



Conversational Commerce: Tap into Messaging Apps Your Customers Already Use

Customers are the lifeblood of any business. Being able to quickly and effectively respond to consumers not only helps you gain and retain customers – it's one of the best ways to outclass your competition.

While that statement may seem basic, SuperOffice's survey of 1,000 companies found that the average response time to customer service requests is 12 hours and 10 minutes. And 62% of companies surveyed don't even respond to customer emails. With statistics like these it's easy to see why customers are becoming increasingly frustrated with using phone or email for customer service.

Today, consumers increasingly prefer to communicate through messaging. And the businesses that can effectively meet their customers in the messaging apps they're already using can gain an advantage in crowded markets.



The State of Customer Communication

Whether using Facebook Messenger, Twitter direct messages, WhatsApp, or WeChat, messaging has become second nature. These platforms allow asynchronous conversation and provide tech such as speech recognition, natural language processing and artificial intelligence (AI) to help consumers talk to friends and family, make purchases, and stay current on what's happening in their world.

Asynchronous communication allows users to connect on their terms and their schedule. And [with modern encryption technology](#), many messaging platforms like these can help protect and secure both documents and communication between parties.

This intersection of messaging apps and shopping, called [conversational commerce](#), is especially important for businesses to pay attention to. Customers want to message with the businesses they buy from. When asked about their attitude toward conversational commerce, [85% of worldwide consumers in a 2020 survey said they would like to message with brands – up from 65% the previous year](#). Plus, of the consumers surveyed, [\(75%\) reported spending more time with brands that offer messaging than brands that didn't](#).

Customers are growing more and more tired of the traditional ways they've connected with businesses. Old school methods of one-way communication – such as email, blogs and promotional posts – no longer meet them where they are.

Similarly, marketing has evolved – just telling customers who you are and what you stand for is no longer enough. They want to be able to access a business and ask questions at any time and in any place.

This includes receiving support and quick resolutions. No one wants to wait for an answer through email or to find themselves on hold, no matter how quick the response time might be.

We believe these expectations will intensify as consumers reassess what's important to them and transform how they interact with brands. Business messaging and conversational commerce can allow you to stay connected to your customers during this shift.



Messaging is increasingly preferred to visiting a company website or using a native mobile app. In a 2021 report, Gartner predicted that by 2025 [80% of customer service organizations will abandon their native app in favor of messaging](#). It's becoming clear that businesses are embracing messaging as part of their overall strategy.

Delight Your Customers by Meeting Them Where They Are

The ability to make one-to-one connections and create two-way communication helps you build relationships with your customers. And the asynchronous nature of conversational commerce helps you connect on their terms.

For example, mini breaks throughout the day are a perfect time for a customer to send off a quick message to your support team to ask about an order delay or schedule an appointment. When they get a moment later, they can pick back up where they left off, hopefully finding a response with options for next steps.

Impact Your Bottom Line with Messaging

It's not just the customer who benefits. When implemented well, businesses can realize both time and cost savings. Automation can help resolve low-level issues and without the restriction of normal business hours, this can happen 24/7. More complex issues can be teed up for your customer service agents who can respond via text, voice chat, or rich media as needed. All this provides an on-the-go, convenient, personalized, concierge-style of service available any time.

And if the interaction is interrupted, the entire thread is preserved. Customers don't have to repeat themselves, a huge pet peeve, and any agent can pick back up to assist a customer. Plus, innovations like integrating messaging and other systems (including identity authentication, CRM, fulfillment, and card-on-file/payments systems) can continue to make this experience more valuable to both customers and businesses.



In a single channel, a consumer can get support, ask questions, and access recommendations and reviews – which you can enhance with rich media like video and images, product lists, locations, and more. By providing such a robust experience, you can reduce the number of apps and websites your customers need to interact with. And by eliminating their need to toggle back and forth, you may reduce the chance they'll drop out of the process before making a buying decision.

As conversational messaging reshapes how consumers interact with brands, it has the potential to reshape how businesses are structured. Even with decreased staffing, messaging can offer businesses an increased ability to serve customers compared to models that rely on synchronous, or real-time, messaging.

This is becoming increasingly critical as customer contact centers look to reduce the number of calls received. According to a 2020 McKinsey report, [this is the number one priority for contact center leaders, up from 2019](#). The report lists their second and third priorities as reducing costs and increasing sales.



Messaging Provides a Full Funnel Solution

Conversational commerce can help businesses support lead gen, nurture activities, sales conversions, and other marketing outcomes. When done well, conversational commerce incorporates all parts of the customer journey. It can help move them through awareness to interest and hopefully to a buying decision by decreasing the distance between prospect and purchase. And by integrating with your existing marketing stack, it can help reduce silos in the customer journey and track success.

In short, business messaging puts consumers in the drivers' seat and gives you the tools to deliver an engaging experience. Customers feel like their concerns have been heard and receive a more personalized experience. Each touchpoint can become a building block to creating richer, more meaningful conversations that can result in higher satisfaction, improved word of mouth, and increased buying decisions.

