

Messaging done right.

4 customer service messaging best practices
for seamless omni-channel engagement.

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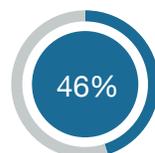
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The number of mobile phone users in the world is expected to pass the five billion mark by 2019.¹

Consumers are in the throes of mobile mania. Everywhere you look—on the street, in stores and restaurants, and even at home—people of all ages are glued to their mobile devices. Just how hooked are we? The numbers speak for themselves:



Suffer from nomophobia—the fear of being without a mobile device or beyond mobile phone contact.⁴



Of smart phone owners say they cannot live without their device.²



People touch their smartphones 2,617 times a day on average.³

90%

9 out of 10 consumers want to use messaging to communicate with brands.

>50%

Less than half of global businesses have the infrastructure in place to fulfill this customer demand.⁸

More mobile phones, more messaging

As consumers adopt a mobile mind shift—expecting anytime, anywhere access to information and services in their immediate context—messaging is on the rise. First SMS exploded onto the scene. Then enterprises started offering their own branded in-app messaging. Now third-party messaging apps are fast becoming the preferred method of communicating with friends and family—especially among millennials. Use of messaging apps has increased by leaps and bounds over the last couple of years, with WhatsApp reaching one billion users per month and Facebook Messenger and WeChat following close behind.⁵ Recognizing this fast-moving trend, Apple announced Business Chat, a customer service messaging platform that allows businesses to connect with customers directly from within its popular iMessage app, in June 2017.

Messaging has become a preferred channel for mobile consumers to interact with businesses and therefore a key component of a successful omni-channel customer engagement strategy. Yet according to Forrester Research, “Less than half of digital business professionals regularly use messaging to engage their customers. Even fewer have the analytics or contextual engines in place to deliver the right message at the right time and place — all keys to successful engagement.”⁶

An untapped opportunity for engagement

Despite its overwhelming popularity, messaging remains a largely untapped channel for businesses seeking to engage with customers. According to Forrester, less than half of digital business professionals use messaging regularly for customer engagement.⁷ Since it’s only a matter of time before messaging becomes the primary channel consumers use to interact with brands, enterprises need to get on board—and quickly.

1 Ace Van Wanseele, Mobile First Design: Responsive, Relevant, Receptive and Realistic, Spetember,14, 2016, found at <http://www.thecreativealliance.com/user-experience/mobile-design-responsive-relevant-receptive-realistic/>

2 Aaron Smith, U.S. Smartphone Use in 2015, Pew Research Center, April 1, 2015, at 4, found at <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/04/01/chapter-two-usage-and-attitudes-toward-smartphones/>

3 Patrick Nelson, We Touch Our Phones 2,617 Times a Day, Says Study, Network World, July 7, 2016, found at <http://www.networkworld.com/article/3092446/smartphones/we-touch-our-phones-2617-times-a-day-says-study.html>

4 Tim Elmore, Nomophobia: A Rising Trend in Students, Psychology Today, September 18, 2014, found at <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/artificial-maturity/201409/nomophobia-rising-trend-in-students>

5 Robert Allen, 9 Global Internet Trends to Inform Your 2017 Strategy: Key Insights from KPCB’s Latest Report, Smart Insights, November 23, 2016, found at <http://www.smartinsights.com/internet-marketing-statistics/global-internet-trends-2016-insights-kpcbs-latest-report/>

6 Forrester Research Report, “Mobile Messaging: Catalyst And Core Channel For Commerce” Forrester Report, by Julie Ask and Nicole Dvorak, May 2016

7 Julie A. Ask and Nicole Dvorak, Mobile Messaging: Catalyst and Core Channel for Commerce, Forrester Research, May 23, 2016, at 1.

8 Frederic Lardinois, Twilio Study: Most Consumers Now Want to Use Messaging to Interact with Businesses, Tech Crunch, September 12, 2016, found at <https://techcrunch.com/2016/09/12/twilio-study-most-consumers-now-want-to-use-messaging-to-interact-with-businesses/>

Roadmap to customer service messaging success

Following are best practices to integrate customer service messaging into your omni-channel strategy and deliver a seamless brand experience your customers will love.

