

Use a WhatsApp catalog to sell even more products in your business

Description

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Meta, formerly Facebook has been making a lot of effort to boost the eCommerce functionality of its products.

From Facebook product catalogs, shops on Facebook pages, product tagging in Instagram and Facebook posts, Facebook Marketplace, shopping ads, and many other interesting developments, there is no doubt the company is invested in eCommerce for all their services and platforms.

Now they have added eCommerce functionality to their market-leading chat app, WhatsApp. Businesses that make use of WhatsApp business to chat with clients can now have an additional sales channel on the app.

By adding a product catalog, businesses can let their clients browse and purchase products right from WhatsApp. This is obviously a huge boost for any business already using or considering using the channel.

I have always emphasised the need for businesses to maximise their sales channels and thatâ??s a need that will never change. The more opportunities you give potential clients to interact with your products the greater the chance they will make purchases.

Moreover, the more sales channels you give your clients, the greater the chances youâ??ll find one they want to purchase on. With a user base of 2 billion people, itâ??s safe to say you have a few potential clients who want to buy on WhatsApp.

So letâ??s explore the WhatsApp catalog and have you link sharing your products to new sales.

1. WhatsApp Business vs Personal WhatsApp

Firstly, itâ??s important to note you can only create a WhatsApp catalog on WhatsApp business, which is different from personal WhatsApp. The latter is strictly for personal communication, while the former adds some marketing functionality to boost business communication with clients.

One example of this would of course be the product catalog, but there is so much more. If your business currently uses personal WhatsApp for communication, switch immediately. You are missing out. Some WhatsApp business features include;

1.1 Enhanced Business Profiles

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For starters, you can create a more robust profile that helps clients understand what your business is about. This includes;

- A cover image in addition to a profile picture,
- A comprehensive business description,
- Business hours,
- A business category to make your services immediately recognisable,
- A business address,
- As well as a business email address.

1.2 Better Messaging

Messaging is also enhanced for businesses on WhatsApp business. You can enable quick messaging and make use of automated responses when you are away and greeting messages for new chats.

A game changer is quick responses though! Itâ??s not uncommon for your to have to say a lot of the same thing in your business chats. Now you can speed up communication by creating shortcuts that type out a full message with a few words.

For example, you can create a shortcut called thanks to thank clients at the end of a conversation or schedule to send clients a link to schedule an appointment with you.

WhatsApp Business helps you label your conversation with useful markers. You can use labels like tickets, new clients, prospects, and so on to group your clients and structure your conversations.

If you are like me and you like to deal with conversations sequentially, thatâ??s a great help. These labels can contain both text and media.

Absolute game changer! These tools can help your business build a comprehensive chat flow that enhances the customer experience.

1.3 WhatsApp Business Marketing Tools

In addition, you get additional marketing tools like Facebook and Instagram ads that let you advertise your products or stories for additional sales.

Finally, many CRMs, like HubSpot for example now allow businesses to integrate their WhatsApp business to bring chats into the CRM and log and enhance customer data. Long story short, get WhatsApp business for your business.

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2. Some WhatsApp Catalog house rules

As you have probably already guessed, you canâ??t list just everything in your WhatsApp catalog. Thatâ??s pretty much the case for any eCommerce service or marketplace. WhatsApp catalog rules tend to mirror those of Metaâ??s broader eCommerce terms in general.

The full conditions can be found here, but generally, here are some worth highlighting;

- **Product limit** â?? your catalog is limited to 500 products
- **Illegal goods** â?? Your catalog cannot list anything illegal
- **Services** â?? This is a bit of a bummer but the catalog only allows you to list physical products
- **Alcohol** â?? While legal within restrictions, the catalog will not allow you to list alcoholic beverages and related products
- **Adult products** â?? Your catalog may not promote adult products
- **Discrimination** â?? Your listing may not be discriminatory to any part of the population based on a personal trait or characteristic

There are a few more restrictions but these stand out the most. Should your listing be deemed to violate any of these policies, youâ??ll be notified that the product was rejected for violating WhatsAppâ??s eCommerce policy.

At this point, youâ??ll have the option to request a review of the rejection if you think this was an error. If rejected a second time, you wonâ??t be able to request any more reviews.

Itâ??s important to note that the process can at times get it wrong twice. In that case, youâ??ll just have to keep adding the product, eventually, itâ??ll be accepted and get be listed.

3. How to create a WhatsApp catalog

When you create a catalog, there are 2 main elements you can add, products and collections. To create your catalog, just open WhatsApp business, click the 3 dot menu on the top right and click catalog. From this point, youâ??ll be prompted to start adding products.

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4. How to create a product

Products are the primary elements of your catalog. Youâ??ll need to add your first product for the catalog to be active. When you click create catalog youâ??ll see the option to â??Add new itemâ?•.

When you click this option, youâ??ll see a product addition screen. Products are comprised of Images, Titles, Descriptions, Prices, Links, and Item codes, and youâ??ll also have the option to make the product visible or not in the catalog with the Hide/ show item option.

