

# 10 best practices for **messaging** with customers.

It's convenient, timely, and what today's consumers want. Are you ready?



## Instant connection – on their terms.

Customers have taken to messaging businesses since it gives them that instant connection without actually speaking a word. They can simply tap out their messages in their own time, wherever they are, rather than be glued to the phone or laptop until their issue is resolved.

The most well-known form of messaging, SMS, is a classic and has been around for so many years for a reason. The same attributes that make it a success with personal conversations – its safety, simplicity and synergy – help to make it an incredibly cost-efficient and powerful tool for business-to-consumer conversations. SMS manages to be both widely understood and highly intimate.

Messaging apps provide this same dynamic texting experience that consumers gravitate to because of the convenient, free access to reach out to brands. In fact, apps are so popular with consumers that, in 2015, active users for the top 4 messaging apps [outnumbered](#)<sup>1</sup> those for the top 4 social networking apps.

As more brands begin to join their competitors and implement messaging capabilities into their customer experience, they can't just open up an SMS channel and run with it. There are several things to consider when rolling out such an influential customer channel as messaging.

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### Messaging apps have beat out social networks

#### Monthly users for big 4 messaging apps

3,750

#### Monthly users for big 4 social networking apps

3,250

Note: In millions of users; as of Q12017; big 4 messaging apps are WhatsApp, Messenger, WeChat, Viber; big 4 social networks are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn

Source: BI Intelligence, Companies, Apptopia, TechCrunch, BI Intelligence estimates, 2017 <http://www.businessinsider.com/the-messaging-app-report-2015-11?IR=T>

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<sup>1</sup> "Messaging apps are now bigger than social networks," BI Intelligence, [www.businessinsider.com/the-messaging-app-report-2015-11?IR=T](http://www.businessinsider.com/the-messaging-app-report-2015-11?IR=T) (accessed 8/18/17)

# 1 Use the right messaging platform for your business

## SMS

Text messaging capabilities are native on every mobile phone.

## In-app

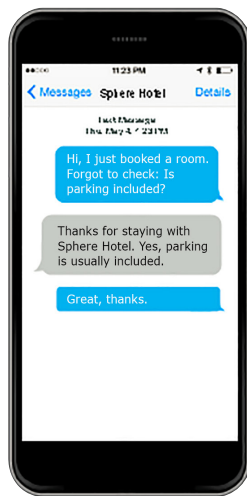
Enterprises can own mobile applications in which customers can converse with them. However, consumers try to consolidate their apps as much as possible, so make sure yours provides value.

## Messaging apps

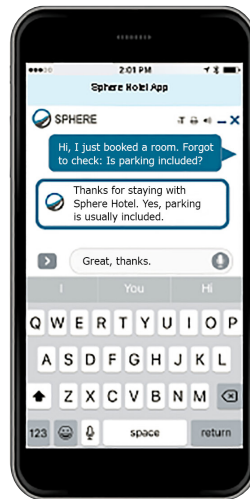
(Such as Facebook Messenger, WeChat, or Kik.) Messaging apps are used by consumers to have all their conversations with friends and family in one place, but brands are starting to adopt this trend as well.

## IoT devices

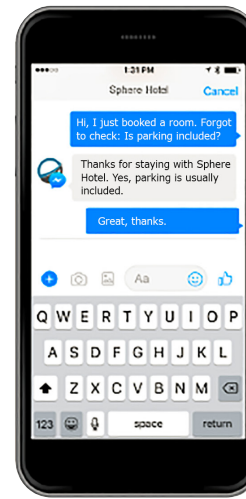
(Such as Alexa.) These are real-time, voice-enabled conversations using a stationary device.



