



3 Critical Steps Businesses Must Take to Transform the Customer Experience with Messaging



After saving up a bit, it's finally time to upgrade your phone. But with so many new options available on the market, the only way to make a final decision about your new dream phone is to take it for a test drive virtually, or in person. If you're a typical consumer today, that means you have a few different options:

- ➔ You can head down to the actual storefront location to check the phone out in person and potentially risk an aggressive sales presence, which—let's be honest—you're not excited about.
- ➔ You can bypass the in-store experience entirely and call the company directly to learn more and potentially order, but you might have to wait your turn to talk to someone and, well, who has time for that?
- ➔ You can also hit up the minimalist landing page for your new dream phone, but just visiting the website alone doesn't give you a sense for its many features.

¹ "What Businesses Need To Know About Communicating With Customers," A Forrester Consulting Thought Leadership Paper Commissioned By Google, December 2020.

² ibid 6.

³ "Gartner Says 63% of Digital Marketing Leaders Still Struggle with Personalization, Yet Only 17% Use AI and Machine Learning Across the Function," Gartner, April 2021.

So, what are you supposed to do?

If you're like other modern consumers, the answer is increasingly clear: it'd be easiest to simply message a business and start a two-way conversation about the product you're interested in. In fact, 24% of consumers surveyed in 2020 said their method of contacting a business has moved from in-person experiences to digital.¹ What's more, 22% of those surveyed also said they expect to be able to conduct all sales tasks digitally with a brand.²

But here's the question that looms large for enterprise companies when confronted with this new reality: Are you ready to accommodate the rising demand for digital browsing and buying experiences? According to Gartner, most businesses aren't, with two-thirds of digital marketing leaders surveyed struggling to deliver personalized experiences to their customers.³

With so much at stake, businesses must invest in building the future of customer engagement via messaging and conversations or potentially risk jeopardizing their bottom line, or worse, hastening their own obsolescence.

So, what steps can businesses take to prepare for the rise of messaging? Let's outline them right now.

Invest in Digital Infrastructure

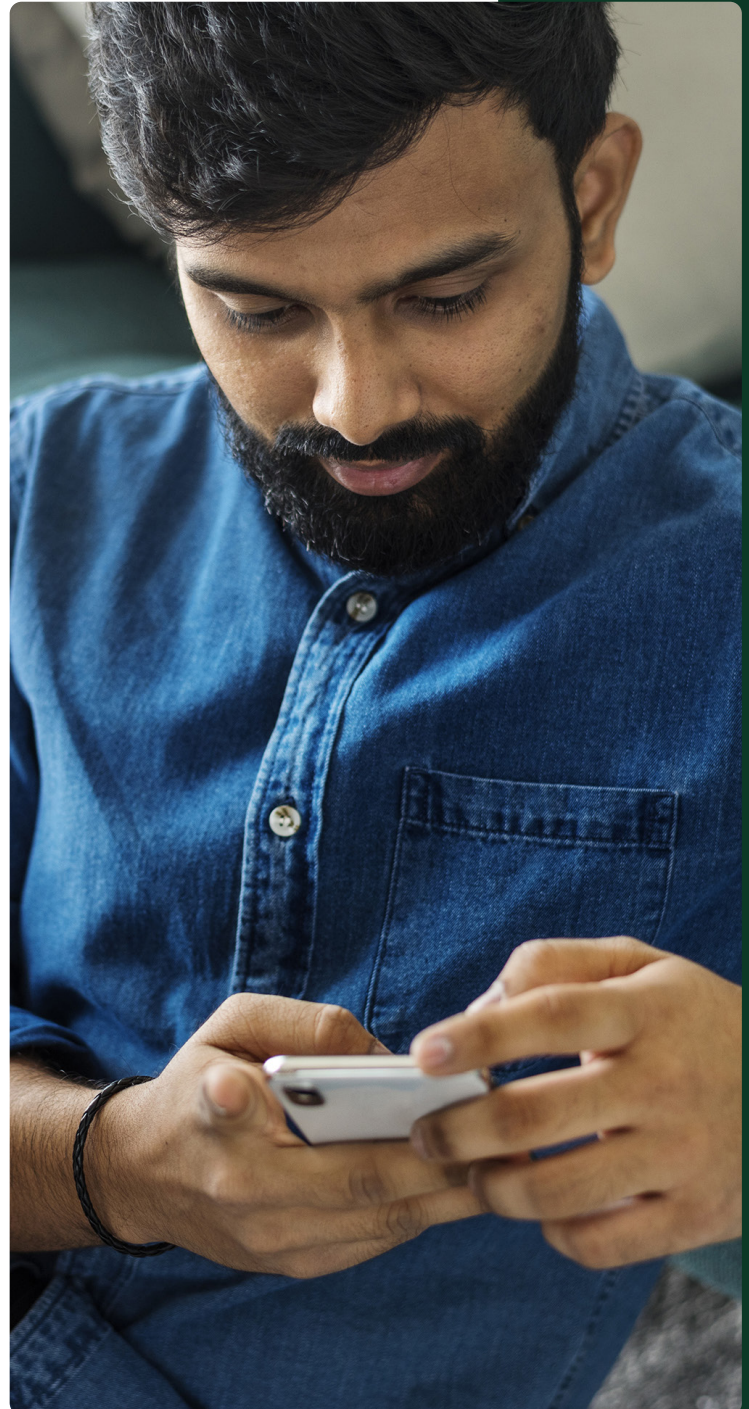
As new technology emerges, consumer behavior naturally evolves, too. We now live in the digital age, where most engagements are mobile-first.⁴ In the future, the success of a business may depend on the extent to which it can let go of the old ways of connecting to consumers, and how well it embraces what's relevant now. Whether they're inquiring about a product, need help signing up for a loyalty program, completing a purchase, or looking for information, companies should aim to fulfill the wishes of their customers more quickly and seamlessly if they want to remain ahead of their competitors.

