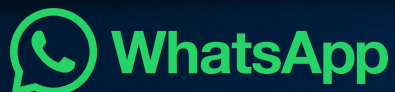# The Ultimate Guide
to the WhatsApp Business Platform for Marketers

WhatsApp

from Meta

It's no secret that consumer behavior is changing.

From where they spend their time and money — both digitally and IRL — to how they interact with family, friends, and brands, to what they expect from the companies they choose to do business with.

In the midst of these ever-changing trends stands marketing, driving awareness and engagement while building relationships and positive sentiment, all in service of delivering a healthy pipeline of marketing qualified leads to keep revenue trending up and to the right.

All of this means reevaluating traditional thinking and making sure your marketing investments are delivering results. A big part of that is showing up on the right channels at the right times and in the right ways — all while optimizing your efforts to stay relevant in increasingly competitive markets.

For a lot of companies, across industries and regions, this increasingly means leveraging business messaging solutions to connect with their customers. And it's easy to see why. We estimate more than

1 billion users are connecting with a business account across our messaging services every week.[1]

What is business messaging?

Business messaging is an umbrella term encompassing the platforms and tools businesses use to connect with their customers in asynchronous, one-on-one chat-based conversations. It includes traditional text messages, website live chat, social media DMs, and modern messaging platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger and Instagram Direct.

It also includes the technologies that help these channels work at scale. Application programming interfaces (APIs) enable integration with customer data, point-of-sale (POS) and inventory management systems, and allow multiple departments and employees to work together on a single channel. Chatbots help ensure customers have an always-on option for quick questions or needs. Ad integration helps marketers drive conversations and ensure they're able to track and report on how effective their messaging strategies are.

While not every business messaging tool boasts all of this functionality, the WhatsApp Business Platform was designed to specifically meet the needs of modern businesses and consumers. The API-based solution connects to a company's existing tech stack and empowers them to connect with their customers across the customer journey.

Why is business messaging such a critical tool for marketing leaders?

Not only are messaging platforms something your audience is likely already familiar with and engaged on

WhatsApp alone boasts more than 2B active users[2]

but as holistic messaging channels with the potential to bridge often disparate marketing efforts, they are the future of marketing. And with consistent year-over-year growth among marketers

27% in 2021[3]

not tapping into the potential of business messaging could mean falling behind your competition.

Not only that, messaging can connect marketing to customer care and sales, helping create a seamless customer experience that builds trust and loyalty with customers for years to come. In fact our recent survey shows

68% of CXOs say business messaging is a high priority for them and 44% expect to significantly increase their spend on those channels.[4]

But before arriving at an epic, collaborative end state, marketing leaders have an opportunity to establish business messaging channels like WhatsApp as a customer-centric marketing tool that creates a cohesive omnichannel marketing strategy by leveraging its functionality across the buyer's journey.

Using WhatsApp as a
full-funnel marketing solution

In today's marketing climate, marketers are often leveraging multiple agencies to create and execute their marketing strategies. And while this helps multiply a marketing team's impact, it often results in a fractured marketing approach with silos of creativity and, more importantly, customer data and metrics.

Because modern consumers are likely already using messaging, placing a tool like WhatsApp at the center of an omnichannel marketing strategy creates a central, owned presence that can build connections at all stages of the customer journey.

And, as it turns out, messaging is uniquely suited to help marketers gather zero party data — the data that customers knowingly and proactively share with a company. When consumers feel they're building an authentic connection that will likely result in more personalized service or promotion offers, they're more open to sharing their information. In fact, Cordial's recent survey found that to be the case with

70% of the consumers
they surveyed.[5]

And there's no need to read the tea leaves when customers directly share their interests, preferences, and buying intent. Savvy marketers are using conversations to gather this info and deliver effective, personalized results to their audience.

From Click to WhatsApp ads that bring conversations to the forefront of the awareness stage to surveys and follow up at the post-purchase environment, conversational marketing helps drive continued engagement and loyalty. A recent survey by Attentive shows

88% of consumers would strike up a conversation to ask questions about a product, and **87%** would do so to address checkout issues.[6]

Which explains why

48% of marketing leaders in our recent survey are using messaging to drive offline conversions/omnichannel shopping and **40%** are also using their messaging channels to provide customer service.[7]

# Taking conversational marketing to the next level with WhatsApp

Whether you're just considering business messaging or you're an old hand at conversational marketing, two concerns are likely in the forefront of your mind — how do you start conversations and how do you keep consumers engaged. Let's take a look at some of the features of the WhatsApp Business Platform that helps answer those questions.