SMS



In-App



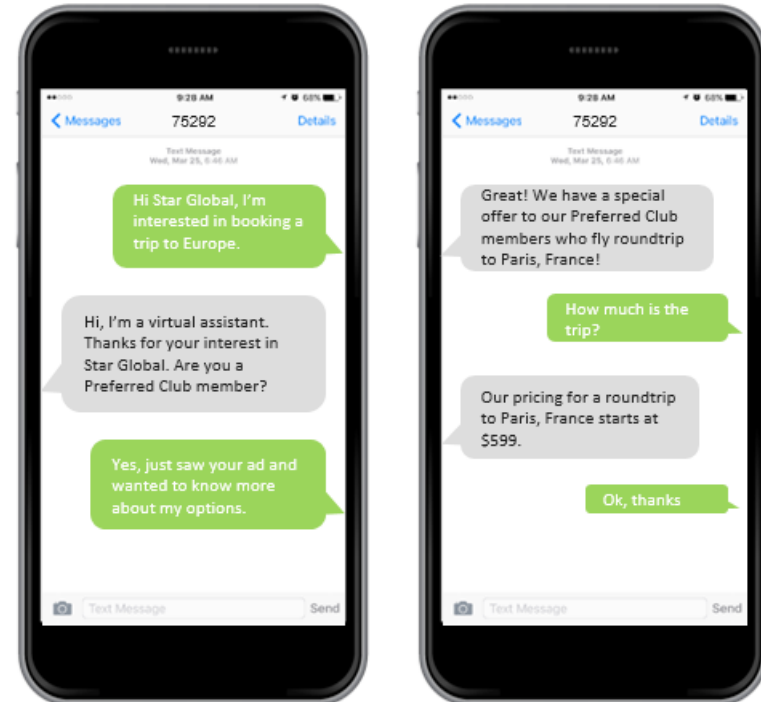
FB Messenger




Alexa

## 2 Optimize your communication for mobile devices

Mobile devices lend themselves to reduced real estate, so train your live agents to communicate in the short, succinct way of texting. Their messages need to be to the point, yet convey the information completely and in the voice of your brand. The challenge comes with making short responses sound polite!







## 3 Choose appropriate use cases for messaging

If you need to send lengthy contracts or large files, then messaging might not be the right channel for your customers. Instead, focus on the value of mobile phones. Allow your customer to connect with you from anywhere they are to ask questions and receive answers while on the go. For example, information requests, product research, clarifications or price estimates can save your customer time when handled via messaging.

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### Helpful tips

- Simplify the ability to move the customer between channels and into the branded environment as needed.
  - From a brand perspective, treat every incoming message in a channel-appropriate way.
  - Let the customer decide where to engage and in which manner.
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# 4

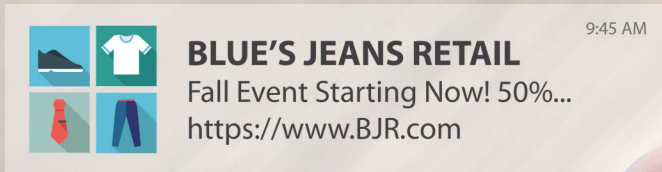
## Leverage automated and human assistance

Start messaging conversations with a virtual assistant for immediate assistance. Then seamlessly escalate to a live chat agent if needed within the same channel. Route new incoming messages appropriately.

