

A guide to RCS 2026

RCS stands for Rich Communication Services. It is a next-generation messaging protocol that enables advanced messaging features such as group chats, high-resolution media sharing, read receipts and more. It is designed to replace the traditional SMS/MMS messaging system and provide a more interactive and engaging messaging experience.

RCS uses a so-called Agent to send RCS messages. It is sometimes called a Bot.

Google is behind the RCS-protocol. In Norway two operators support RCS, namely Telenor and Telia.

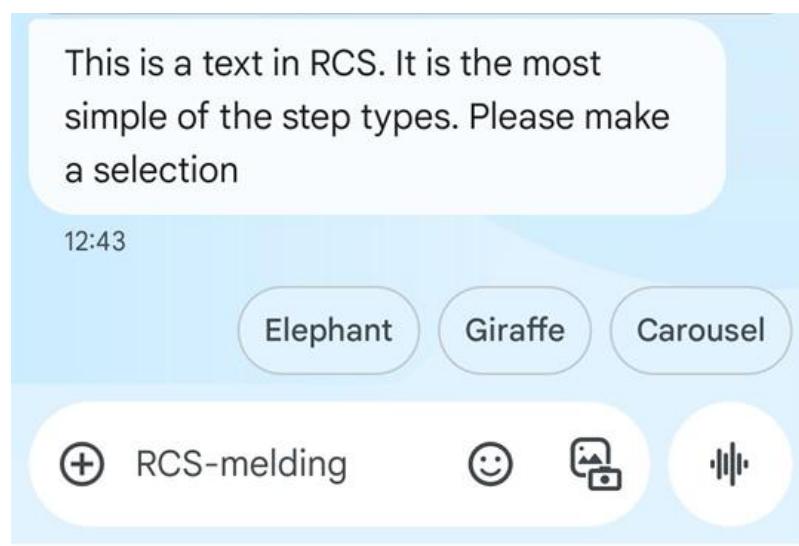
After the agent is set up, you can start making your **RCS campaign**. One agent can have several campaigns. You may start using the RCS campaign immediately after saving, there is no buffer or cache time.

Types of steps

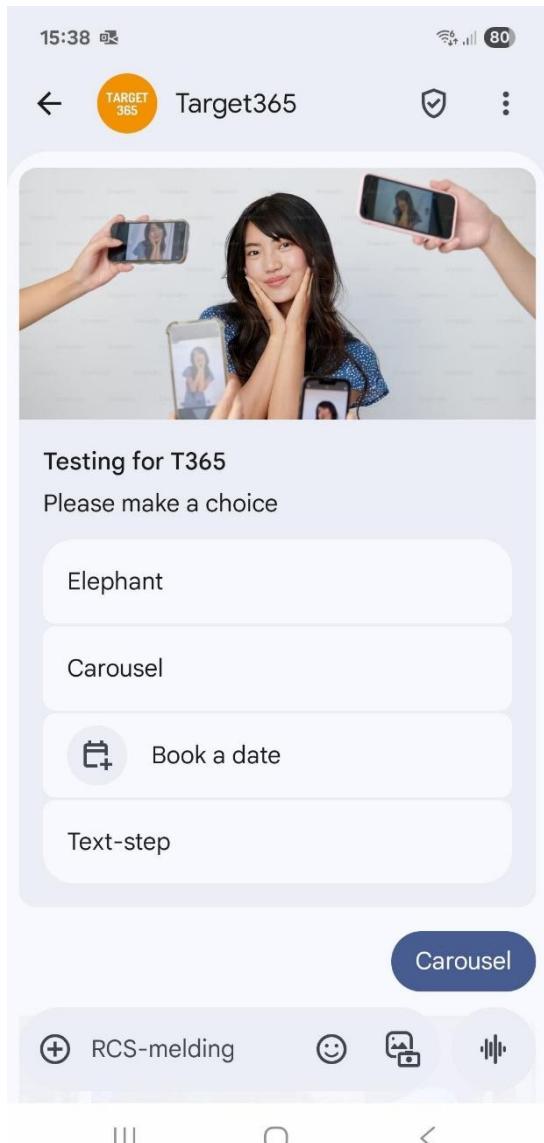
There are three basic types of steps in an RCS-message:

- Text
- Card
- Carousel

Text is the most basic, with just a caption with up to 12 buttons below and a maximum of 3072 characters of text. Example:



Card may include one media file, either picture or video, some text (max 3072 characters) and up to 4 buttons below. Example:



Special buttons: Notice the 'Book a date'-button has a calendar icon. Google adds appropriate icons on special steps like **Calendar**, **Call** and **go to URL**.

