Business Messaging:

The Next Era of Customer Engagement

Meta

From Ancient Greeks haggling face-to-face in the Agora marketplace to customers posting in brands' social channels for a refund, it's clear that communication is a timeless, central element of any relationship between a business and its customers — even if its nature is always changing. In fact, we've even seen some radical changes within our lifetimes: from dial-tone menus, e-mail, and 24-hour call centers, the race to provide your customers with the most convenient, frictionless conversations is already well underway.

However, as both scale and technological advancements have changed the nature of these conversations, it's easy to see how the trust-building, human connection often provided by a thoughtful one-on-one interaction may get lost in the shuffle. But as customers also lead increasingly busy lives — and have less and less patience for anything short of instant gratification — some customers may ask:

**Who has the time for that kind of interaction anyway?**

Two great concerns, with one simple answer: Meta's Business Messaging platforms. Below, we'll review how this next era of business messaging can benefit both sides of the register, aligning perfectly with the evolving landscape of customer engagement.

Mapping the customer journey

Of course, today's customer journey is less linear than ever, rarely fitting into a neat, tidy little funnel shape.

Growth across the journey

DISCOVERY ↗

CONSIDERATION →

← AWARENESS

PURCHASE →

← RE-ENGAGEMENT
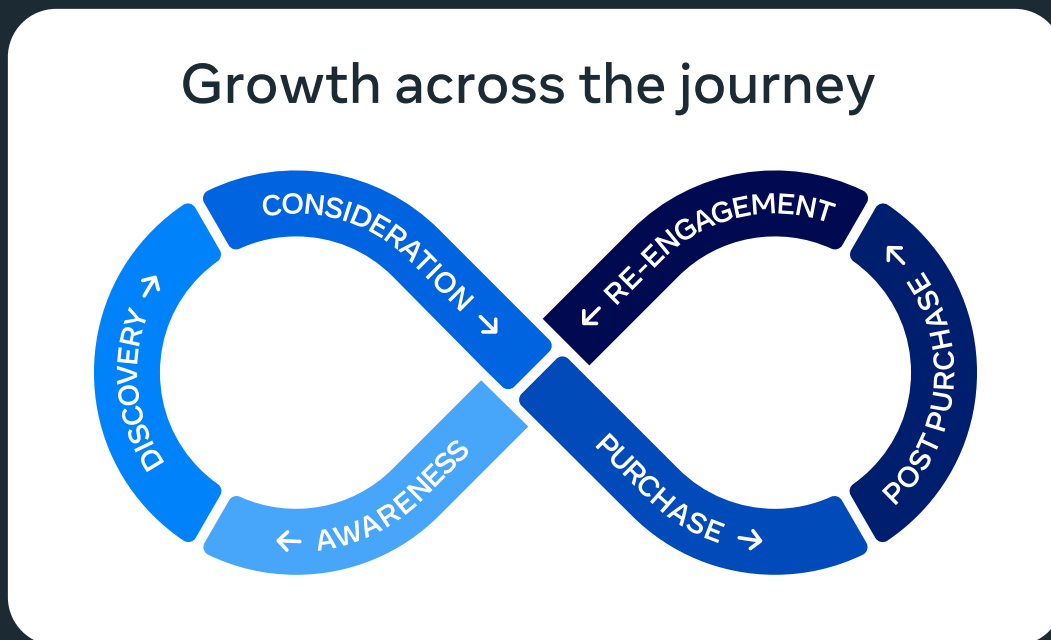
POST PURCHASE ↗

Nevertheless, the challenges of each step remain the same: From the moment a potential customer becomes aware of a brand or product, to the post-purchase interactions that foster loyalty and repeat business, every touchpoint can become an opportunity — to engage, understand, and deliver value. As such, it's crucial that brands take the necessary steps to remain agile and responsive every step of the way.

In this guide, we'll explore each of those stages in detail, offering insights, strategies, and best practices that can help make every connection with your customers an opportunity.

