



CHOOSING WHATSAPP PROVIDER

DO's & DONT's



Written By
Andreas S. Constantinides
GTC Senior Consultant

WhatsApp Business Messaging «THE CHILDHOOD ILLNESSES»



Viber did it. Now WhatsApp did it as well for its new Business service: They certified as WhatsApp for Business distributors some SMS aggregators and some of Facebook's partners, most of whom are companies that specialize in IT development.

Maybe that's the reason why the company's service policy is presented by each reseller differently. So, WhatsApp will start crawling with childhood illnesses,

as it happened to Viber and as it usually happens to every "newborn".

A little research is enough on these official resellers to understand that the commercial policy is almost random, everyone sells every WABA at whatever price he wants, without any coherence, no direction and most of the times no logic.

The most important thing, it's obvious that no thorough research seems to have been undertaken ei-



56 Official WhatsApp Resellers, 56 Commercial Policies + the Commercial policies of the resellers of the official resellers = more than >100 different commercial policies





ther with brands themselves or with the companies that manage messaging and mobile marketing campaigns. Such research would have shown precisely what the enterprise messaging market wants, needs and how to get it across via this new messaging medium. Pity, because at the end of the day the whole messaging industry is financed by the enterprise brands themselves. Not by resellers, not by software houses, not by aggregators.



The cost of creating and sustaining a WABA, is not the only part related to the diverging commercial policies. Some may charge for creating a template, others charge fees for WABA hosting, whereas others charge the WABA and the sent messages only.

Yes! Choosing the right WhatsApp provider requires great research and consideration. It's totally worth it though!

The bottom line is that WhatsApp did exactly what Viber did. It was given out, without any prior consideration, to companies that had zero experience with retail business messaging. Thus, among the official resellers, we find a handful of telecommunication providers, also being aggregators, which specialize mostly in wholesale messaging, plus some IT companies that specialize in Facebook apps. This is the reason for the diverse policies that render any financial comparison hazy, tricky and extremely complicated. Just what happened with Viber 3 years ago.

But, all these "childhood illnesses" can't be avoided and WhatsApp providers will revise many more times their trade policy before reaching the point the market demands.

Like it or not, this is a procedure that every "living" organism goes through and our messaging industry is not just alive but intensely developing and kicking!

At Global Telco Consult

we did a research on all WhatsApp's official partners. We outlined their ways, recorded the problems, got informed in-depth, noted those who have a deep understanding of the needs of enterprise messaging and ended up with the providers that offer the necessary tools, reliable infrastructure, know-how, and competitive pricing.

The most important: we tracked those who have understood the difference between wholesale and retail and the importance of it, providing their partners with competitive advantages, ensuring the acquisition of a significant part in the growing market of wholesale and enterprise messaging.

Despite all this, the purpose of this whitepaper is not to show you the "best provider". It is to help you grasp the structure of the service, how it works, the differences in the plethora of policies and to provide you with important information to draw your own conclusions.

We want you to be able to choose the best provider for your needs.

On behalf of all the GTC Messaging team, thank you for your trust and we remain at your disposal for any further clarification or information needed.

With Best Regards,
Andreas S. Constantinides
Senior Consultant at GTC

Contact me at:
**andreas@
globalTelcoconsult.com**



GTC is an independent consulting firm, founded in 2014, based in Munich, Germany. With significant expertise in A2P and P2P messaging, GTC provides tailor-made messaging strategies, helping Telcos and Firms to productize, launch, monetize and run messaging products such as RCS, Viber, WhatsApp and SMS both for the wholesale and retail industry.

01 THE NEW OTT ENVIRONMENT

It is a fact that in the last three years the world of Business Messaging has changed drastically. The market has now escaped the 160 Latin characters of SMS. OTTs apps dynamically entered the game allowing companies to send almost all kinds of messages to consumers on their favourite channel.

