

More Nigerian customers engage and transact with brands online

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Fast-changing global economic conditions, a new post-pandemic reality, and a fast-growing, increasingly technology-savvy young population have presented Nigeria with challenging times, making it increasingly difficult for brands to maintain and attract new business.



Source © Premium Times [Premium Times](#) The number of Nigerian customers choosing to engage and transact with brands online is increasing

Simultaneously, brands in the West African country are finding that competition is increasing, which demands better and more creative differentiation than just better pricing to maintain a competitive edge.

In addition consumer behaviour is also changing drastically, with an increase in the number of Nigerian customers choosing to engage and transact with brands online.

The country's internet penetration rate stood at 55.4% of the total population at the start of 2023, with 122.5 million internet users recorded in January 2023.

Further to this, a total of 193.9 million cellular mobile connections were active in early 2023, equivalent to 87.7% of the total population.

Consequently, this has prompted Nigerian brands to explore more universal engagement routes to connect with their customers and interact via conversational messaging.

To successfully engage with customers in the digital space, brands are increasingly making the shift towards hyper-personalisation, automation, and 24/7 availability, allowing their promotional campaigns and messaging to be directly targeted at individual customers.

Deriving more value

Brands in Nigeria are thus beginning to realise that customers do not fit into boxes but are individuals who need to be analysed to derive most value from customer engagements.

At the same time, it is also becoming clear that traditional SMS messaging is inadequate where achieving this level of engagement is concerned.

While SMS has played a critical role in business communication, the new realities around customer behaviour and expectations mean that traditional SMS messaging – which provides one-way engagement – has certain limitations.

These include gateways, DND (Do Not Disturb) and firewalls that often prevent promotional messages from reaching the target end customer, which may result in relatively low SMS open and read rates.



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Rich Communication Services

Conversational messaging, in the form of Rich Communication Services (RCS), can address many of these challenges.

RCS enables businesses and brands to communicate more effectively while reaching out, attracting and converting potential customers. RCS is an evolution of SMS, which integrates features from various chat apps into one platform.

The platform allows the exchange of group chats, PDFs, video, audio and high-resolution images as well as read receipts and real-time viewing, providing more value than traditional SMS.

One of its key benefits is that RCS sits on top of the SMS platform, which means it has the same reach and is thus also native on most smartphones.



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Better metrics

RCS allows for conversational engagement with customers who can be interacted with as a group or directly on a one-on-one basis, similar to apps such as WhatsApp.

A clear benefit for businesses is that RCS provides deeper metrics on whether a message has been delivered, opened and

clicked, delivering better analytics for businesses to gauge how successful a promotional campaign has been.

The use cases for RCS are varied and a number of banks, retailers and hospitality businesses have started using it to send promotional and transaction messages to customers.

For example, banks can send payment notifications as full colour, branded, PDF documents that can serve as payment receipts.

Some restaurants already use the card carousel feature to send their menus to customers to browse through the different pages and click on their desired options, without having to use the restaurant's website or mobile app.

Other use cases include the ability to send messages with a location pin from Google Maps, movie previews or QR codes that enable mobile payments by directing users to mobile payment platforms.

Conversational message provides a customer experience that not only focuses on problem-solving, but aims to build long-term relationships with customers, leading to greater customer loyalty, improved brand image and ultimately more revenue.

By being conversational, businesses can deliver the best customer experience possible with advanced technology and readily meet changing consumer demands.

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