An introduction to the WhatsApp Business API

Connect with customers over the world's most popular messaging app

What's in the guide?

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What is the WhatsApp Business API?

WhatsApp is one of the most prominent messaging apps today. It has embedded itself into the daily lives of its audience that, on average, checks the channel more than 23 times a day. The channel is complimented by the WhatsApp for Business app, dedicated for small and medium businesses operating on their mobile devices. For enterprises though, the game changer is the WhatsApp Business API, launched in early 2019, that is designed for businesses with high volume, and high value conversations.

Enterprises can use the WhatsApp Business API to reach over 2.5 billion WhatsApp users across 180 countries through verified business accounts.

For any enterprise that wants to improve its customer communications, the WhatsApp Business API is a must-have and can be the CX differentiator.

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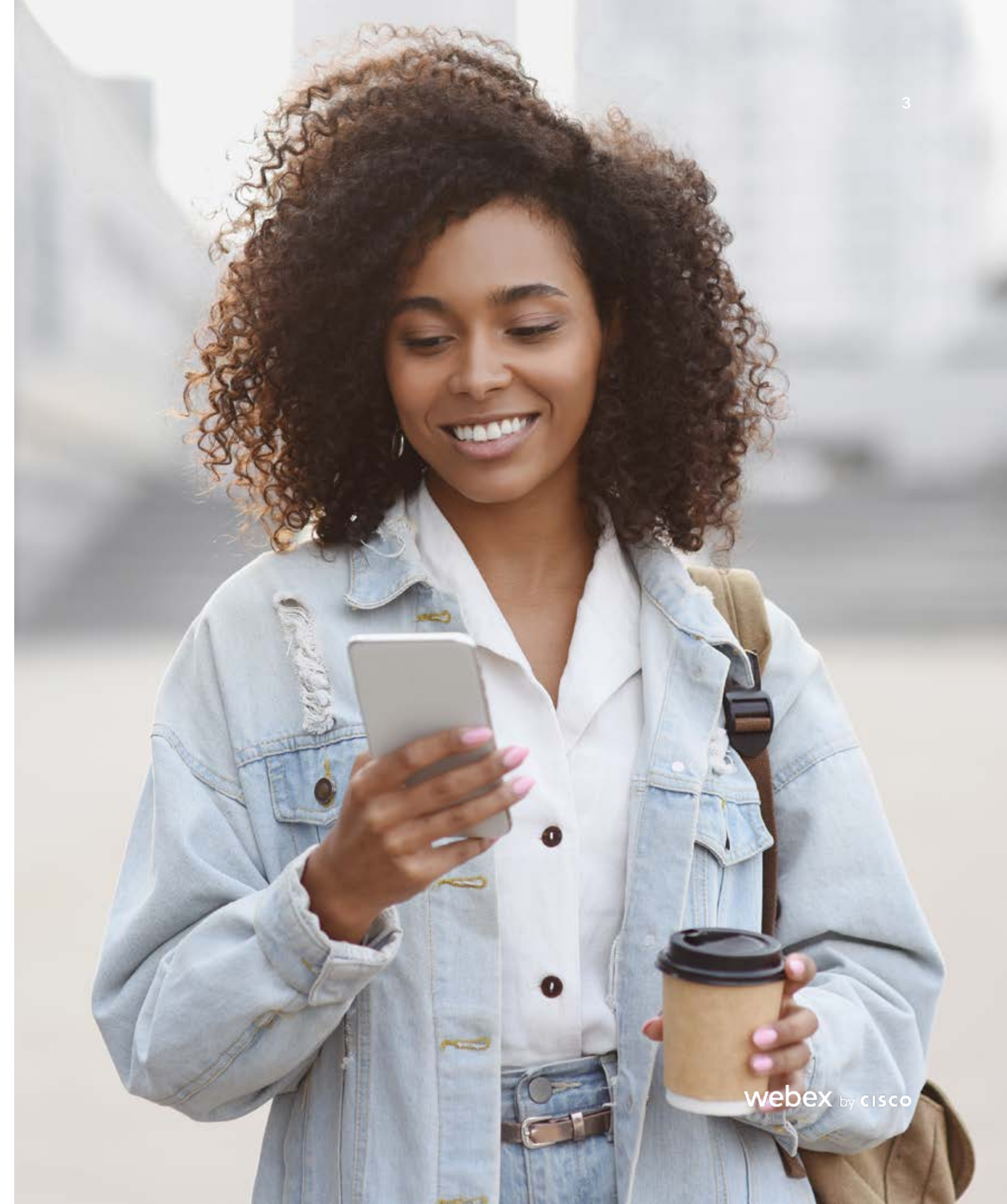
How can the WhatsApp Business API be used?

From promotion through to customer service, the WhatsApp Business API can now be used by enterprises to drive conversations with their (opted-in) customer base across the entire customer journey.

Whether starting a conversation from a digital ad, reaching out with the latest offer, or answering a customer inquiry, WhatsApp is the go-to channel to provide customers with a seamless end-to-end experience.

WhatsApp provides customers with a seamless end-to-end experience

High-value transactional notifications

Customer support

Non-promotional content

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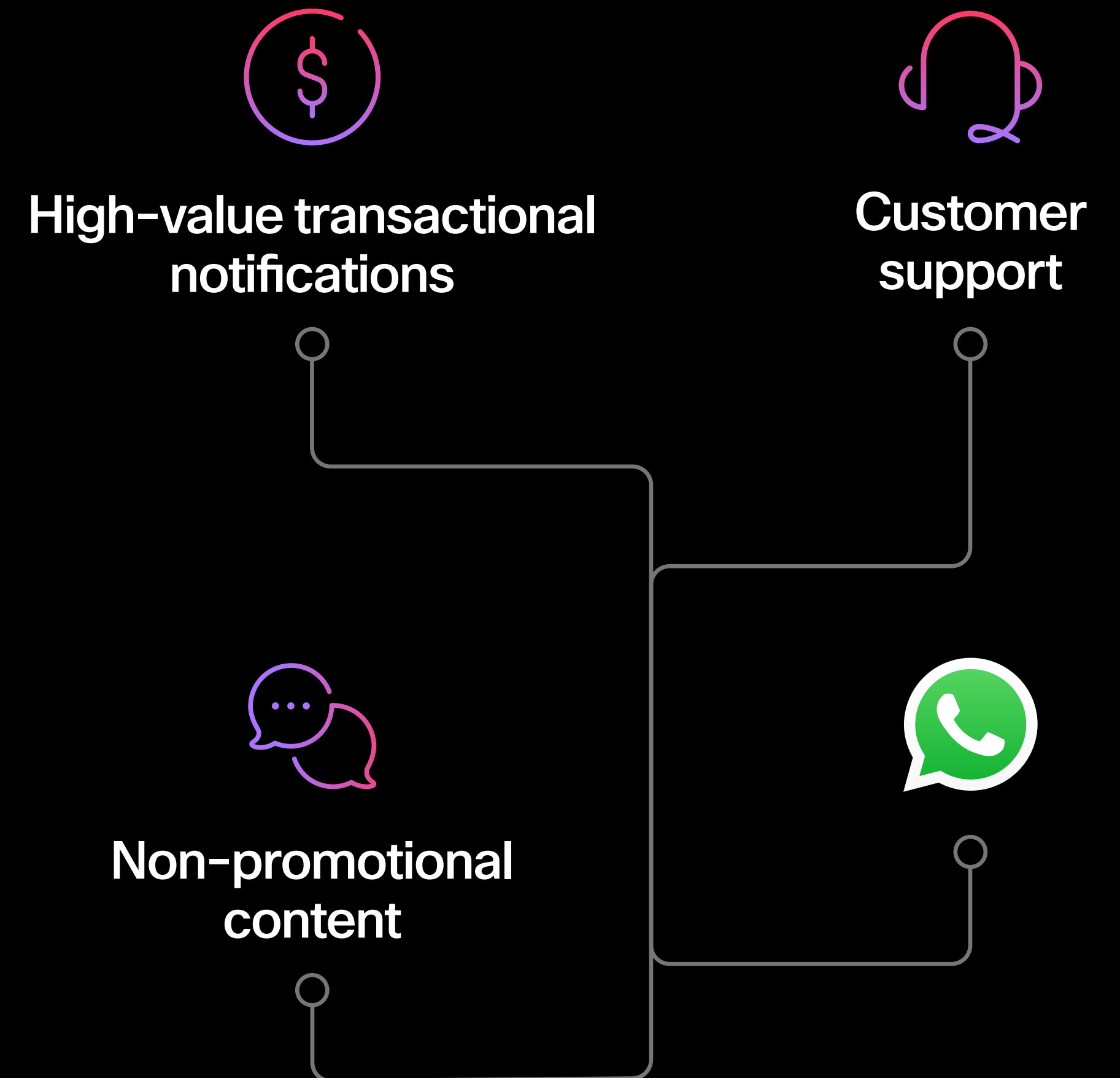
How does it add value to the business?