Viber with one billion users was the first OTT that offered its API in the international market of business messaging and has already set a good precedent in the Telco industry. Its success seems to ensure an excellent and promising future for the other OTTs as well. The new

business messaging occurs free from the limited characters of SMS and the restriction of pure text. Creative images and colorful CTA buttons were added creating for the consumer, a new messaging experience.

On the other hand, the long-awaited RCS has shaken the entire messaging market, just because behind this venture lies the giant Google. For this reason, it has already created high expectations in the Telco industry and especially with business Messaging professionals. Yet, it seems that RCS still has a long way to go until the service reaches a high penetration comparable to other OTTs, let alone SMS.

O2 WHATAPP IS HERE TO STAY

Wone of the most popular messaging channels that took the world by storm is WhatsApp, which is one of Facebook's major acquisitions. With 1.5 billion users in 180 countries, WhatsApp is poised to become the most ubiquitous channel after SMS for business messaging.

With a strong presence in LATAM, Business Messaging of WhatsApp has begun to spread around the world, elevating the creation of a WABA (WhatsApp Business Account) a new vocabulary for every marketer in a small or large business.

The war of messaging has already begun!

On the other hand, just like the pioneer Viber, WhatsApp offers universal features like two-way communication between consumers and any business regardless of its size. We can distinguish two business messaging models:

Model 1: WhatsApp Business for "Local Business"

Model 1 is a flexible and open offering that can apply to any small business. In a word, it's

a business messaging app, available at no cost whatsoever. It is called WhatsApp Business and is free to download for tablets and smartphones. Via this application, the businesses can create a page to contact and communicate with customers free of charge. A desktop version is not available at the moment and there has been no official WhatsApp update about it so far.

Model 2: WhatsApp API for "Medium and Large Companies"

The second service is named WhatsApp API and is suited for medium and large companies. With this API every company can send out direct, personalized transactional

and informative messages. The service features bespoke Sender IDs. It is subscription-based as Viber, and has a fixed monthly fee.

Every Sender ID needs the approval of WhatsApp, a relatively lean process, but not as simple as Viber's. Only after successful approval by WhatsApp of so-called templated messages the company can send messages to their clientele that happens to be using this popular application.

The creation, cost, exceptions, terms, and conditions for the use of a WABA account, are analyzed in the upcoming sections. However, cooperation with one of the 56 official WhatsApp resellers or their partners, is required.



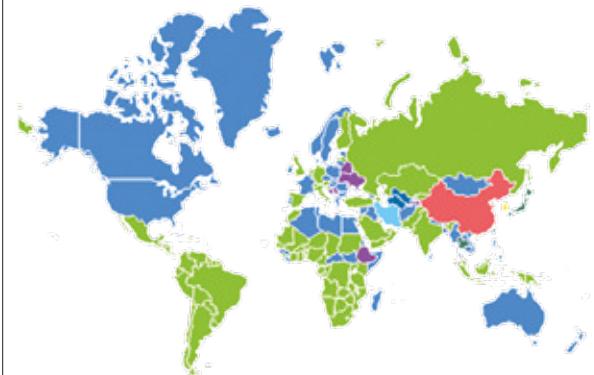
03

THE WHATSAPP DOMINANCE

Having established a dominant presence around the world, WhatsApp gathers more than half of its users in just 10 coun-

tries. Even in the US, where Messenger is by far the most used messaging application, WhatsApp's penetration goes beyond 1/5th of the population.