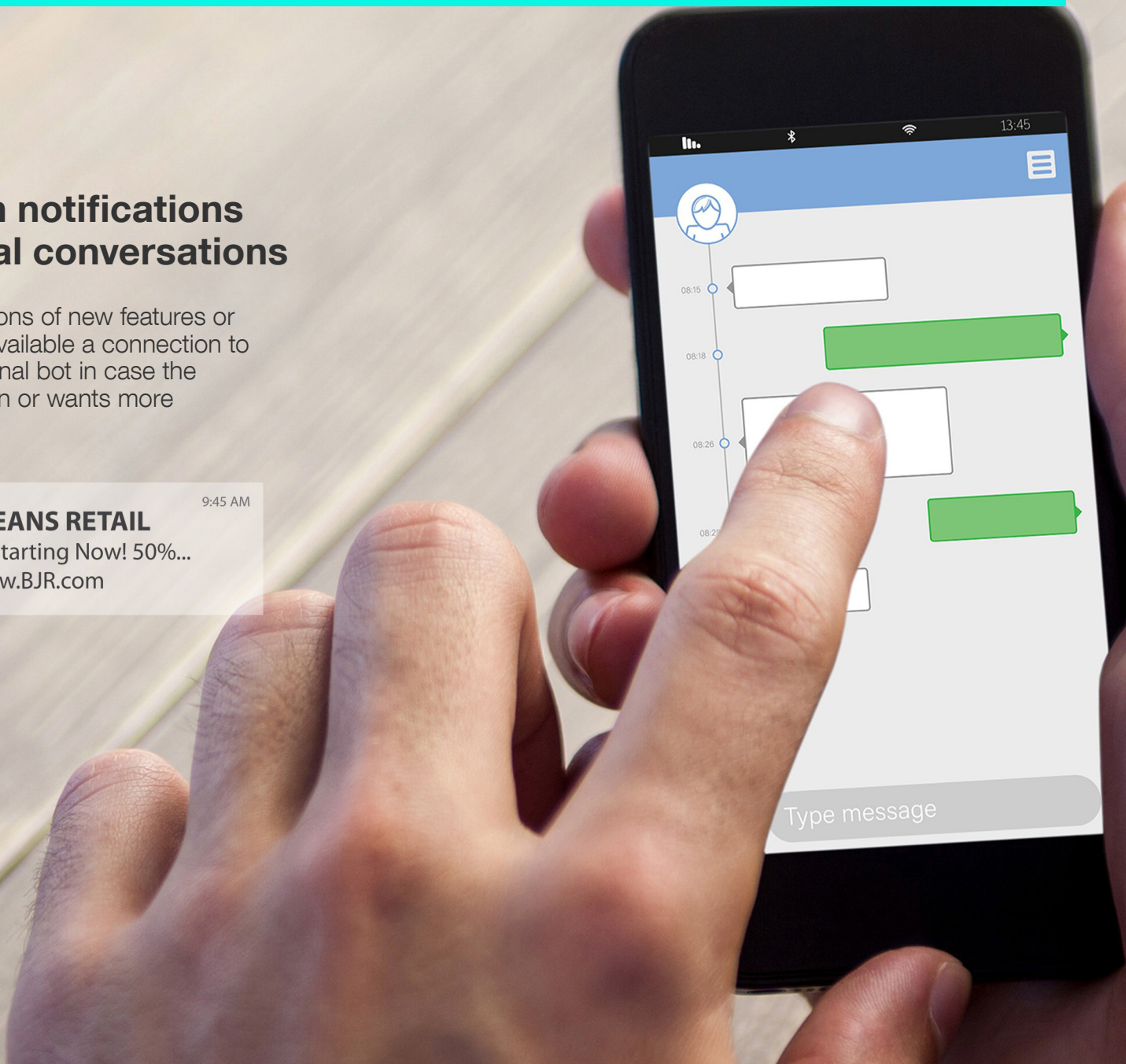


# 5 Combine push notifications with contextual conversations

When sending notifications of new features or status updates, make available a connection to an agent or conversational bot in case the customer has a question or wants more information.



A push notification card for 'BLUE'S JEANS RETAIL'. It features a 2x2 grid of icons: a shoe, a t-shirt, a tie, and a pair of jeans. The text reads: 'BLUE'S JEANS RETAIL', 'Fall Event Starting Now! 50%...', and a URL 'https://www.BJR.com'. The time '9:45 AM' is shown in the top right corner.





# 6 Use context to make messages relevant

Use the information you have at hand to find out:

- What does the customer need?
- What is their context?
- Is there any historic information that could be valuable?

Focus on the needs and motivations consumers have on the go, to provide the right messaging. Just providing static services requires the customer to hunt down the right category or forces them to repeat themselves constantly. Your customers will thank you when you present the information they need when they need it.





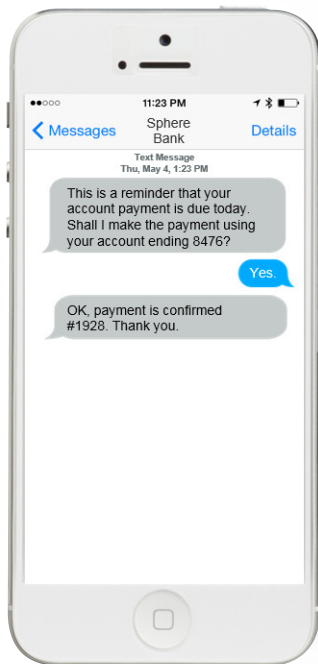
# 7 Add secure authentication to your messaging channels

Ensure your customers are who they say they are without ever leaving the messaging channel. Voice biometrics allows the user to authenticate themselves inside an app or any other messaging channel just by saying a specific passphrase. This makes authentication easy and convenient for the customer and adds an unmatched level of security for the brand.



