

MOBILE

How brands are tapping Facebook Messenger to bolster customer service

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Facebook Messenger is an unexpected yet powerful medium for brands

By [Alex Samuely](#)

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A growing number of brands are teaming up with Facebook Messenger after realizing its potential as a communication channel for offering customer service and building personal relationships with mobile users.

The Businesses on Messenger platform enables marketers to bring service conversations to social media, a facet of mobile with which many consumers are familiar. Brands including Hyatt have joined forces with customer service solution Conversocial to roll out these initiatives on Messenger, which may include real-time chat and transaction receipts.

"We have launched this service today with Hyatt, which is the first of our customers to go live with Facebook Messenger for customer care," said Paul Johns, chief marketing officer of **Conversocial**, New York. "Now that our Facebook Messenger service is available we fully anticipate most of our customers will begin to adopt."

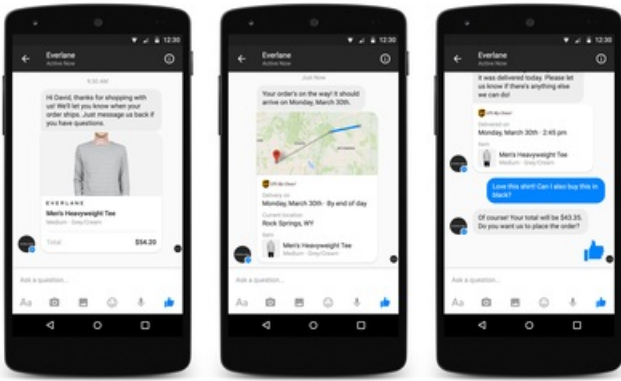
"Social is moving - from being about public displays of dissatisfaction to being a convenient mobile channel with a focus on service resolution."

Promoting social care

Conversocial has recently integrated a real-time chat experience into the Messenger app, a service that allows brands and their customers to have two-way talks regarding issues or inquiries. As the popularity of Facebook's standalone app enjoyed a 40 percent growth spurt from 2014 to 2015, brands can certainly find a large portion of their audience on this channel.

More than 700 million people currently use Messenger each month.

Businesses must now consider Facebook as a primary customer service channel, due to the staggering amount of users it boasts. It can also help streamline requests for employees, especially if most of the customer traffic gets directed to social media.



Clothing marketer Everlane communicates with customers via Businesses on Messenger

However, marketers must commit to using social media, and consequently train all associates to be ready to respond to any requests that come in. There are also several best practices to leveraging the Businesses on Messenger platform of which brands should be aware.

"Make sure you are publicizing that social customer care is available," Mr. Johns said. "Make it clear on your Web site, Facebook page, etc.

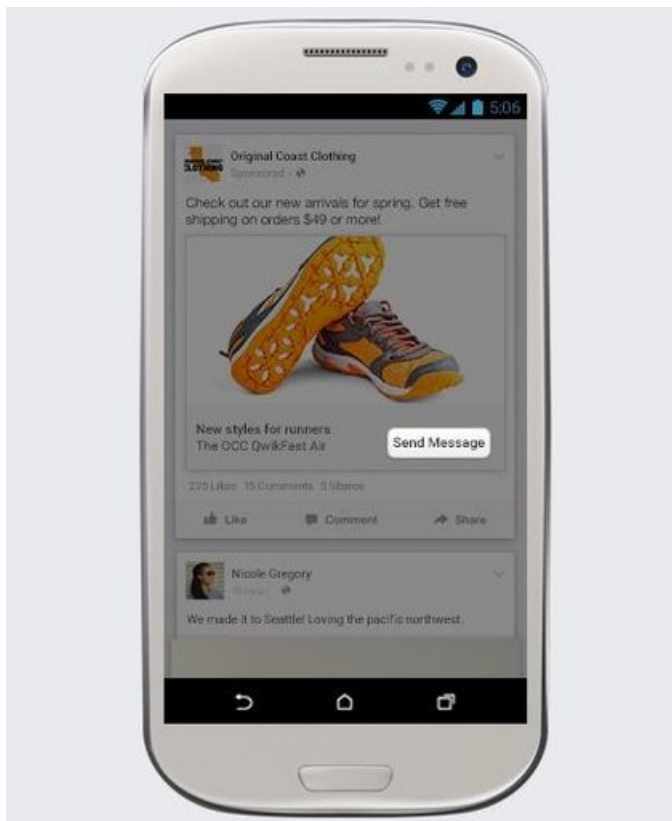
"Have a focus on near-immediate acknowledgment of the inbound message," he said. "Focus on resolving whatever issues you can in the channel - do not divert customers to another channel.

"Do not be tempted to script or auto-bot the dialogue. Keep the conversations as human as possible. This is an opportunity for brands to have real conversations."

Hyatt's customer-first approach

Hospitality marketer Hyatt implemented the Conversocial solution into its global control room efforts this past summer. This enables several customer contact centers to respond to guests' inquiries and maximize their positive travel experiences via Facebook.

As more hotel brands roll out mobile concierge platforms, consumers increasingly expect to interact with them for all requests via their smartphones, making this an ideal move for Hyatt.



Consumers will appreciate the convenience of instant messaging a brand

Facebook has recently updated its Pages feature to aid businesses in bolstering their mobile presence and sales via more prominent call-to-action buttons, improved layout and new sections for showcasing relevant information to users ([see story](#)). If the Businesses in Messenger platform integrates with this layout, the social network may see an influx of brand-consumer interaction in the near future.

"What I can say is that 'in the moment' service is a critical component of the Hyatt guest experience," Mr. Johns said. "It allows guests to have a positive experience as they are engaging with Hyatt on mobile and throughout their customer journey.

"Hyatt is leading the way here, offering service and embracing channels such as Facebook Messenger as well as other social channels such as Instagram with geotagging. My sense is that Hyatt sees the value in their guests very much being an extension of its brand and a clear way to differentiate from other hotel businesses."

Final Take

Alex Samuely, staff writer on Mobile Marketer, New York

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