What is a Chatbot?
A chatbot is an intelligent agent that helps people create value for little effort. In the case of conversational bots, it’s communicated through a SMS messaging interface.

Why Should Marketers Care?
For marketers, chatbots provide an opportunity to reach millennials on the devices they use most: mobile. Additionally, chatbots allow self-service oriented consumers to get answers to their questions very quickly without having to navigate websites for information or products.

Key Chatbots Stat
According to the ANA Marketing Futures Chatbot study, 38% of marketers say chatbots will completely replace traditional techniques.
“Building a successful chatbot requires a cross-functional team. That usually includes a product lead, marketing, copywriters, UX designers, engineers, legal, and more,” she says. “We are starting to see brands define a role for ‘conversational commerce.’ Eventually, I believe this will fall under the umbrella of a new division for customer relationship or contact management, designed to provide touchpoints for every phase of the customer journey that is a blend of humans and automation.”
CASE STUDY

The Wentworth Rat

The Foxtel TV network was struggling to retain audiences as a change in how consumers watch TV was underway.

A new breed of agile competitors, such as Netflix, complicated audience retention. Foxtel wanted to make its show Wentworth, an Australian TV series set in a female prison, its weekly No. 1 drama. To do so, it used a chatbot to give consumers a new reason to watch live TV.

Foxtel created an entirely new character within the show’s plot and inside Wentworth’s prison. The new character was an anonymous prison rat who could smuggle out secrets, prison gossip, and exclusive content that viewers could access only if they watched Wentworth live.

Key cast members helped create a backstory, planting a rumor in popular fan forums that a contraband phone was found inside Wentworth. Once the rumor was plausible, Foxtel designed a Facebook Messenger experience that allowed the prison rat to chat with fans for a few stolen seconds every evening at a time that matched prison routines. After every episode, a dedicated debrief streamed live on Facebook.

Foxtel launched with leaked footage of the show’s prison governor refusing to comment on the Rat’s existence. Fan group activity increased 300 percent, and as theories became increasingly deranged, Foxtel launched its Messenger experience.

Wentworth’s new character changed the way fans watch TV, and the show ranked as No. 1 every week that it was on-air. Foxtel’s Messenger innovation set a new standard for the platform, garnering over 2,200 interactions — real fans talking directly to the Rat every week. Fans were compelled to watch live and did so in record numbers. The average fan spent one hour and nine minutes chatting with the Rat, and 95 percent of those fans talked to the Rat throughout the entire season.

Want to learn more?

ANA Members have access to the CMO Concierge Research Service, where our experts can help you get started on innovation by helping you find the right partners, identify industry benchmarks, and learn about consumer behavior around this and other emerging trends.

Contact ask@ana.net for more information.