Today's smartphone customer wants messaging-based experiences, convenience, and instant service. These expectations are causing customer engagement and service strategies to be repositioned on digital messaging channels.

Enterprises today are increasingly messaging-first. They are using two-way messaging across multiple channels to provide support and create conversational experiences that differentiate the brand.

The WhatsApp Business API is an opportunity for enterprises to join one of the channels closest to their customers, using WhatsApp to create interactions and services that build relationships, strengthen loyalty, and offer an anytime, anywhere service.

Sudarshan Dharmapuri, VP Products, Webex CPaaS Solutions, says, "The WhatsApp Business API offers so many possibilities to deliver intelligent two-way solutions that improve CX and deliver tangible results for the business.

It can be used to enable customer self-service, deliver proactive real-time updates, and create conversational interactions. It is a must-have communication channel."

23x
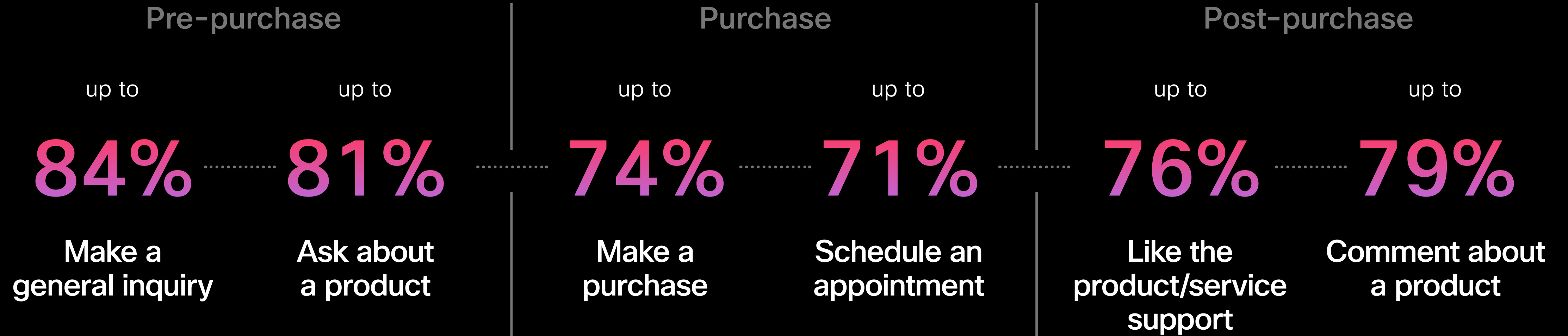The number of times the average user checks WhatsApp per day

195 minutes
The minutes the average user spends on WhatsApp every week

115.9 sessions
The average number of sessions per month per user

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Customers want messaging-based interactions

Pre-purchase		Purchase		Post-purchase	
up to	up to	up to	up to	up to	up to
84%	**81%**	**74%**	**71%**	**76%**	**79%**
Make a general inquiry	**Ask about a product**	**Make a purchase**	**Schedule an appointment**	**Like the product/service support**	**Comment about a product**

Source: "Motivations, Mindsets and Emotional Experiences in Messaging (vs. Feed)" by Sentient Decision Science (Facebook-commissioned survey of 8,156 people in BR, GB, IN and the US), June 2018.
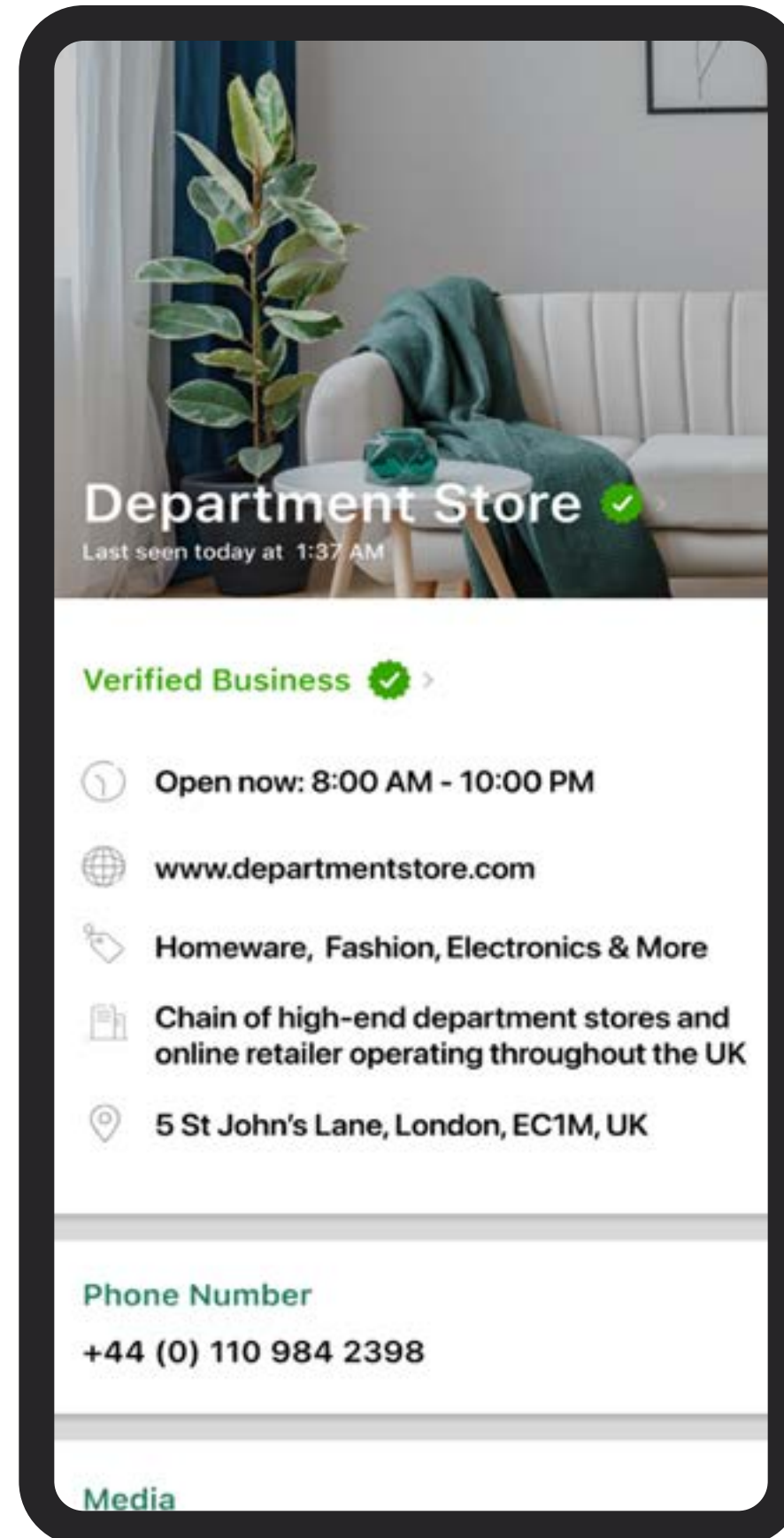
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Key features

