WhosOn™

Track - Chat - Engage

LETS CHAT ABOUT IT

A guide to successfully using Live Chat in your organisation

LETS CHAT ABOUT IT

Live chat can be added to every page on your web site allowing the customer to contact your agents in just one click.

Lets chat about it

With more and more customers switching online and using various devices to do so, it's no coincidence that yesterday's call centres are becoming all-encompassing contact centres which offer multiple channels in which to communicate. Email to social media, live chat to blogs – speaking to customers no longer takes place just on the phone. Live chat is just one area that has grown significantly in the last few years. Indeed many businesses are now reporting that it's the online communication channel of choice – second only to traditional telephone calls. There's no doubt that live chat has become a key communication tool, allowing businesses to offer the same sales and customer service online as they would in face to face situations. The analogy of 'taking the high street experience online' is not too much of a reach.

Since the first chat solutions hit the market around 10 years ago, live chat has been seen as a cost cutting method for call centres, allowing agents to reduce time spent on a single customer and to respond to multiple callers simultaneously.

As a result it was always cheaper to drive a customer to a chat window rather than a call – on average around 55% cheaper. However, as live chat software has advanced so has its true value to businesses. From offering better customer retention to tracking visitor interactions in real time – live chat is no longer just about cost savings.

Chat technology has developed to such a degree that it is now used as a stand-alone tracking and conversion tool by many businesses.

> "As a result it was always cheaper to drive a customer to a chat window rather than a call - on average around 55% cheaper"

> Live Chat is regarded by customers as innovative communication, particularly amongst the tech generation

Why chat?

So, why does your business need to chat? Cost effectiveness and reducing contact response times are obvious draws to chat technology. But handling multiple customers simultaneously is only part of the picture. If your business has a website and you already use email as a communication tool, live chat could provide a more immediate response to customer queries.

If your website is heavily reliant on self-service, then using live chat to walk a customer through a difficult customer journey can head off issues before they start. Similarly, live chat can be added to every page on your website allowing the customer to contact your agents in just one click. Unlike the multi-layered IVR phone system, routing chats to the appropriate business department can be done in just a click and goes a long way to improving customer satisfaction.

Furthermore, live chat solutions offer a way for the customer to communicate with you on their terms. It's regarded by customers as innovative communication, particularly amongst the tech generation, and using it may just set a business apart from competitors.

Beyond the realms of improving customer satisfaction and reducing costs in your call centre, when it comes to converting your customer there are few better tools. Studies have shown in excess of 80% of a website's visitors won't convert to a sale.

Businesses spend millions attracting visitors to a website but few spend the time or money in 'mining' the customers once they arrive. Poor customer journeys and product information can be easily overcome by an agent intercepting a customer's journey to reassure or resolve issues (having said that there's no substitute for a well-designed and planned website!).

Live chat agents are able to reach out to customers while they are already browsing the site and more willing to listen to offers of assistance and new promotions and marketing campaigns.

Live chat agents are able to reach out to customers whilst they are already browsing the site and more willing to listen to offers of assistance

Most live chat providers can offer stats from existing clients to show that pro-actively chatting to your customer while they are browsing brings significant benefits and can help avoid the 'abandoned basket syndrome' that is all too prevalent online.

Increasing conversion rate by as much as 20% and boosting average customer spend by up to 50% is not uncommon. Clearly the stats speak for themselves. Digitally driven businesses would therefore be better off asking themselves 'why not chat'?

WhosOn™
Track - Chat - Engage

How to choose your live chat provider?

If you've already started investigating live chat solutions you'll know there are considerable options out there. Here, we take a look at how to separate the wheat from the chaff.

To host or not to host?

As a business you need to consider what matters to you most. Do you want a solution to be implemented quickly? Where do you want to host the software? How much control do you want over the solution? The type of solutions available will vary between live chat providers.

Many will offer a hosted service where you simply need to cut and paste a piece of HTML into your website code, access their chat tool via a web client and away you go – you'll be chatting before you know it. For larger businesses, enterprise solutions are available – some of which can be hosted in house on your own servers with your own IT team.

