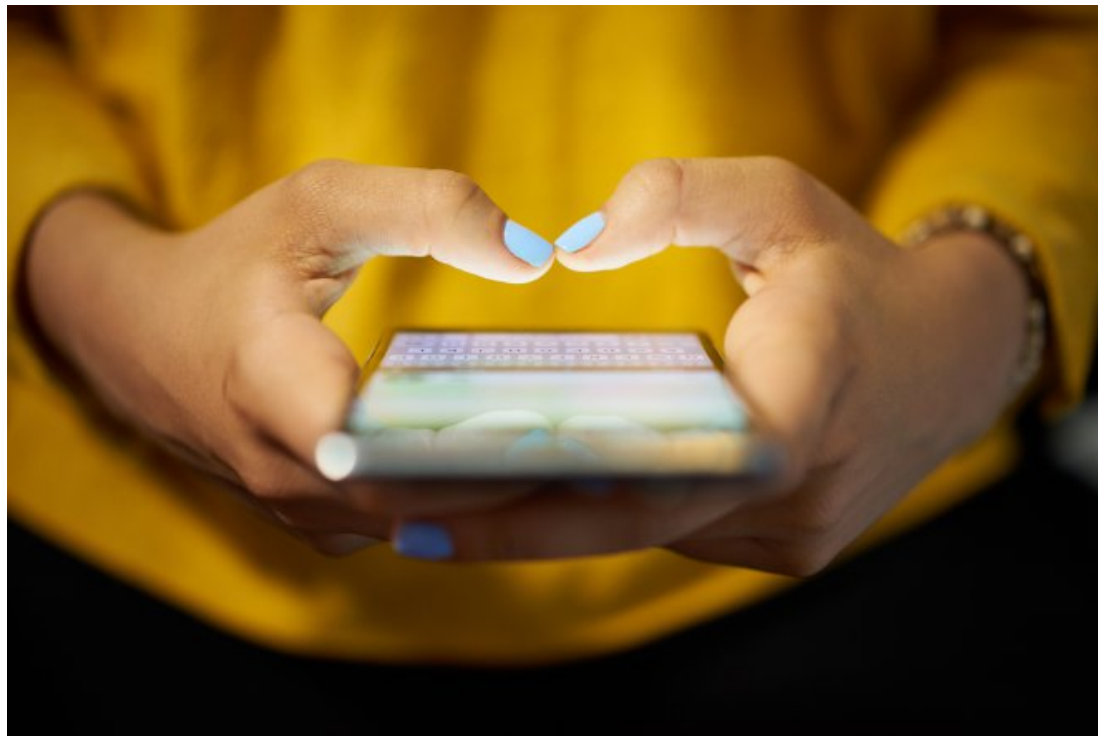# 5 Steps to Developing an Effective Global Customer Messaging Strategy

By **ALYSSA MAZZINA**

An effective strategy for global customer messaging requires understanding your business goals and the technical capabilities you have at hand, both in terms of the messaging apps you're using and the APIs you're leveraging.

The following steps can help you gain that understanding. Read on to learn how to make the best use of this new approach to communicating with customers:

1. Know How and Where Your Customers Use Messaging

Direct messaging is a global trend—Facebook Messenger alone reports being used to send over two billion messages monthly. Much of this messaging takes place between family and friends, but in recent years, messaging for customer support has increased in importance, as reported by Business Insider.

How much messaging customers use and the apps they favor will likely depend on the demographics being targeted. The most common messaging apps have different penetrations in different markets. Facebook Messenger predominates in the US, Line is popular in Asia,

and WhatsApp is used in more than 100 countries globally. Be sure to do your due diligence to understand which messaging app APIs you'll need to reach the broadest audience.

2. Identify Use Cases for Customer Messaging

The use cases for customer messaging through apps go far beyond simple marketing. Mass messages could be considered spamming, so it's wise to be cautious about contacting customers that way. Businesses should collect detailed preferences from customers before sending pure advertising messages. An alternative is to use an advertising strategy like placing ads on the messenger home screen rather than sending interruptive messages.

When messages are sent for advertising purposes, they don't have to stand alone. Because messaging apps often provide read receipts, businesses should build a process for following up to encourage action by consumers who read messages but don't respond.

In addition to marketing, messaging apps are effective for providing customer support. According to Business Insider, many consumers say messaging is their preferred support platform. Businesses can use automation to send reminder and confirmation messages. Relatively straightforward issues, including processing payments and answering delivery questions, can be handled by chatbots, as long as there's a way to escalate to a live person if the issue is too complex.

There may also be special features on a particular platform you may want to utilize, such as the popular stickers on Line.

3. Choose Technology to Support Use Cases

Once a business has identified the goals of its messaging, the technology team can look for a technical solution to make satisfying those goals easier. Businesses need to understand the capabilities and services the messaging platform supports in order to determine the feasibility of each use case, as well as the support offered by communication providers.

Not all communications vendors will support all messaging platforms. Of course, you'll want to start with a tool that supports the messaging app used by most of the business's customers. Ideally, the business should use a messaging API that supports multiple messaging platforms. This will make it easier for developers to create applications that work on multiple platforms and extend services to the global customer base.

4. Understand the Impact on Customer Support Representatives

Using messaging and chatbots won't eliminate the need for live agents to provide customer support. Indeed, it can expand the need, as chatbots enable a larger number of conversations to occur at the same time. Agents need to be able to smoothly pick up conversations and transactions from apps to avoid frustrating customers by asking for information that was already provided to them via messaging.

While the nature of messaging doesn't require an immediate response, consumers still expect fairly rapid responses to messages to customer support teams, which may also impact staffing patterns.

5. Measure the Results

Businesses should start with small experiments and measure their effectiveness to develop their mobile customer messaging strategy further. Mobile analytics are important for understanding how customers interact with your business through messaging and deciding the best way to expand those efforts. The results of the analytics can help you decide whether the next step is to build out messaging on another platform or to extend the functionality provided through the messaging app currently being used.

Messaging apps are a new channel for businesses to communicate with customers, so expect challenges and possibly some missteps as you begin implementing customer messaging on these apps. As the technology becomes more understood, however, it's sure to become a vital part of a digital transformation-driven customer messaging strategy.

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