Verified business profiles

The WhatsApp Business API enables enterprises to build a recognizable and trustworthy profile with a green checkmark badge that confirms brand authenticity.

The profile also lists key contact information like business name, address, and other information for customer reference.
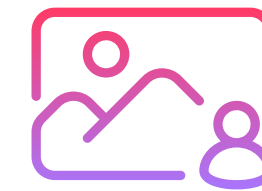

Rich media messaging

One of the best WhatsApp Business API features is rich media capabilities that allow businesses and consumers to exchange media, choose from a list of products, reply instantly with a few taps, and make payments.

From sharing travel itineraries to making end-to-end purchases, WhatsApp's rich messaging features allow consumers to have a complete journey from within the channel.
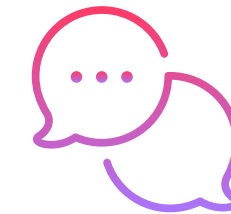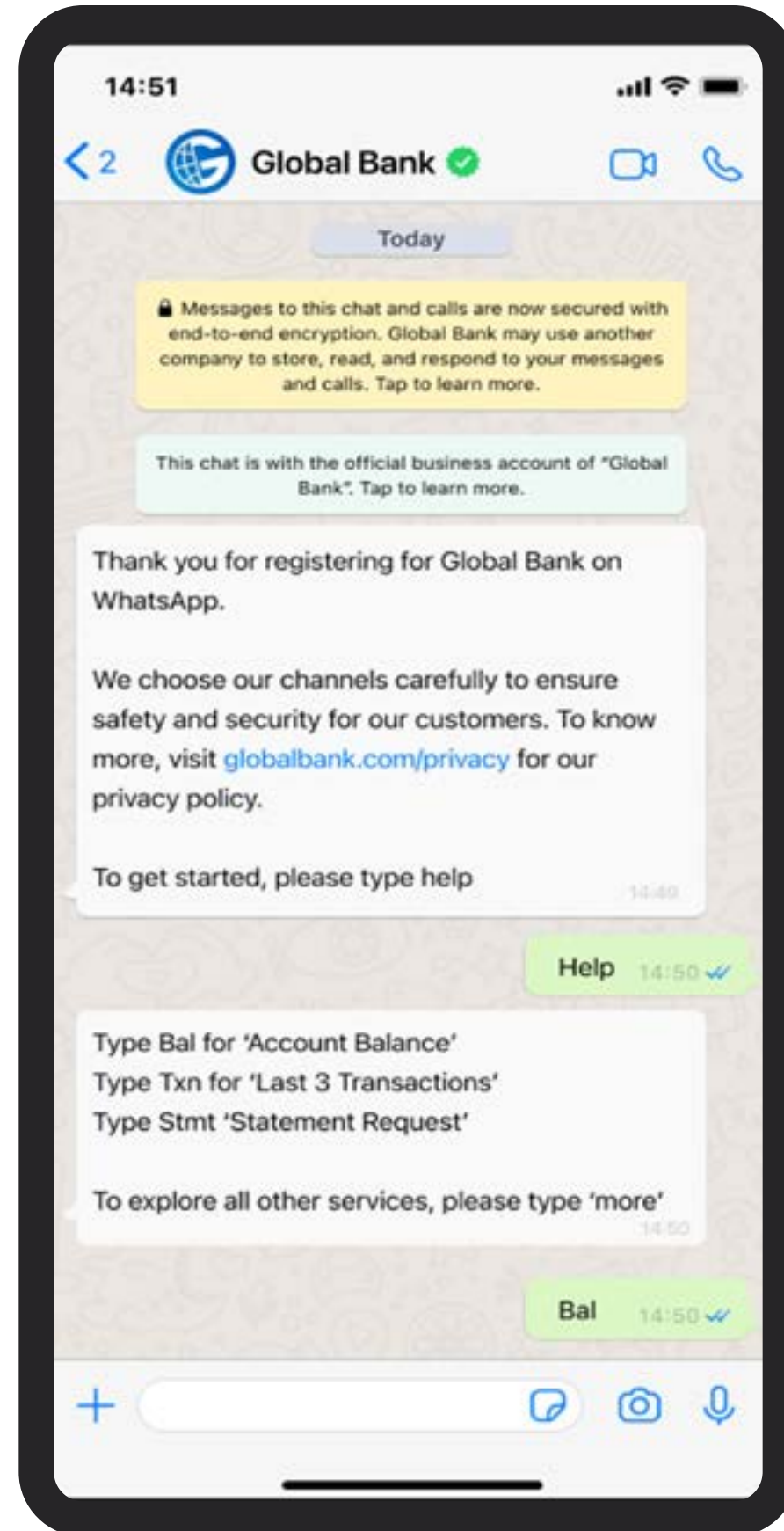
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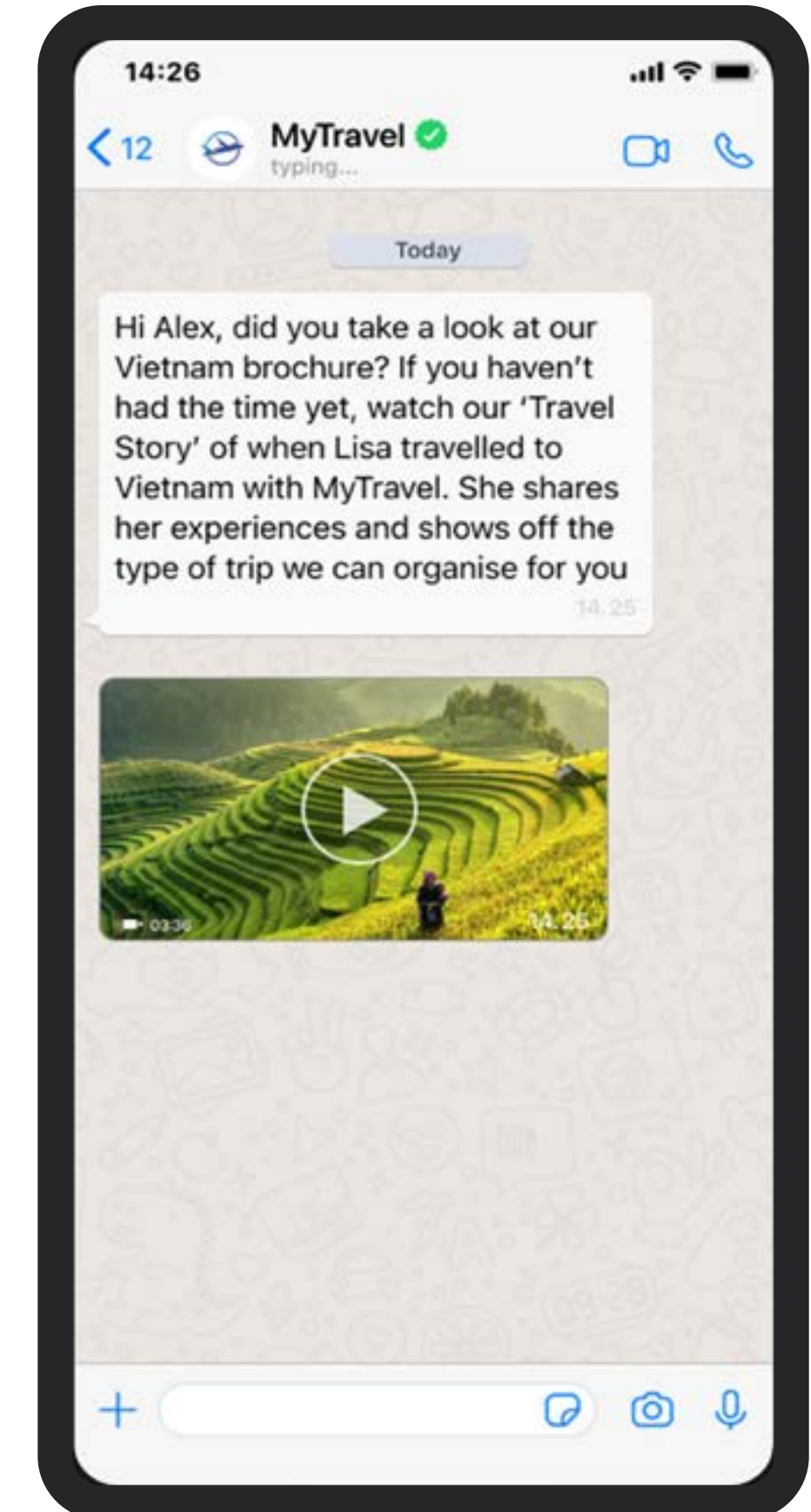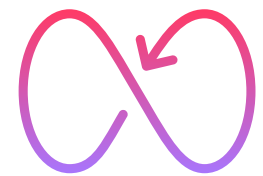
Key features