# 8 Message with customers in real-time

Have a conversation where every message is taken care of immediately. This is especially helpful for issues where your customer expects an immediate answer. The most important aspect of a satisfying customer service experience is getting the issue resolved quickly.<sup>2</sup>



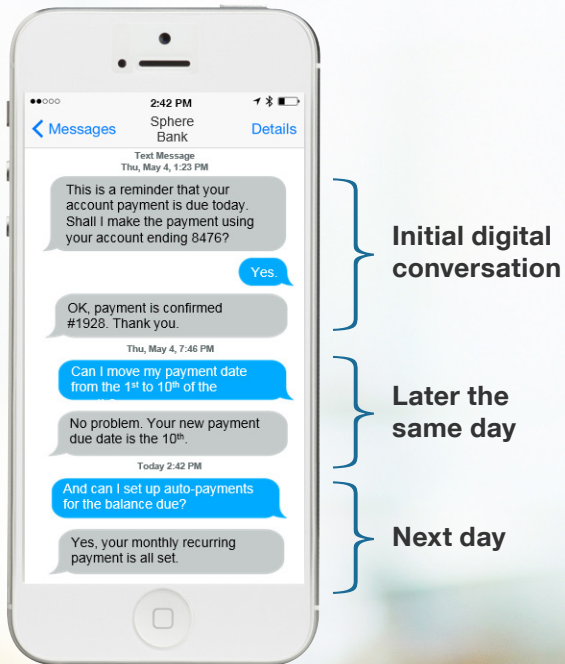
**Immediate digital conversation completed in one interaction**

<sup>2</sup> "2016 State of Global Customer Service Report," Microsoft, <http://info.microsoft.com/rs/157-GQE-382/images/dynamics365-en-global-state-customer-service.pdf> (accessed 8/18/17)



# 9 Message with customers asynchronously

A digital conversation starts, then continues later the same day, and/or the next day without losing the context. This way the customer can come back to the conversation whenever convenient and the agent can look up information, if needed, and respond as soon as all information to resolve the issue is gathered.

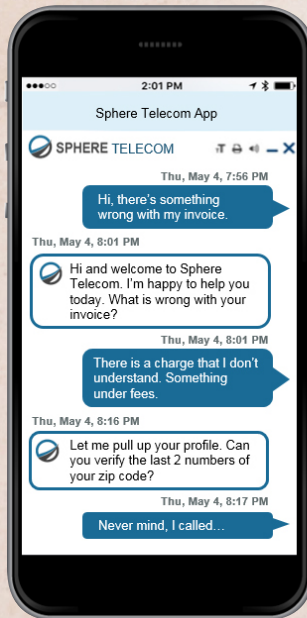




# 9

## Asynchronous messaging – things to consider:

Beware of becoming too asynchronous with your messaging. If the customer is expecting immediate responses, don't leave them hanging while you find the answer. If they have to wait too long, they may end up calling, instead.



