

## An A to Z Playbook for **Conversational Marketing**

**Conversational marketing** is poised to take over standard website elements such as registration forms, and feedback questionnaires. At the same time, “conversational” is also a marketing mindset (not just a platform) that can impact customer communications across channels. In this article, we look at everything you need to know about **conversational marketing** in 2020 – literally from A to Z! We share predictions to keep in mind as you reimagine your marketing footprint for the new year.

### A to Z Guide to **Conversational Marketing** and its Integral Elements

The popularity of **conversational marketing** has a lot to do with the rise of instant messaging as a communication form. More than SMS or even voice, instant messaging/chat now forms the crux of our communication patterns. “The way people connect with businesses always mirrors the way people connect with each other,” said **Mikael Yang, ManyChat CEO and co-founder**.

“There wouldn't be an email marketing industry if millions of people weren't using email to connect with each other, there wouldn't be a social media marketing industry if millions of people weren't using social media, and there wouldn't be a Messenger Marketing industry if billions of people weren't using messaging apps to connect with each other.

“And by looking at all of this, this is what makes me say that chat is the future of marketing,” he added. To prepare for this future, marketers should be conversant with the many elements that make conversational campaigns a success.

#### 1. Automated conversations become more engaging

**Conversational marketing** doesn't just mean parking a chatbot on the corner of one's website. It allows you to design engaging conversations that resonate with a human touch, despite being automated. This is thanks to the power of artificial intelligence (AI).

#### 2. Bot-based interfaces are at the heart of **conversational marketing**

**Conversational marketing** depends on bots, either chat or voice. Most marketers use chat-based interfaces on their landing pages, mobile apps, and e-commerce stores. The Internet of Things (IoT) will bring marketing conversations to voice-enabled devices like Alexa or Google Home as well.

#### 3. Chatbots are a critical tool for this technique

If you're getting started with **conversational marketing** in 2020, your first step should be to deploy a chatbot across your digital footprint. These are low-investment platforms that replace the traditional lead generation forms we are used to. There are several chatbot vendors to look at, bringing us to **D**.

#### 4. Drift is “the world’s first and only **conversational marketing** platform

Drift is one of the leading **conversational marketing** platforms out there, founded in 2014. It has several options for launching a conversational campaign, including chat, video, and email. It also helps to introduce automation across the purchase journey using AI.

#### 5. Email can be enhanced using a conversational mindset

Conversational isn’t limited to bots alone. Your emails could also gain from a conversational mindset – for example, using a personalized greeting, short messaging, direct questions, your phone number, etc. This goes a long way in strengthening relationships, rather than elaborate, heavily-designed emailers.

#### 6. Faster conversion is one of its key benefits

Once a customer enters their details in a form, brands take between half a day to 48 hours to respond. Bots are much faster, answering queries/gathering data in real-time, even when a human executive isn’t available. This ensures that your leads do not get cold, and conversion is accelerated.

#### 7. Gathering leads is easier through a conversational tool

This is a key objective for **conversational marketing**. [Databox](#) surveyed dozens of industry experts to find out the impact on lead gathering. Most respondents used at least one conversational tool; some were 100% conversational. On average, lead gathering capabilities for bots were 10+ percentage points ahead of forms.

#### 8. HubSpot Conversations is another platform to consider

HubSpot needs no introduction in the marketing world, and it has a powerful conversational offering that you should consider for 2020. It comes free of cost if you are already a HubSpot user and can be integrated with Facebook Messenger, team emails, and live chats.

#### 9. Intelligent responses are enabled via AI technology

The intelligence quotient is a critical factor for conversational campaigns. You will inevitably face a variety of customers, each with a unique set of needs and expectations. AI helps bots to adaptively respond, learning from customer behavior without imposing a one-size-fits-all model.

#### 10. Journey-mapping can help to design the bot’s personality

As you embark on a conversational strategy for 2020, remember to define a clear personality for your bot. The first step to doing this is tracing the user’s purchase journey – do they conduct research on B2B

publications? Are they existing subscribers of your newsletter? All of this will go into designing the bot's personality, the questions it asks, and the information it provides to users.

#### 11. Is it a "Killer app" for marketing?

There are signs that **conversational marketing** will prove to be a "killer app" for the industry. "With an expected 90% penetration in this market by 2022, according to eMarketer, the growth will be remarkable," commented Yang, citing ManyChat's predictions for 2020. But email and lead forms are still widely used.

#### 12. Live chat belongs on your website in 2020

Live chat is a conversational technology where the conversation is powered by human professionals. An automated engine steps in only when an executive isn't available. Before you start using sophisticated AI technology, we recommend deploying a live chat feature for customer support, removing the need to send long emails and raise multiple tickets for common issues.

#### 13. Messenger by Facebook is essential for B2C marketers

Messenger is a popular tool among marketers, linking their Facebook stores to a conversational interface. It's no surprise that HubSpot has a native integration for Messenger. If a customer pauses on their purchase journey or abandons the cart, you can reach out to them on Messenger.

#### 14. Natural Language Processing (NLP) is an AI technique powering conversational interfaces

Decoding the AI behind conversational interfaces, NLP is the first element to look at. It converts queries made in English or other natural languages into a machine-readable format so that the AI can spot trends/insights. This makes the difference between automation and intelligent automation.

