

2023 State of Business Messaging:

Making every connection an opportunity



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 Meta

What is business messaging?

You talk to your friends with it. And your family. And sometimes, even your boss. So, why not your customers?

As consumer patience continues to wane for waiting on hold, automated phone menus, and days-long email exchanges, business messaging — that is, sending text or chat messages to brands — is quickly emerging as the preferred channel for both businesses and shoppers alike.¹

Unlike traditional communication channels — which can often feel impersonal and distant — business messaging offers both a personalized and interactive experience, allowing for immediate feedback, clarifications, and deeper engagement with your customers. There's a reason one study found that as many as 90% of consumers would rather text customer support than a phone call, or even social media.²

As business messaging platforms continue to demonstrate their broad utility across a wide range of use cases, these tools — once considered luxurious nice-to-haves — are now emerging as an essential cornerstone of any marketing strategy. In this guide, we'll review how these channels are altering the marketing and customer experience for the better, and ways that businesses can avoid missing out on this shift in the landscape.

1. "Where Customers and Marketers Agree: What's Driving The Embrace of Business Messaging Channels?", WhatsApp, 2023.

2. "SMS Marketing Statistics 2023 For USA Businesses", SMS Comparison, 2023.



Messaging's effects across key business areas

Indeed, business messaging is more than just a new way to say “sup?” to your customers.

At its core, business messaging combines real-time communication with strategic planning — offering a personalized, friendly touch amid an increasingly digitally-saturated landscape. This personalized connection allows you to pursue success on a number of related fronts.



Marketing:

Business messaging offers several key advantages over other channels. For example, unlike other generic ads or promotional content, business messaging allows brands to personalize their messages to each individual shopper, providing a more tailored and resonant experience for their customers – tweaking your approach from monologue to dialogue.

On top of that, with business messaging’s staggering 98% open rate — nearly 5x its nearest competitor, email, at 20% — you’ll ensure your personalized messages aren’t just sent, but seen.¹

Combine that with the channel’s ability for two-way communication, and brands become empowered to instantly gather feedback, answer queries, and address concerns, all in real-time. Indeed, many business messaging users are already seeing incredible results with this channel.

Indonesian [financial technology firm Akulaku](#) teamed up with automation partner Sanuker to build a WhatsApp-powered digital assistant to help customers activate their accounts. The results?

3x

higher opt-in rate for
WhatsApp versus SMS

98%

delivery rate

99%

read rate

1. “Putting Your Message in the Right Hands: The Value of SMS Marketing”, Salesforce,

Sales:

Business messaging is not just accelerating the sales process — it's redefining it. With features like “buy in chat” and in-chat catalogs, the traditional barriers between conversation and conversion are quickly breaking down.

Customers no longer need to leave a chat to make a purchase — instead, they can enjoy the luxury of a virtual storefront within the context of your conversations, greatly reducing friction and enhancing the overall user experience.

Customer care:

Of course, a good customer experience isn't just about immediacy — the follow-through is just as important. And while it's always great to be able to quickly address a customer's needs, great brands realize that taking steps to anticipate their future needs can bridge the gap when it comes to driving loyalty and repeat transactions.

Business messaging can help businesses strengthen these connections by leveraging data insights to drive personalized experiences, integrating immediate feedback from customers, and communicating loyalty rewards that recognize continued patronage or other trigger events.

Business marketing continues its upward trajectory in its popularity with both marketers and customers alike.

Brands now have the ability to engage with their audience in real-time, fostering genuine connections and building trust. Customers, too, are now empowered to proactively reach out to brands with concerns, questions, and feedback.

This shift towards more direct and personalized communication has led to notable improvements in lead generation, customer retention, and the overall strengthening of brand-customer relationships.



Executive summary

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Key stats

A recent Meta-commissioned study explored how enterprise-level marketers both viewed and used business messaging solutions in their own organizations.