#1 Offer customer driven convenience

New channels for personal and business interaction continue to emerge at a dizzying pace. It seems like every day there's a new messaging channel or app that allows people to engage with friends, family, and increasingly, businesses. This means consumers have more options to choose from—whether it's SMS, branded apps, messaging apps, or Internet of Things (IoT) devices.

Each new messaging channel offers businesses opportunity to interact with customers. But you need to engage on their terms—not yours. A Facebook IQ study showed that on average across 14 global markets, people associate messaging with convenience above all else.⁹ Give consumers the convenience they crave by making it easy and intuitive to contact your brand and get answers quickly using whichever channel they prefer.



SMS

- Text messaging capabilities native on every smartphone
- Enhancements like Apple Business Chat for customer service messaging

Messaging apps

- Used by consumers to consolidate all their conversations with friends and family in one place
- Brands are starting to adopt this trend

In-app messaging

- Enterprise-owned applications available for mobile devices
- Key apps, like those offered by airlines and banks, are still used, but consumers are trying to consolidate as much as possible

IoT devices

- Messaging without typing or tapping
- Real-time voice-enabled conversations using a stationary device

⁹ Facebook IQ, Insights Guide: The Message heard Around the World (2106), at 4, found at https://scontent-iad3-1.xx.fbcdn.net/v/t39.2365-6/17636475_410462579329701_1591761755170668544_n.pdf?oh=c7357ada82621b035a8dd1b83ad7594f&oe=5A0F3147

Go asynchronous or go bust

According to Forrester Research, mobile has shifted consumer expectations on three core dimensions: immediacy, simplicity, and context—and these expectations now extend to messaging.¹⁰ Meeting these demands through real-time channels like live chat, phone or IoT device is challenging enough, but it becomes even more difficult as consumers gravitate more toward asynchronous channels such as SMS and messaging apps.

Real-time

Immediate digital conversation completed in one interaction

**Asynchronous**

Initial digital conversation

Later the same day

Next day



Today's consumers demand seamless engagement with brands even when there are long gaps in the conversation or they switch between channels. Let customers communicate at their own pace—without timing them out. Be ready to continue a conversation—in context—whether the customer responds in 10 seconds, 10 hours, or 10 days. If you can't deliver this kind of continuous dialog, you risk brand loyalty and an increase in costly inbound calls to your contact center.

¹⁰ Julie A. Ask and Nicole Dvorak, Mobile Messaging: Catalyst and Core Channel for Commerce, Forrester Research, May 23, 2016, at 2

#2 Deliver a consistent experience across all customer touchpoints

As new modes of interaction burst onto the scene, enterprises are scrambling to keep pace. Too often, however, they establish a separate team, strategy, and infrastructure for each channel as it emerges. The result? Siloed operations that increase the likelihood of a bad customer experience. Yet, no matter what's going on behind the scenes, your customers expect a seamless and personalized dialog with your brand across all channels.

Break down engagement roadblocks

Customers expect to be able to engage with your brand at any time via any channel—and that their conversations will continue without missing a beat. They expect your company to know who they are, where they are, what they want, and what their history is with your brand. This requires a cohesive, integrated omni-channel strategy—and the right technology infrastructure to back it up. Whether consumers are contacting your brand using a messaging app, mobile app, live chat or IVR, you need to make the experience simple and seamless:

– Go with the flow

Don't lock customers into one channel. Give IVR callers the option to engage in an immediate SMS chat. Or add a human touch by seamlessly connecting any self-service engagement to a live chat agent.

– Retain conversation history

Stop asking customers to repeat information or wait on hold while agents log into separate systems. Capture messages so live chat agents can access them instantly and start helping the customer—pronto.

– Make it easy and familiar

Work within the framework of third-party messaging app interfaces so the experience is effortless for the user. Make sure customers receive notification of incoming messages—just as they would for messages from friends or family—and make it simple to connect to a live agent from within the app.

The introduction of new channels should enrich the brand experience—not expand opportunities to give customers the run-around. It's time to think strategically about omni-channel engagement so you can start delivering world-class customer experiences that differentiate your brand from the competition.

