

Top 12 Things To Look For in a Great Mobile Chat Solution

Introduction

Extending chat to mobile customers is one of the hottest topics in mobile engagement. With mobile devices playing an increasingly important role in both e-commerce and in-store spending, connecting with customers wherever they are has become more important than ever. And just as live chat has become a critical part of customer engagement on your website, it's just as important on your mobile site and mobile app!

And perhaps even *more* so... Live chat is the preferred communication channel for most customers, and when a customer is looking for information on a mobile device, he or she is more likely to be in the process of actively shopping, researching, or making a purchase decision. Mobile chat is an opportunity to provide the information that your customers need, exactly when and where they need it, while keeping them connected to your app or mobile site. And while you're shoring up all these new sales opportunities that might otherwise have fallen by the wayside, you're adding a "wow factor" that your competitors aren't. (Yet.)

LivePerson is the leading provider of live chat solutions, and a pioneer and innovator in both desktop and mobile chat. We have been helping companies—ranging from small businesses to global enterprises—implement mobile chat solutions designed to drive business results that include increased sales and improved customer satisfaction and loyalty. In this paper, we'll be taking a look at what to look for (and look *out* for) in a great mobile chat solution.

1. Leverage your existing chat platform and infrastructure.

A great mobile chat solution should not require a substantial amount of additional administrative or IT burden. It should be an extension of your existing desktop chat, allowing you to leverage the very same agents, the same agent tools, the same administrative tools, and the same IT platform.

2. Deliver a rich, "desktop-like" chat experience. And more!

At quick glance, this sounds like a given. Sounds like an obvious requirement that would be addressed by even the most basic solutions out there. But it's not. Mobile devices, mobile user interfaces, and mobile user expectations are quite different from their desktop counterparts, and to ensure a positive user experience, it's important that your mobile chat solution addresses these differences with keen attention to detail.

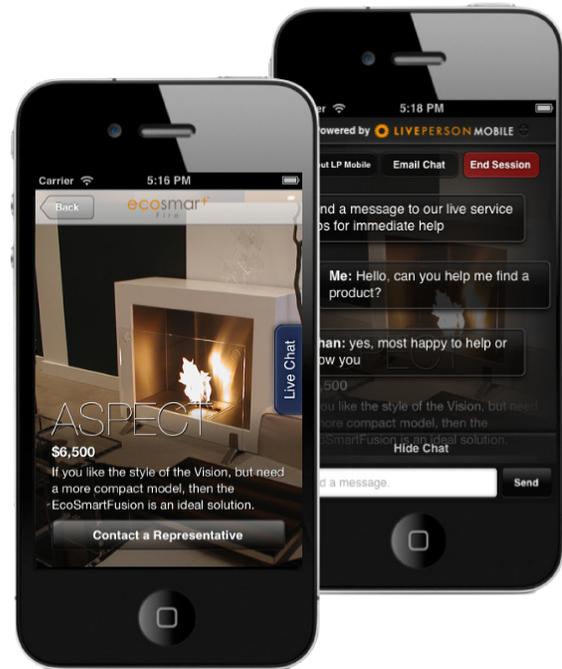
For example, you might not even think about how important it is for the customer to be able to see when an agent is typing. Or when you think about desktop chat, having a continuous, uninterrupted internet connection is typically taken for granted—not so for mobile. Or it might not be immediately obvious that sending a hyperlink within a chat message would be disruptive to a customer using a mobile app.

As you read on, several of the items below will address this concept, but it's an important over-arching goal that should always be top-of-mind.

3. Keep customers in your mobile app or mobile site.

On the desktop, chats typically open in a new window. But this paradigm does not translate well to mobile, where managing multiple windows does not lend itself to a positive mobile experience. A great mobile chat solution must become an integral part of the mobile site or mobile app and become part of your brand experience. Customers should not be brought out of the site or app. And if they do wander away during a live chat, the chat solution should notify them of incoming chat messages so they can easily and immediately be brought back into to the live chat conversation.

A great mobile chat solution must become an integral part of the mobile site or mobile app. Customers should not be brought out of the site or app.



4. Make sure your agents can easily identify mobile customers.

Mobile customers are more likely to be in the process of actively shopping, researching, or making a purchase decision. They often have a greater sense of urgency, and a 30-second wait will feel a lot longer to the mobile customer than to the desktop customer, who can easily pass the time checking email, text messages, and the latest goings-on with the Kardashians. A great mobile chat solution will allow the agent to easily identify mobile customers, which, as a matter of best practices, would be handled on a priority basis. Further, a great mobile chat solution will provide special features and capabilities that can be used by the agent to enhance the mobile chat experience. (Several of these are discussed below.)

