

Rich Communication Services (RCS) and the Future of Business Messaging

Text messaging is integral to modern communications; there are now over 5 billion mobile phone users across the globe, sending in excess of 23 billion text messages each day. While the simplicity, ubiquity and instantaneous qualities of SMS have driven its popularity, its future growth will require something of an overhaul in functionality.

Today's mobile user seeks a richer, more interactive experience that includes read receipts, typing indicators, high-resolution video sharing and mapping directions. To keep up with the times, messaging providers need to deliver a robust, integrated service that offers seamless sharing of multimedia content and streamlined connections to other mobile applications.

Rich Communication Services



Business Branding and Verification Build Trust



Multimedia Content Grabs User Attention

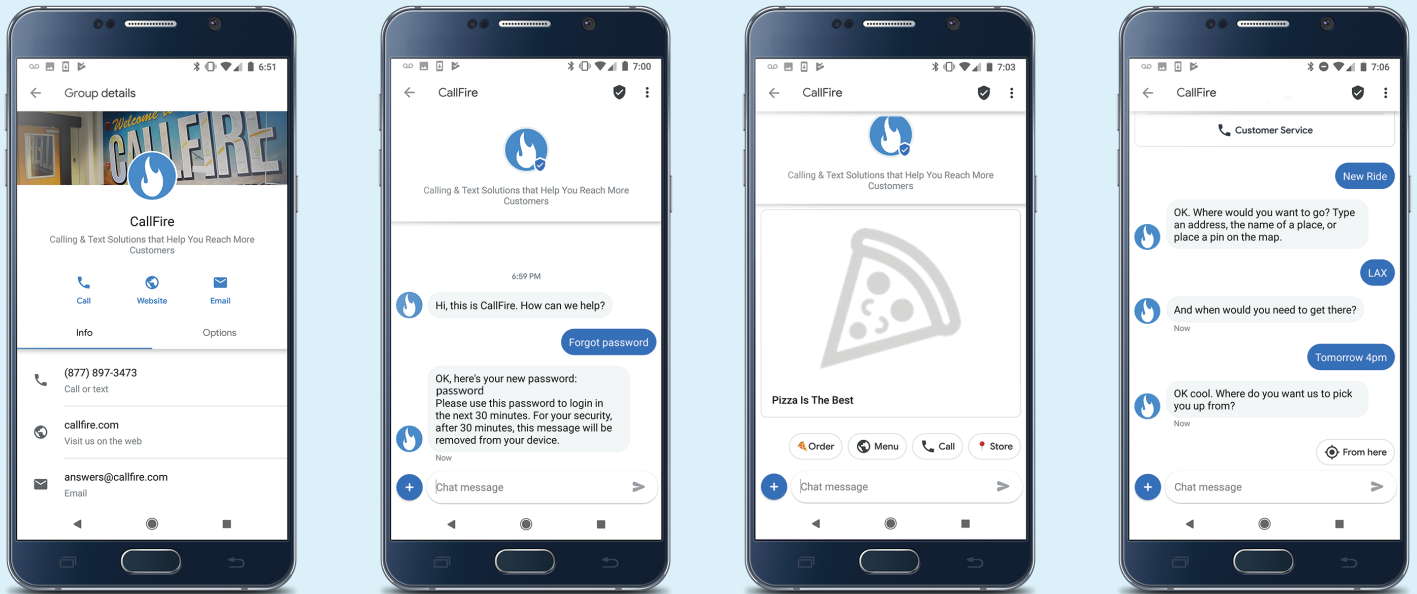


Rich, "App-like" Experiences Reduce Friction and Drive Conversions

What is RCS?

RCS (Rich Communication Services) is a next-generation messaging platform that is on track to eventually replace traditional SMS. Significantly more sophisticated and immersive than today's SMS offering, RCS allows users to take advantage of capabilities that were previously exclusive to over-the-top messaging apps, such as WhatsApp and iMessage.

