



WEBCARE IS  
**MORE THAN**  
CUSTOMER  
SERVICE

OB|4WAN  
.....

Many organisations view online customer care or webcare purely as a form of service: a standardized way of answering complaints and questions of people who otherwise would have called or e-mailed. Of course, answering questions and complaints is the core of online customer service, however, the team could also have a signaling function. So called 'webcare' is the ears and the eyes of your organisation. It is not only about reacting fast and adequate to stakeholders through online media; it is also spokespersonship, engagement, marketing and sales.

Thus, webcare goes much further than simply responding to complaints and questions through Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp. It is about all online channels where consumers can

ventilate their opinions. The 'why' of webcare is no longer a discussion and it is increasingly more often an integral part of digital customer contact. Webcare has matured.

However, maturity does not automatically mean wisdom, which is gained over the years. By that, we see that a broad application of webcare within many organisations is still in its infancy. Much too often, webcare is simply an instrument to refer to traditional customer contact channels. In this whitepaper we look at the optimal application of online customer service for organisations. We will discuss the most important channels, objectives, reporting, the organisation and the team and its corresponding tasks.





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# 1. BE ACTIVE WHERE YOUR CLIENT IS?

Many organisations 'focus on the customer' and make use of online and offline media monitoring to gain insight into relevant messages from social networks, news sites and review sites. Therefore, it is not surprising that many webcare teams respond through social media platforms as Twitter and Facebook, but also through messaging apps such as WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger or review sites as Trustpilot. Deciding through which channels your service should be provided, depends highly on the customer's desires, the strategy you choose and the (technological) developments within the landscape of customer service.

Webcare begins with listening. Do you signal questions and complaints through social media? Do your customers leave reviews about your brand or products? Are you being mentioned on blogs and fora or in responses under news coverage? Join the conversation and respond to those messages!

'Being active everywhere' is however not always the right choice. This requires tuning with Customer Service, Marketing or Communication & PR. Service oughts to be embedded in the most important communication and marketing channels. Do ask yourself whether or not the channel of choice fits your organisation.

## **Excellent webcare is fast, convenient and offers a little extra**

Important success factors are the fulfillment of promises, personal and excellent service and a good price. Moreover they distinguish themselves in delivering speed and ease through digital service and going the extra mile by offering a bit more. It also highly determines the satisfaction of your customers. Choosing the right channels for webcare is then not only dependent on the customer, but also on the question of whether you could fulfill the desires and demands that are presented in terms of speed, convenience and quality of the delivered solution.



## Signaling of questions, complaints, buying intent and much more

Webcare has a signaling role. Social media monitoring makes it possible to signal questions and complaints that are pending for an answer. However, it does not stop here. How about monitoring of print media, like newspapers and magazines, or monitoring of radio and TV broadcasts? It is wise to map when and where conversations take place about your brand, market, competitors, in written or spoken words.

Listening with the intention of understanding what the (potential) customer means, to learn from what went wrong, is the base of monitoring and finally, webcare. Unfortunately, taking direct action is often missing and the service process is only designed on reactive customer service. Meanwhile customers increasingly want better, faster help and service through their preferred channel.



