

Start More Conversations, Sell More Homes:

Using Live Chat to Connect
with Today's Consumers



Communication for the New Era

Since the new millennia launched us into the technological era, it's clear that people are missing the human interaction of the days before that rainbow colored apple seemed to change things for good. But, at the same time, we aren't missing it so much that would give-up the convenience and easiness to life that technology has brought us.

We want a balance between being able to communicate on our own terms, but having a real, living person on the other end. And, let's not forget ... immediate gratification.

This is especially true in real estate.

People want to work with a human when it comes to buying and selling a home. However, the fast-paced nature of today's world does not provide time for the intimate relationship between agent and client that was expected even just 5 years ago.

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Today's buyer or seller has the Internet. However, they still need an agent to carry out a deal and assist with paperwork or help them navigate in a very competitive housing market.

This is where Live Chat comes in. You've probably heard about it by now, but aren't exactly sure how it can be utilized for real estate agents.

In short, it's filling the gaps in our current communication options and providing to the modern seller or buyer what traditional email, text and social media do not ... instant gratification with a human touch.

But before we get into specifics, let's start with a brief history.

We're All Human After All: A Brief History of Live Chat

It wasn't until the late 90s that Jeremie Miller invented the open-source technology Jabber/XMPP, which later became the blueprint for the majority of Live Chat companies.

In its early form, many users found themselves speaking with outsourced teams or having to deal with somewhat inconvenient features like leaving the page they were on in order to complete the chat. To many, the process felt inhuman – it was inconvenient and impersonal.



Then, social media —and its ability to be used as a customer service tool— came along. This immediate, conversational-style of communication that was easily accessible was innovative to an industry whose foundations were made of templated conversations and responses. The true potential for chat/messaging had really began to reveal itself.



Although, social media comments and conversations have a tendency to drift away from focus and can tip easily into the realm of offensive and even obscene quickly. While having a comfortable, human interaction has become the key to many customer service strategies, there also is a need for some basic professionalism boundaries.

The solution? A perfect fusion between the privacy, professionalism and convenience of email all at the speed and accessibility of text messaging: Live Chat



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Money and Convenience Makes the World Go Round

When it comes down to it, convenience is the main driving force behind the popularity and growth of live chat. Nearly everyone has a Smartphone and for 35% of Americans it's the first thing they check in the morning. Email will never become obsolete; however, it is not an immediate communication tool. Whereas a phone call requires a place and time commitment that not a lot of people have during business hours.



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One survey by Ovum, reported that 44% of the "respondents said that one of the reasons they preferred to send a text to a company's customer service department was because it was less time-consuming. In addition, 42% said they preferred to do so because it was more convenient than using the telephone."

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42%

preferred to send a text because it was more convenient than using the telephone.

Additionally, chat apps are becoming the more preferred method of convenient communication over email. Only 22% of Americans list their email as being the first thing they check in the morning, according to research conducted by Business Insider.

Combined, the four top chat apps in the world report 3 billion active monthly users globally, which surpasses the amount of users the top four social networks claim.

4 TOP CHAT APPS IN THE WORLD REPORT

3 BILLION

ACTIVE MONTHLY USERS GLOBALLY

OK, So Who's Using It?

So who exactly are these 3 billion chat users? Not to shock you, but Millennials and Generation X are responsible for the massive, technology driven change (insert sarcasm here).

A report by Business Insider found that people between 18 and 34 years of age find chat apps to be a more "reliable and convenient way to reach brands and service providers." About half of the respondents to one particular study noted that "they preferred to interact with a service provider via chat for several reasons, including the desire to achieve a swift resolution to a problem and the idea that they don't have to use a separate service or app to achieve this resolution."

Even more data from recent studies supports this. Twilio, the cloud communications platform company also recently reported that "9 out of 10 consumers want to use messaging to communicate with brands," according to Bulldog Reporter.

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TELUS International has even more impressive statistics regarding the use of Live Chat:



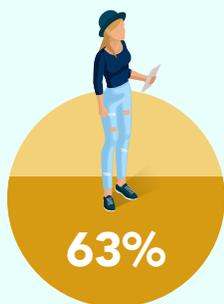
consumers aged 18-40 located and engaged in online chat when they visited a company's website



shoppers with a previous chat experience continue to actively seek chat options on merchant websites



chat users agree the new interaction method positively influences their attitude about the retailer they were considering buying from



respondents reported they were more likely to return to a website after experiencing live chat



stated they purchased from the e-commerce website as a direct result of the chat session itself

Integrating Live Chat Into Your Real Estate Business

So this all sounds exciting and cutting-edge, right? But how exactly can a real estate agent or brokerage utilize Live Chat effectively?

For starters, Live Chat allows agents to respond almost instantaneously to a person's inquiry in a way that email and phone calls cannot. This can have an unparalleled impact on your business, as studies have found 90% of consumers work with the first agent to respond to their online inquiry.

While having chat doesn't necessarily mean that buyers or sellers are instantly committed to you, it allows you to stand out in a crowded marketplace. It allows you to connect with would-be window shoppers who simply want more information. When they're ready to act ... they'll remember you and the unique experience you gave them.



Along with this idea of urgency and the ease of being able to ask questions quickly without commitment, comes the benefit of capturing a higher number of leads when using a Live Chat platform.

Think of it this way: If a person visiting your site has a quick question about a house, reaching you via chat is much more likely to happen when compared to the nuisance of having to fill out a form (with name, email, phone, questions, etc.) and wait for a call back. By not having Live Chat on your website, you are missing out on a large and growing consumer segment that prefers (and wants) the instant gratification of speaking to someone right away. Simply put, chat enables you to have more conversations and sales opportunities.



With roughly 2 million active real estate agents in the United States, being available at a moment's notice can be your true differentiator. In today's world of instant gratification and unending options, if a lead isn't able to make a connection with you instantly, they're moving on to someone who's available.

Ready to transform your business and win more sales with live chat?



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