End-to-end ecryption

WhatsApp ensures the end-to-end encryption of all messages, meaning that all interactions with customers are completely secure and private.

Amidst rising security attacks and data leak threats, this feature is a significant value-add for customers.

Delivery and read receipts

Through the WhatsApp Business API, enterprises can track if the customer has received and read messages.

This opens up the possibility for intelligent fallback. WhatsApp can be used in combination with other channels to improve customer contact rates for critical communications such as healthcare appointments or flight delays.

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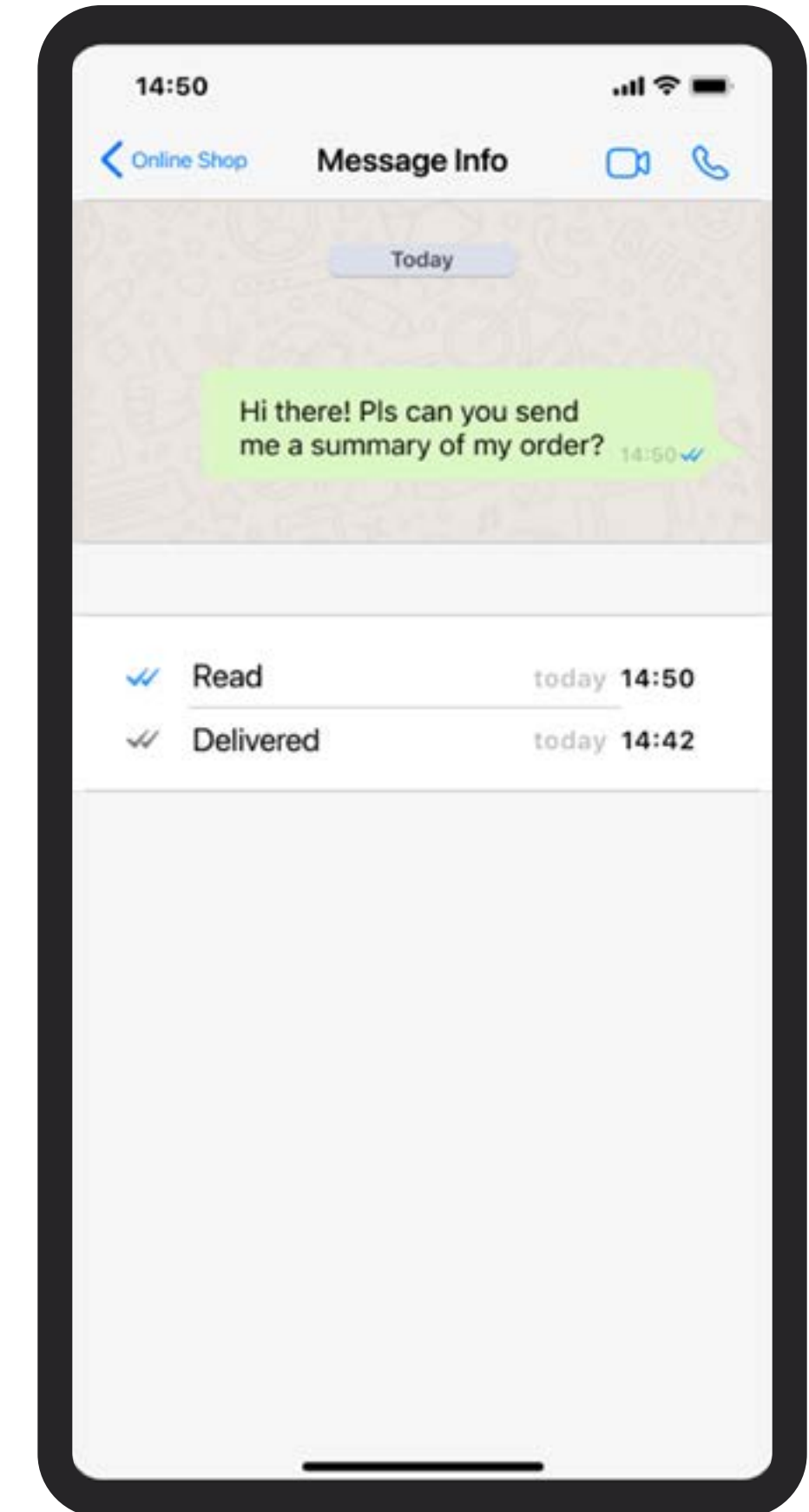
Gaining customer opt-in

A customer must consent to receive messages through WhatsApp before an enterprise can start messaging.

Customer opt-in must meet the following two guidelines:

The opt-in must be triggered by a user

Customer opt-in is a pre-requisite for businesses to interact with customers. Businesses can obtain this by offering customers a QR code to scan or a contact us option on the website. Other simple ways can be to click a check box or a button, or just by letting the customer know the contact number to reach out on.