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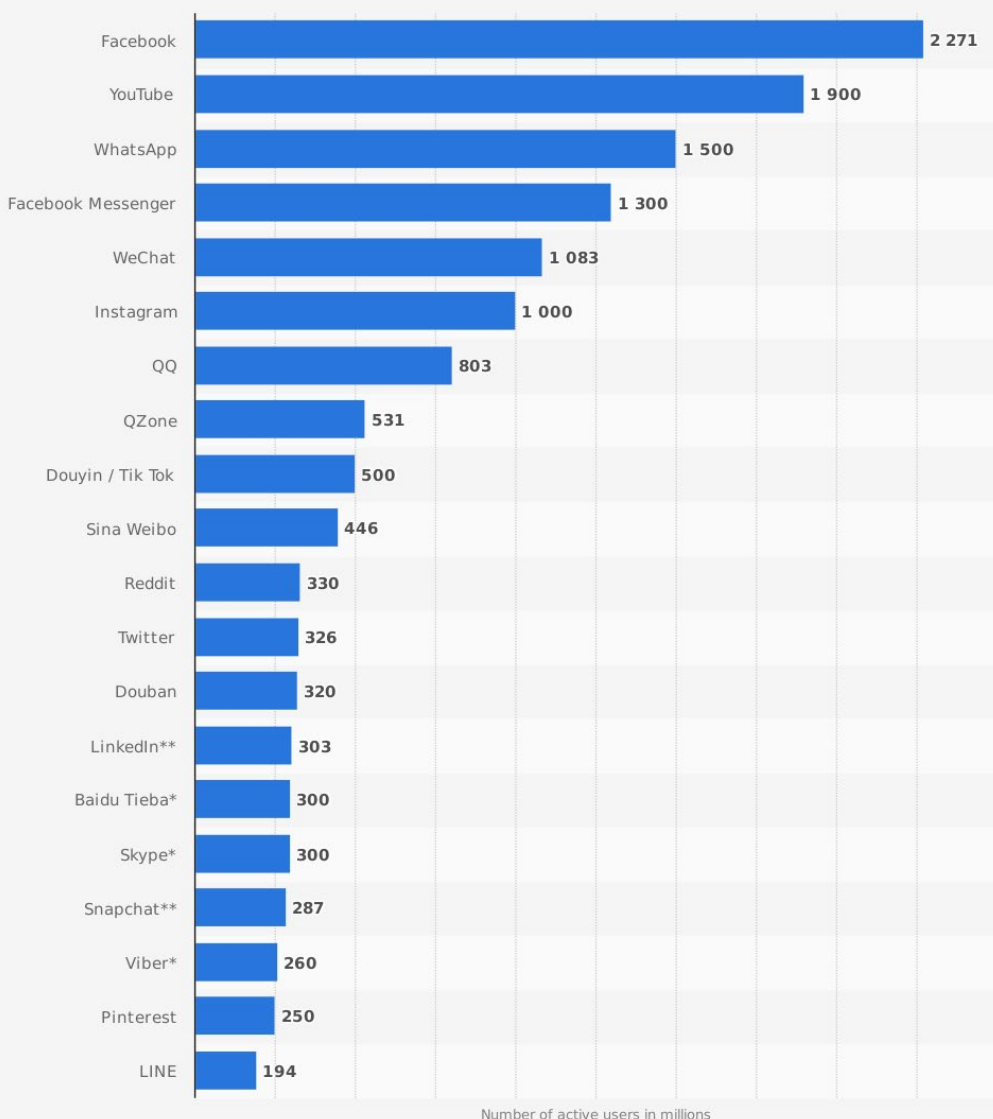
## Shift of public communication to private channels

Questions to webcare teams are increasingly more asked through private channels. This happens for example via live chat on the website, a special WhatsApp number for customer service or through Facebook Messenger. This trend leads to an increase of messages and raises additional questions, especially due to the growing pressure that may not negatively influence the speed and convenience of webcare.

All in all, webcare goes much further than solely responding to complaints and questions via your Twitter and Facebook channels. It is about all online channels where consumers share their opinions. Determine which channels you ought to keep an eye on and choose to which type of posts you will or will not respond.

Again this year, Newcom Research's research shows the latest developments in the field of social media channels. The use of Facebook in the Netherlands continues to decrease and we can see a growth in the use of Youtube, WhatsApp and Instagram. ■■■■■

**Most popular social networks worldwide as of January 2019, ranked by number of active users (in millions)**



## 2. OBJECTIVES OF WEBCARE



What would you like to achieve with the application of webcare? Did the webcare team start with the idea to decrease the workload on your callcenter - focussing on cost reduction? - or would you like to react better and faster to relevant messages? The power of webcare lies in helping out customers and delivering excellent service. When carried out adequately in a way that consumers value, you can tremendously limit the impact of a single complaint. By that, you prevent escalation and negative 'word-of-mouth'. Secondly, you can give positive stories and experiences surrounding your organisation an extra boost through smart webcare. Social media is social. If you do your best, consumers are willing to share this with friends and followers.

