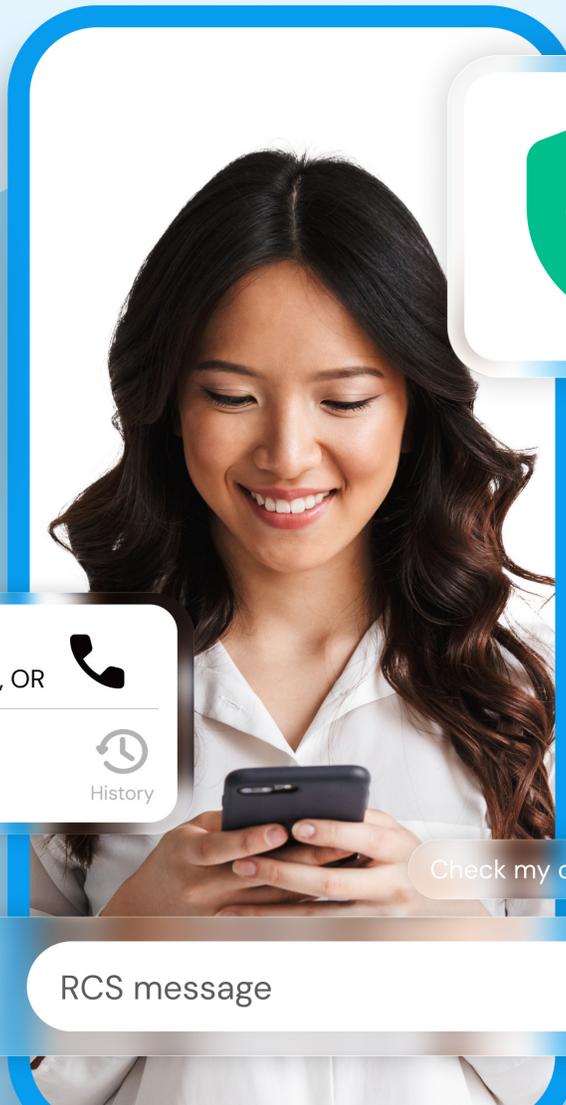
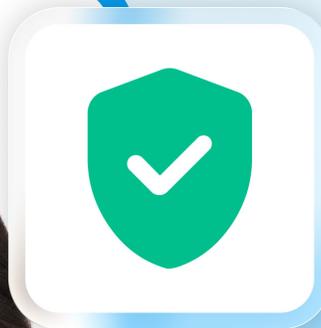


# 2026 Messaging Landscape

SMS & RCS INSIGHTS FROM CRM PLATFORMS



 +1 888-777-6666  
The Blue Bank, Portland, OR 

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 Add contact    Message    History

Check my order status

Cancel my order

 RCS message 

# Introduction

**A new world of ecommerce messaging has arrived.**

Text has been a key part of the retail marketing channel mix for years, but now the arrival of RCS ushers in a wave of innovation. Rich features are bringing true shopping experiences to the inbox. Add AI segmentation and deliverability tools to the mix, and you've got a winning recipe for ecommerce success.

In this report, you'll find our latest insights into what smart CRMs are doing to ensure their messages meet the mark and deliver sales for brands.



**By 2030, 80% of enterprise applications will be multimodal—AI-enabled and capable of seamlessly blending voice, text, and images.**

# RCS: The new texting path is now opening up

Started from the bottom, now we're where?

If you send a text in the US today, the receiving device can almost certainly handle RCS. With near-universal coverage, RCS moved from testing the waters to gaining real traction, although there's plenty of trail left to explore.