Country	Country WhatsApp Users (in millions)	Country Penetration
Spain	30,5	64,89%
Italy	32,9	54,83%
Germany	43,9	52,89%
Brazil	99	47,37%
Mexico	57,2	44,34%
UK	27,6	41,82%
Russia	54,1	37,57%
India	340	25,39%
Indonesia	59,9	22,69%
USA	68,1	20,83%



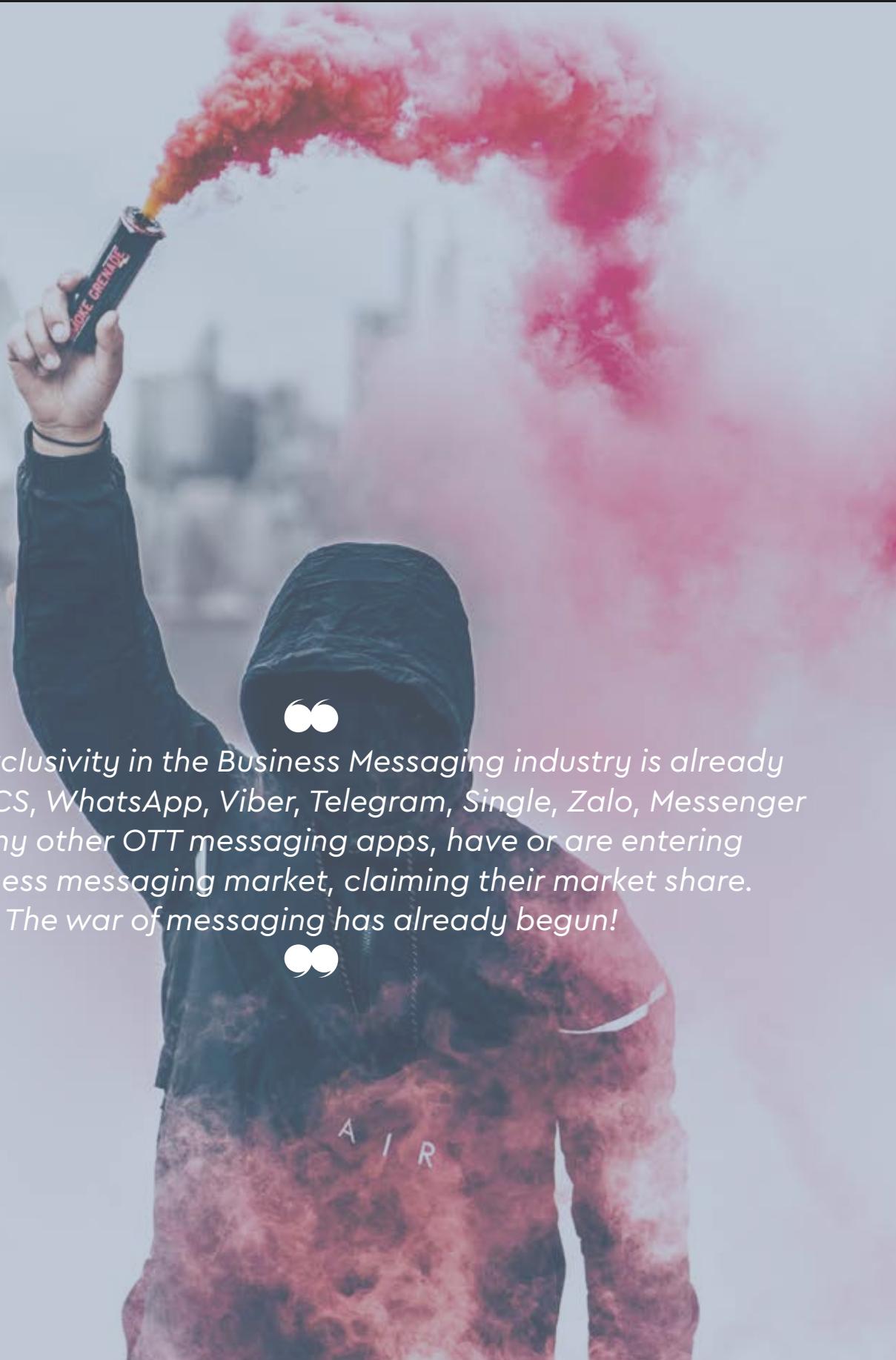
Source: www.statista.com

This wide dispersion is the reason why WhatsApp is the most popular OTT messaging app, globally.