So, how can enterprise companies set themselves up for success in meeting customers where they're at through messaging?

One way is by investing in digital infrastructure, particularly the kind that makes two-way conversations possible between consumers and the brands they want to buy from, like an enterprise business messaging solution. When evaluating options, prioritize the solutions that:

- ➔ Enable you to scale two-way conversations with automated conversational workflows
- ➔ Give you the ability to create rich and engaging experiences that can drive business outcomes
- ➔ Make it easy to design high quality conversations and maintain that quality over time

⁴ "Percentage of mobile device website traffic worldwide from 1st quarter 2015 to 4th quarter 2021," Statista, January 2022.



Offer Asynchronous Communication

Consumers want there to be a smooth transition through each step of the customer journey, with 73% of customers expecting companies to understand their unique needs and expectations.⁵ Whether it's answering product questions or checking the status of an order, providing a channel that allows customers to communicate asynchronously is the key to meeting and exceeding those expectations.

In fact:

- ➔ A US study found that 88% of millennials surveyed in 2020 prefer text over the phone.⁶
- ➔ Overall, 75% of adults surveyed in 2020 said they want to communicate with a business the same way they do with friends and family: through messaging.

The story that the data tells us is clear:

Folks want to be able to pick up their phones at any time and reach out to businesses and get a timely response. It's up to businesses to take action to make that happen.

So what do you have to do as a business to help ensure asynchronous communication is easy for your buyer?

Invest in a messaging solution and leverage automated workflows to be available when and where your customers need you the most. Automated workflows support asynchronous communication in a variety of ways, but particularly in allowing businesses to provide assistance after normal business hours, giving your customers access to a resolution whenever and wherever they need it and providing tools for quick and efficient support through customer support agents, that enables them to carry out and resolve multiple conversations at once.

⁵ "State of the Connected Customer, Fifth Edition," Salesforce, 2022

⁶ "Wireless Survey," HighSpeedInternet.Com, 2020



Optimize for Cost Savings with Better Customer Care

By investing in digital infrastructure and meeting consumer demands for asynchronous communication, businesses have the potential to drive more desirable outcomes throughout the customer journey, both on the consumer side as well as the enterprise. That's because while business messaging solutions are critical tools for connecting with audiences, they can also be integrated into existing workstreams to drive efficiencies at each stage of the customer journey, such as:

Discovery:

Use messaging to provide product recommendations or inspiration on when, where and how to use your products.



Consideration:

Make it easy to receive answers to product questions or even retrieve an abandoned cart to complete purchase.



Purchase:

Speed up the purchase process by confirming a few key details through messaging, allowing transactions to be processed without having to fill a payment form each time.



Post-purchase:

Send your customers messages when their order is shipped and include any relevant tracking numbers or delivery information.



Leverage the knowledge that messaging is a preferred form of communication and attract new customers through means like entry points, allowing them to engage and begin messaging you from different platforms. With this ease in communication, perspectives can be turned into loyal shoppers quickly and easily. In fact, 68% of customers surveyed said they were more likely to go with a business that offers convenient communications.⁷ Not only that, but when consumers can use the communication channels of their choosing, they're over 50% more likely to make a first-time purchase, buy more often from the company, and recommend that business.⁸

In a recent study, brands with advanced communications have significantly higher Net Promoter Scores (NPS) and Customer Satisfaction scores (CSAT) and are also 3.4 times more likely to have experienced significant (5% or greater) revenue growth in the last year.⁹ With conversions, brand loyalty, and overall profitability being vital to a business's bottom line, messaging needs to be an integral part of your strategy.

Why Businesses Need to Take Note of This Transformational Shift

Fewer than half of the decision-makers surveyed in a recent Forrester study said their brands were equipped with modern business messaging to meet customers where they were.¹⁰ This tells us that even though two-way conversation is the future of messaging, leaders are simply not equipped nor educated enough to lead their businesses into this new digital era. While it might seem like a daunting task, it is imperative that you meet these consumer expectations or could possibly risk becoming obsolete in the ever-changing marketplace. Take these necessary steps to implement messaging into your business so that you can meet consumers where they're at and start creating engaging, personalized experiences.

⁷ "What Businesses Need To Know About Communicating With Customers," A Forrester Consulting Thought Leadership Paper Commissioned By Google, December 2020.

⁸ Ibid 7.

⁹ Ibid 3.

¹⁰ Ibid 4.