Clear messaging

Businesses need to ensure that their customers know what type of messaging they are signing up to and that everything they are going to receive from the business is **relevant, expected, and timely.**

A customer must consent to receive messages through WhatsApp before an enterprise can start messaging.

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Customer initiated entry points

To promote and drive usage of the channel, enterprises can make it easy for customers to initiate a conversation.

There is a wide range of desktop and smartphone capabilities that can be integrated into different entry points to enable customers to begin interacting over WhatsApp.

Advertizing WhatsApp availability

· Check box at registration

· Scanning a QR code

· Send a text or give a missed call to a WhatsApp number

· Sign up to receive notifications over WhatsApp

· Launch WhatsApp with a button click

· Launch WhatsApp with a link click

· Click to WhatsApp from a Facebook ad
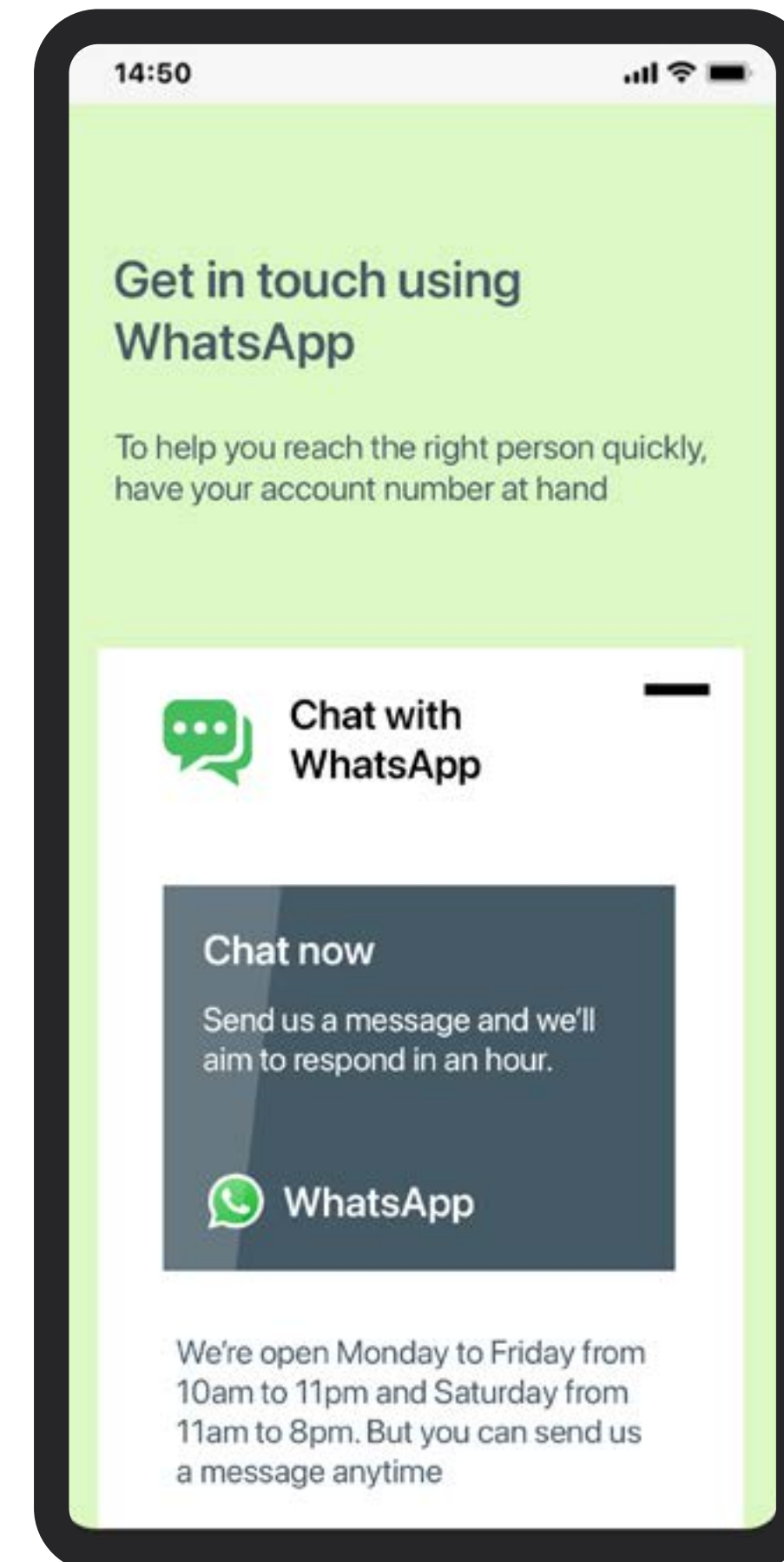
Entry points

· Email

· Online and mobile web

· IVR deflection

· Print

· QR code

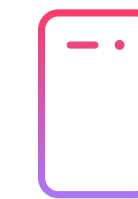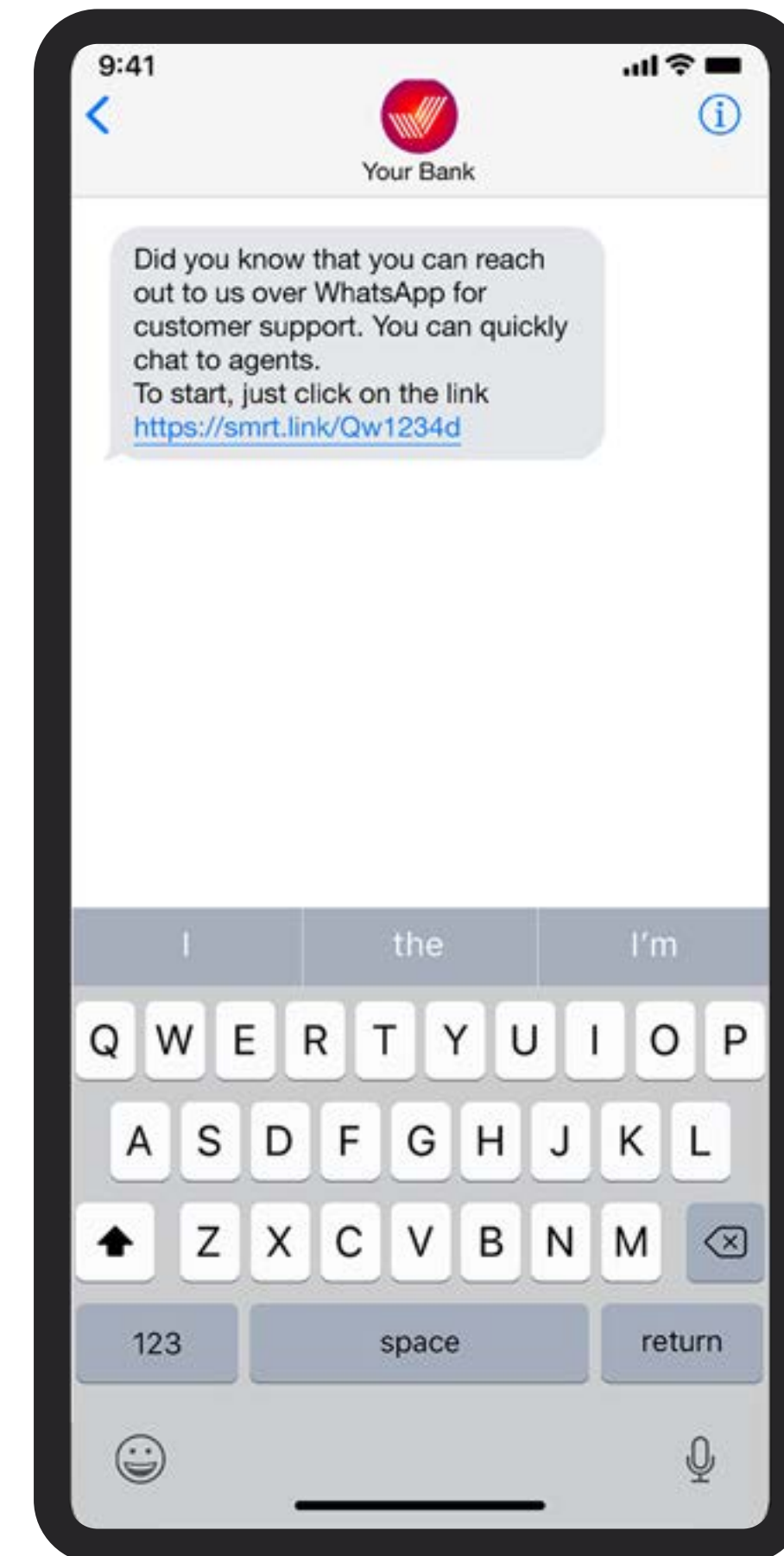webex by cisco