04

FACTS & FIGURES YOU NEED TO KNOW

- WhatsApp was founded in 2009 by Brian Acton and Jan Koum, former Yahoo employees.
- It is globally the No. 1 Messaging Application.
- Holds 1,5 billion users.
- It is used across 180 countries.
- In 2010 Google offered 10b USD for WhatsApp.
- In 2010 Facebook offered 19b USD for WhatsApp.
- 58% of users access WhatsApp several times per day.
- WhatsApp is the third most downloaded Android app in the world (after Facebook and YouTube).
- WhatsApp has spent zero cash on marketing, PR, and user acquisition.
- One million people register on WhatsApp, daily.
- The average user checks WhatsApp more than 23 times a day.
- Brazil tops the list of WhatsApp users, with 19.91% of the total number of users coming from this country.
- India is second with 7.61%.
- Turkey is the home of 5.62% of WhatsApp users.
- 84% of smartphone users in Argentina use WhatsApp.
- Many years ago, Twitter & Facebook had the chance to hire Brian Acton, who later founded WhatsApp. However, they decided he wasn't good enough. A few years later, Facebook offered him a fortune to acquire his creation!



The SMS exclusivity in the Business Messaging industry is already outdated. RCS, WhatsApp, Viber, Telegram, Single, Zalo, Messenger and many other OTT messaging apps, have or are entering the business messaging market, claiming their market share.

The war of messaging has already begun!



05

WHATSAPP OFFICIAL RESELLERS - WHO ARE THEY?

The original list of 51 WhatsApp Resellers was recently extended by 5 additional players. So, at the writing of this paper, WhatsApp maintains a network of 56 «Partners» as they are called, that provide their own value-added services as well as WhatsApp message delivery, and each one offering it in their way.

Among them, we find some Telco companies, as messaging aggregators, but mostly we find Facebook partners that are involved in building and managing Facebook applications.



Creating fun-to-use Facebook apps is great, but it has nothing to do with the standards, the needs and the requirements of the enterprise messaging market.



1	36odialog	29	KeyReply
2	Accengage	30	Khoros LLC
3	ACL	31	LivePerson
4	Ameyo	32	Macrokiost
5	Axxia	33	Message Bird
6	Botmaker	34	MessengerPeople
7	Brand Embassy	35	MFMS
8	Clarabridge	36	Netcore
9	Clare.AI	37	Nexmo
10	Clickatell	38	Nonomind
11	CM.com	39	RingCentral
12	CommBox	40	Sanuer
13	Conversocial	41	Sinch
14	DamCorp	42	Smooch
15	Emma Global	43	Sparkcentral
16	Facelift	44	Superare
17	Falcon.io	45	Take
18	Freshworks	46	Twilio
19	Gupshup	47	Tyntec
20	Haptik	48	UIB
21	Hello Technology	49	Value First
22	Hubtype	50	Wappin
23	IMImobile	51	Wavecell
24	Infobip	52	Wavy Global
25	Jatis Mobile	53	Whatsquare
26	Kaleyra	54	Yalochat
27	Karix	55	Yello Messenger
28	Kata.ai	56	Zendesk

06 THE MONTHLY WABA COST

The service for the creation, maintenance and use of a WABA account is charged at a specific monthly fee. The costs of a WABA vary significantly depending on the reseller. For the same features, each WABA can cost from approximately 50 to 350 EUR per month. The price of a WABA is not mandated by WhatsApp itself, any official reseller may set the price at their discretion.

Choosing the right WhatsApp provider requires great research and consideration. But the results, reward the effort!