5. Make sure that a separate set of mobile-friendly prepared responses is available.

While the agent's transition from serving desktop customers to mobile customers is not complex, it is very important that a separate set of mobile-friendly prepared responses is available. Why?

- Concise responses are critical to a positive mobile chat experience. This is true not only due to the obvious smaller screen of smartphones, but also due to the mobile customer's generally greater sense of urgency.
- Responses to mobile customers should not contain traditional hyperlinks, which will bring the customer out of the chat, out of the engagement, and possibly out of your company's mobile app. On a related note, the responses *should* contain a means for customers to navigate to selected pages within a mobile app, without disrupting the chat. More on this later...
- Mobile customers come with a unique set of common questions and circumstances, for which responses can be prepared. They might relate to their location (as revealed by GPS), to finding the closest store or branch, or to a promotion to help drive an immediate in-store purchase.

6. Dropped connections must not mean dropped chats.

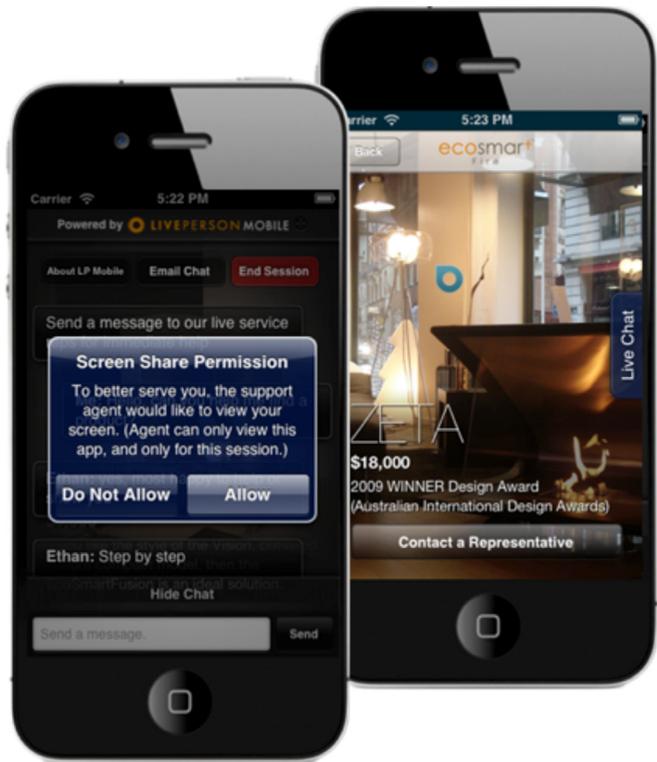
Highly variable signals and dropped connections is part and parcel of mobile communications. If a mobile chat abruptly ends every time a weak signal is encountered, you can expect a lot of frustrated customers! And how likely is it that the customer would be willing to start the chat all over again with a new agent? Not very. A great mobile chat solution will be designed to withstand dropped connections and continue seamlessly upon reconnection. Short connectivity lapses should not even be noticeable to the customer!

7. Deliver dynamic, interactive chat experiences.

We've come to expect dynamic interaction during desktop engagement. Although we often don't see this with mobile apps, that fact doesn't make it any less important to ensuring a superior mobile customer experience. Some things that a great mobile chat solution should have will include:

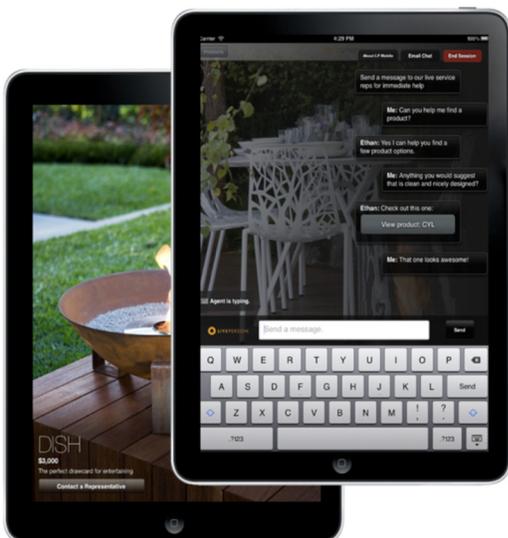
- Ability for a customer to see when an agent is typing
- Ability to display a chat button only when agents are available
- Ability for a customer to share his or her screen with the agent
- Ability for an agent to guide a customer by "pointing" to places on the screen

Being able to view the customer's screen and guide the customer by "pointing" ensures a great customer experience.