Product images and titles are compulsory while prices, descriptions, links and item codes are optional. I recommend that you add all this information for the best-performing catalog.



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4.1 Image

Your WhatsApp catalog will display products with a thumbnail on the left, plus a title, description and price on the right. Of all these elements, your product image has the biggest impact on the success of your catalog.

Humans are visual creatures, we process visual information the fastest. You are most likely to recognise a phone and click on a phone when you see a picture of it well before you read the name.

Be sure to put up a product image that best represents your product. If itâ??s a phone, make sure the image matches the brand, model, colour, and everything in between. Make sure the image is high quality so as to be clear even when reduced to the size of a thumbnail.

WhatsApp stores the images in the catalog, so you donâ??t have to worry about memory on your phone. Images will continue to show on your catalog even after they have been deleted from your phone.

Make full use of the space available and leave little white space on the edges as a WhatsApp catalog does not crop any images. This will focus more of the available image real estate on the product.

Your product needs to shine in its own listing, so make sure not to crowd it by adding other products to the image. Finally, your WhatsApp catalog will display your image as a square, so go for a ratio of one to one for the image.

4.2 Title

Your title is the next important element after the image and like the image it must be added for the product to be saved. There is no indication of limits to title lengths, but make them short and sweet.

Make sure your potential client knows what the product is in 2 to 3 words. Humans are not highly renowned for their attention spans, so get the product across quickly.

If you already list your products elsewhere or your catalog is for products you resell, then use the name the products are already listed under for faster recognition.

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Make your titles brief but descriptive. Itâ??s a tough balancing act, but one that can be achieved. Hereâ??s a great guide to product titles that convert.

4.3 Price

Though optional, youâ??ll want to add a price to your products. The field is even listed as recommended as opposed to optional when adding new products. Itâ??s pretty important. A lot of customer journeys start, and indeed sometimes end with a search for pricing.

More information on pricing could be the reason why your client is on your catalog. In this regard, you can make your WhatsApp catalog an important touch point in your sales funnel. Particularly during the discovery stage.

Considering WhatsApp catalogs donâ??t list services, which tend to have more fluid pricing, you should have pricing readily available for your products.



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4.4 Description

Much like the title, there is not much indication of word limits when it comes to your product description. This is good news because you will want to be detailed here. Unlike with the title, donâ??t be shy about adding information to your description.

If youâ??ve got your prospectâ??s attention all the way to the description, they want to know more. This is important particularly if they are still discovering your services. Also, a great description will cut down on the time you need to invest in chatting with clients.

Anticipate potential questions about your products and answer them ahead of time. This reduces the necessity of clients initiating chats to find out more about your products.

4.5 Link

You can add a link to your products mainly for 2 reasons, to view more information or to initiate checkout. Sometimes a link can achieve both, which is a great win. Take for example the Mut-Con WhatsApp cataog.

We usually link our products to their product pages in the Mut-Con shop. These pages usually contain more detailed information about that product, and from there, clients can use the secure checkout of

our shop that includes multiple payment options to complete their purchase.

4.6 Item code

Item codes can be used to organise your products. These are most likely the least important element of your WhatsApp catalog as they are primarily for internal use. All the same though, if you have a system of cataloguing your products using stock codes or the like, your WhatsApp catalog lets you continue using that system with the item code block.

4.7 Hide/ show an item

Product availability will change during the course of running your business. This could be temporary, for example, due to supply chain issues and backorders.

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It would be annoying if you had to delete a product every time it was unavailable. The good news is you donâ??t have to.

Just toggle the hide or show item button as necessary, and as the name states, the product will be shown or hidden from your catalog.

5. How to create a collection



Collections are the second element of your WhatsApp catalog. They are not necessary for the catalog to work, but they may be essential to the shopping experience.

Unlike Shopify and WooCommerce which have variations, when you add products to your WhatsApp you add them individually even when they are related.

So even if itâ??s the same t-shirt, you may have to add multiple versions of it to showcase, for example, different colours. Considering the impact images have, you may not have a choice in the matter.

The difference between a red and white t-shirt on the thumbnail could influence a sale. Collections give you a way to bring those products back together and showcase that they represent a single product.

Your clients would then be able to browse that very same t-shirt, in all the colours available. You could even be able to sell them more of the same product.

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Collections also work the same way you would use collections in Shopify and categories in Woocommerce.

To create a collection, click â??Add new collectionâ?•, and proceed to name the collection. Once you have named the collection, select the products to go into the collection and save. Collections can be created from approved or pending products.

Much like products, collections are also reviewed and approved before they can show in your WhatsApp catalog. They are however less likely to be rejected, as approval mostly boils down to acceptable naming conventions.

You can edit your collections to add and remove products as your catalog evolves.

6. Purchases from the catalog



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Though not yet a full eCommerce service with checkout, your clients can still buy from your WhatsApp catalog. The WhatsApp catalog includes an add-to-cart icon that can be used to add the product being viewed to a cart.

