

PRINT-READY DECISION GUIDE

Product Authentication Methods Compared

A practical comparison of physical, digital and conversation-based verification methods for brand owners, distributors, authorities and implementation teams.

WAB2C | WhatsApp product verification and evidence workflows

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SCAN FOR THE LIVE ARTICLE

<https://wab2c.com/resources/blog/whatsapp-product-verification-counterfeit-protection#comparison>

Use this guide to shortlist controls. Confirm supplier specifications, legal obligations, data governance and operating costs before selection.

Full comparison matrix

Nine methods compared across the capabilities that matter to customers and investigation teams. 'Possible' means the capability depends on design and integration, not the label or channel alone.

Method	Customer effort	Unique item	Repeat detection	Media evidence	Investigation trail	Principal limitation
Printed visual cues	Low	No	No	No	No	Customers may not know what to inspect; visible cues can be imitated.
Holograms / labels	Low	Sometimes	Not alone	No	Limited	Labels may be copied, imitated or transferred.
Static QR / barcode	Low	Usually no	No	No	Basic log	A shared code gives the same experience when copied.
SMS verification	Medium	Yes, with serial	Possible	No	Message log	Rigid input and weak support for rich evidence.
Call centres	Medium	Possible	Manual	Separate	Agent notes	Time-bound, difficult to scale and prone to transcription errors.
Standalone application	High for occasional users	Yes	Yes	Yes	Strong	Download, permissions and unfamiliar-interface friction.
RFID / NFC	Low with compatible device	Yes	Yes	No	Strong	Tag, reader and integration cost.
Distributed ledger	Varies	Record-level	Possible	External	Immutable events	A ledger cannot by itself prove the physical-digital link.
WAB2C + unique item serial	Low	Yes	Yes	Photos, video, receipts, voice	Conversation + case	Needs secure serialization, governed data and a team ready to act.

Important: A valid database match does not by itself prove that the physical item is genuine. Secure serialization, repeat-check intelligence, evidence collection and governed escalation strengthen the decision.

Method notes: physical and familiar channels

Use these profiles to understand where each method fits and what must be added around it.

Printed visual cues

BEST USE

Immediate, offline packaging inspection

MAIN LIMITATION

Customers may not know what to inspect; visible cues can be imitated.

Customer effort: Low **Unique item:** No **Repeat detection:** No **Evidence:** No **Trail:** No

Holograms / labels

BEST USE

Visible tamper or authenticity signal

MAIN LIMITATION

Labels may be copied, imitated or transferred.

Customer effort: Low **Unique item:** Sometimes **Repeat detection:** Not alone **Evidence:** No
Trail: Limited

Static QR / barcode

BEST USE

Simple access to instructions or product pages

MAIN LIMITATION

A shared code gives the same experience when copied.

Customer effort: Low **Unique item:** Usually no **Repeat detection:** No **Evidence:** No **Trail:**
Basic log

SMS verification

BEST USE

Basic-phone reach using short codes or serials

MAIN LIMITATION

Rigid input and weak support for rich evidence.

Customer effort: Medium **Unique item:** Yes, with serial **Repeat detection:** Possible
Evidence: No **Trail:** Message log

Call centres

BEST USE

Human judgement for complex or sensitive cases

MAIN LIMITATION

Time-bound, difficult to scale and prone to transcription errors.

Customer effort: Medium **Unique item:** Possible **Repeat detection:** Manual **Evidence:**
Separate **Trail:** Agent notes

Standalone application

BEST USE

Trained inspectors or frequent specialist users

MAIN LIMITATION

Download, permissions and unfamiliar-interface friction.

Customer effort: High for occasional users **Unique item:** Yes **Repeat detection:** Yes
Evidence: Yes **Trail:** Strong

Method notes: connected systems

Connected methods can create stronger histories, but they still depend on the quality of the physical-digital link and the operating process behind the customer response.

RFID / NFC

BEST USE

High-value items and controlled supply chains

MAIN LIMITATION

Tag, reader and integration cost.

Customer effort: Low with compatible device **Unique item:** Yes **Repeat detection:** Yes
Evidence: No **Trail:** Strong

WAB2C + unique item serial

BEST USE

Customer verification with evidence and case escalation

MAIN LIMITATION

Needs secure serialization, governed data and a team ready to act.

Customer effort: Low **Unique item:** Yes **Repeat detection:** Yes **Evidence:** Photos, video, receipts, voice **Trail:** Conversation + case

Distributed ledger

BEST USE

Shared records across governed participants

MAIN LIMITATION

A ledger cannot by itself prove the physical-digital link.

Customer effort: Varies **Unique item:** Record-level **Repeat detection:** Possible **Evidence:** External **Trail:** Immutable events

Decision checklist

1. Define the item or record being verified.
2. Identify who will check and on which device.
3. Decide what a safe response can reveal.
4. Plan repeat-check and suspicious-pattern rules.
5. Assign evidence, review and escalation ownership.
6. Pilot one product, one market and one controlled batch.
7. Measure participation, useful reports, response time and operating cost.



Continue with the live guide

Read the implementation, privacy, evidence and cost-planning sections online.

<https://wab2c.com/resources/blog/whatsapp-product-verification-counterfeit-protection#comparison>



Download the infographic

Scan to open and save the visual product authentication comparison directly.

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