Getting Started with Business Chat

Business Chat Overview

Business Chat is a service that allows your organization to directly chat with your customers using the Messages app. You can also use the full power of the iMessage framework to help your customers resolve issues, schedule appointments, make purchases, or make payments with Apple Pay. Depending on your configuration, your customers are able to start a conversation through a Business Chat entry point from your website, your app, emails and other touch points. Depending on your configuration, customers can also find your business and start a conversation from within Siri, Search, and Apple Maps.

The first step to communicating using Business Chat with your customers is through Apple Business Register, where you can create a Business Chat account (BCA). As shown below, a Customer Service Platform (CSP) is required to connect your business to the Business Chat service. A CSP provides the software and services necessary to allow your agents to respond from their consoles to customer messages sent from the Messages app on Apple devices. A list of approved CSPs can be found on Apple Business Register.
Providers of business messaging and customer service platforms can apply for a CSP account on Apple Business Register as well. There are very specific requirements for this type of account and applications are carefully reviewed.

The onboarding steps for both BCAs and CSP providers requires an Apple review at different points in the process. While Apple is reviewing your progress, you can start planning your Business Chat solution. If you are registering for a BCA, research your business needs and provide an adequate process plan that identifies and authenticates your customers within Business Chat, to your CSP. Approved CSPs receive access to detailed documentation and access to our dedicated support team to assist you.

Apple recommends that you follow Business Chat Policies and Best Practices for your business to ensure a positive customer experience using Business Chat.

Qualifying as a Business

To qualify for a BCA you must have an asynchronous messaging platform staffed by live agents during business hours. Your business must use one of the CSP providers approved by Apple.

In addition, your business must be willing and capable of offering comparable service to your customers over Business Chat that it is currently provided over your telephone support line.

Qualifying as a Customer Service Platform Provider

To qualify for a commercial CSP account your platform must support asynchronous messaging with live agents and basic automation support. Your platform is also expected to have the capability to determine customer intent, queue, prioritize, and route messages to the appropriate agent or group of agents, and send and receive messages and app content to your clients’ customers using the Business Chat service.

Apple selects those businesses for the Business Chat CSP program that have clients in the medium-to-large enterprise categories and are live on other asynchronous messaging channels. Once selected for the Business Chat CSP program, you must complete full integration of all Business Chat features and commit to staying current with all future updates and enhancements.

Operationally, you must demonstrate your capability to assist your business clients to be launch ready for Business Chat. Launch ready means that your business clients must demonstrate the ability to resolve all customer queries that are regularly resolved over their telephone support line. In addition, your business clients must create a Business Chat experience for each of the top 20 reasons that customers contact them. You must also provide technical support and guidance with integrating their apps and business
services, such as CRM, Authentication, and Order Management Systems, with your platform to provide a rich Business Chat experience.

To successfully launch brands with Business Chat, you must develop a traffic ramp plan to support this channel, defining ways to drive users to use it, and ensure resources are in place to support it as usage increases. To enable intelligent resource planning, you need to work with brands to collect CSAT, NPS, and other metrics.

Assigning Roles to Your Team Members

Before you begin your organization registration, assign the roles below to team members. It is recommended that you have more than one team member for each role. Each team member assigned a role must have an Apple ID that uses your organization’s email, see Create an Apple ID.

- Administrative contact: An employee that an Apple Business Register representative can contact for technical issues. The administrator can also register the business using Business Register. It is recommended to have two administrative contacts for redundancy.
- Technical contact: An employee that an Apple Business Register representative can contact for technical issues.
- Sponsoring executive: A senior member of your team responsible for overseeing your Business Chat project to agree to the Terms of Use (TOU).

Applying to Use the Business Chat Service

To use the Business Chat service register your organization. Assign team members the roles of administrator and sponsoring executive before beginning the application process. It is recommended that you designate more than one team member to the roles needed to complete the onboarding process. These roles are designated during the registration process.

The complete organization onboarding process, including applying for either Business Chat Accounts or CSPs, requires actions from an administrator, a technical contact, and a sponsoring executive. The administrator uses Apple Business Register to register the organization and approve the TOU on behalf of the sponsoring executive, the technical contact can set up Business Chat Accounts, CSPs, and Brands, and the sponsoring executive agrees to the TOU. You should have these program contact roles identified prior to registration. See Assigning Roles to Your Team Members.

The first step in onboarding your organization, whether you are a business or a CSP provider, is to ensure you and your team members have an Apple ID using your organization’s email address.

1. **Create an Apple ID.** An Apple ID is typically for the personal use of Apple services, such as storing personal content in iCloud and downloading apps from the App Store. If you have a personal Apple ID, you should create a separate one using your organization's email address to administer Business Chat. A separate administrative Apple ID lets you distinguish Business Chat communications from personal Apple communications. See Create an Apple ID.

2. **Apply to use the Business Chat Service.** Review the requirements for either account type and start your application process.
Apply for Your Business Chat Service

1. Sign in to Apple Business Register.
2. Agree to the Terms of Use.
3. Click Apply for access.
4. Acknowledge Apple policies for Business Chat Accounts and click Next. You won’t be able to proceed without the acknowledgment.
5. Select your organization type and click Next.
6. Enter your organization information and click Next.
7. Enter your organization’s head office location information and click Next.
8. Verify the location on the map matches your head office location and click Next.
9. Add any web links that would help customers locate you and click Next.
10. Add a primary contact and click Next.
11. Assign roles to the contact you created and click Next.
12. Select the organization venues for the role you assigned Indoor Maps - Map Maker and Surveyor. Click Next. These selections only appear if you chose these roles for your contact.
13. Add a technical contact and a sponsoring executive, if appropriate. Click Next.
14. Set your monthly customer contacts and total number of live agents. Click Next.
15. Set the contacts to be resolved over Business Chat and live agents during business hours. Click Next.
17. When you're finished and you've filled out the required information without an error, a Ready to Submit window appears. Click Submit Now, or if you click Later, you can come back and click Submit for Review.

If you make mistakes, alerts help you correct them. When you finish, a completed profile page appears with the button Submit for Review.

After you submit your profile, the status area on the profile page shows that Apple is reviewing your profile.

What's next

Apple reviews your application and an email notification is sent to you with the next steps. For more information about onboarding, see Onboarding Your Business Chat Accounts.

To check on your application status, click Help located at the top right corner of the page, and fill out the email form.

NOTE

Business Chat accounts and Customer Service Platform provider accounts are not available until after the Business Chat Service application has been approved.