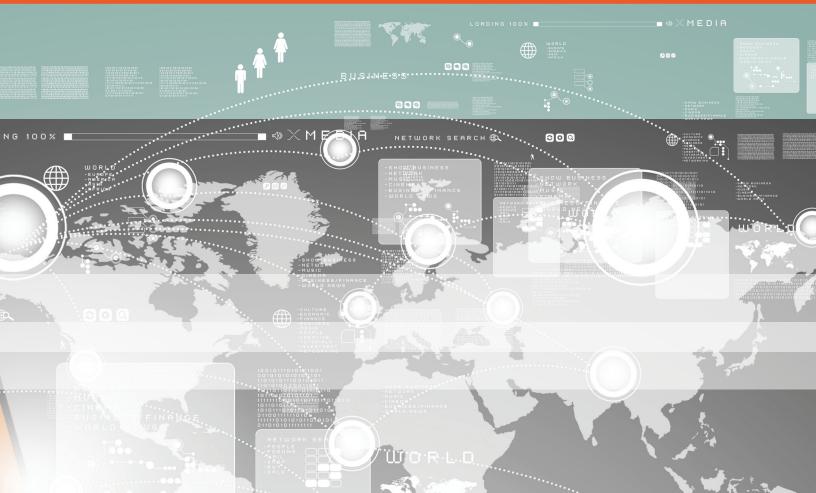# Foundations of
Conversational Marketing

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Foundations of Conversational Marketing »

Conversational Marketing messaging bots engage prospects and customers in conversations that make them the source of the most recent and accurate indicators of their intents, preferences and instructions. Leveraging this new approach to consumer engagement, brands can gain competitive advantage and increased customer lifetime value from the ongoing customer relationship-building these bots can provide. In this document, Opus Research will describe the features and functions supported by Conversational Marketing platforms and toolkits and provide a list of solution providers that have taken leadership positions in this domain.

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Strategic Findings

Conversational Marketing's time has come – Email is inefficient. Search marketing is wasteful. Outbound messaging can be ill-timed and mis-targeted. Conversational Marketing messaging bots engage prospects and customers in conversations that make them the source of the most recent and accurate indicators of their intents, preferences and instructions.

Most Messenger bots are not conversational – Brands, by and large, rushed to create Messenger bots on Facebook motivated by a perceived need to automate interactions with their "Fan Pages" and maintain parity with competitors. The results, for the most part, are single-purpose, unidirectional "feeds" or commerce platforms that fall short of true conversations. To date, conversational use cases that are vehicles for user-centricity haven't been well thought out. But that is beginning to change as a second-generation of bots focused on specific customer pain points are being released by brands that see the long-term potential of Conversational Marketing and seek competitive advantage from the ongoing customer relationship-building these bots can provide.

Tools must be designed for marketers and designers, not developers – Marketers and designers need tools to create, analyze, tweak and manage effective, long-term conversations without the need for long and expensive development cycles. In this report, Opus Research evaluates solutions by how well they integrate Natural Language Processing to enable people to communicate in their own words and apply Artificial Intelligence to detect and define the most appropriate messages and actions to be taken and whether those solutions put that power in the hands of those closest to the customer and the experiences they will find most helpful.

Elegant integration with IT improve conversations – Most genuinely useful bot experiences require integration to one or more back-end systems to facilitate engagement, personalization, and transactions throughout the entire customer journey. A big differentiator among solution providers are ready-made interfaces with existing CRM systems (for customer profiles and activities), "live" access to inventory (to support e-commerce) and the ability to transition to checkout and payments in the course of a conversation.

Solutions must be "enterprise grade" – Because bots are in the critical path between companies and their customers or prospects, solutions must comply with high-standards for reliability, security, encryption and privacy protection and have the ability to scale.

For more information and to purchase Opus Research's
"**Foundations of Conversational Marketing: Engaging Prospects and Customers Through Messaging Bots**" (February 2018), please contact:

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About Opus Research

Opus Research is a diversified advisory and analysis firm providing critical insight on software and services that support multimodal customer care. Opus Research is focused on "Conversational Commerce," the merging of intelligent assistant technologies, contact center automation, intelligent authentication, enterprise collaboration and mobile commerce. Opus Research organizes and produces industry-leading events that feature case studies, in-depth panel discussions and unprecedented networking opportunities for enterprises, customers, solutions providers, and technology vendors to foster new business opportunities in emerging markets.

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