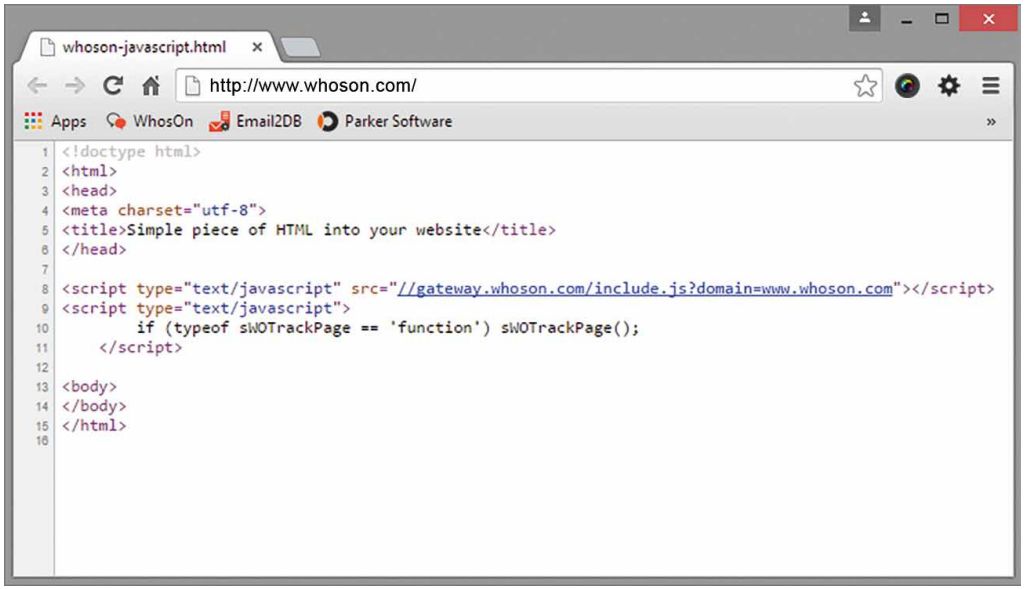
The benefits of this solution, which are sure to please risk averse IT directors, is that it gives full control of any software the company is using and changes can be made to systems directly. Live chat, like other technologies, requires investment in both time and money to achieve the best results. The single most important factor in making a success of live chat in your business is to know what your objectives are at the start.

The price is always right...

From the outset be clear on the live chat pricing structure. Like software hosting, pricing packages can be confusing. It should be easy to predict your total cost of implementing and operating the live chat solution. But there are often optional extras, such as training, 24 hour technical support and optimisation support. Complex menus of features, pay per-chat and costs for additional chat seats will make budget planning difficult. Always look for solutions that have intuitive and transparent pricing plans. Pricing will always vary between providers, but be sure to consider how many features you're getting for your buck. Cheap as chips doesn't necessarily result in the best option if you're looking for a vast range of features, such as dynamic rule based chat, post chat surveys and customisable chat design. Be sure to weigh the price against the entire package of features, support and the company's reputation.

Open all hours...

If your business is online or has global offices, then you'll need to be open all hours and so will your live chat support team. Even if you're a mostly 9-5 business, you never know how your weekly email newsletter or weekend website sale might require you to make changes to your chat implementation. Consider a solution that offers the ability for your own staff to make changes quickly and remotely away from the office. You should ensure your live chat provider gives you access to their own 24



You simply need to cut and paste a piece of HTML into your website code, access their chat tool via a web client and away you go

> Increasing conversion rate by as much as 20% and boosting average customer spend by up to 50% is not uncommon

hour support team to resolve any downtime or chat-related issues.

Time is money...

Never is there a truer statement than when your live chat has gone offline and one of your agents just lost the chance of closing a sale. Many live chat providers will publish their uptime history – with many reporting uptimes of between 99% to 99.9%. Avoid companies which offer no uptime assurances.

Be sure to consider the location of your live chat providers support team – is it UK or US based? With many offering 24/7 support you might not think this would make a difference. But being able to talk to local support agents and training teams could make all the difference when it comes to getting the most out of your software.

Features, features, features...

There are many live chat providers who claim to offer the ability to chat to the moon and back. On a more serious note though, if space exploration isn't your thing, you need to consider which 'out of this world' live chat features matter most to your business. Here's a few of the features on offer:

Robotic Chat - Nobody wants to talk to a robot.

When your live chat is run solely by the software your customers will only be communicated to via pre-defined chat scripts. Only consider robotic chat solutions if your product and service offering is totally undiversified.

Proactive Chat

Invitations can be sent to an online customer to chat based on a pre-defined set of visitor behaviours, either determined manually by a sales agent or by a set of pre-defined rules. This is particularly useful for converting visitors to a sale or resolving customer service issues.

Live Visitor Tracking

Chat is much more than just an online chat tool. Software including in-built tracking allows you to track a customer as they browse from one page to the next on your website. What's more, this tracking can be in real-time, as it happens. Your agents can immediately see the hottest leads and offer a solution.

Prospect Detection

This allows your agents to see where your visitor came from, such as a search engine or another website, and specific data about the visitor, such as country & city, organisation, browser and operating system. You can see which marketing campaigns are working and target the hottest leads by offering promotional incentives.

Send & Receive Files Via Chat Tool

Allow your agents to share a demo or video with the customer via the live chat tool.

Customisable Chat Design

Integrate your chat solution seamlessly with your website design. Only consider solutions that offer customizable chat designs to fully incorporate your brand, corporate image and logo in the chat window.

Auto-Translate

Translates chats for your agent and customer in real time to enable cross-border, global conversations.