Where does the siloed approach break down? Consider this example:

Jason reaches out to your brand via a chatbot on Facebook Messenger. After a few message exchanges, the chatbot is unable to continue the conversation and sends him a link to the web site. When Jason asks the same question online via live chat, the agent has no easy way to access the Facebook conversation for context. As a result, Jason has to type in the same information all over again. Now imagine that Jason connects with your brand a few days later via phone. Because the Facebook Messenger, live chat, and contact center channels all operate in separate silos, he has to repeat the same information yet again or wait on hold while the agent tries to access the conversation history in separate systems. So much for a seamless customer journey...

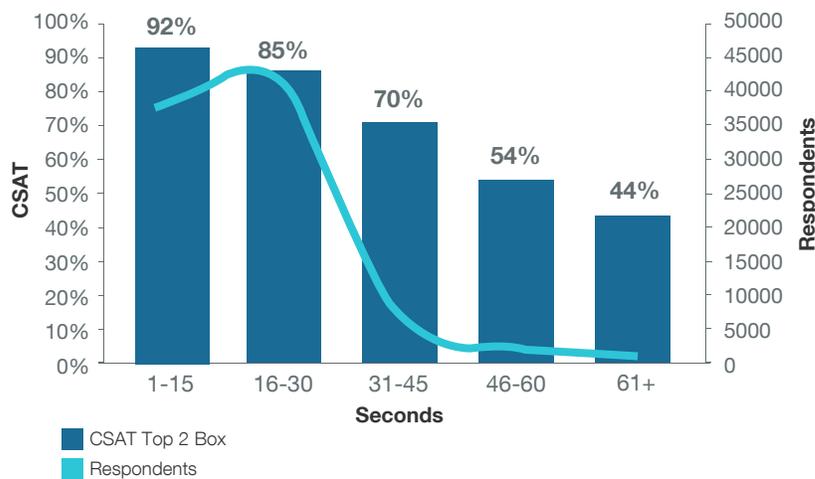
#3 Design interactions to balance cost and service across channels

Consumers typically contact your brand not because they want to, but because they have to. They need to check on a payment. They're experiencing a problem with your product or service. Or they require more information to make a purchase decision. No matter why or how they reach out, they expect fast, efficient service—every time. Making them wait even a few minutes can have a significant negative impact on customer satisfaction (CSAT) scores. Based on actual customer data, Nuance found that CSAT declines rapidly when the agent takes more than 36 seconds to respond on a mobile device or more than 30 seconds to respond on the desktop. Simply put, you snooze, you lose.

Engage customers on their terms:

- Intelligent, automated VAs and guides ensure customers find answers quickly, instead of waiting in long phone queues.
- Guided and conversational experiences effortlessly lead customers to the right results.
- Agent-assisted interactions deliver personalized, relevant information for customers on any device, anywhere they go.

Impact of average agent response time on CSAT



Whether your customers are savvy self-servers or seek one-on-one chats with personalized assistance, you need to engage them on their terms with channel-appropriate service. It all starts with designing the right engagement experience for the right channel.

Design interactions to balance cost and service

Live chat provides personalized service with a human touch, but since it's dependent on availability, it often keeps customers waiting. After all, it's not easy to staff a contact center in a way that enables live agents to respond within seconds—at least not cost-effectively. That's why more brands are opting to deploy virtual assistants (VAs) for desktop and mobile chat.

A VA is an intelligent, human-like chat agent that delivers a conversational customer service experience on your website, mobile app, text messaging application or even an IoT device. VAs not only meet the needs of consumers looking to receive an immediate answer, but they can collect all the important data up front. That way, if you need to escalate the issue to a human-assisted channel, the live agent has the historical information they need to provide fast, efficient service in context without making the customer start from scratch. And because more sophisticated VAs are even capable of having long and complex conversations, they can handle a broader range of issues for higher self-service resolution rates.

Best practice...

Consider having customers engage first with VA in your digital channels. A friendly, human-like persona will answer their request—whether it's typed into a computer, tapped on a screen or spoken into a device—and prompt them for key information. If the VA can't resolve the request, reduce online abandonment by making it easy for your customer to contact a live chat agent. From that point on, route all incoming messages related to the same live chat conversation appropriately for streamlined engagement, seamless continuity, and faster issue resolution.