### **Reputation management**

The added value of webcare goes much further than cost reduction. It influences your reputation! Consumers ask their questions more and more often through social media and messaging, but increasingly know where to place complaints for maximum exposure. It involves stakeholders who talk about you: on your social channels, your online forum and external platforms. With the right input of webcare you are always on top of what is happening online.

### **Proactive service delivery**

Solely responding to messages that are directed to you creates a lot of missed opportunities. The added value of responding proactively is presented in offering information or a helping hand, without asking customers to contact you. Using this, organisations can quickly handle the problem before it reaches an escalation phase. It can also turn a negative sentiment into a positive experience. A positive experience with webcare is easily shared and can reach a large potential customer group with the viral character of social media.



From all conversations which take place on social media channels from Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, more than a quarter is proactive. In the Customer Contact Center, a cooperation between the Schiphol Group and Arvato Bertelsmann, a team of Social Media Specialists monitors coverage around Schiphol daily with the OBI4wan webcare tool. Aside from solving customer questions, they strive to welcome passengers by proactively engaging in personally relevant conversations.



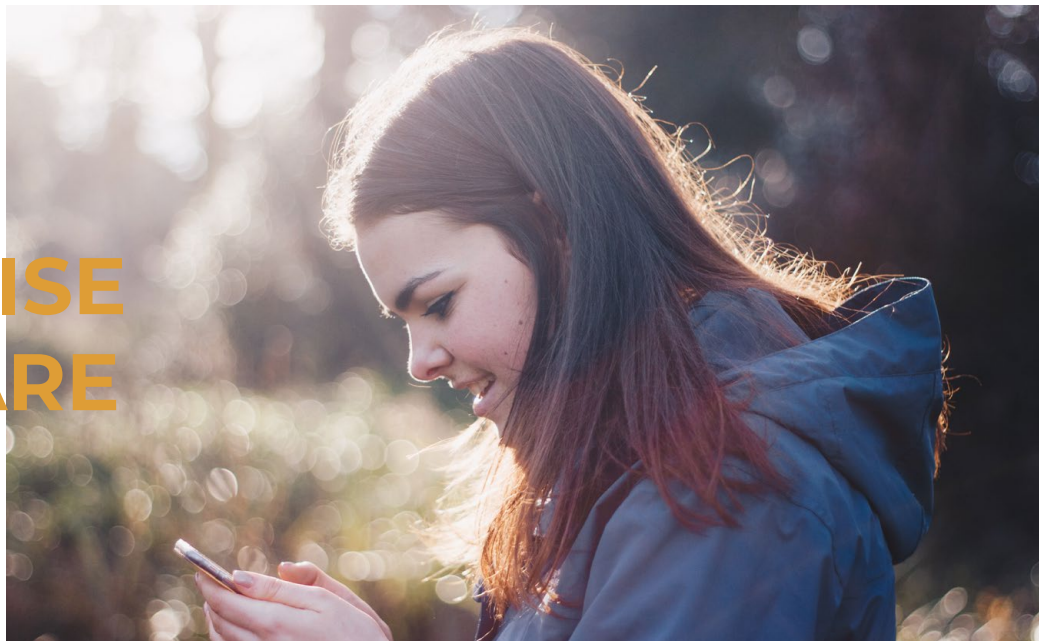
## Detecting points of improvement and leads

Reporting and analysis is essential when applying reactive or proactive webcare, as it is important to find out whether or not the agreed upon KPI's have been achieved. Furthermore, you would like to measure the effect of communication and catch the latest tips for product improvement or even buying intent!

Webcare offers excellent opportunities to collect input for product improvement. Use your webcare tool to collect and group user feedback, in order to productively improve your product or services. In addition, you can also use such communities to actively ask for input.

Detect buying intent of potential customers, by searching for interesting messages within your sector, using keywords. Which questions do they ask? Or is there a conversation which presents a need for your product, so you can take part? By finding out what terms are being used in the messages of potential customers, you can actively monitor these terms and proactively contact them. ■■■■■■

### 3. ORGANISE WEBCARE



First and foremost, the basis needs to be clear and undisputed. Where do you place the webcare team? Which function profiles are needed and what should be the goal of the team? Next up are the details. What is the best set-up? How to decide on the response time and service level? Finally, you determine how to measure the customer satisfaction and lastly, all of those agreements form your social media policy.