Among marketers who used business messaging in their campaigns:

67%

said business messaging solutions are “consistent,” nearly tying for first place with online ads (at 69%).

67%

also called them “trustworthy,” beating other channels by a significant (8%+) margin.

64%

describe them as “effective,” strikingly beating out non-digital channels like TV and out-of-home advertising.

58%

have seen their leads increase when employing business messaging solutions — more than TV (45%) and out-of-home advertising (37%).



Emerging trends

A few key trends in usage are emerging as business messaging continues its rise in popularity. As a result, brands are becoming increasingly equipped to set the stage for a more connected, efficient, and personalized marketing landscape.



Increased automation:

While previous iterations often left customers frustrated and repeatedly pressing “0” to speak with an agent, improvements in automation tech have made these tools a wise investment for any business using messaging solutions.

In fact, one study found that 56% of customers are now indifferent about whether they interact with a bot or human — as long it gets the job done. Even among those with a preference for human interaction, 63% report that they are open to automated “conversations,” assuming it can nevertheless provide instant and useful responses.¹

56%

of customers say they’re willing to use automated chat systems, assuming they address their needs.

63%

of those with a preference for chatting with a live agent are open to trying automated systems.



1. “State of Social Conversational Commerce”, SPECTRM, 2023

Businesses can reap the benefits as well. As automation addresses your customers' most common inquiries, your agents will be more readily available to tackle more sensitive or complicated issues. Our study found that 34% of surveyed marketers reported that on-demand, message-based product information as a key benefit of business messaging automation.¹ Another found that automated workflows can increase conversions by as much as 21% in messaging marketing campaigns.²

56%

of marketers say providing on-demand product info is a key benefit of automation.

As much as a

21%

increase in conversions by integrating automation workflows.



1. "WhatsApp Business Platform Research Report", Meta, 2023

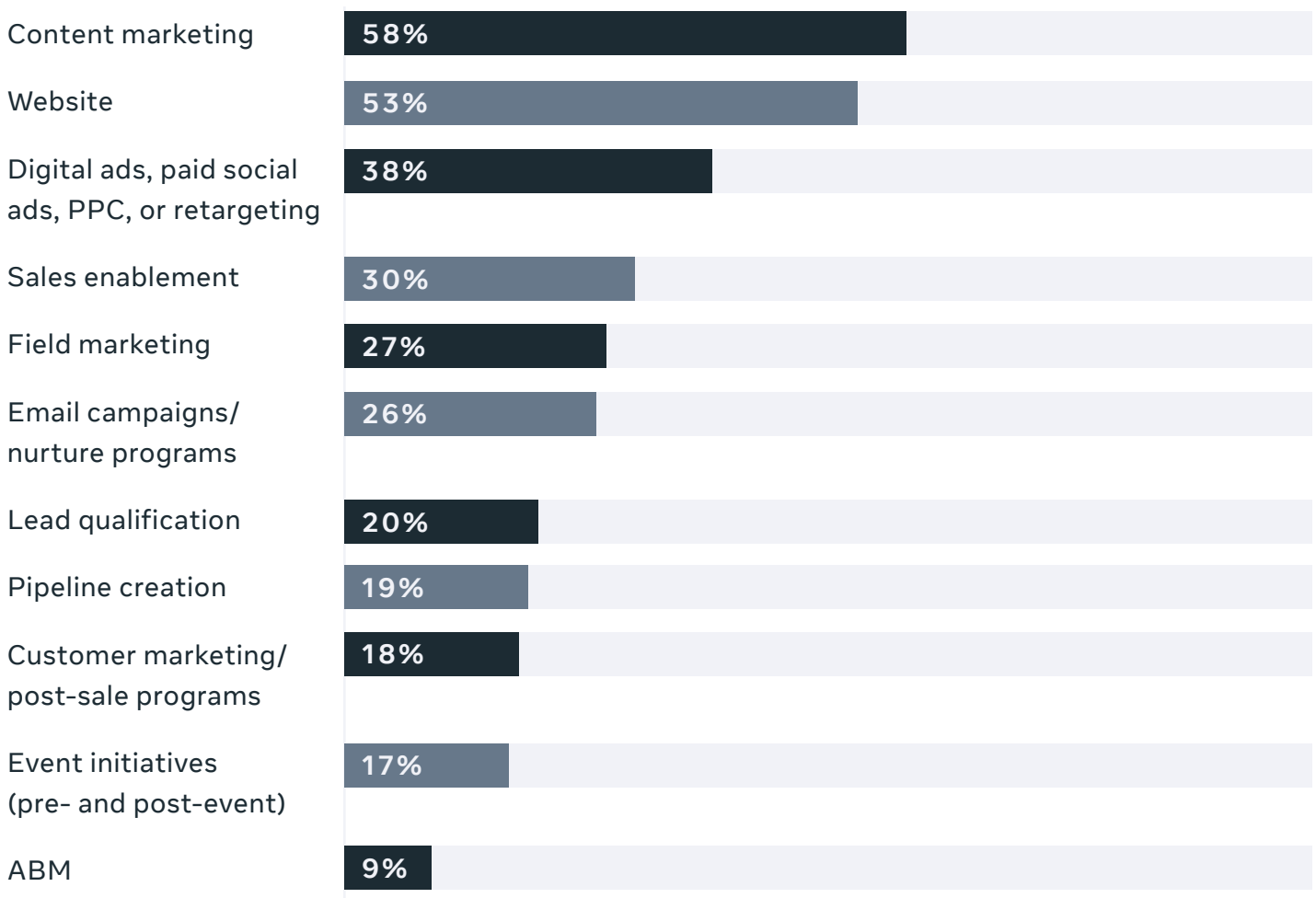
2. "The State of Marketing", Hubspot, 2023