Discover: The first stop on the customer journey

Luckily, busy as they may be, more and more of your customer's "flow of life" is taking place in digital spaces — a perfect way for brands to charmingly ingratiate themselves with customers in the channels where they feel more comfortable.

Put another way, most consumers don't just use these apps — they're the platforms on which they live their lives. And just as they'll be (usually) quick to answer messages from friends, family, and colleagues, brands can also enjoy a similar responsiveness: one study found that marketing messages had as high as a 98% open rate, more than four times the second highest channel (email).[1]

Combined with the potential reach of over three billion users chatting on Meta messaging platforms every day — and the one billion of those who message a brand at least once a week — you can message with an unprecedented level of confidence that your targeted audience will almost certainly see your content.[2]

While impressive, all of this may raise an important question: Other channels, like social, TV, or out-of-home, all rely on various forms of public visibility to spark an initial awareness about your brand's products. So, without resorting to unproductive (or possibly illegal) mass spamming, how do brands initiate a "customer journey" on messaging channels at all?

The answer? Pretty much any way they want.

Diverse entry points that drive engagement

It's true: Brands have a number of creative ways to leverage existing campaigns in order to drive awareness of their messaging experience — and more such features are on their way.

For example:

QR Codes:

Ten years ago, QR codes were widely considered a gimmicky non-fad. Now? They're as commonplace in advertising as the toll-free phone number. Wherever customers experience their first touchpoint — be it in a magazine, television ad, etc. — they can easily scan a code that quickly connects to a conversation with your brand.

Your Brand s App/E-commerce Platform:

If you offer an app-based shopping experience to customers, you can easily guide them toward messaging channels with incentives (savings, convenience, etc.) through functions like push notifications, in-app calls to action, and more.

Social Networks:

Customers are already used to interacting with each other on social media — why not get them on your messaging channels with a creative post that explains the benefits of your messaging channel, with a link to chat?

Click-to-Message Ads:

One of the most powerful ways that brands can drive customers to their messaging channels, Click to Message ads are a widely adaptable solution that breaks down the barriers between "awareness" and "conversation." For all its efficacy, the term is simply exactly what it sounds like: an online ad with a call-to-action that sends your customer directly into a conversation with your brand on Messenger, Instagram Direct, or WhatsApp.

In fact, a number of businesses have seen tremendous success leveraging these cross-channel approaches to driving awareness on your messaging channels.

Omay Foods

By linking its WhatsApp for Business, Facebook and Instagram accounts, D2C snack company Omay Foods vastly broadened its reach to potential customers, appealingly showcased its products, and promptly answered questions from their audience of increasingly engaged customers.

Just one year out from the company's initial launch of its WhatsApp channel, they saw a:

- 5x increase in customer inquiries (when compared to their previous email contact channel),

- 3x increase in repeat customers via WhatsApp, and

- 5x increase in sales for all retail channels.[3]

Power in numbers

Clearly, messaging's true power to drive awareness comes from the power of your cross-channel campaigns. If you're already seeing success with your current offerings, integrating business chat into your brand's marketing strategy can only serve to further personalize and amplify the resonance of those messages with your customers.

This approach not only provides your customer with the information they need to continue their journey to purchase, but reinforces that you're a brand who takes its customers' time and questions seriously.
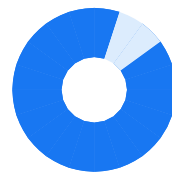
Asked, how much do you agree or disagree that your organization has experienced each of these benefits with Meta Business Messaging compared to legacy channels, marketers offered some glowing praise.