#### **Where do you place webcare?**

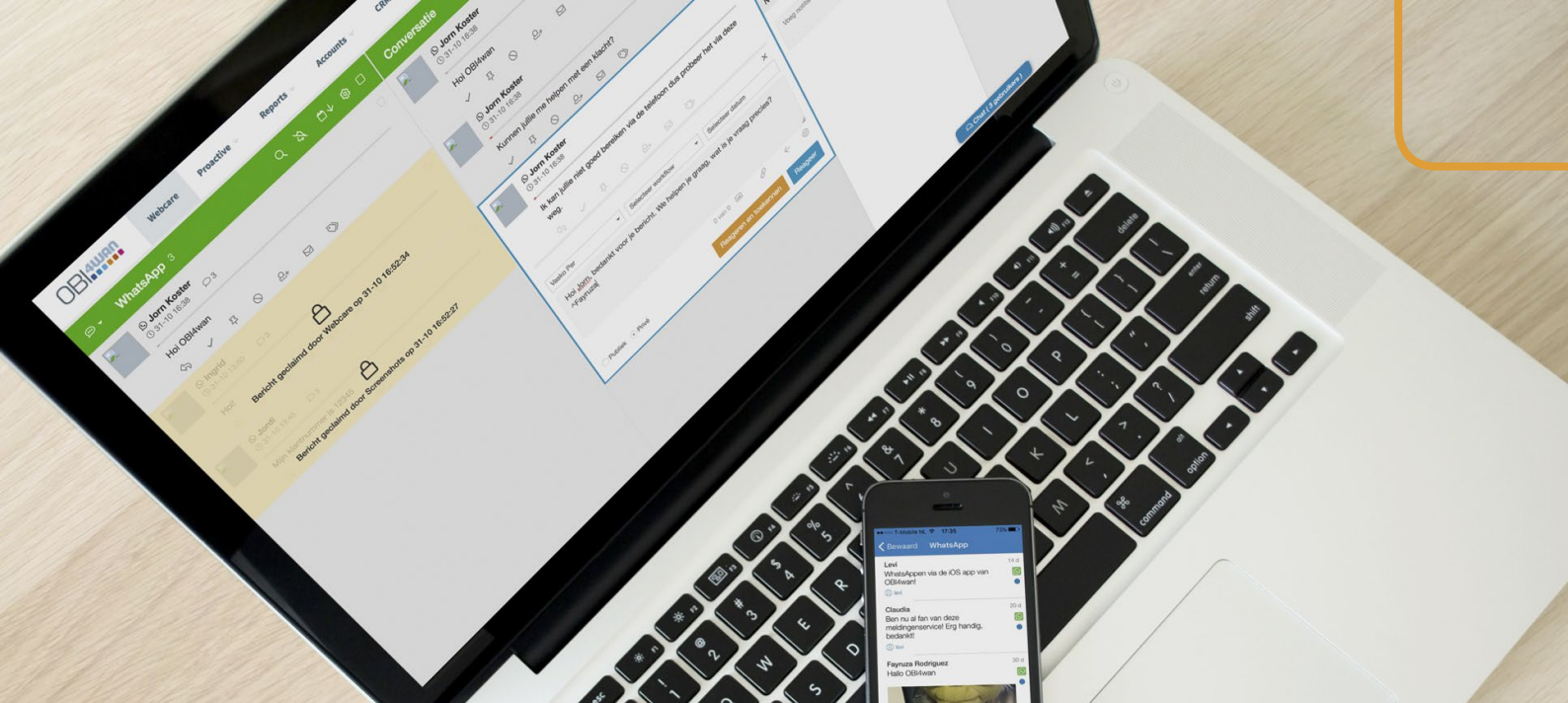
Smaller organisations often place webcare within other departments such as customer service. Larger organisations often have a dedicated webcare team or place their webcare activities within communication departments. In this case, spokespersonship and corporate communication are closely related.