Increased usage as a content marketing channel:

Business messaging is reshaping the way many think about content marketing — particularly when it comes to repurposing assets, or even creating original campaigns, for business messaging channels.

One report saw 58% of responding marketers said content marketing was where they saw the most success with their business messaging solutions — higher than websites (53%), and digital or social ads (38%).¹

Where marketers have seen the most success from their conversational marketing solutions:²



1. “2022 State of Conversations Report”, Drift Press/Heinz Marketing, 2022

2. “2022 State of Conversations Report”, Drift Press/Heinz Marketing, 2022

Increased personalization:

Customers increasingly expect personalized experiences from brands, and are becoming more and more inclined to buy from the brands that can provide them.

A significant 88% of customers report that they're willing to communicate their preferences in a "privacy-safe way," directly to the brand, in order to receive a more personalized shopping experience.¹

And according to our study, many marketers are following suit: we found that 3-in-5 marketers were actively integrating first-party data with other sources of data, both for targeting and personalization purposes.²

1. "State of Social Conversational Commerce", SPECTRM, 2023

2. "WhatsApp Business Platform Research Report", Meta, 2023



Challenges to adoption, and solutions

While business messaging continues to revolutionize marketing communications, some marketers remain hesitant, often due to misconceptions or perceived challenges. However, many of these hurdles can be easily addressed with the right strategy, tools, or clarifying context.



Some of the top challenges to adoption identified in our study include:

Hard to support from a resource or staffing perspective:

This was the top concern expressed in our study, at 45%, and certainly one worth addressing head on. However, thanks to business messaging’s broad effectiveness in fostering collaboration across business units like customer care and sales, business messaging can become a lot more than just another channel to worry about — rather, a comprehensive solution that can maximize output and minimize strain across various departments in your business.

Note too, that automated solutions can go a long way in reducing the impact its adoption would have on staffing resources. Consider a scenario in which a business receives hundreds of calls from its customers a day, 80% of which consist of the same ten questions – perhaps your most common troubleshooting inquiries, or questions like “what are your store’s hours?” Maybe your agents are typically answering the same kinds of questions over and over again about different products: “does X come in black,” “when will Y be available?”