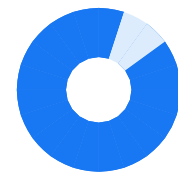# Organisations have experienced many benefits from Meta Business Messaging

94%

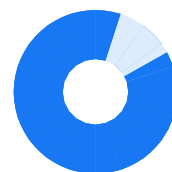Improved customer acquisition efforts increasing net new customers

91%

Increased number of leads

91%

Increased click through rates

88%

Increased open rates

85%

Reduced the cost per lead

Consideration: Compounding interest and trust

For marketers, the consideration stage is a juncture as pivotal as the moment of purchase: when your customers — now aware of your brand, albeit likely familiar with several other competitors in the same space, too — begin to seriously weigh their next steps.

As shoppers teeter on the edge of a decision, any bit of relevant information you can provide them will often go a long way in ensuring them that your products can solve their problems. Remember: 75% of online adults say they are more likely to shop with a business they can message.[4] Don't leave 'em hanging!

So, assuming you're already in conversation with your leads: How do you best maximize the benefits of business messaging at this stage in the journey?

Paid, targeted messaging:

Meta messaging platforms offer cost-efficient paid messaging plans that enable brands to regularly check in with their leads while gently nudging them along to purchase. Many well-known approaches may come into play at this stage — e.g. scarcity notifications, changes in price, other promotional offers, etc. However, these tried-and-true approaches are rendered particularly effective by both Meta platforms' unrivaled rate of use and their extraordinary open rates.

Furthermore, targeted messaging can have a major impact in this channel — notifications based on past browsing or purchase behavior, audience segmentation, and a variety of templates can help you deliver highly personalized messages that make your customers feel heard, understood, and more inclined to buy. This approach will become more and more essential, as trends suggest customers increasingly expect these kinds of tailored, bespoke experiences. [5]

Assisted shopping experiences:

Remember, Meta messaging platforms not only enable you to send marketing messages straight to your leads' pockets — they can respond in real-time, as part of their "flow of life."

As a result, these conversations can provide striking insights to your customer's interests, concerns, and barriers to purchase — even when conducted via automation tools. Thus, you can also adjust their experience accordingly: Whether answering questions about product features, availability, or whatever else may come to mind, these tools empower your business to put a personal shopper in each of your customer's hands.

That level of attention not only fosters trust, but very often drives further interest — ideally, smoothing the customer's way along to the point of purchase.

Bring a little levity   with a twist:

Your messaging doesn't have to be directly related to a purchase in order to foster interest (or collect some great data in the process). Tools like trivia quizzes, polls, contests, behind-the-scenes "sneak peaks" and other low-stakes fun can help gauge your customer's preferences while informing an entertaining, unique shopping experience that drives engagement.

Rajasthan Royals

Eager to deepen fan engagement and drive merchandise sales, this prominent Indian Premier League cricket team turned to WhatsApp Business Platform. It soon became the brand's primary channel for real-time updates, exclusive deals, and interactive fan experiences.

The result? In less than six months the team experienced:

- 4x increase in sales

- Doubling of their order-to-visit ratio

- 50% of all merchandise orders attributable to WhatsApp.

- 60% of all first-party data collected via the platform.[6]

Purchase: Frictionless, real-time support

While some may view the purchase stage as the culmination of the customer's journey to purchase, smart marketers know: It's just the beginning. Even as the "lead" now transitions into a paying customer, it's crucial that brands take the right steps to ensure that this first purchase evolves into a recurring relationship.

Thankfully, there are plenty of ways Meta's messaging platforms can do exactly that.

Buy in chat:

Imagine — sales without friction. A scenario in which a customer casually inquires about your products, and within the same conversation, is presented with an option to purchase it. No redirection to a sales portal, no need to fill out lengthy forms — just a simple, "Would you like this? Y/N?"

Brands harnessing the power of messaging API can now do exactly that: Bridge the gap between messaging and their sales or CRM systems, creating a unified and fluid shopping experience. This not only provides an incredibly convenient process for the customer, it can also drive "in the heat of the moment" purchases, i.e. at the height of the customer's interest and excitement for your brand.

Oh, and since we mentioned recurring customers: Imagine how delighted they'll be to find all of their shipping and payment info saved and ready to go when they're in the mood for another "Y/N" style purchase?