The experience even includes a cart page like most eCommerce services where users can adjust their products and even add more. Once your clients are in their carts, theyâ??ll then have the option to send their carts to your business via chat.

You will receive the items they are interested in and you can continue the conversation from there. As already mentioned, if you add a link to a checkout page, then you can make the experience smoother for your clients, but they may still opt to check out via chat.

7. Payments

Meta is currently experimenting with the use of payments inside the WhatsApp catalog to make it a full eCommerce service with checkout within the app.

At the time of writing, the system is being tested in Brazil and India. Hopefully, itâ??ll be rolled out to the rest of the world as this will be a significant boost to functionality.
When the feature is fully rolled out, your clients should be able to browse, select and buy your products right from WhatsApp.

8. Advertise on Facebook

You have the option to advertise your products or catalog on Metaâ??s advertising properties. When advertising your catalog, you are limited to ten products. Click on the â??advertiseâ?• button on the catalog home to select the products you want to advertise in any one ad.

To advertise a single product, click on the product then select advertise at the bottom of the product. Once you have the product(s) to be advertised, click next and youâ??ll be taken to the screen where you can add your ad details.

First, add a description that accompanies the campaign. This description should encompass all the products you are advertising. For the individual product title and description, the ad will pull from the information in your catalog. Next, add a budget.

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8.1 Budget & Duration

Add a daily budget as well as the number of days you want the ad to run. Start with your total budget and work backwards.

You can divide your total budget by the number of days to get a daily budget or divide the total budget by a daily budget to get the number of days you can run your ad.

You will get an estimated daily reach when setting up the budget. If you are aiming to reach a set number of people each day of the campaign, then dividing a total budget by a daily budget is a good starting point.

These are of course estimates, but they are somewhat reliable estimates to work with.

For the few among us blessed with the elusive unlimited ad budget, then you can pick a daily budget that meets your reach goals and set the number of days you want the ads to run and you are good to go.

Just above the create ad button at the bottom of the ad creation screen, you will see how much you will pay in total. Remember this amount excludes VAT, so multiply it by 1.15% to get the actual amount youâ??ll pay.

8.2 Targeting

Ad targeting is limited in WhatsApp as expected. Your options are limited to targeting by age, gender and location.

As an added bummer, you canâ??t use any of the amazing audiences you have built inside Facebook using your pixel.

The location targeting options are pretty comprehensive though. You can get pretty granular about where your ads reach.

Itâ??s not the most exciting ad targeting setup, but if you use it well, you still be able to drive relevant leads to your chat.

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And yes, WhatsApp ads automatically set WhatsApp chat as the primary call to action for the campaign and this cannot be changed.

8.3 Launch your ad

At this point, you, are ready to launch your ad. Thereâ??s an added option to tick a box if your ads are about credit, housing, employment, social issues, politics or elections. Add a payment method if you havenâ??t already and launch your ad.

The ad will bill the ad account for the Facebook page linked to your WhatsApp account. This is also the ad account your ads will run under. You can analyse the performance of your ads on the relevant dashboard.

9. Final tip

If you are like me then you donâ??t like working on your phone. As great as phones are, with their mobility and portability, they have a lot of limitations. Your screen has a lot less real estate to work with.

The typing is a bit slower and prone to mistakes. You probably have most of your files on your PC or laptop. Itâ??s tougher to navigate between apps and tabs to copy + paste links and text.

Then a good idea is to use your laptop or PC to create your WhatsApp catalog. This should cut down your working time significantly, and reduce the chances of mistakes while giving you the freedom to add as much detail as possible.

For me, itâ??s particularly great because I can just copy + paste products from the Mut-Con shop to the WhatsApp catalog. To get started, just connect your WhatsApp business to your laptop or PC.

Youâ??ll need to;

1. Navigate to https://web.whatsapp.com on your preferred browser, where youâ??ll immediately see a QR code on the screen.
2. Open WhatsApp Business on your phone.
3. Tap the 3-dot menu button on the top right.
4. Select â??linked devicesâ?•
5. Click â??link a deviceâ?•, and when your camera is launched, scan the code.

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Once you are connected, you can click the 3 dot menu on your WhatsApp web, select catalog, and just like that, you can manage your WhatsApp catalog the easy way, according to me at least.

And in conclusion,

Your business needs to maximise sales channels to succeed. Additional channels that donâ??t need more effort from you are even better.

WhatsApp is one of the preferred tools for communication among your clients and if you are already going to be talking to them on there, itâ??s worth it to invest a little effort to make sure they are always able to see your products.

Youâ??ll also have links to share your catalog and products. Share it often with your clients to make sure they discover your products. Consider adding a link to your welcome or away message to direct clients to the catalog if you canâ??t talk to them.

Now if Meta could just give us all access to sync the catalog to eCommerce shops like you can with Facebook pages weâ??ll have truly reached nirvana. But Iâ??m sure thatâ??s already being worked on!

Visit the Mut-Con Catalog for an idea of how a completed catalog works. Be sure to share it everywhere to bless your network with #insightsforsuccess!



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