Customer Ticketing & Transcripts

Your live chat operators can open and respond to tickets via the live chat client. Ticket responses are sent to customers via email. The customer can reply to the email which will then get added to the ticket. You can also raise the ticket with the operator's manager and review the chat transcript.

Pre & Post Chat Surveys

Get to know your visitor and what they think about your product or service with a pre or post chat survey

Integration into CRM System

If you already use an existing CRM system like Microsoft Dynamics then some chat providers will offer a seamless integration so all your customer data can be held in one place.

WhosOn™
Track - Chat - Engage

> In most cases it can be activated simply by pasting a few snippets of code on your website

Training

While there are similarities across live chat implementations, your website may present unique challenges. Any provider should have best practice training and data-driven documentation they can share with you.

Customers like you

It's important to find a provider that has experience in your industry. Ensure your provider understands regulatory and compliance hurdles and check for references and case studies.

Implementing Live Chat in your business

The technical implementation of a live chat solution is relatively straightforward. In most cases, it can be activated simply by pasting a few snippets of code into your website. However, there are several more operational concerns to consider when integrating live chat into an existing contact centre.

Resource

It's important to consider live chat staffing and not to overburden existing customer service teams. Do your existing agents operate live chat and still answer calls or will the two contact methods be separate?

Consider also the type of skills required for a live chat agent – good writing skills and the ability to multi-task are essential for live chat operators. Many live chat providers will tell you that volumes are at least 10 times that of email and require a much faster response time. Your contact centre needs the right infrastructure and resource to handle this effectively.

Data Security

For websites that deal with sensitive customer information such as finance, it is important to ensure sensitive data and chat transcripts are encrypted. Rules and chat scripts should also be generated around which sensitive data can be shared via a chat.

WhosOn Live Chat provides seamless integration with your existing CRM system such as Microsoft Dynamics, Salesforce or Sugar CRM.

> As a sales tool it's vital you empower your agents to offer incentives and to use chat as a tool to sell

Use across departments

Live chat adoption should ideally be business wide. If you're a multiple department business with separate sales and customer service teams, it's important you're able to share and route chats to the right person that can solve each customer query.

Rule Defined Chats

Where a business decides to offer proactive When a business decides to offer proactive chat it's necessary to define a set of rules that determine when chat is initiated. Many live chat providers offer the ability to initiate a chat based on a set of automated rules or manual intervention by an operator.

Furthermore, whose responsibility is it to define these rules? Rules will ultimately determine conversion opportunities for a sale. For instance, how long a customer has been hesitating on the page or basket, when to offer promotional incentives and many other time sensitive scenarios.

Getting the best out of chat

Invest in your people, not just your technology. No matter how many automated rules you implement, live chat ultimately requires human interaction. Investing in training for your operators will not only lead to better live chat response times, but also better customer interactions.

As a sales tool it's vital you empower your agents to offer incentives and to use chat as a tool to sell. Chat managers should be assigned to exploit the vast features of the technology and constantly optimise rules and engagement, taking learning's from the tracking data available. It's not just a chat tool, but a conversion and customer retention tool rolled into one. Just like a phone call, chat should have its own set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). If your phone agents are set targets, so should your live chat agents.

Number of visitors to your website, number of chat agents available, number of chats in the queue, number of sales converted – all these targets can help you adjust staffing and maximise your live chat performance.

Finally, get to know your visitors. Whether it's regularly reviewing chat transcripts, tracking customer journeys or offering a post-chat survey, capturing data about your customers will help you streamline your processes and give customers exactly what they are looking for. Maybe it's time to get chatting? Statistics are provided by WhosOn – based on average customer data.

Who is WhosOn?

WhosOn is market-leading live chat software designed to help business achieve success online - be it improving conversion, increasing sales or giving better customer service. It allows you to track and understand your customer and engage with them via live conversations when they visit your website.

WhosOn is created by the Parker Software team who develop innovative software aimed at online companies - from live chat solutions to business automation software.

Why is WhosOn so great?

- We're the only live chat provider to offer a one-off fee and a fully installable solution that can sit on your own servers – brilliant if your IT director doesn't like new systems that are hosted outside your business.
- We also offer a super easy hosted solution to get you up and running quickly.
- We love innovation and are constantly improving our products and creating new ones.
- We offer full integration into CRM solutions such as Dynamics, Salesforce & SugarCRM.
- Plus all the other simple but powerful features of a live chat solution.
- Over 10,000 websites use WhosOn to chat with millions of web visitors every month across the globe.

WhosOn™
Track - Chat - Engage

LETS CHAT ABOUT IT

UK: +44 (0)330 2231 032
US: (800) 680 7712
www.whoson.com
sales@whoson.com

PARKER Software
Engaging Applications · Engaging Results

WhosOn™
Track - Chat - Engage