Driving conversations

Enterprises can place prominent opt-ins
at multiple customer touchpoints to drive
discovery and start a conversation:

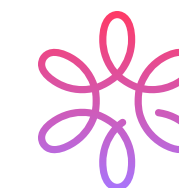**During the online
transaction process**

**Customer onboarding
when setting up user
profile and preferences**

**Via email, SMS,
or within a mobile app**

**Via lead ads that
allow opt-in**

Business initiated conversations using templates

Templates are essential for enterprises looking to proactively initiate a conversation with their customers, particularly to deliver important, timely messages during the customer journey. These conversations are based on defined messaging templates that are approved by WhatsApp and can include dynamic parameters to personalize the interaction.

Before deployment, the messages must be pre-approved by WhatsApp. This process has a typical SLA of 48 hours or less. The templates, of course, support rich media content and all Unicode characters, including emojis.

Businesses using the WhatsApp Business API to send alerts, promotions, and notifications have seen an increase in:
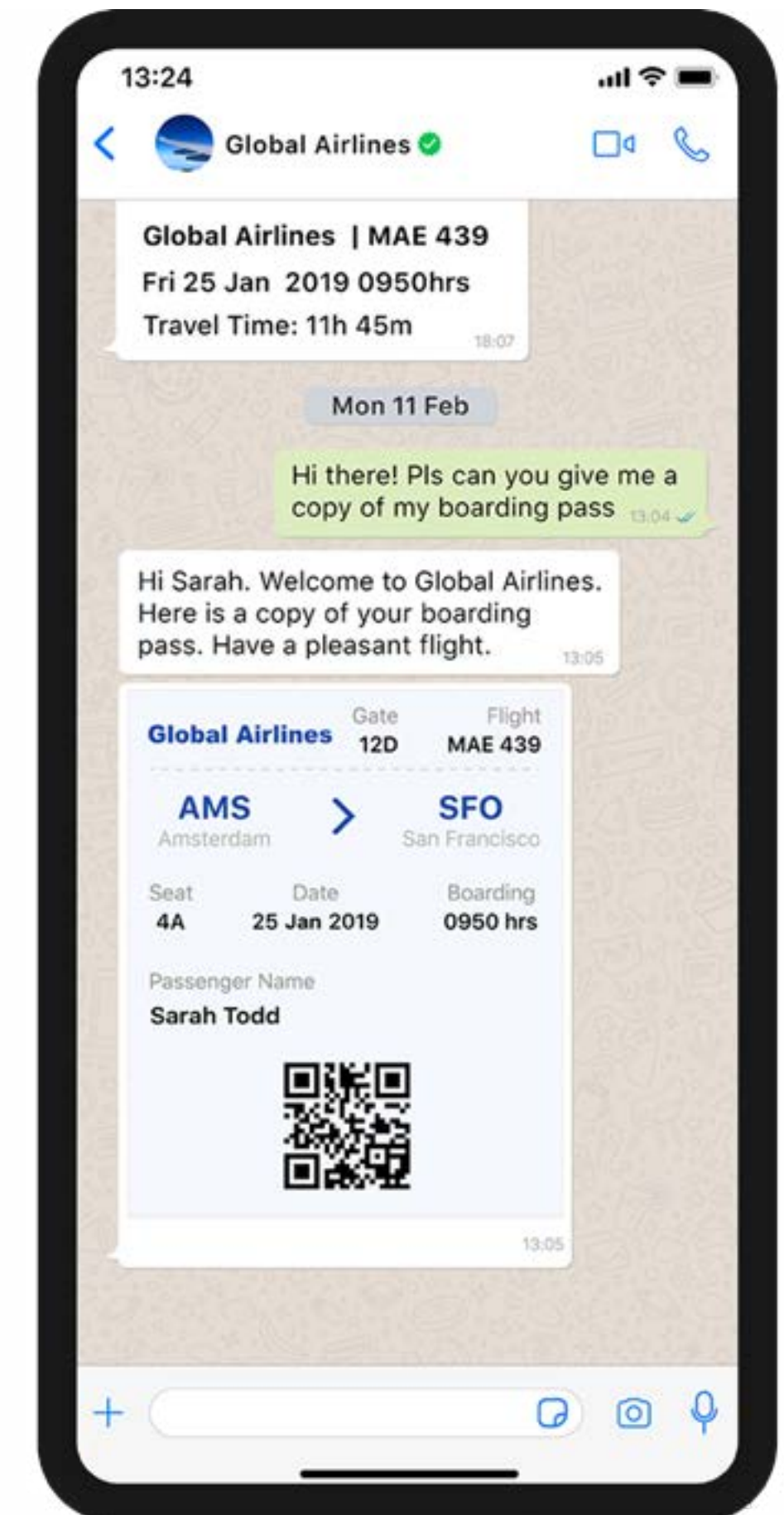
Delivery, open and conversion rates

Opt-in rates and purchases

Customer retention rates

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Template categories

Account update
Notify the customer of a change to their account settings

Payment update
Alert the customer of a payment update for an existing transaction

Personal finance update
Securely confirm a customer's banking and other financial activity

Shipping update
Notify the customer of a change in shipping status

Reservation update
Update the customer about an existing reservation

Confirm an appointment
Notify the customer of a change to an appointment

Transportation update
Notify a customer of an update to an existing transport reservation

Ticket update
Send the customer an update or reminder about a future event

### Issue resolution
Update the customer about a support issue

Alert
Notify a customer of something informational

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Promotional messaging

WhatsApp's updated policies now allow for outbound messaging. This means that businesses can send a wider range of communications like proactive notifications and promotional content to opted-in customers. The communications, however, must be expected, timely, and relevant to the customers.

Non-transactional messages that include product recommendations, informational alerts, relevant offers, or newsletters are also part of the communications that businesses can send. While the opt-in continues to be a pre-requisite, the ability for businesses to initiate and proactively share promotional content can prove to be game-changer and positively impact CX.