#4 Leverage a single, unified omni-channel platform

As new channels create new touchpoints and new opportunities to engage, you need to be prepared to meet soaring expectations and win customer loyalty.



Of consumers want consistency across channels.



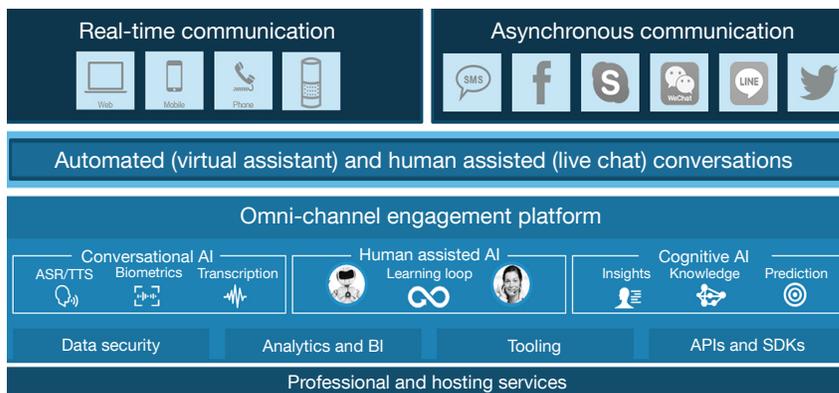
Report receiving confirming information between channels.



Call when they can't find what they need online.¹¹

Customers move between devices and channels 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—from IVR to SMS, virtual assistant to live chat—and informs agents about search behavior and previous engagements. Back-end integration with customer relationship management (CRM) systems and cross-channel conversation history can add even greater consistency and further streamline interactions.

Consider investing in an omni-channel platform that lets you create a superior automated or human-assisted experience once and deploy it on any channel—desktop and mobile browsers, inside your app, via native SMS and customer service messaging like Apple Business Chat or in third-party messaging apps. Look for platforms that support both real-time and asynchronous communication and leverage leading-edge technologies like speech, natural language understanding (NLU), conversational interfaces, and artificial intelligence (AI). These features will enable your business to deliver an intuitive omni-channel experience that drives loyalty while increasing revenue and reducing operating expenses.



One platform. Many benefits.

Realize low total cost of ownership

- Extend investments by designing an experience once and deploying it across channels.

Reduce operating costs

- Deliver efficient customer service interactions in low-cost channels for improved call deflection and optimized chats.

Increase customer satisfaction

- Enable consistent, effortless interactions with your brand in whichever channel is most convenient.

Minimize business risk

- Ensure scalability for growth while meeting enterprise-level SLAs and PCI compliance requirements.

11 SDL, [Ninety Percent of Holiday Shoppers Expect Consistent Brand Experiences Across Channels and Devices According to SDL Survey, October 23, 2014](http://www.sdl.com/about/news-media/press/2014/90-percent-of-holiday-shoppers-expect-consistent-brand-experiences-across-channels-and-devices-according-to-sdl-survey.html), found at <http://www.sdl.com/about/news-media/press/2014/90-percent-of-holiday-shoppers-expect-consistent-brand-experiences-across-channels-and-devices-according-to-sdl-survey.html>

Recap: Deliver customer service messaging that works for your customers and your brand

For your customers it's all about the experience. Follow these best-practice recommendations to seamlessly integrate messaging into an omni-channel engagement strategy that drives customer loyalty and supports your business goals.



1 Offer customer driven convenience

Meet growing demands for convenience by letting customers decide where and how to engage with your brand.

2 Deliver a consistent experience across all customer touchpoints

Allow customers to move effortlessly between channels and into the branded environment as needed.

3 Design interactions to balance cost and service across channels

Treat every incoming message in a channel-appropriate way to meet soaring expectations for fast, efficient service.

4 Leverage a single, integrated omni-channel platform

Integrate messaging channels into your omni-channel strategy and leverage a single, robust technology platform to support seamless customer experiences.

Take the next step

[Learn about innovative Nuance solutions for omni-channel customer engagement.](#)



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.