Automated reassurance:

These days, nobody likes to wait — especially your customers. And of course, the more you make them wait, the more likely they are to do business with a competitor who doesn't.

This is where the power of automation — and the asynchronous nature of messaging — can provide a key advantage for many brands. By integrating chatbots and automated response systems into their messaging channels, brands can ensure that customers receive instant replies, while also retaining the freedom to continue the conversation at their own pace — fitting seamlessly into their "flow of life."

This can be especially effective during the purchase phase, when customers might have lingering concerns about product details, shipping times, return policies, or any other last-minute barriers to purchase that might arise. Promptly addressing these questions as quickly as they arise could make or break your customer's final decision to buy.
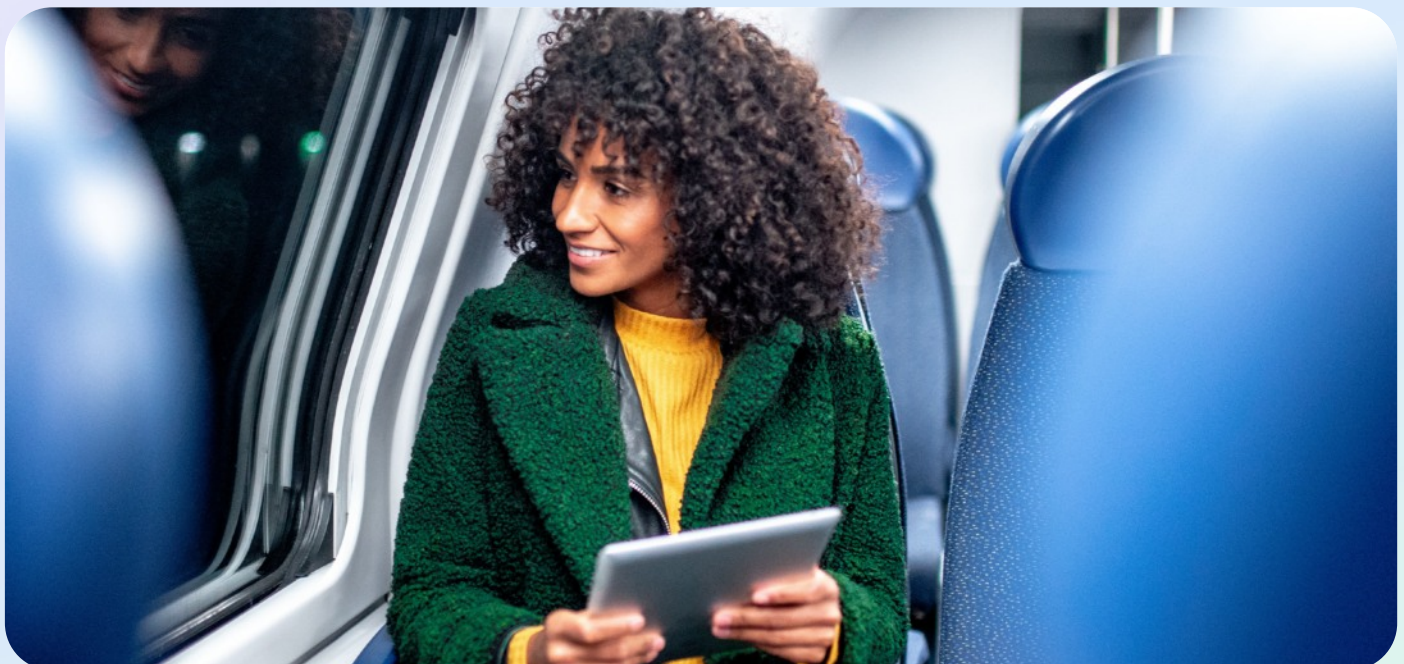
Instant, two-way confirmations:

While most ecommerce portals will send the customer tracking information, remember: It's far more likely your customer will see and interact with them on a messaging channel.