07 HOW TO CREATE A WABA

For the creation of a WABA account, your company will need to partner with a WhatsApp provider. To create an account, you will need:

1. A telephone number (landline or mobile)
2. The Company Name
3. Facebook Business ID
4. Verified Facebook Account
5. Name of a contact person in the company
6. Desired Sender Name

The implementation to

create and approve a WABA requires around 5 to 10 business days. WhatsApp allows businesses to create up to four different accounts, separate telephone numbers and sender names are required for each.

As a result, a business can have one WABA account for its customer service and one for its technical support, and hence addressing all of its customers' needs via the same medium, supporting the customer interactions for up to 4 different departments.

08 THE MESSAGING NATURE

Contrary to SMS and Viber, WhatsApp allows only informative and transactional messages. Promotional or marketing messages are not allowed, no exceptions!

Warning
Promotional
Messaging
is strictly
forbidden!

09

WHAT IS A TEMPLATE AND WHERE IS IT NEEDED?

Both in SMS and Viber Messaging, every marketer can create its own content according to the brand's needs, including broadcast marketing campaigns. WhatsApp messaging is taking a different stance in order to categorically protect its users from

being spammed. Not only is it not allowing marketing content, but it requires that the enterprise can only send messages from pre-approved templates.

Every brand can and must ask for its templates to receive approval in advance. However, there is no limit

to the number of templates that a business can use. This is valid for communication initiated by the enterprise. In case the end-user initiates the conversation with the brand, the answer isn't restricted to the approved templates and can be free text.

10

THE VARIETY OF COMMERCIAL POLICIES

WhatsApp has not announced a fixed, joint pricing policy for its partners. This fact has given the ability to every one of the 56 official resellers to implement their own pricing strategy. That's why there is a clear demand for in-depth research and further investigation.

There are two basic elements to be charged, (A & B) which pricing may vary

depending on the different policies of the providers:

- A) The Monthly Fee per WABA**
- B) The Cost per Sent Message (see next chapter)**
and some others (C, D, E) which some providers charge and some others do not.
- C) The Templates Cost**
- D) The Cost per Message sent during a chat session**
- E) The Hosting Cost per each WABA account**
Opting for the most finan-

cially beneficial WhatsApp reseller demands to contact all of them since the cost varies significantly.

In addition to that, there are services, i.e. the creation of a template, that some charge extra, while others don't. Finally, price is only one component, every reseller has more or less sophisticated software packages that help the enterprise managing all their WhatsApp business communication.

11

THE COST PER SENT MESSAGE

Although the pioneer, Viber includes some tens of thousands of messages in the monthly cost of the account, WhatsApp's resellers do not include any free messages in the monthly cost of WABA. Until today, every templated and brand-initiated message is charged separately. For this

purpose, Facebook has published an official worldwide messaging pricing list with charges that vary from country to country. Some resellers add a markup and some others don't! And lately, some of the resellers opted for including some thousands of messages without any additional charge.



The enterprise messaging industry is a completely different environment.

Compared to the wholesale, the enterprise segment tends to be more demanding and detail-oriented!