#### 15. Optical Character Recognition (OCR) could transform the future of this space

OCR allows bots to take images and extract structured data from them. This has incredible potential in **conversational marketing** – imagine if customers could send an invoice and the AI automatically resolves their warranty claims! That is how OCR could transform the next-generation of bots.

#### 16. Pillar pages with conversational interfaces are a great idea

Pillar pages are a vital asset for content marketers, attracting a lot of traffic and improving their SEO rank. You could embed chatbots on a pillar page to generate leads. For example, Drift [has a bot on its pillar page](#) for 2019 state of **conversational marketing** trends that asks for your details before you download.

#### 17. Question-and-answer flows have to be determined carefully

This is a critical element for **conversational marketing** outcomes. You need to map the user journey, trace different possibilities, and outline a question-and-answer flow that's as detailed as possible. That's why today you can partner with specialized conversational copywriters to get this element right.

#### 18. Real-time interactions are possible 24 by 7

This is the most obvious reason for switching to a chatbot. Instead of entering details and waiting for hours or even days, customers receive a quick reply to their queries. This is extremely useful for global businesses, as the customer might be located in a different timezone than the contact center. This brings us to S.

#### 19. Support services are streamlined if you have a conversational portal

Let's consider an e-commerce store with buyers spread across the globe. Someone might have an urgent query (returns, refunds, delivery complaints, etc.), but it is a Sunday at the contact center. Conversational interfaces enable a prompt reply, regardless of timezone or human availability. An AI bot can collect the data and pass it onto a support executive – or even resolve queries on its own for FAQs.

#### 20. Tracking performance is essential

Like any digital marketing strategy, the performance of conversational interfaces needs careful tracking. It is possible that your target demographic is more comfortable with traditional forms. Or, the bot may lack a unique personality, putting off users. It's a good idea to ask for an NPS after every conversation.

#### 21. Unifying CX is another benefit you could expect

Customer experience (CX) is now spread across a variety of platforms and channels. **Conversational marketing** places the same chatbot across all of these touchpoints to unify the experience. It also creates a single source of data, basing questions on information collected on previously used platforms.

#### 22. Voice-enabled bots are the next step

The rise of IoT means that **conversational marketing** will soon expand to devices other than smartphones and PCs. For instance, a B2B consumer working on a factory floor might want to place an order via IoT-ized equipment. Shopping through smart refrigerators will soon be commonplace for B2C. This makes conversational capabilities for voice assistants the logical way forward.

#### 23. WhatsApp (and other smartphone platforms) deserve special attention

Smartphone-based instant messaging platforms like WhatsApp and WeChat have taken the world by storm. Marketers need a conversational blueprint for these platforms as well.

Netflix reminds users on WhatsApp whenever a new show that they might be interested in becomes available. Order updates, shipping confirmation, and even a digital invoice (reducing paper usage) may be sent on WhatsApp.

#### 24. Generation X is open to interacting with bots

You might think that it's only millennials who are interested in shopping and communicating via bots. But research suggests that older generations aren't far behind.

In a [NICE inContact survey](#) of 2550+ consumers, 38% of Gen X respondents said that they use private social messaging for customer service. Another [survey by Drift](#) covering 1000+ US consumers found that 54% of Boomers expect chatbots to answer their questions.

#### 25. Young consumers (millennials) view bots as a marketing staple

Millennials form the biggest audience for **conversational marketing**. They form a large part of the world's earning population, and are eager to explore new ways to connect with their favorite brands. 46% of millennials expect answers from chatbots and 34% want conversational query resolution, found Drift.

#### 26. What about Gen Z?

Gen Zers (aged between 7 and 22 years in 2019) are conversational natives. They have grown up using social platforms as part of their shopping experiences. 83% of Gen Z respondents in the NICE inContact survey prefer live agents, compared to 96% of Boomers and 91% of Gen X. With this generation entering the workforce, brands need effective conversational strategies to inspire and maintain loyalty.

#### Closing Thoughts: **Conversation Marketing Predictions for 2020**

**Conversational marketing** is a fast-evolving space and brands must keep an eye on the latest trends in order to succeed. Yang shared his predictions for 2020, backed by ManyChat:

- Users of mobile messaging will surpass users on social media. This means brands need a conversational plan including Messenger, WhatsApp, WeChat, etc.
- Phone calls will shrink dramatically in volume, as chat takes over. "We expect to see a rise among all age groups in their use of messaging apps as their number one way to communicate," commented Yang.

- Small businesses will have to embrace iMessage and Rich Communication Services. “55% of the US uses an iOS device and it is the biggest operating system in the country,” Yang noted.
- Industries undergoing a conversational revolution in 2020 include real estate, finance, and legal. “ManyChat saw a significant rise in real estate consultants, lawyers, financial planners, and investment managers using the platform,” said Yang.

Now that you’re familiar with the A-to-Z of **conversational marketing**, you can hit the ground running in 2020. Start with the basics (like conversational customer support), expand using the power of AI, and add a conversational touch to all your campaigns, including email. This, we believe, is the secret to connecting with a personalization-first audience and creating impressions that last!