RCS (Rich Communication Services)

RCS (Rich Communication Services) 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.

In Norway, there are two providers for RCS: Google and Mavenir. Google sends to Telia-numbers and Mavenir sends to Telenor-numbers. This happens in backend but be aware that you actually need one agent in Google and one agent in Mavenir to send to the two largest operators in Norway. ICE does not support RCS at this moment. RCS is only supported by Android smartphones, not iPhones.
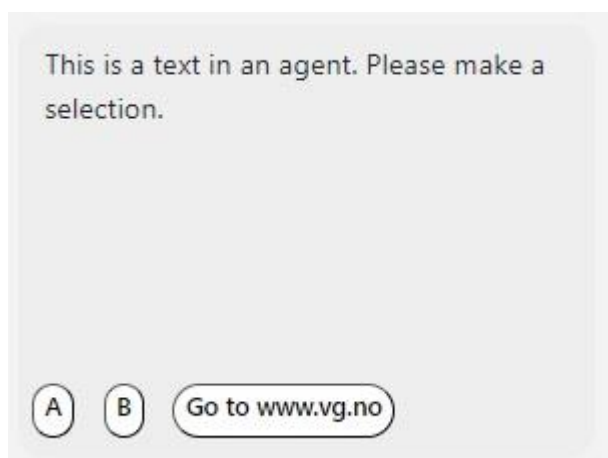
After the agent (or agents) are set up, you can start making you campaign. One agent can have several campaigns.

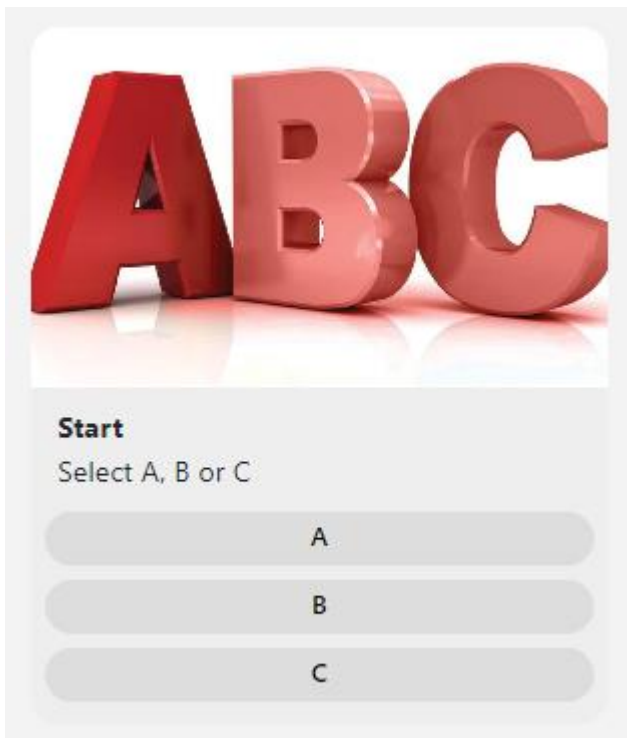You may start using the RCS-campaign immediately after saving, there is no buffer or cache time.

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. Example:

Card may include one media file, either picture or video, with up to 4 buttons below. Example:

Start
Select A, B or C

A
B
C

Carousel may include up to 10 media files next to each other, with up to 4 buttons. Example:
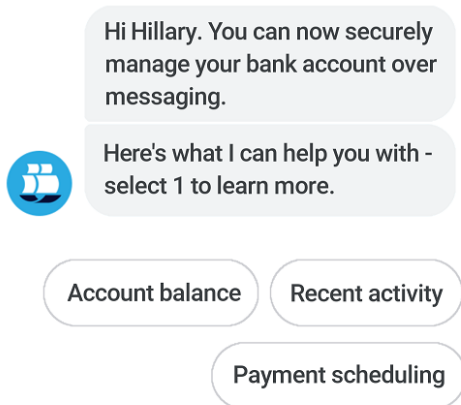

Selection 1
A

Selection 2
B

Selection 3
C

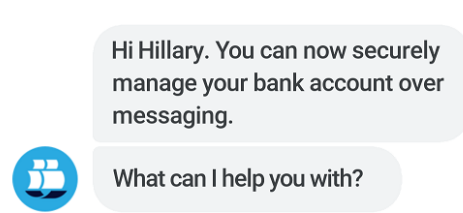A carousel is essentially multiple cards next to each other.

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.   **DON'T.**

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 type of RCS, Google will truncate the card(s) if the cards have long texts or titles. Google does it in this order:

1. Reduce the description to one line.
2. Reduce the title to one line.
3. Omit suggestions that do not fit in the card, starting from the end of the defined list.
4. Omit the description.
5. Omit the title.

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

Exactly how much is truncated depends on the font size, resolution etc. on the handset.

Mavenir truncates less than Google, but again, this varies from handset to handset. The best way to avoid this, 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. 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 you 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.