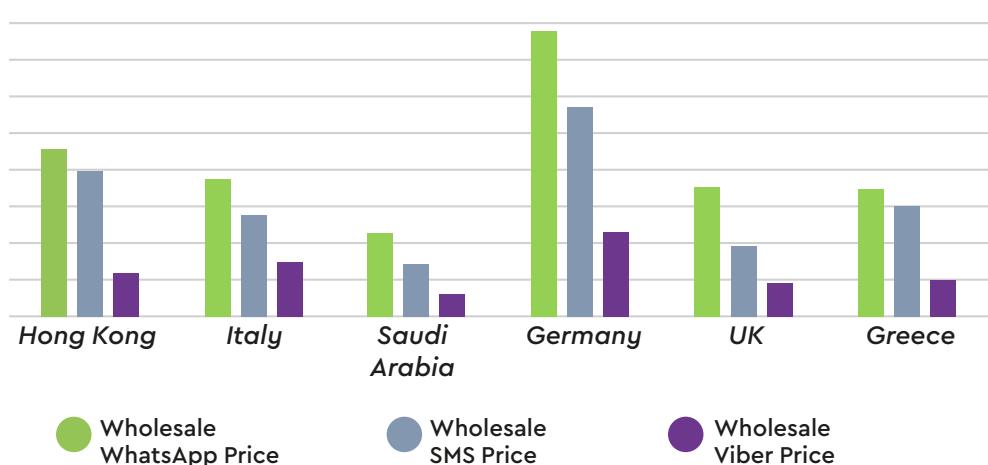


12

MESSAGING PRICE COMPARISON (WHOLESALE)

In conclusion, is WhatsApp as a communication channel inexpensive, rather affordable, or pricey? The Wholesale Pricing Comparison table, speaks for itself.

WHOLESALE PRICING COMPARISON



13

PLATFORM, API OR BOTH?

A message from Viber can be sent through API, or by creating and sending messaging campaigns, through an OMNI-Channel platform. Since Viber allows the sending of bulk messages – often advertisements or marketing campaigns – the availability of such a platform is a prerequisite, for the creation and management of bulk campaigns.

However, Viber doesn't offer a platform for sending bulk messages. Resellers and other service providers are there-

fore forced to offer a solution. Both are interconnected either directly or through third parties, by using Viber's API.

The same thing happens today with messages sent via WhatsApp. If you already have your own messaging platform, you can choose a WhatsApp API provider and integrate WhatsApp Business service into your platform.

If you don't have your own SMS platform, then you have to investigate further. Some resellers provide WhatsApp termination exclusively from

their platform. As a matter of fact, this is not the best practice for retail messaging companies, which conduct the campaigns on behalf of their enterprise customers, because the use of another platform reduces your value-add and bears the risk of losing the customer.

For your own freedom, autonomy and security, you can simply seek and buy your OMNI-channel platform, that will provide you with all messaging services needed, without risking your clientele.

14

VIBER VS WHATSAPP

For the time being, both Viber and WhatsApp, remain two of the most popular OTT messaging apps, that provide business messaging services. The comparative table sums up the similarities and differences between the two applications.

Viber Vs WhatsApp	Viber	WhatsApp
Number of Users	1b	1.5b
Characters of Message	>1000	>1000
Sender Name	✓	✓
Multi Language	32	60
International Coverage	✓	✓
Informative Messages	✓	✓
Transactional Messages	✓	✓
Promotional Messages	✓	✗
Free Messages per Month	✓	✗
Cost Per Month	✓	✓
Cost per Template Creation	✗	✓
Cost of Session Messaging	✓	Viber Yes / WhatsApp Varies
Chatbot functionality	✓	✗ NOT YET



GTC team is ready to recommend the most suitable WhatsApp partners for you; the ones who will save your business time, reduce your spending and provide the competitive advantages needed to conquer the messaging industry



15

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT WHATSAPP PROVIDER «DOs & DON'Ts»

If you're considering involving WhatsApp Messaging into your business services, either as a wholesaler or as an enterprise messaging provider, choosing the right provider is the most significant factor to success.

Especially in the enterprise messaging market, you have to be twice as careful because compared to the wholesale, the enterprise segment is paying much higher attention to service details!

The following ten characteristics are the most important to consider and check before choosing a provider. This will help you to ensure the knowledge, the tools and the financial competitive advantage needed to conquer the messaging industry.

1. Get the Job Done!

Research! No matter how time-consuming it is, comparing the official resellers is key to choose the most reasonable prices and all the amenities needed for successful business development. Best you create a hypothetical traffic model that forecasts the amount of WABAs and messages needed in order to calculate the total cost, summing up the cost items listed under points 2 to 5.

2. Cost per WABA

Being a monthly recurring cost, the cost per WABA is the most relevant line item. Ensure you select the most competitive offer securing the minimum functionality you need.

