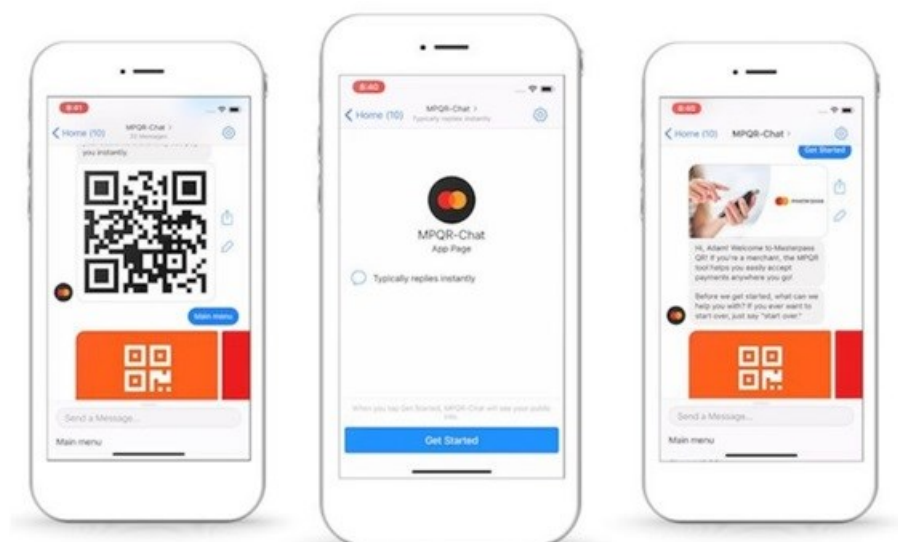


Mastercard to use Messenger to help SMEs leverage digital payments in Africa, Asia

Mastercard will use Facebook Messenger to provide technology to small businesses in Africa and Asia to drive affordable acceptance of electronic and mobile payments. Access to digital payments will help these businesses expand to new markets, and unlock financial services and products that enable them to grow their livelihoods.



This Messenger experience will launch in Nigeria, where Mastercard will pilot a new Masterpass QR bot to help business owners move beyond cash transactions to accepting QR payments. Ecobank and Zenith Bank will support this inaugural programme. The pilot in Nigeria is the beginning of a larger plan by the two companies to include more businesses into the digital economy.

According to research done by The Fletcher School and Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth, of the \$301 billion of funds flows from consumers to businesses in Nigeria, 98% is still based on cash.

“Every business owner is looking for ways to increase sales and draw new customers into their stores. By offering QR-based digital payments, smaller retailers can achieve these goals and create greater customer stickiness with little to no investment beyond the phone they already have,” said Jorn Lambert, executive vice president, digital channels and regions, Mastercard.

“Masterpass QR opens up new commerce channels for these merchants and enables them to create auditable transaction records. These advances open doors to other financial tools and products such as loans to drive added business growth.”

How it works

To get started, businesses can send a request to the bot to enable QR payments, receive approval from the bank, set up an account and start accepting digital payments in a fast, simple and secure manner. Once the account set up process is complete, business owners can print and display the QR code in their stores or save the code on their phones. Customers can pay by either scanning the code from their smartphone or by entering the merchant ID associated with the QR code into their feature phone.

Launched in 2016, Masterpass QR provides people with any type of mobile phone the ability to safely accept and make in-person purchases without cash or a plastic card. It provides greater choice in payments and complements Mastercard's investment in contactless payments to provide merchants of all sizes – from international chains to individual shop owners and street vendors – a fast, secure and inexpensive way to accept payments.

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