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WhatsApp for business: the risks, and the practices that avoid them

Security & Consent

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WhatsApp for business: the risks, and the practices that avoid them

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WhatsApp has become the sales channel for many businesses in Angola, and that brought a risk few weigh up: **the number is not yours**. It is an account on a platform you do not control, under rules you do not negotiate, and it can be closed without warning and with nobody to appeal to. It is worth knowing where the lines are.

The biggest risk: losing the number

Business accounts are blocked every day, and nearly always for the same reason: **messaging people who did not ask**. It only takes a number of people reporting or blocking your messages for the system to act by itself - and there is no counter to explain yourself at.

What triggers a block	Why
Sending to a bought list	The fastest way to lose a number. People report it, and the system counts.
Many new messages from a new number	A freshly created number starting hundreds of conversations looks exactly like what the systems hunt for.
Unofficial bulk-sending tools	They are prohibited by the platform rules. Using one is planning for the block.
Messages reported or blocked	The content is not read, but people's reactions are counted. A bad campaign burns a number in hours.

If the number goes, everything goes with it.
You lose more than the account: you lose the conversation history, the customer list that exists only there, and the number printed on your cards, your site and your van. That is why **WhatsApp should not be the only way to reach your customers** - the domain and the e-mail are yours and nobody switches them off: see **how to choose the right domain** and **how to create an e-mail account**.

The other risks, in order of frequency

1. **An employee's personal number.** When that person leaves, the customers leave with them - and legally the conversation was theirs. Use a company number from the start.

2. **Sessions left open on other people's computers.** A WhatsApp Web session forgotten on a borrowed laptop reads everything that arrives, indefinitely. Check the linked devices now and then and end the ones you do not recognise.

3. **The backup.** Conversations travel encrypted, but the copy your phone keeps in the cloud **may not be**, depending on the settings. If you keep customer data in conversations, turn on backup encryption.

4. **Cloned-account fraud.** Somebody copies your photo and name, creates a similar account and writes to your customers asking for money. You cannot prevent it, but you can tell customers which number is the real one - publish it on the site.

5. **A verification code you did not request.** If one arrives, somebody is trying to take over your number. Give it to nobody, and turn on WhatsApp's own two-step verification.

Customer data in a conversation is personal data

Addresses, phone numbers, photographs of documents, proof of payment - all of it tends to end up in WhatsApp, and it is still information you have to keep carefully. Two simple rules:

1. **Do not ask for more than you need.** A photo of an ID card for a small order is more risk than it is worth, for you and for the customer.

2. **Do not leave everything forever on the phone of whoever answers.** What matters moves into the system; the rest is deleted. See **personal data protection**.

Good practices that make a difference

1. **Write first to people who wrote to you.** A conversation the customer started carries no risk at all. It is the safest source of contact and the cheapest.

2. **Make people come to you.** A button on the site, a QR in the window, a link on the invoice - see **putting WhatsApp on your site**. It is worth more than any list.

3. **Identify yourself in the first message.** Company name and reason. A message from an unknown number with no context gets reported.

4. **Give an easy way out.** «Reply STOP to hear no more.» Someone who leaves the list without friction does not report you, and reporting is what costs the number.

5. **A steady rhythm.** Months of silence then two hundred messages in one afternoon is the classic compromised-account pattern - and it is treated as one.

6. **Separate personal from professional.** Two numbers, or at least the Business app for the business alone - see **which WhatsApp suits your business**.

Bulk sending: the rule is the same as ever.
If you want to reach many people, the legitimate route is the API with approved templates and recipients who consented - and even then, marketing is charged per message. Everything else - browser extensions, auto-sending apps, bought lists - breaks the platform rules and ends in the same place. If mass reach is the goal, there are channels built for it: **SMS marketing** and **e-mail marketing**.

What to do if the account is blocked

1. **Request a review through the app itself**, which is the only route there is. Be brief and factual.

2. **Tell your customers through another channel** - and this is where the value of having your own e-mail and website becomes obvious.

3. **Do not immediately create another account on another number** to do the same thing. If behaviour was the cause, the second falls faster.

And if you would rather not handle the sending?
We do bulk e-mail sending and SMS with your own Sender ID, for Mozambique and Angola - with the domain authenticated, the list handled and delivery reporting. It is not an off-the-shelf product: it depends on volume, countries and frequency. Tell us what you need and we will come back with a proposal. See **e-mail marketing** and **SMS marketing**.

NEED A HAND?

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