3. Cost per Message sent

WhatsApp published on Facebook's developer page its pricelist for sending templated messages across the globe: <https://cutt.ly/WrBsTW7>. Prices vary, from country to country. Some of the official WhatsApp resellers, do not alter the prices and just pass on their costs. Others have added a markup over the initial prices. Best you check directly with the source.

And some even include free messages into their monthly bundle offer.

4. The Template Cost

Some of the providers charge you for the creation of a template. This is one of the most important characteristics, as far as the competitiveness of the service is concerned. But also ask how long the approval process will take and how the provider can support and consult you to get it approved.

5. The Session Cost

A session is the chat duration started when a customer contacts a business. Things become rather complex here. At wholesale level, WhatsApp officially does not charge for any message sent within a session. However, pricing policy varies among partners once again. Some charge for every message sent to customers (according to the price list stated before). Others charge per session, starting at the time the customer sends the initial message to the enterprise. Such session ends after 12 or 24 hours, depending on the provider. There are official WhatsApp resellers who

charge per sent message within a session as well.

6. API or Platform

That is the question! Although, this depends on the way you wish to provide the service. If you are interested in wholesale, then an API is the only thing you need. However, if your clientele includes companies that use enterprise messaging, then things look slightly different.

Some of the 56 resellers force their partners to make use of their messaging platform. For enterprise messaging service providers this practically means that your value-add towards the brands becomes rather small in comparison to the WhatsApp partner.

For your own freedom, autonomy and security, it is required to integrate WhatsApp API on your existing platform. Otherwise, you can simply seek and buy your own OMNI-channel platform, that will provide you with all the messaging services needed, without risking your clientele.

There are many reliable companies in the messaging market, which have created OMNI-channel platforms for

SMS, Viber, and WhatsApp, including a fallback to SMS. These platforms are provided as white-label, too. As a consequence, any business having expertise in enterprise messaging can get the platform needed, in order to use all channels and termination.

7. Define other Expenses

"Would you prefer your customers' WABA hosting to be based on Beijing, Shanghai, Frankfurt or Zurich?" Some of the official WhatsApp resellers have found innovative ways to add further costs. During your extensive research, you will find out that WABA hosting in Shanghai costs 17 USD more per month, in Frankfurt 25 USD etc. Thankfully, such resellers are not the majority.

8. Enterprise Messaging Knowledge

When contacting the official resellers, it'll be easy to spot the ones who don't address directly the enterprise messaging market; and you'll soon find that they are representing a majority. Pick the ones who are aware of the differences and are able to provide the knowledge and tools needed to succeed. Creating fun-to-

use Facebook apps is lovely but it has nothing to do with the high standards of enterprise messaging.

9. Provider Reliability

When collaborative business communication starts, it is important for communication to be continuous and consistent. Choose to work with a business that responds to your emails quickly. If during your communication with the business you experience significant delays in their responses, imagine the response time you will have once you have become a customer.

10. Ask the Messaging Experts

At GTC we help you do messaging! As it's been the case with SMS, Viber and RCS services, we've done our homework and we are ready to recommend the most suitable WhatsApp partners for you; the ones who will save your business time, reduce your spending and provide the competitive advantages needed to conquer the messaging industry.

Contact us for a free Hangouts session at andreas@globalTelcoconsult.com

With more than 50 official **WhatsApp Business Account** (WABA) resellers, the decision path for choosing the right WhatsApp provider seems to be a complicated and very demanding procedure.

- Is there a way to **avoid** the template cost?
- Do you have to pay monthly **hosting fees** per every single **WABA**?
- How does the service **differ** when paying 100euros instead of 300euros per WABA per month?

In **Global Telco Consult** we have done our research to make it **easier for you**. Our free **White Paper** helps you to understand the differences between **all the commercial policies**, allowing you to **choose** the offering with **the most competitive prices** and the best **service quality**!



www.globaltelcoconsult.com

We Help You Do Messaging!