**Customer has an issue and expects a solution immediately**

**Doesn't meet customer expectation, so customer calls instead**

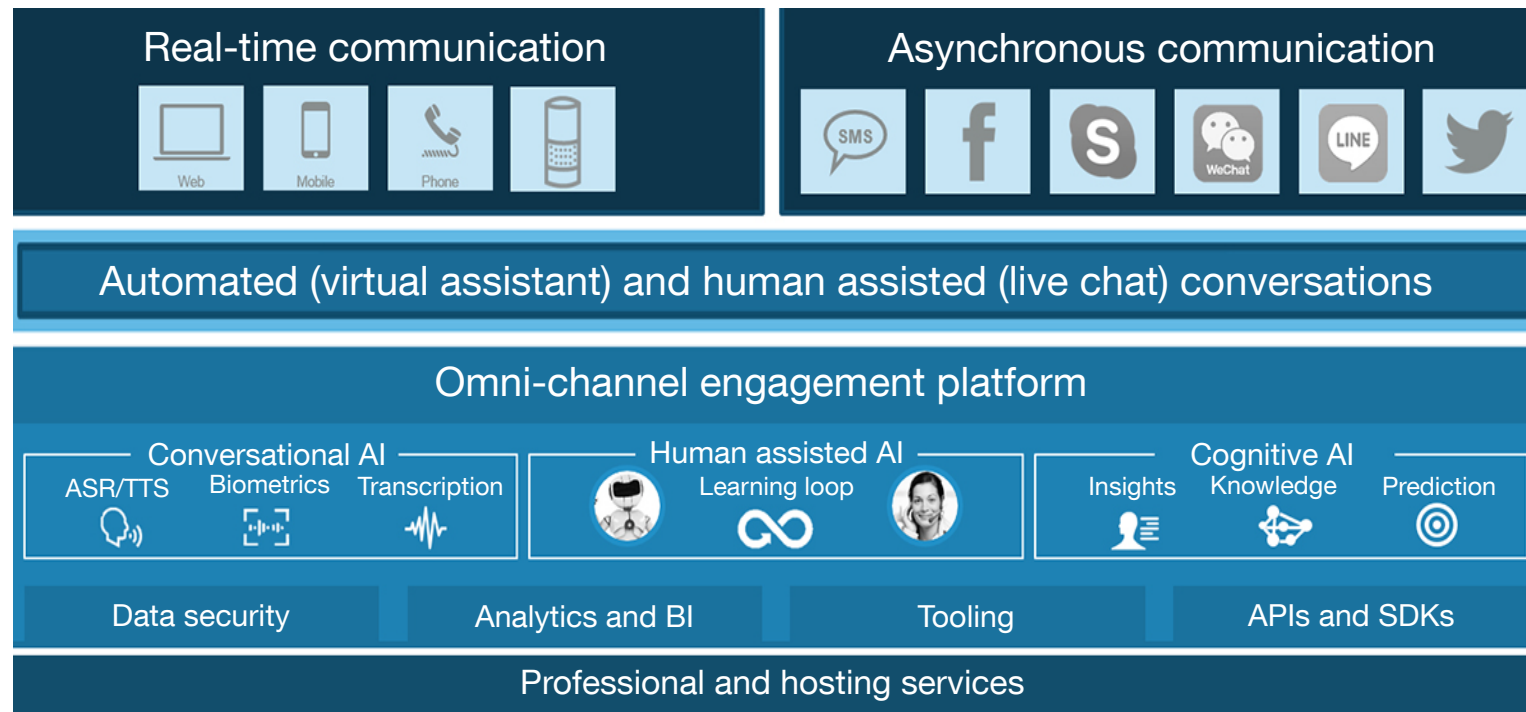




# 10 Leverage a single, unified omni-channel platform

Customers move between devices and channels – [almost six touchpoints](#)<sup>3</sup> on average daily – as they interact with your brand, and they expect every touchpoint to feel the same. Maintain context across the entire journey with an omni-channel platform that provides a comprehensive view of the customer experience and informs agents about search behavior and previous engagements.

## Messaging across automated and human-assisted conversations



<sup>3</sup> Mindi Chahal, "Why marketers are failing to target consumers at key life events," Marketing Week, <http://www.marketingweek.com/2016/03/04/why-marketers-are-failing-to-target-consumers-at-key-life-events/> (Accessed 8/18/17)

## Messaging is a major part of our daily lives

Messaging as a conversation platform has virtually changed how we communicate with each other - and soon, how we interact with brands. When messaging is done right, brands can seamlessly integrate messaging into an omni-channel engagement strategy that drives customer loyalty and supports your business goals.





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### **About Nuance Communications, Inc.**

Nuance Enterprise is reinventing the relationship between enterprises and consumers through customer engagement solutions powered by artificial intelligence. We aim to be the market leading provider of intelligent self- and assisted-service solutions delivered to large enterprises around the world. These solutions are differentiated by speech, voice biometrics, virtual assistant, web chat and cognitive technologies; enabling cross-channel customer service for IVR, mobile and web, Inbound and Outbound; and magnified by the design and development skill of a global professional services team. We serve Fortune 2500 companies across the globe with a mix of direct and channel partner selling models.

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