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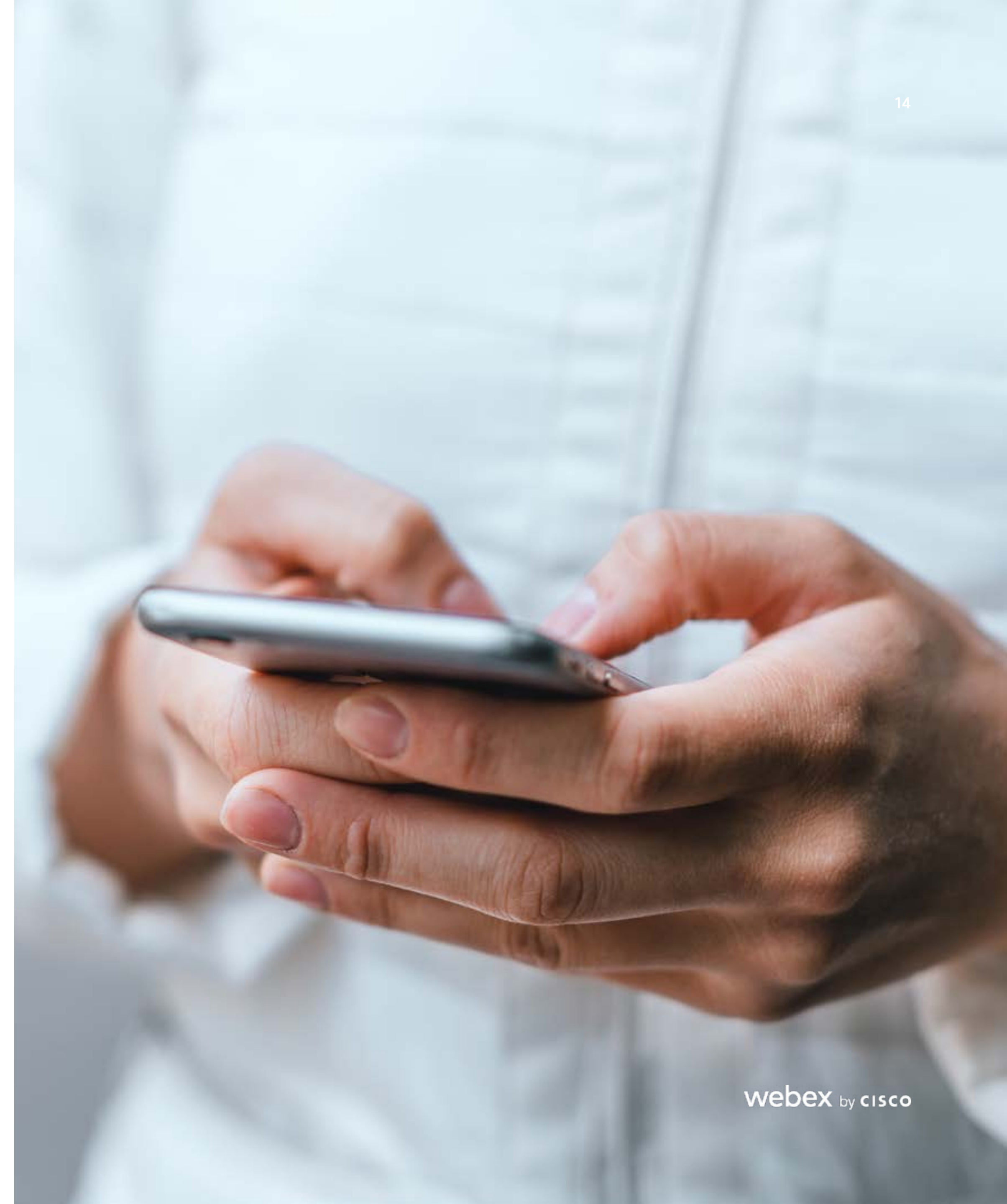
Customer initiated conversations

Customers have to initiate the conversation first. Once customers reach out, businesses have the flexibility to respond in free-form text to answer their queries. This response does not need WhatsApp's approval as a template message does. However, businesses can choose a template message if that is best suited to address the customer query.

There is no restriction on automated conversations. This includes rule-based, NLP, and hybrid chatbot interactions.

Rich media content can be used to improve the experience for the customer, with Session Messages supporting audio, video, images, files and location sharing. Session Messages can be sent within 24 hours of the last message from a customer to a verified business account.

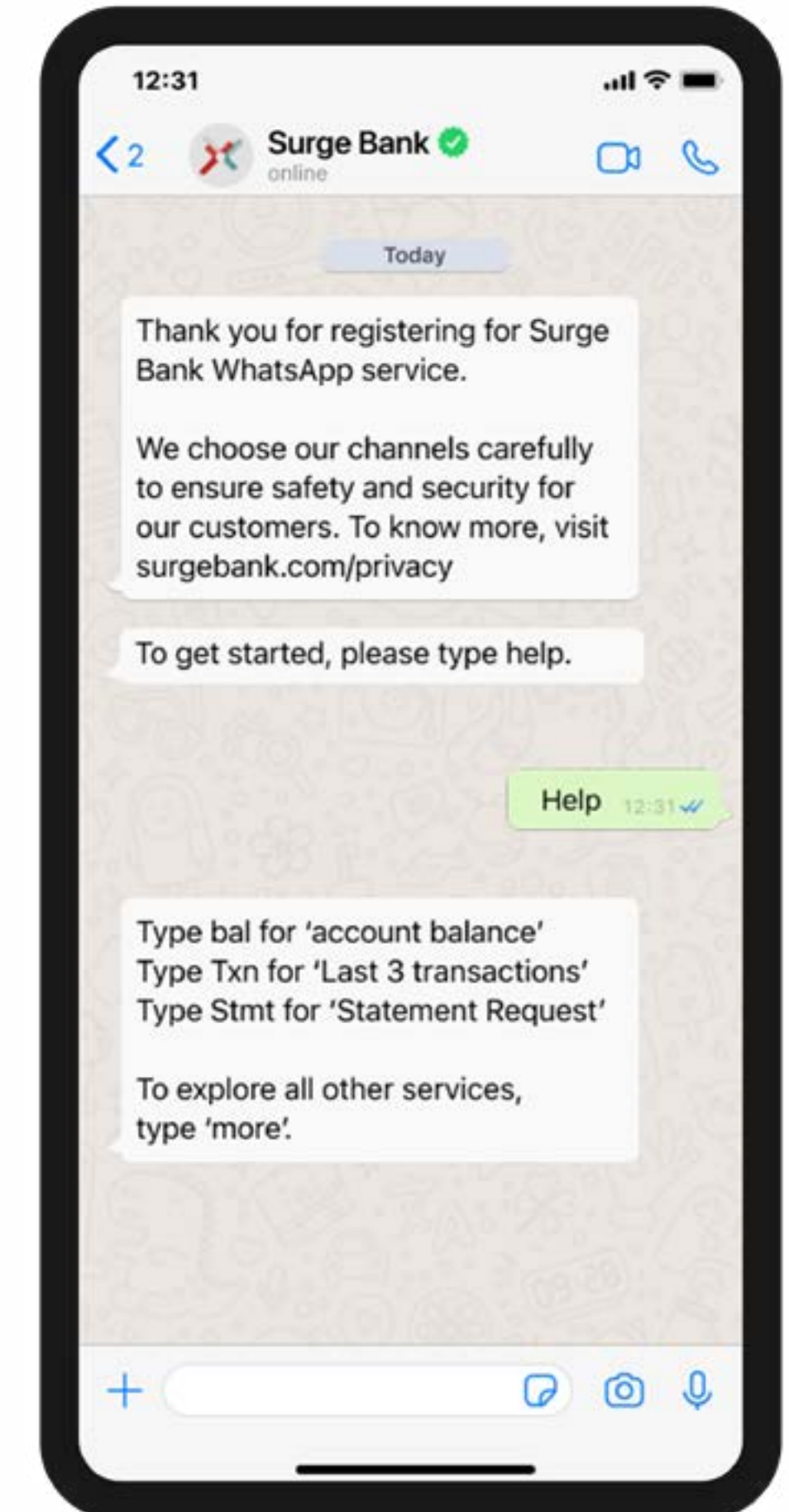Using the WhatsApp Business API to send Session Messages helps enterprises to:

Increase customer service efficiency

Increase customer engagment and satisfaction

Decrease operational spend

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Contact center agent chat

While the WhatsApp Business API can be used to deliver automated notifications and conversation flows, it can also be used to enable customers to chat with contact center agents in real-time.