8. Help customers navigate your mobile app.

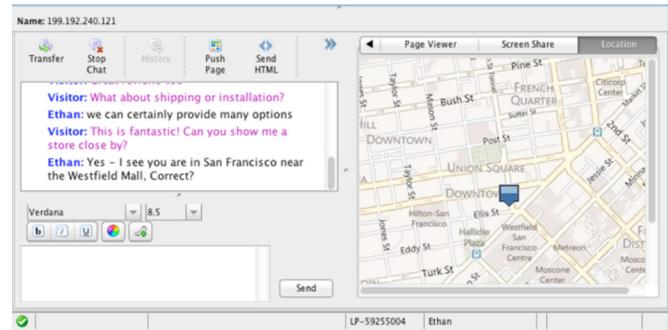
We discussed earlier that agent responses must not contain traditional, URL-based hyperlinks, which would bring the customer out of the chat and effectively end the engagement. There should, however, be a way that an agent can direct a customer to a specific product or service or support page within your mobile app. By way of example, with LivePerson's mobile chat solution, agents are able to send a button, which when pressed, will navigate the user to the desired mobile app view, without disrupting the chat.



By sending a button within a chat message, an agent can direct a customer to a specific page within your mobile app, while maintaining the chat and keeping the customer engaged.

9. Leverage your customers' GPS.

For GPS-enabled apps, being able to leverage customer location data can be a powerful way to provide a high level of service. With a great mobile chat solution, agents can inform customers of regional promotions or services, inform them of stores or branch locations in the area, or even provide step-by-step directions to the nearest location!

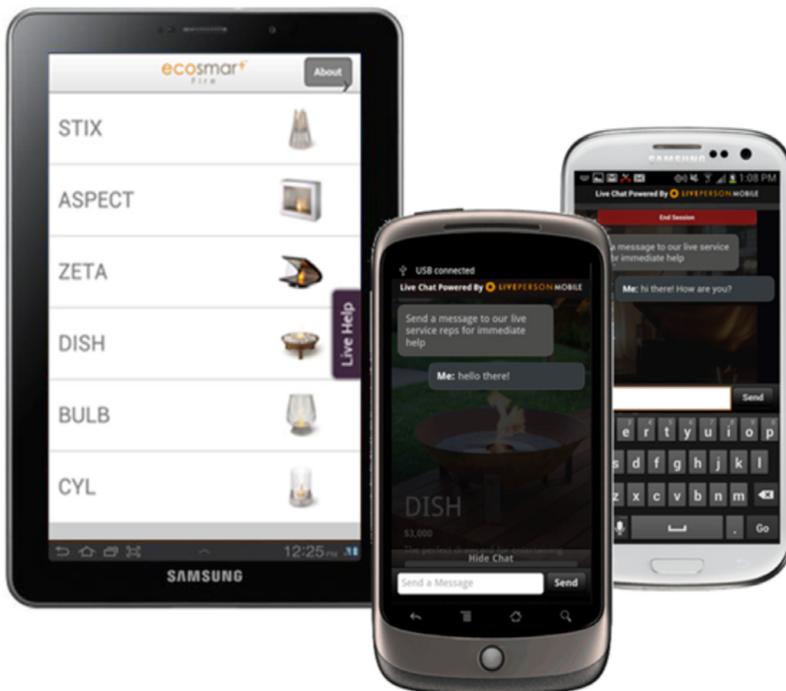


With mobile chat solutions that leverage GPS, agents can provide enhanced services by knowing exactly where customers are.

10. Operating system compatibility.

With the broad range of mobile devices, operating systems, and OS versions being used at any given time, most would agree that reaching 100% compatibility would be an impractical goal. However, reaching the vast majority of mobile customers is quite achievable. According to a recent comScore report (October 2012), 52.6% of smartphone subscribers in the U.S. use Google's Android mobile platform, and 34.3% use Apple's iOS platform, together representing nearly 87% of all smartphone subscribers. If your customer base is likely to have mobile operating systems in similar proportions, focusing on just iOS and Android compatibility might be a reasonable strategy, at least to get you started.

Similarly, a recent Pew Research Center survey (October 2012) reported that 52% of adult tablet owners in the U.S. own an iPad, and 48% own an Android tablet. Ensure that your mobile chat solution offers tablet compatibility as well, both with the iOS and Android operating systems.



Look for compatibility with both smartphones and tablets, both iOS and Android operating systems, and both mobile-optimized sites and apps.