With a robust, automated messaging solution, your chatbot can not only instantly address your customer’s most frequently expressed needs, but free up your human agents to discuss sensitive or complicated issues with multiple customers at once — reducing turnaround time for all types of customer inquiries.



For example, when Uruguay-based [biotech brand ATGen](#) decided to expand its services to include COVID-19 testing in 2020, their phone lines were “quickly overwhelmed” by customers. After adopting the WhatsApp Business Platform and a third-party custom automation solution, ATGen found that:

1. “ATGen Case Study”, Meta, 2021

94%

of interactions did not require live agent support.

Their customer satisfaction improved by

90%

after implementation.

Leading to an estimated

\$2.5 million

in savings.¹

“Without automation, we would be spending about \$2.5 million annually just in customer service, and still not be able to achieve the same high-quality interactions that WhatsApp offers.”

Fabricio Sarlos, associate director at ATGen

Customer privacy concerns:

About a third of surveyed marketers expressed concern that customer sensitivity about data-sharing could stymie efforts to on-board messaging solutions at their business. However, as we addressed earlier, customers are extremely eager to share their information with brands in a “privacy-safe” way, if it will help to personalize their experience.

Certainly a platform like WhatsApp, featuring industry-leading encryption, can help address your customers’ concerns. Every message on that platform, including those between people and businesses, are protected until they’re delivered to the intended recipient.

Skepticism about reaching important audiences:

Only 44% of those using messaging solutions felt that the channel helped them “reach important audiences” — by far the lowest of any other channel identified in the survey. Though it’s worth noting that, as the world becomes increasingly mobile, we’ve found that more than one billion users are connecting with a business account across the Meta family of messaging products each week.¹

These platforms also offer a number of entry points that can be easily leveraged for more specific targeting, including incorporating tools like click-to-message ads.

Proving ROI and effectiveness:

As you can probably imagine, marketers are concerned not only with ensuring their campaign’s effectiveness, but being able to quantifiably demonstrate it to various stakeholders throughout their organization.

Thankfully, business messaging platforms have a number of solutions, both native and third party, that allow marketers to track key performance indicators related to their campaigns’ effectiveness. Data points like click-through rates, conversion rates, and “revenue generated” provide easily digestible insights for marketers making the case for their spending.

1. Internal data, February 2, 2022





Business messaging in action

Let's explore a few actual challenges faced by real-life businesses in the past, as well as the ways that business messaging solutions helped to overcome them.



Rapid engagement with automation

Brand

cinépolis

Problem:

Mexico-based cinema company Cinépolis wanted to provide its customers with a more convenient online customer service experience — a system that could easily provide showtimes, sell tickets, and answer FAQs without adding additional stress to their staff.

Solution:

After partnering with a developer to build an experience on the Messenger app, Cinépolis reported:

An 8.7x increase

in their conversion rate compared to email

90%

of conversations resolved without the need for a human agent

A 95% reduction

in client acquisition costs for its subscription service compared to other social and search channels.

There's a reason 56% of our surveyed marketers cited "the ability to rapidly engage" as a key benefit of business messaging solutions — it works!



Simplified, cross-functional communication

Brand | Renault



Problem:

Renault MAIS is the Turkish distributor for Renault vehicles, as well as a leading manufacturer and importer of passenger cars and other light commercial vehicles. The company was looking for ways to attract a new generation of digitally savvy customers, while improving the overall speed and convenience of their customer experience.