The handover to an agent is a must-have in case an automated conversation fails to achieve its purpose due to an unforeseen input by a customer or if a high priority query is identified.

Businesses that have used the WhatsApp Business API to enable customers to message agents have seen:
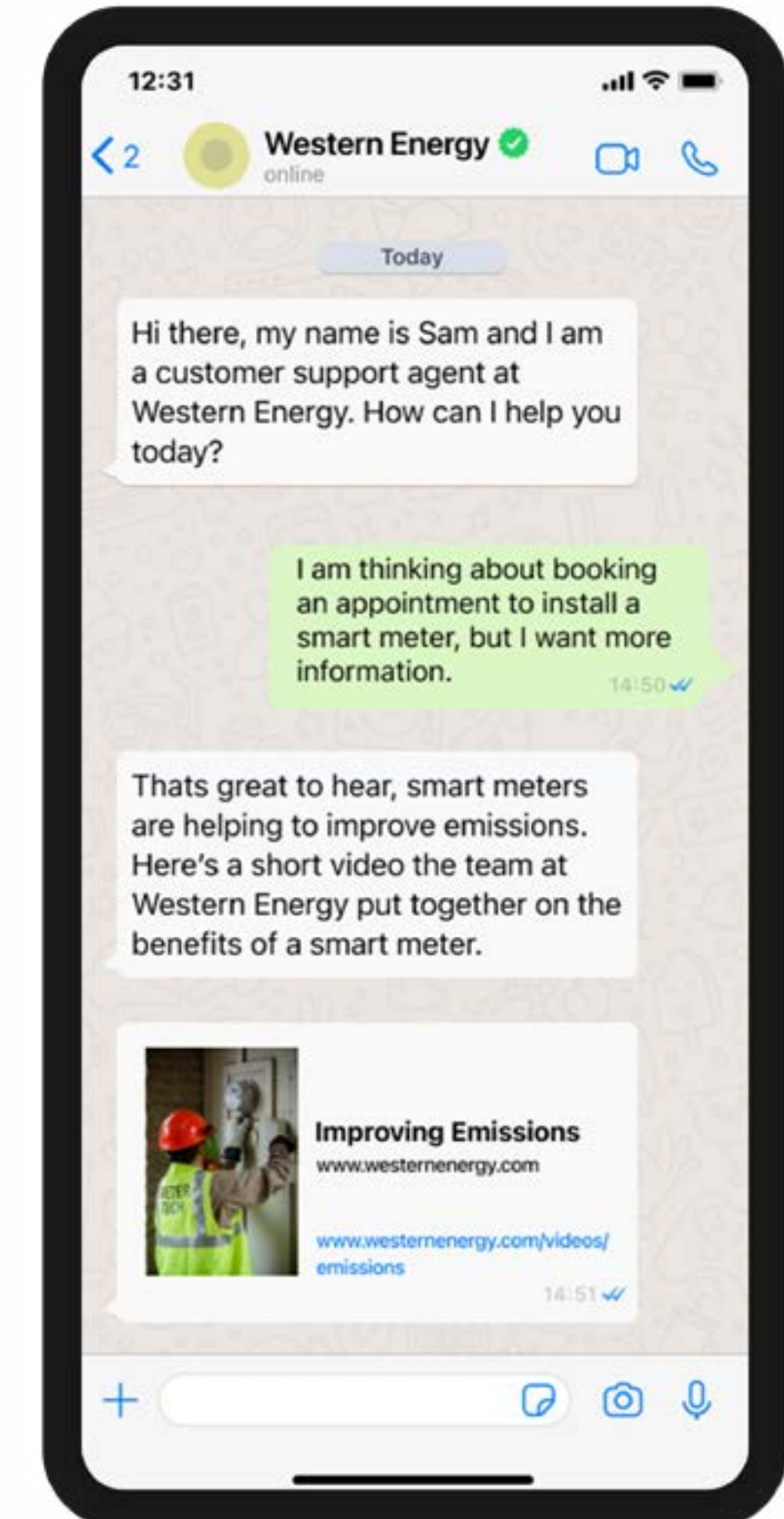
Reduced contact center costs

Increased customer satisfaction

Increased customer service efficiency

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Conversational pricing

Businesses using the WhatsApp Business API are charged per conversation which includes all messages delivered in a 24-hour session. Rates vary depending on whether a conversation is user or business-initiated and determined based on the country or region a business operates in.

Businesses are allowed 1,000 free messages every month which can be business or user-generated. Additionally, customer-initiated messages originating from call-to-action buttons within a WhatsApp ad or from a Facebook page, are free of charge for 24 hours.

"The conversational pricing model allows businesses to reach out and build a bond with their customers."

David Creasey-Benjamin,
Future Messaging Evangelist, Webex CPaaS Solutions

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Common use cases

WhatsApp Business API can be the perfect channel for various use cases, across industries.

We look at three examples where WhatsApp Business API can add value and enhance customer experience.
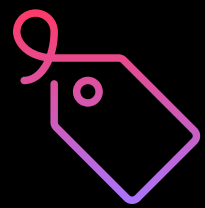
**Retail:
Abandoned basket reminders**

Encourage customers to complete their purchasing journey. Send visuals of abandoned cart items that link directly to their basket to complete the process. Follow up with gentle reminders and allow them to respond instantly using quick reply buttons.
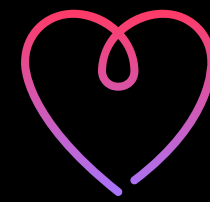
**Healthcare:
Prescription refill reminders**

Inform customers proactively when their prescribed medication is due for refill. Use quick replies and list menus to confirm what they need. Personalize their experience by offering delivery services or instant payments within the channel.

**Utilities:
Appointment management**

Manage engineer appointments from end-to-end. Send reminders ahead of the appointment time. Allow customers to modify or reschedule appointments and chat with a service agent in just a few taps.

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Take the next step

Textlocal - Webex CPaaS Solutions is a verified partner of WhatsApp.

We can help you to quickly and easily integrate WhatsApp into your communication strategy. Proactive alerts and notifications, AI-enabled customer self-service, context-aware messaging, and real-time agent chat, are just some of the solutions we offer.

Speak to our **Future Messaging experts** today to know how to get started.

Request a demo!

Try WhatsApp first-hand.
WhatsApp "**Hi**" to **+91-40-30858603**

Explore more WhatsApp Business API use cases and see how to get started here.
Contact us today at: whatsapp@textlocal.in

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