Carousel may include up to 10 elements each including media file, text and up to 4 buttons each. Example:

Element 1
Lorem Ipsum es simplemente el texto de relleno de las imprentas y archivos de texto.

Step 1

Back

Element 2
Lorem Ipsum es simplemente el texto de relleno de las imprentas y archivos de texto.

Step 2

Back

Element 3
Lorem Ipsum es simplemente el texto de relleno de las imprentas y archivos de texto.

Step 3

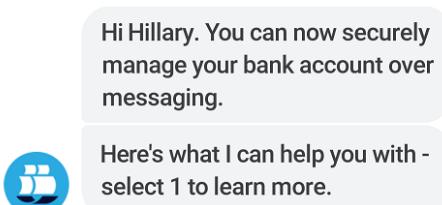
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A carousel is essentially multiple cards next to each other. Also see point 4 in the section below.

Best practices for using RCS

1. Give the end user a few, concise and clear actions. Frontload information your users care about. Avoid prompting for free text as reply, provide buttons instead.

DO.



Account balance

Recent activity

Payment scheduling

DON'T.



Hi Hillary. You can now securely manage your bank account over messaging.

What can I help you with?

2. Keep a good rhythm: Using diverse types of information in conversations keeps users engaged and interacting with your agent but be careful to not overwhelm your users. Keep messages within engaging, digestible lengths that let the user see the whole message onscreen at once.

3. The font size is determined by the user's handset. Be mindful that some users may have large text set on their phone. Try to make the text in one step fit on one screen, to prevent scrolling.

4. When using the carousel, Google will truncate the cards if the cards have long texts or titles. Google has introduced a fix for height limitations on carousel cards. This ensures your message is always accessible, even if it's long. If your text or buttons exceed the card's height limit, Google automatically adds a "**More**" button. Tapping the text area will expand the card into a swipeable, full-screen view. While this feature prevents content from being lost, you should still aim to keep your primary message visible on the main screen to reduce the friction of an extra click.

Design tips for carousel:

- a. Reduce the description to one line.
- b. Reduce the title to one line.
- c. Keep the images at the same aspect ration (e.g. 16:8). This provides visual consistency.
- d. Omit suggestions that do not fit in the card, starting from the end of the defined list.
- e. You may omit the description or the title entirely.

See also: <https://developers.google.com/business-communications/rccs-business-messaging/guides/build/messages/send#truncation-carousel>

Exactly how much of the element is truncated depends on the font size, resolution etc. on the handset. The best way to avoid truncation, is to keep cards within carousel **short** and **concise**.

5. Don't create dead ends. Each suggested reply should lead to a meaningful conversation thread with the user. For example: Do not make a carousel with only media, but no buttons. How is the end user supposed to reply?

6. As a rule of thumb, a picture should be **twice as wide as high**. When using media (images and video), be respectful of the user's resources. Images will be scaled up or down to fit the handset of the user. The **optimal** resolution for the media is 1440x720 px (horizontal) and 768x1024 px (vertical) with a **maximum** recommended file size of 2 MB for images and 10 MB for video. The optimal resolution for the media's thumbnail is 770x335 px with a recommended file size of 40 kB and a recommended maximum size of 100 kB.

- 7.** Remember that when using images, the system does not leave any space around the actual picture. Bear that in mind, so you leave some “air” around your image, especially charts and illustrations containing text, to prevent a cramped layout.
- 8.** Telenor and Telia allow you to change the colour of the font itself, but not the buttons. The buttons are always light grey. Please provide Strex/Target365 with a colour-code for your font, in RGB format (#000000 is black).
- 9.** Respect when the user does not want messages. Your agent must understand when users reply "STOP" and react appropriately. This means that if the user replies STOP (or STOPP in Norwegian) at any time, the agent should send an end message and cease to send additional message.
- 10.** No elements are *required*, but think through your flow, and avoid illogical steps or dead ends (also see point 5)
- 11.** One agent can have multiple campaigns. Be mindful so that two or more campaigns do not overlap. Each reply from the user includes a campaign-specific ID, so one button/reply should not be interpreted as a reply to another campaign. However, be wary when you switch from one campaign to another, as users can take days or weeks to reply to one agent.
- 12.** To improve the user experience and prevent unexpected data consumption, a 100 MiB size limit has been implemented for the total combined size of all media and PDF attachments within a single RBM message. The limit now applies to RBM traffic on all carriers.