Solution:

Renault MAIS pursued a comprehensive communications channel that provided an immediate consultative approach, supporting customers at each stage of the car-buying process. The approach allowed for cross-functional communications with both sales and customer service reps, allowing either to engage the customer when appropriate. The company soon saw:

A 93% decrease

in average customer response times attributed to WhatsApp

A 35% decrease

in the time for agents to resolve customer issues

And 4% of leads

attributable to WhatsApp convert to sales

About 1-in-2 marketers who use business messaging solutions report that a key benefit is that the platform helps to simplify communication – as you can see, that simplicity can go a long way.¹

1. “WhatsApp Business Platform Research Report”, Meta, 2023



Increased conversions via personalization

Brand

6THSTREET.COM

Problem:

6thStreet, a Dubai-based footwear ecommerce platform, was on the lookout for techniques that could increase their sales without increasing spending. The company was also keen on boosting awareness, driving repeat purchases, and recovering customers lost to churn.

Solution:

Using artificial intelligence tools, 6thStreet was able to create personalized marketing campaigns on the WhatsApp Business Platform.

The result?

A 20x increase

in ROI compared to SMS
over 30 days

A double

click-through rate

A 6x jump

in customer ratings and reviews,
with a 20% improvement in customer satisfaction

In our study, 1-in-4 marketers reported that personalized offers were a key benefit of business messaging – that number could continue to increase as businesses tap into innovative tools like click-to-message ads and CRM integration.¹



1. "WhatsApp Business Platform Research Report", Meta, 2023



Business messaging as a comprehensive and scalable solution

While we've detailed many of the advantages business messaging can bring to your marketing campaigns, one standout benefit remains: its scalability.

As brands grow and evolve, these platforms can help your team adapt to a number of changing conditions, ensuring that communication remains consistent, efficient, and tailored to your needs — as well as your customers.



Seamless integration:

Marketers can easily integrate a business messaging solution into their existing tech stack through APIs, ensuring a smooth transition to enhanced lines of communication.

Bridging communication gaps:

Business messaging solutions can connect marketing with sales and customer care, simplifying communications between departments while maintaining a consistent and streamlined customer experience, at scale. These solutions can also seamlessly integrate with your existing customer relationship management platform, point-of-sale system, and other backend elements, sharing data that can enhance personalization throughout numerous touch points along the customer journey.

Cost-effective pricing:

Rather than worry about daunting upfront costs or unused credits, many business messaging platforms allow you to pay by the conversation. This pricing structure ensures that, as your business grows, your costs align with the amount of messaging you use.

Leveraging partnerships:

Leaning on partners — particularly if you are already engaged with them for other services — can be a great way to maximize the value of these channels for both parties.



Taking your next steps in business messaging

Clearly, business messaging solutions provide a number of unique benefits on both sides of the transactional relationship.

Marketers love the kinds of cost-savings, time savings, and high open rates these platforms can provide, while customers love the frictionless ease and convenience it brings to their shopping experience.

Make sure your business isn't missing out on all of the benefits of this quickly emerging, game-changing powerhouse. Check out [our get started page](#) to learn more about how to delight your customers and colleagues with business messaging.

Looking for more information on business messaging benefits in general? Check out "[Where Customers and Marketers Agree: What's Driving The Embrace of Business Messaging Channels?](#)" on the [WhatsApp Business Platform blog](#) for more insights on the increasing popularity of these channels.

Research methodology

This report incorporates both original and third-party research. All cited research includes corresponding footnotes. Our original research, “WhatsApp Business Platform Research Report,” was prepared in conjunction with a trusted industry partner.

Method:

We conducted a 15-minute, device-agnostic online survey.

Fielding:

The survey was fielded from September 29 to October 13, 2022.

Sample size:

We gathered responses from 300 marketers.

Sample criteria:

Our participants were defined as individuals either employed full-time, part-time, or are self-employed in a marketing role. They are responsible for making marketing decisions, conduct business in the United States, and work for companies with a workforce of at least 5,000 employees.

Objectives:

The primary aim of this research was to continually understand the landscape of users and potential users of the WhatsApp Business Platform. We sought to identify the challenges marketers face, as well as understand their perceptions of messaging as a marketing channel. The overarching goal was to pinpoint the pain points marketers currently face to present impactful solutions that cater to their needs.