Doesn't webcare primarily belong to customer service? Webcare activity mostly consists out of answering customer questions and solving problems. Through webcare, it becomes clear when stakeholders express criticism on business management. These expressions must be monitored, while pinpointing potential risks and, in case needed, reported quickly to the communication department. Consequently, the response of webcare ought to be in line with the message you would like to communicate as a business.

#### **The profile of a webcare employee**

Webcare is an extension of spokespersonship and PR. It is of great importance have employees that know the trick of the trade. People that understand that a response on Facebook is also a corporate statement. Such a profile is often not the same as the preferred profile of customer service employees. Webcare is in most cases an application of one-to-many communication. Consider it as such and acknowledge that this requires a different approach than traditional customer service. A sufficient level of knowledge and skill is required by the webcare team to really help stakeholders.

A good webcare employee takes sufficient time to create a flexible and correct response. The quality of answering evidently increases when employees take the time to broaden their knowledge to fully grasp the person, the case and the situation. Did this customer contact you before about the same problem? If possible, go the extra mile for this person. Perhaps you could help him differently? Such customer insights need to be documented in your webcare- or CRM system to sufficiently inform your colleagues about this situation.



## Determine the desired response time and measure the service level

A few years ago people would get excited from the number of fans and followers on their accounts, but those days are over. Actually, the number is not that interesting. Interaction is the base for online service, in which a quick response is the norm for many organisations. Rarely does anyone like to wait (too long) for an answer. Measuring the degree of delivering good online service to your customers is much more interesting, simply because good service is the new marketing!

Where needed, use real time insights to direct the webcare team. Use sample based rating to ensure the quality per employee. Evaluate given answers on knowledge of product/service, formulation of the answer empathy towards the customer. Webcare agents who don't use "conversational human voice" in their answers, influence the sentiment negatively.

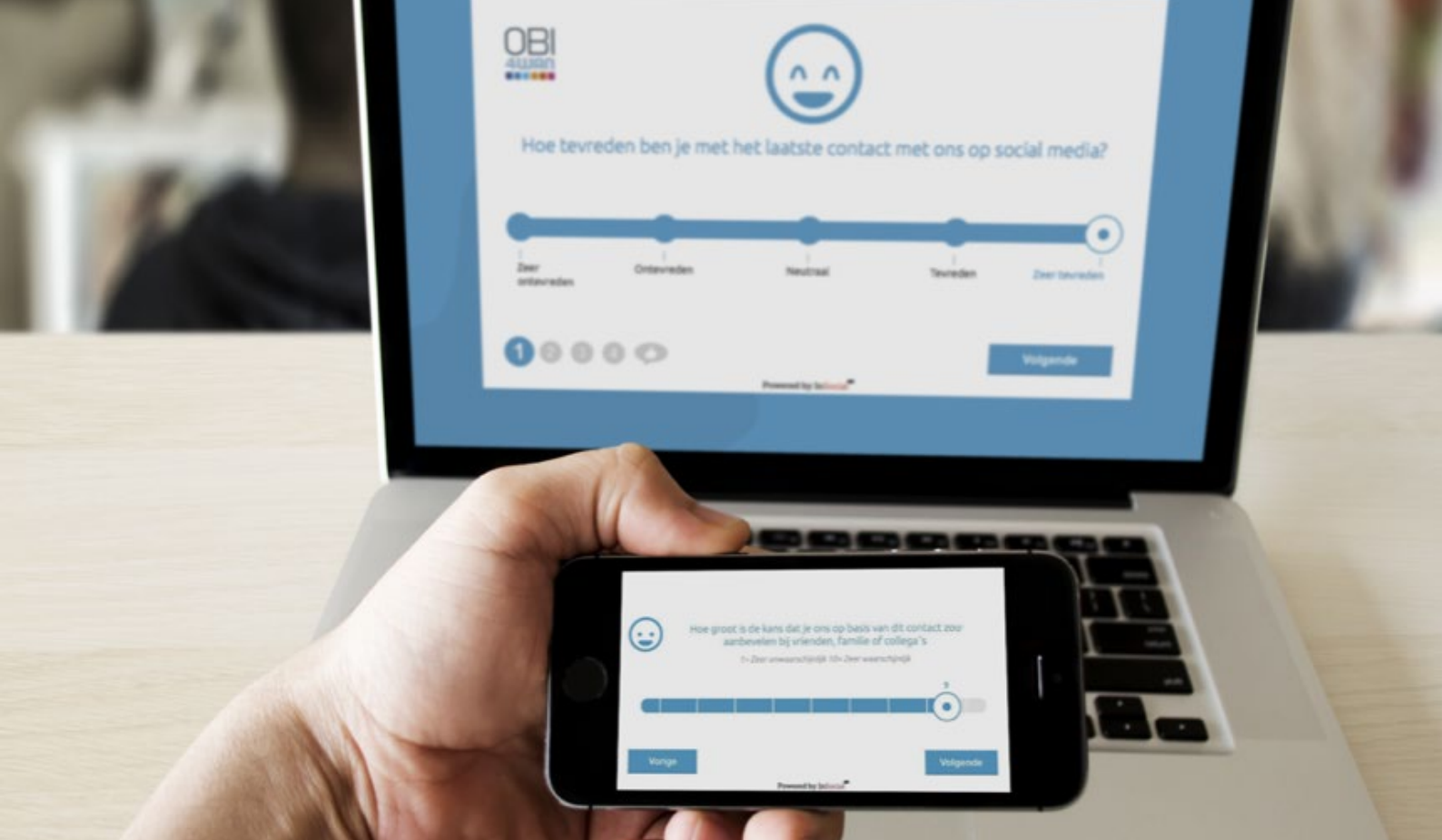
## Collect customer feedback through social media