Click to WhatsApp Ads

While there are several obvious, organic entry points to a business messaging conversation, including things like QR codes on signage or packaging, and links from your "Contact Us" page or social media bio — there's one that can be used much more intentionally. Click to WhatsApp ads allow you to use a CTA on your Facebook or Instagram ads that not only opens a conversation but, with the right chatbot and automation integrations, can allow your company to start instantly interacting with consumers once they're there.

If you're running paid social as part of your campaigns, it's likely you're already using Facebook and Instagram ads — which means you know that these ads are able to connect at multiple stages of the customer journey — whether it's awareness or discovery or, through the use of intelligent retargeting, re-engaging customers post-purchase to encourage repeat purchases.

By adding the ability to instantly connect with consumers to your ads, you're increasing engagement — giving your business more time to build a relationship and, ultimately, close the sale.
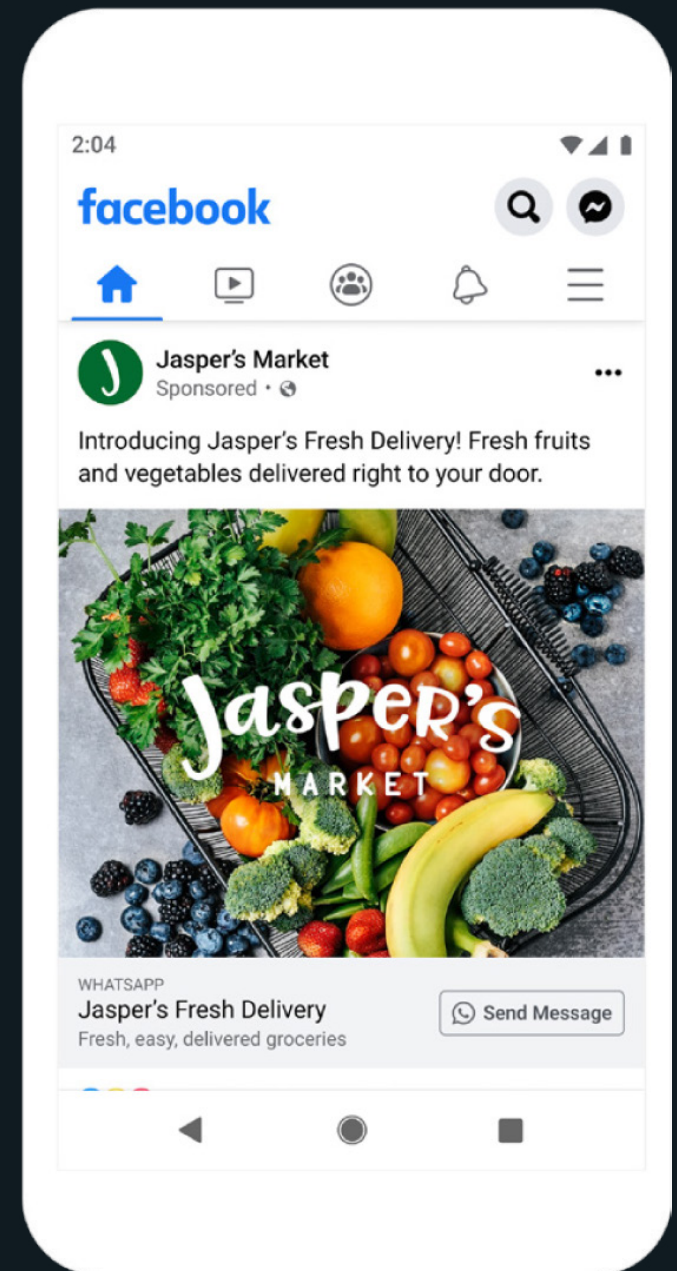
More than just text ☁

The terms business messaging and conversational marketing paints a picture of just chatting with prospects and customers. But with WhatsApp, it can be so much more than that. By using the WhatsApp Business Platform's API you can integrate chatbots, automation, your customer relationship management (CRM) system, your content management system, and your point of sale (POS) or inventory management systems with WhatsApp.

Pairing that with WhatsApp features like product catalogs and the ability to buy in chat means you can build a seamless customer experience that can check inventory levels, set up accounts, complete purchases, and answer questions about products or services — all before a consumer connects with an agent. This conversational self-service can be personalized based on the existing data you have in your CRM or tailored to their purchase history based on your POS data.

