

RCS technology boosts CX by enabling consumers to 'touch & feel' messaging

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From being the numberplate prefix for the Western Cape town of Knysna, 'CX' is today popping up all over the web as the marketer's shorthand for 'Customer Experience'.



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When it comes to the mobile customer, in particular, of which there are upwards of 35 million active cellular users in South Africa, RCS is being touted as the enhancer of CX.

Next evolution of SMS

Rich communication services is essentially next generation messaging technology being rolled-out globally by the world's mobile network operators and top ICT firms like Google. It has been described by industry pundits as the next evolution of SMS and the protocol intended to succeed the most-adopted form of written communication in history.

However, while the Googleplex might be evangelising RCS, CX is the driving force behind its adoption. No longer content to be reached in ways that suit corporations, consumers today expect brands to communicate with them the way they themselves communicate.

When it comes to mobile consumers, this simply has to mean text-based communication. The customer's love affair with short digital text start with SMS - obviously - and now continues with RCS. This freshened-up descendant of SMS now enables bulk text-based mobile communication to feature the latest emoticons, stickers and animations of the day.

From one-dimensional mobile messaging that just gets the job done in a clunky and uncool fashion, RCS can instantly transform CX with all the bells and whistles we love. You might even say that RCS with all of that brand-building animation action enables the mobile user to 'touch and feel' mobile messaging - in a virtual way, of course.

High interest in SA

According to the GSM Association (GSMA) an international grouping representing the lion's share of the world's cellular network operators, over 30 countries have already launched RCS messaging. In South Africa, there is 'high interest' in the new technology, says the Association. The GSMA forecasts additional RCS launches by more than 40 operators across 30 countries.

In a crowded messaging marketplace; marketers, brands and their agencies are increasingly-demanding access to RCS as an up-to-date bearer with the potential to positively impact CX. At the recent GSMA Mobile World Congress in Barcelona earlier this year, RCS was showcased at the GSMA Innovation City as part of Google's 'The Future of Operator Messaging' stand.

There are a number of ways business believes RCS can be a real boon for CX. RCS business messaging is clearly loved by consumers in the markets where it is already available. According to one research firm, Zipwhip, 74% of mobile users said they replied to an RCS message from a business within one hour. Conversely, just over 40% reported responding to an email. People generally interact with things they like so the implication here is that RCS translates into much greater customer satisfaction.

One stop-shop

With the average consumer under considerable economic stress at present, satisfaction with RCS is enhanced as the customer beings to understand just how cost-effective this new technology is for both businesses and consumers. Quick and easy replies without costly phone calls, practically no usage of pricey data, and more are all possible with RCS.

Equally, we live in a time-pressured world so CX is enhanced as RCS makes it possible for the consumer to get more done, faster, and with less effort. This is because RCS is a kind of messaging 'one-stop-shop' with product information, calls to action, and the welcome ability to pay bills and easily sign-up for services with just a few clicks from one's messaging centre.

Finally, CX is boosted as the consumer realises RCS with its ability to verify business senders enhances their virtual and real-world safety and security.

ABOUT DEVON MEERHOLZ

Devon Meerholz is Chief Creative Officer at IMmobile, a global software and solutions group with a presence in over 60 countries worldwide. Devon's unique approach to creativity is put to good use at IMmobile's Johannesburg office. Here he works with a multidisciplinary team to develop SA-specific mobile initiatives from bank statements to cross-platform personalised marketing videos that enable the company's clients to speak to current and potential customers in more visual, appealing and creative ways.

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