Social media has developed into full-fledged customer contact channels. Because of the growing importance of these channels, the need arises to know how customers experience the contact through social media. Using online monitoring, larger organisations receive a lot of unfiltered feedback through social media. These messages contain negative as well as positive sentiment. Organisations cannot influence the subject, type en frequency of that feedback, because they don't actively ask for it.

By combining these different types of customer feedback, you gain insight into (structural) points of improvement for your organisation. Next to that, it's important to compare customer contact channels (telephone, email, social media, chat), to create a 360 degrees overview of your customers.

By using a good social media monitoring tool, collection of said feedback and automatic and scalable measurement of customer happiness via social media becomes a reality. Social analytics reports are therefore extendable with a metric like NPS (Net Promoter Score). Next to insight into volume, sentiment, webcare activity and response time, it also determines the overall quality of webcare.





## Form a social media or webcare policy

A clear strategy for webcare is needed to optimize the results for reputation management, service and lead generation. Part of the webcare strategy is a communication policy for clear communication, otherwise called a social media policy.

A social media policy adds value when agreements have been made about communication through webcare. Different answers to the same question create confusion, especially when it concerns a public conversation. A good policy determines when, where and whether a response is needed. It describes the preferred manner and tone of voice when responding. This leads to fewer surprises for both the webcare agent and the client. Think of how you want to communicate in case of:

- crisis situations;
- regular questions;
- complaints;
- factual inaccuracies;
- compliments.



## 4. YOUR PARTNER FOR WEBCARE



OBI4wan helps organisations with a successful application of media monitoring and online customer contact. Our user-friendly tool supports our customers with online and offline media monitoring, webcare, messaging, social analytics and content publishing.

In this way a complete and accurate overview of millions of (inter)national messages and conversations for real-time web-care can be gained and targeted monitoring of your organisation, market or competition is possible, at all times and wherever you happen to be.

We have been collecting all relevant messages from popular social media platforms and millions of (inter)national blogs, forums and news sources since 2009. With the addition of innovative solutions for radio, TV and print monitoring you can be sure never to miss another relevant message. Our team of enthusiastic service agents and consultants are also there each day to advise clients on the best way to benefit from OBI4wan!

If you have any questions about this whitepaper or if you are looking for a successful implementation of webcare, we would happily support you with that! Feel free to get in touch with us through [info@obi4wan.com](mailto:info@obi4wan.com) or +31 (0)85 210 50 60. You can also send a WhatsApp to +31 (0)6 30 58 42 28!      

**Email:** [info@obi4wan.com](mailto:info@obi4wan.com)  
**Phone:** +31 (0)85 210 50 60  
**Website:** [www.obi4wan.com](http://www.obi4wan.com)



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