On top of that, you can provide your shoppers with far more robust and real-time information about the status of their order, on the instantaneous request of your customer. Rather than waiting hours or even a day or two for an emailed reply, a robust messaging experience can provide the same information in real time.

Segari

Faced with the challenge of efficiently managing customer inquiries, this innovative Indonesian online grocery company decided to turn to WhatsApp as their exclusive customer support channel — going so far as to eliminate the use of email entirely.

The results were swift and impressive. Within the first year, the company saw:

- 12x increase in revenue (!)

- 99.5% of customer inquiries answered within 5 minutes

- An average customer engagement rate of over 50 percent[7]

Post-Purchase: Let's be friends forever

Your customer has finally received their order, and lucky for you, it works just as expected. They couldn't be happier with their shopping experience, and left a glowing review of your company on its sales portal.

Sounds like an ideal outcome, right? Sort of! It's always great to make a new customer — but how do you keep them coming back for more? Fortunately, messaging offers a number of great ways to keep your newfound buyers in the fold.

Re-engagement:

Paid targeted messaging campaigns that rely on your customers' buying histories to provide personalized recommendations can go a long way in enticing them to buy again. You can make product suggestions ("most customers who like X also like Y!"), offer regular deals or other exclusive promotions to returning customers — and, with Meta's messaging platforms, feel confident they'll see and engage with them.

Loyalty programs:

Reward your returning shoppers with exclusive discounts, subscription programs, and other incentives that make their decision to repurchase not just easy, but irresistible.

No hassle cancellations:

Even customers unhappy with a particular experience may find some redeeming value in the outcome, so long as you are able to exceed their expectations when resolving the issue.

Properly leveraged, Meta's messaging platforms can allow customers to cancel, change details, or make other changes to their purchase. Even if the initial transaction wasn't perfect, this easy, accommodating approach will resonate with your customer and build trust — something they'll probably keep in mind the next time they consider purchasing from you.

BMW Taiwan

In an effort to foster stronger relationships with customers, this well-known automotive brand recognized the need for consistent, targeted messaging in order to re-engage their shoppers and boost loyalty.

After just a three-day contest on Facebook — in which customers answered BMW-related trivia questions via messenger — the impact was hard to ignore:

- 78% opt-in rates for recurring messages

- 99% read rate for recurring paid messages

- Achieved 10x more customer participation in online events[8]

Meta Messaging: Fitting seamlessly into your customer's "flow of life"

Remember: Even as technology makes modern life increasingly easy, even your most loyal customers are still immersed in the hustle and bustle of their everyday lives. Gone is the time when customers were willing to sit on hold, wait days for a customer service response, or passively shrug off a bad customer service experience.

Just as Meta's messaging channels have become an integral part of your customer's routine, so too, can your brand seamlessly integrate into your customer's "flow of life." You just have to be willing to meet them where they're most comfortable.

Ready to unleash the power of Meta's business messaging platforms for your business? <u>Click here</u> to explore more ways you can enhance your customers' experience at each stage of their journey.

[1] "Top WhatsApp Statistics Compilation for Business 2023", by Landbot, 2022.

[2] "Important Social Media Advertising Statistics to Know", Hootsuite, 2022.

[3] "Omay Foods: WhatsApp for Business Case Study," Meta, 2022

[4] Business Messaging Usage Research by Kantar. (Meta commissioned online study of 5,504 online adults in BR, MX, ID, TH, VN, UK, DE, ES, FR, IN, US), April 2022

[5] "The value of getting personalization right – or wrong – is multiplying", McKinsey & Co., 2021

[6] "Rajasthan Royals: WhatsApp for Business Case Study," Meta, 2022.

[7] "Segari: WhatsApp for Business Case Study," Meta, 2022.

[8] "BMW Taiwan: WhatsApp for Business Case Study," Meta, 2022.

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