customer service. To that end, you can measure various data points including the number of messages received, messages sent, unique customer inquiries per day, average handle time, and the topics or types of messages being sent.

This data will tell you whether your agents are performing well or they are facing problems and backlogs that need your attention. You can

also compare engagement on your WhatsApp service with other communication channels such as social media or email to analyze trends and discover valuable insights.

Keep in mind, however, that customers are likely to have a very different idea what successful customer service looks like compared to how you think about it. WhatsApp might be an asynchronous communication channel with both sides replying on their terms, but customers are expecting almost an instant, real-time chat. Left unprepared, businesses could easily get overwhelmed by the increased demand in communications and ensuing customer grievances.



   
@grandtravel - thanks for responding to my tweet and rescheduling my flight! 😊❤️😍

## FUTURE-PROOFING YOUR CUSTOMER SERVICE

Global companies are adopting the WhatsApp Business solution to elevate their business to a new level and adjust to customers' expectations. They integrate WhatsApp for customer service into their digital channel strategy to be available to customers at any given time. AXA, a global insurance leader, is one of the companies that has seen brilliant success in incorporating WhatsApp into its communications stack. The company is using the RingCentral Engage

Digital platform to manage interactions from WhatsApp, other messaging apps, email, live-chat, phone, and social media. Instead of going back and forth between different channels and backend systems, the company's agents get to answer inquiries from a single interface. The platform also uses AI to automatically classify and allocate incoming messages. It enables AXA to effectively integrate WhatsApp into its operations and future-proof customer service for the next era of communications.

For more information, please contact a sales representative. Visit [ringcentral.com](https://ringcentral.com) or call 855-774-2510.

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