Marketers Remain Confused About New Messaging Tools

Less than half feel they know how to use these tools to engage with customers

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Brands have long had digital communications channels to interact with customers, such as email. But the recent emergence of chatbots and messaging apps has provided them with even newer tools, replete with their own benefits and drawbacks.

Recent research from LiveWorld reveals that brands remain somewhat puzzled about the best way to use two-way conversation tools other than email. In fact, 48% of brand marketers surveyed by the firm in April 2017 felt that social media, chatbots and messaging apps were solid tools to engage with customers, deliver personalized messages and start individual conversations.

Or, in other words, more than half of marketers don't feel that way.

Marketers have so far used messaging apps, in particular, for customer service—55% of respondents said so. Fewer respondents (43%) used them for marketing purposes, and even fewer (27%) did so to put a shine on the customer experience.

Objectives for Which Messaging Apps Are Used at Their Company According to US* Brand Marketers, April 2017

% of respondents

Customer service	55%
Marketing	43%
Customer experience	27%
Sales	14%
Other	15%
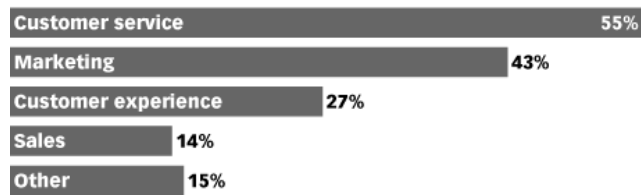
Note: *primarily US-based
Source: LiveWorld, "Messaging Apps and Chatbots for Brand Marketing" conducted by Brand Innovators, Nov 7, 2017

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Meanwhile, just 14% of marketers had used messaging apps for sales, an interesting outcome given how successful email has been in helping to drive conversions.

LiveWorld also found that Facebook Messenger ranked highest among marketers it polled, while China's favorite messaging platform, WeChat, was a distant second place.

For many marketers, messaging apps don't provide a clear enough utility to warrant an investment. Some 58% of respondents said messaging apps simply weren't a priority for their organization. But a lack of in-house expertise in using them was also named as an inhibitor by a majority of those polled.