WhatsApp Business API Guide

Overview

The WhatsApp Business API allows businesses to interact with their customers on WhatsApp, utilizing services for all Meta applications such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. This guide covers the use of webhooks, middleware server applications, account setup, message categorization, conversation management, and pricing information.

Business Guide

Setting Up Your Business Account

1. **Use Your Business Number**: You can use your own business WhatsApp account number to send messages. If you don't use your own number, a default number will be provided.
2. **Middleware Server Application**: It is recommended to add a middleware server application to manage the API interactions.

Message Categorization

Conversations are categorized into four types:

- **Marketing**: For generating awareness, driving sales, and retargeting customers. Examples include:
  - New product/service announcements
  - Targeted promotions/offers
  - Cart abandonment reminders
- **Utility**: For following up on user actions or requests. Examples include:
  - Opt-in confirmations
  - Order/delivery updates
  - Account updates/alerts
  - Feedback surveys
- **Authentication**: For user authentication with one-time passcodes during login processes. Examples include:
  - Account verification
  - Account recovery

- Integrity challenges
  - **Service**: For resolving customer inquiries. Examples include:
      - Customer support interactions

Message Templates and Free-Form Messages

- **Marketing, Utility, and Authentication Conversations**: Can only be initiated with template messages. If an existing conversation of the same category exists, no new conversation is opened. Otherwise, a new conversation of that category is opened and lasts for 24 hours.
- **Service Conversations**: Can be initiated with free-form messages.

Customer Service Window

When a customer messages you, a 24-hour customer service window opens.

- **Within the Window**: You can send free-form or template messages.
- **Outside the Window**: You can only send template messages.

Developer's Guide

Using Webhooks

Webhooks enable you to listen to a wide range of user and business actions and activities across Meta applications. They provide real-time updates and can be integrated into your existing systems.

Middleware Server Application

Implementing a middleware server application helps in:

- Managing API interactions
- Handling webhooks efficiently
- Ensuring secure and reliable communication with the WhatsApp Business API

Integration Steps

1. **Set Up Your WhatsApp Business Account**: Register and configure your business account on the WhatsApp Business API platform.
2. **Add Middleware Server**: Implement a server application to manage API requests and webhook responses.
3. **Configure Webhooks**: Set up webhooks to receive real-time notifications of user and business activities.
4. **Template Message Approval**: Submit your message templates for approval. Approved templates are necessary for initiating marketing, utility, and authentication conversations.

Pricing Information

Conversation Costs

- Conversations typically cost between $0.01 - $0.03 USD, depending on the country and time zone.
- Each WhatsApp Business Account receives 1,000 free service conversations per month across all business phone numbers.

Payment Method

- **Free Tier Conversations**: Can only be initiated by customers. Businesses cannot message customers until a valid payment method is added. Can only use a default sender number and the receiver numbers first needed to be added and verified using an OTP.
- **Pay-As-You-Go**: The payment model is pay-as-you-go.

Increasing Conversation Limits

- By sending a high volume of high-quality messages or verifying your business, you can increase your daily conversation limit from 250 to 1,000+ new conversations.
- Verified businesses can have their display name shown in chats and notifications, improving customer recognition and trust.

Missing Payment Method

- Without a valid payment method, businesses cannot initiate conversations and can only respond to customer–initiated messages within the free-tier limit.

Architecture Followed For Our Application
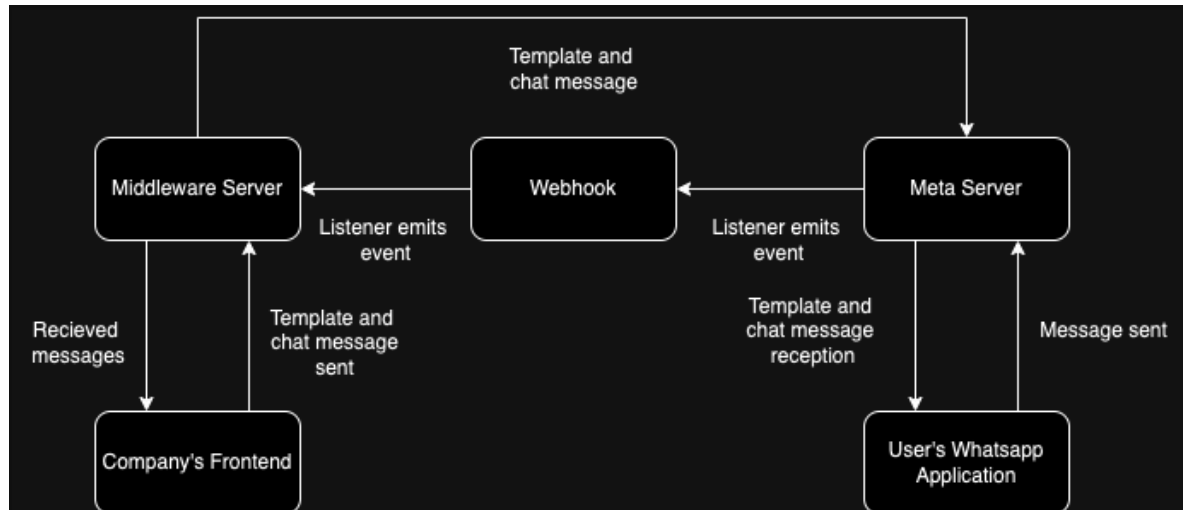
Additional Resources

For further details, please refer to:

- WhatsApp Pricing Information
- WhatsApp Business API Documentation