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Putting WhatsApp on your site: the link, the button and the ready-written message

WhatsApp & APIs

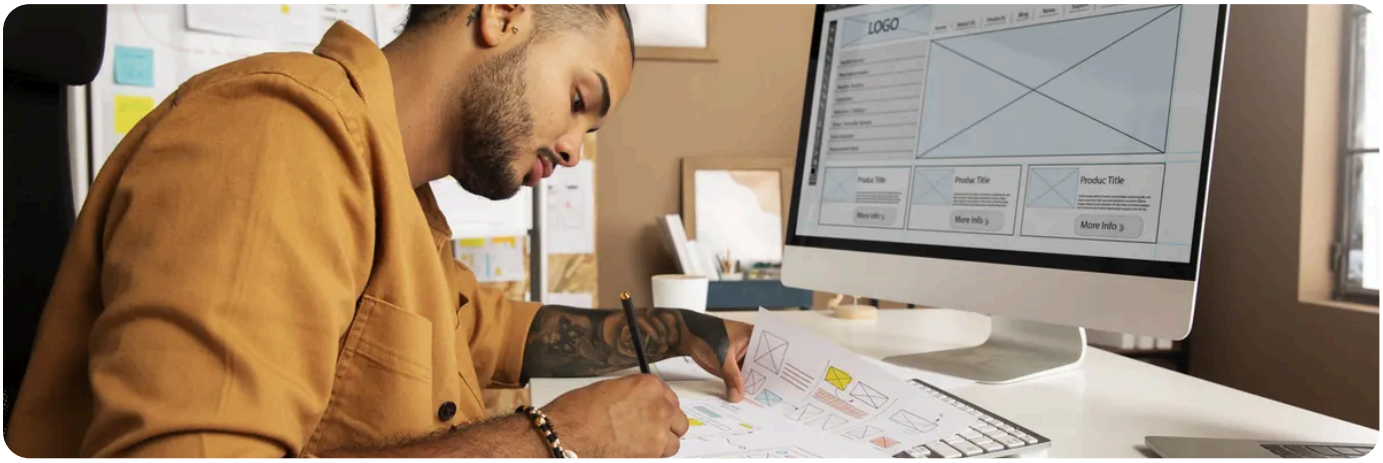
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Putting WhatsApp on your site: the link, the button and the ready-written message

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In Mozambique, WhatsApp is where business conversations happen. A contact form gives you a message somebody reads tomorrow; a WhatsApp button gives you a conversation that starts now. It is the cheapest change you can make to the site, and it takes ten minutes.

The essential piece: the link

You need no plugin to begin. WhatsApp has an address of its own that opens the conversation directly, with the app on the phone or on a computer:

```
https://wa.me/258840000000
```

1. Use the number **with the country code and nothing else** - no plus sign, no spaces, no brackets and no dashes.
2. Try the address in a browser before putting it on the site. If it opens the right conversation, you are done.
3. Put it on a visible button, not hidden in the footer.

The trick almost nobody uses: the message already written

You can open the conversation **with the text already filled in**. It sounds minor, but it changes everything: it saves the visitor deciding what to say, and it brings you a message that already says where it came from.

```
https://wa.me/258840000000?text=Hello%2C%20I%20saw%20the%20site%20and%20wanted%20a%20price
```

The text goes after `?text=`, with spaces and accents encoded - any online URL encoder does that for you. And if you put **different messages on different pages** - one per product, say - you start knowing which page each enquiry came from, with no tool installed.

A button that follows the visitor.
The format that works best is a round button fixed in the bottom right corner, visible on every page. On WordPress there are several free plugins that do it; on a custom site it is a few lines of code. What matters is that it is **always visible on a phone**, which is where most enquiries come from.

Ordinary WhatsApp or Business?

What changes	Worth it?
A business profile	Name, address, hours, website and category - visible to anyone opening the conversation. **Yes**, and it is free.
Away and greeting messages	It answers by itself out of hours, and avoids the impression of abandonment. It is the feature that pays most.
Quick replies	Shortcuts for the eternal questions - prices, address, hours. It saves hours a week.
Catalogue	Products with a photo and a price inside WhatsApp. A good complement; it does not replace the site, because it does not appear on Google.

The Business version is free and installs like any app. There is also a route for large companies, integrating with management systems, but for the overwhelming majority of businesses the ordinary app is more than enough.

What WhatsApp does *not* replace

Worth saying, because some people shut down the site thinking WhatsApp is enough:

1. **A conversation is not found on Google.** What Google reads is the site - see **being found on Google**.
2. **The number is not yours forever.** A domain is: it is registered in your name and nobody takes it from you - see **how to choose the right domain for your business**.
3. **An e-mail address on your own domain** is still what separates a company from an individual - see **how to create an e-mail account**.

Careful with the personal number.
Starting with the number of whoever answers is natural, but it ties the business to one person: when they leave, the customer history leaves with them. If you can, use **a company number from the start** - changing later means losing conversations and re-educating customers.

If you sell over WhatsApp

Plenty of people in Mozambique sell exactly this way, with no shop at all, and it works: a catalogue on the site, the order closed in conversation, payment by mobile money or transfer. It is not a makeshift arrangement - it is a valid model, and a cheap one.

When the orders become too many to record by hand, that is when a proper shop pays off: **an online shop with local payment methods**. Until then, a catalogue with a WhatsApp button on each product does the job.

NEED A HAND?

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