And when the conversation is just starting, you can start gathering that data by offering promo codes or personalized recommendations in exchange for their data — as well as their permission to keep the conversation going with additional marketing messages in the future.

All of this adds up to building confidence and positive sentiment in both returning customers and prospects.
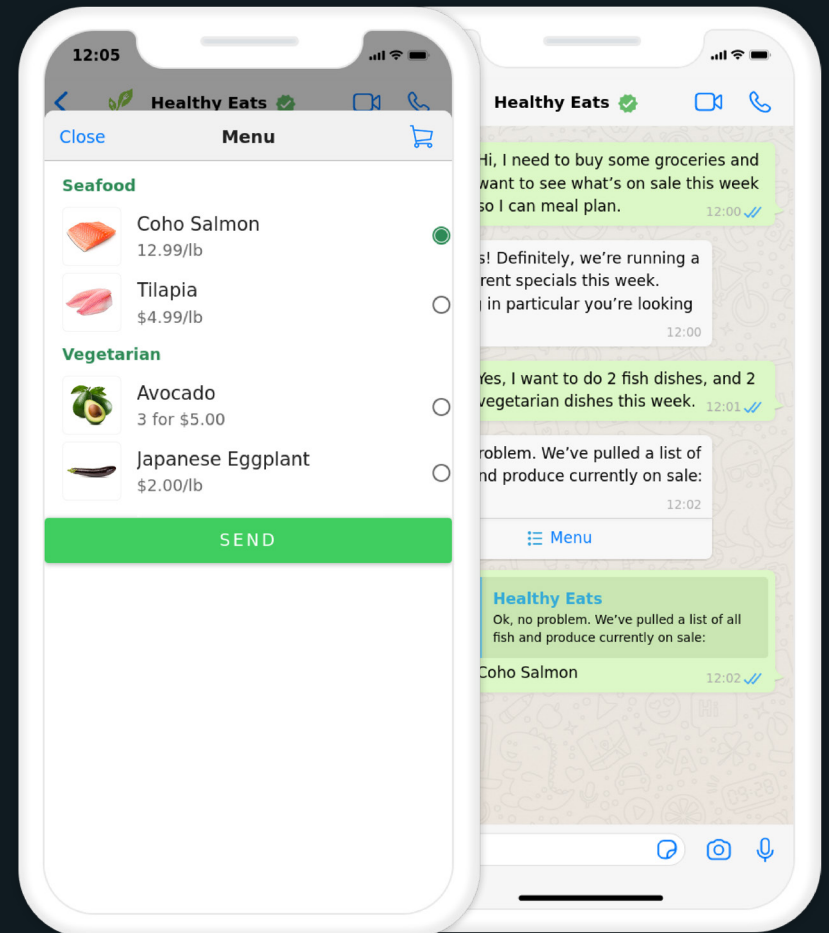
How businesses are using WhatsApp as a marketing tool

Business messaging isn't just the latest marketing trend — it's driving measurable results with businesses around the world and across nearly every vertical. Three industries that have seen incredible success with WhatsApp in marketing are retail — driving not just total purchases but increased average order values, telecommunications — where the ease of use is driving record adoption and satisfaction, and financial services — where WhatsApp integration is decreasing call center dependence and increasing new customer acquisition.

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Barò Cosmetics

Barò Cosmetics is an innovative line of organic cosmetics created from grapes local to Italy's Barolo wine region. After some success in ecommerce spaces, the company found that traditional channels (such as phone and email) lacked some of the immediacy and personalization they felt should be a hallmark of their shopping experience.

To improve on various aspects of the customer experience – from customer inquiries to orders – Barò Cosmetics needed a powerful and easy-to-scale communications channel.

After implementing the WhatsApp Business Platform, Barò Cosmetics saw:

30%
of online revenue attributable to WhatsApp over seven months

80%
message open rate in WhatsApp

700%
increase in sales conversions compared to email

10-11x
increase in purchase orders

300%
increase in sales conversions compared to SMS

Indosat Ooredoo Hutchison

Indosat Ooredoo Hutchison, Indonesia's second largest telecommunications company, offers mobile phone services, fixed wireless internet and data plans. The brand also promotes a vision of a "digital lifestyle" in which people live and work with greater ease and efficiency, thanks to tech.

So it makes sense that, as the company looked for ways to improve its interactions with millions of customers – from basic call center transactions to targeted marketing campaigns – they knew they'd need a familiar, versatile, and scalable messaging channel solution.