11. Compatibility and support for both mobile apps and mobile sites, both on smartphones and tablets.

As you examine compatibility, you'll want to look at compatibility with both iOS apps and iOS native browsers, as well as with Android apps and the native browsers on the major Android devices. Keep in mind that Android-based apps are not necessarily compatible with all Android-based devices, so this should be explored. You'll also want to find out how the mobile chat vendor handles updates as new operating system versions are released, in terms of distribution, timing, and cost.

12. Ensure your client data is secure.

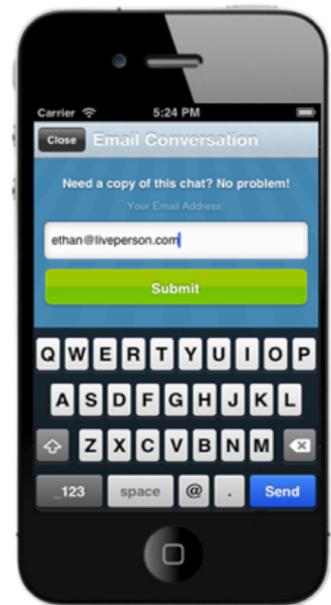
Your chats contain a wealth of data. Account information, transaction information, contact information, payment information—some of it may be personally identifiable, and all of it can be leveraged to provide customer insights and more intelligent future engagements. Data security must be a priority. Make sure your mobile chats are secure.

Get Started!

The shift from desktop to mobile among online consumers is incontrovertible and is accelerating in a variety of ways, including mobile commerce volume, research of products and services, and expectations of service levels. Professionals in e-commerce, marketing, customer service, and customer experience are aggressively deploying strategies to meet customers where they are and to deliver the services and experiences customers want and expect.

Live chat has become an expected service on traditional websites and now has the highest customer service rating among online service channels (Forrester, 2012). Live chat on mobile is expected to follow suit. Your selection of a great mobile chat solution can have important and enduring implications for your business, and careful consideration of your options is imperative.

Just as on a desktop, the option to send a chat transcript is a great way to complete the mobile chat experience.



About LivePerson Mobile Chat Solutions

As the leading provider of real-time customer engagement solutions, LivePerson has helped global companies extend their brand promise into the mobile space, and engage both prospective and existing customers wherever they are. With a highly-advanced feature set, LivePerson's mobile chat solutions provide exceptional chat experiences through seamless integration with native mobile apps as well as mobile-optimized sites. Implementation is "plug and play", and the solution is fully integrated within the LivePerson chat infrastructure. For more information, visit www.liveperson.com/mobile.

About LivePerson

LivePerson, Inc. (NASDAQ: LPSN) offers a cloud-based platform that enables businesses to proactively connect in real-time with their customers via chat, voice, and content delivery at the right time, through the right channel, including websites, social media, and mobile devices. This “intelligent engagement” is driven by real-time behavioral analytics, producing connections based on a true understanding of business objectives and customer needs.

More than 8,500 companies rely on LivePerson’s platform to increase conversions and improve customer experience, including Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Microsoft, Verizon, Sky, Walt Disney, PNC, QVC and Orbitz.

LivePerson received the CODiE award for Best Content Management Solution in 2012 and for Best Ecommerce Solution in 2011, and has been named a Company of the Year by Frost and Sullivan in 2011. LivePerson is headquartered in New York City with offices in San Francisco, Atlanta, Tel Aviv, London and Melbourne.

Contact

LivePerson, Inc.
475 Tenth Ave
5th Floor
New York, NY 10018

T: 212.991.1794
F: 212.609.4233
info@liveperson.com
www.liveperson.com

Notices

All information provided in this white paper, including all content, diagrams, data, graphs, lists and other materials, is provided "AS-IS". LIVEPERSON, INC. MAKES NO REPRESENTATION OR WARRANTY, WHETHER EXPRESS, IMPLIED, STATUTORY OR OTHERWISE, OR INDEMNITY WITH RESPECT TO ANY INFORMATION, AND LIVEPERSON, INC. EXPRESSLY DISCLAIMS ALL IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NON-INFRINGEMENT. Information furnished is believed to be accurate and reliable. LivePerson, Inc. assumes no responsibility or liability for use of such information or for any infringement of patents, trademarks, copyrights or other rights of any third parties that may result from such use. No license is granted by implication or otherwise under any patent or under any other intellectual property right. Information included in this document is subject to change without notice.

Trademarks

LIVEPERSON is a registered trademark of LivePerson, Inc.

Copyrights

© 2012 LivePerson, Inc. All rights reserved.