In addition to all of the features users have come to expect on a messaging app, which include real-time typing indicators, group chat and the ability to send audio and video messaging, RCS also takes the experience a step further by limiting the cumbersome process of toggling between apps. This means that the native messaging suite becomes a streamlined hub of activity, a place where users can do everything from check into a flight, order a sandwich and shop for clothing.



How Does RCS Benefit Businesses?

RCS Business Messaging allows businesses to eliminate a major barrier that has historically limited customer engagement on mobile devices. With RCS, users no longer need to take the step of downloading your proprietary business application, you can now deliver rich, contextual messages to them where they already are - on their native messaging application.

Drive Conversions with Frictionless Engagement

RCS turns a user's native text messaging application into a platform for richer, more interactive conversations with businesses and applications. Because RCS communicates directly with other mobile applications and was designed to incorporate embedded rich media content such as coupons, maps or videos, businesses can use "rich cards" to share high-value content directly within the messaging window. Businesses can also provide users with a choice of pre-programmed responses that they can access by tapping a "Quick Reply" button, making it easy for them to complete a conversation with your business.

These seamless content delivery and communication tools serve to increase user engagement as well as the likelihood of the user completing a desired action, such as visiting a brick and mortar store, watching a branded video or cashing in on a coupon. In the future, RCS capabilities will include providing secure end-to-end payments directly within the messaging window, this is expected to reduce the steps needed to make a purchase, further improving conversion rates.

Deliver Personalized Communications at Scale

Businesses can use RCS to create dynamic customer interactions, similar to chatbots, enabling a customer to get their question answered within the messaging window. Additional value is added when the “bot” is able to use the existing contact record to add context to the interaction -- for example, verifying that a pizza should be delivered to the “home address” associated with a given phone number, rather than requiring the user to re-enter their home address. Over time, the ability to automate context dynamically is only expected to improve, increasing the potential for RCS to deliver advances in

Create Fully Branded Experiences that Customers Trust

Unlike traditional SMS messaging, where your business shows up attached to your phone number or short code, RCS messages allow your company to add your business logo and brand colors to the chat window. RCS also offers verified sending, so customers are protected from phishing and can feel confident that the message they receive is coming directly from your business.

Optimize with Real-Time Analytics

To maximize engagement, businesses need to know if their communications are effective. This has been a challenge with SMS messaging, as there is limited data on the way consumers interact with messages. With RCS, optimization is infinitely more possible as businesses can see when a customer reads a message, begins to type a response and clicks on the information your business has shared. This allows businesses to get smarter over time, determining leaks in the communication funnel and optimizing messaging for maximum readability and customer engagement.

Current State of RCS

The move from SMS to RCS is being driven by Google, and in the US, the new messaging protocol is available only for Android devices on Sprint’s network. Penetration across Android devices is expected to grow rapidly as all major carriers have committed to implementation are in the process of building out support for the new messaging platform.

As RCS messaging builds traction with consumers, becoming an early adopter offers significant benefits to businesses. Customer engagement tools tend to be at peak effectiveness early on, when they still feel novel and exciting to consumers. Getting started with an RCS program now not only allows your business to showcase its innovator status, but also provide time to learn and iterate so that by the time the technology becomes mainstream, you have already have a leg up on the competition.

RCS with CallFire

CallFire has been chosen as a partner for Google's RCS Business Messaging early access program.

We can now offer businesses the ability to take their messaging to the next-level, including:



Moving beyond text to drive deeper consumer engagement, using multimedia content such as images, animated gifs, and videos to make your message memorable.



Personalizing conversations through automated chatbots that are able to formulate responses to customer queries based on content and context.



Providing consumers with suggested text replies and recommended actions in order to simplify the purchasing process.



Adding branding and customization to your messages to increase brand recognition and consumer trust.



Sharing rich, app-like experiences, such as coupons, interactive maps and boarding passes directly within the messaging app.



Delivering engagement metrics that include read receipts, typing indicators and interactions with "Rich Cards".

If you are interested in getting started with a project through our beta program, let us know and we'll be happy to help. Give us a call at (888) 995-5408.