After implementing the WhatsApp Business Platform, Indosat Ooredoo Hutchison saw:

5X
revenue growth in a year with WhatsApp

168%
growth in monthly active users

92%
of customer inquiries via WhatsApp resolved without live agent support

40%
increase in overall customer satisfaction score in 6 months

LAFISE Bank

LAFISE Bank is the second largest bank in Nicaragua, providing a range of financial services for its customers, with a focus on international banking across 11 countries.

When Covid hit, in-person interactions at the bank's locations plummeted, driving a massive surge in call center volumes. LAFISE realized they needed a scalable, secure, and efficient communications channel to help customers quickly process remittances. The bank was also interested in making other services available over such a channel.

After implementing the WhatsApp Business Platform, LAFISE saw:

35%
decrease in call center volumes attributable to WhatsApp

100%
customer satisfaction scores for service through WhatsApp

20%
growth in new customers attributable to WhatsApp

25%
increase in sales of new products linked to WhatsApp

WhatsApp tips and best practices
to drive marketing outcomes

When deploying WhatsApp as a marketing channel, it's important to set your efforts up for success — this includes leveraging the tools and features available, but also building your strategy to maximize reach and efficiency. Here are some quick tips to help you make the most of WhatsApp.

1 Build for scalability

Starting small and testing a new channel is a smart approach, but building conversation flows that are one-offs that only works in that context can slow down broader adoption and use. When building your WhatsApp channel think through your desired end-state and plan for the integrations and cross-functional support you'll eventually need from the beginning. Also, make sure you're taking advantage of time-saving and scale-enabling features like message templates, quick reply buttons, and product catalogs that can help your live agents or chatbots work with multiple customers more effectively.

If you're not entirely sure where to get started, we have a robust partner ecosystem of world-class companies that are experts at deploying the WhatsApp Business Platform who can help ensure you're looking at the big picture.

2 Give new leads a reason to engage

Driving awareness and discovery campaigns with Click to WhatsApp ads are an incredible way to start building connections with prospects. But if they're dropped into a chat thread with nothing to do or no reason to engage, you're not going to see the positive impact you had hoped for. Whether it's offering a personalized shopping experience, a first time customer discount, or a quiz to figure out which of your products or services are right for them, it's critical that new leads have a tangible reason to connect and share their information.

It's also vital to ensure you have the ability to keep the conversation going in the future — so make sure that what you're offering is tied to an opt-in for future marketing or promotional messages.

3 Nurture to conversion

Restock reminders, abandoned cart notifications, and special birthday offers are just the beginning of how you can nurture leads in conversations. In fact, many of the nurture tactics you use in email can be adapted for a more conversational context on WhatsApp, with one crucial difference

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a 98% open rate for WhatsApp messages.[8]

After you've secured the initial opt-in, finding interesting and engaging ways to stay in contact with your leads will help drive them to purchase.

4 Build a relationshop to drive brand loyalty

Once you've nurtured your prospect through to their first purchase it can be easy to move on to the next lead. But checking in with a personal message to make sure the product or service is meeting their needs, asking for feedback, or helpfully providing educational content about their purchase shows you care about them and their satisfaction — helping to build an ongoing two-way conversation that will hopefully lead to brand loyalty.

And the good news is that you don't have to do this manually. By integrating with your POS and CRM systems you can automate post-purchase engagements and, if needed, build in seamless transitions to live agents when needed.

Key takeaways

We've always known that we are built for connections, but in the past few years there has been a marked shift in consumer behavior towards business interactions that feel more personal, more connected. Embracing that change and leveraging business messaging tools to stand up a conversational marketing function is more than just reacting to a trend — it's smart business.

Ready to dive deeper into how your business can start building deeper, stronger connections with your customers?

Start by connecting with one of our WhatsApp Business Platform experts who can help you evaluate your needs and find the best way to get started on WhatsApp.

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[1] Internal data, February 2, 2022

[2] WhatsApp Statistics & Facts, Statista, August 2022

[3] 2023 SMS Marketing Survey, SimpleTexting, 2023

[4] BCG conducted survey with decision makers in marketing/digital roles across 6 key markets and 3 industries, Feb-Mar 2023.

[5] The New Era of Customer Engagement, Cordial, 2022

[6] https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20230327005181/en/The-Future-of-Marketing-is-Conversational-88-of-Consumers-Are-Seeking-Text-Messaging-Conversations-with-Brands

[7] BCG conducted survey with decision makers in marketing/digital roles across 6 key markets and 3 industries, Feb-Mar 2023.

[8] Five Reasons Why You Should Use WhatsApp Business Messaging, Sinch, 2022

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