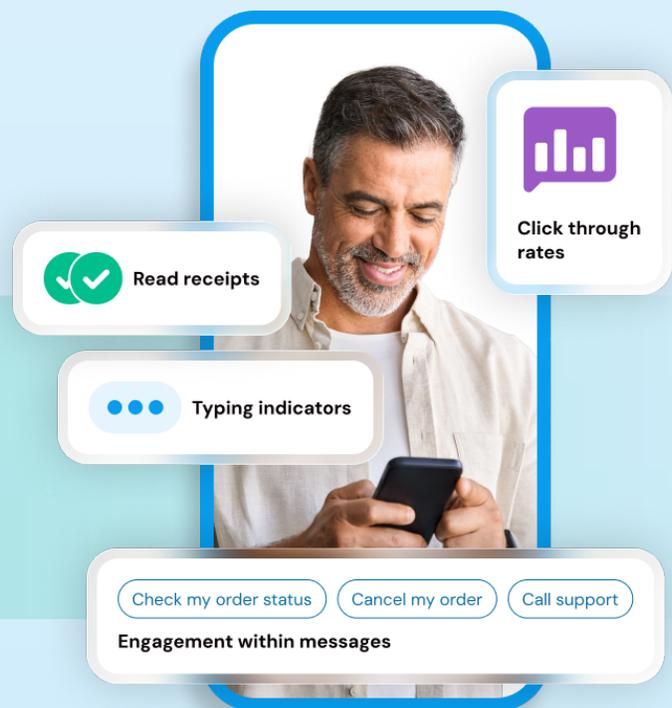
The bigger question now is how US businesses implement RCS, and how it performs. While some brands have jumped in headfirst, others are still in the initial learning stage.

96.2% of smartphones are now RCS-enabled.<sup>1</sup>



"If you look at it, and look at where RCS is right now, it's got that scale. Now it's got that reach that brands really want. **So now it's a case of educating brands about the effectiveness and the power.**"

[Watch our interview with Nick Lane of Mobilesquared →](#)



# RCS Readiness Checklist

Ready to explore the possibilities of RCS for your CRM? There are a few key considerations both on the industry readiness side, and on the brand readiness side.

## What the industry is looking for at this stage of market growth:

- Preferred use cases**  
Marketing and Ecommerce use cases are being favored for early adopters.
- Feature usage**  
Carriers are eager to see brands that leverage the rich features of RCS (vs. simply being basic text messages sent via the RCS channel).
- Sending volume**  
Brands should be ready for launch and preparing to send at consistent volumes.
- Brand recognition**  
Recognizable brands are ideal. This doesn't mean a brand needs to be a household name, or on the Fortune 500, but it should be well-known and recognizable.

Your appointment is soon!

Hey, Alice 📱 Just a reminder that you have an appointment with Dr. Raymond on Dec 5th. Please complete the survey below before the appointment. Thank you!

 [Send me directions](#)

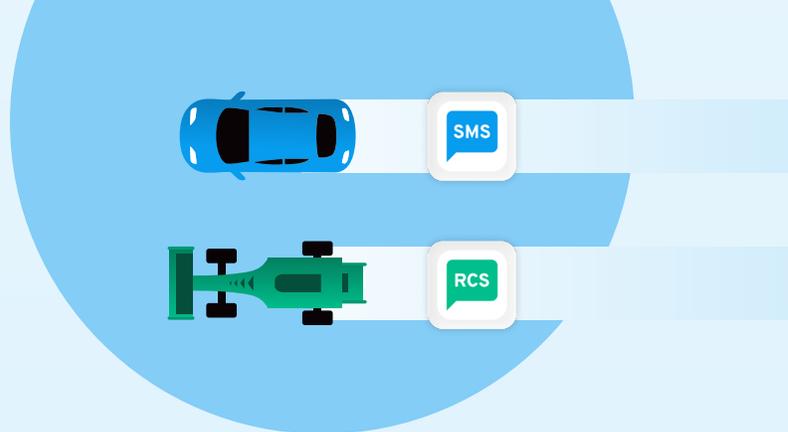
 [Complete the pre-appointment survey](#)

 [Check-in](#)

## Assessing the ROI for brands:

- Verified sending**  
Determine if verified sending will be a big value for the brand (simply confirming a user's already-scheduled appointment may not benefit as much from verified sending, as an alert from a financial institution).
- Feature usage**  
Determine if rich features are going to be useful for the brand: tools like map and calendar integrations, suggested replies, rich media cards, etc.
- Price**  
Assess price sensitivity. At this point, RCS can be considered a premium channel.

# SMS: The road still traveled



## What role does SMS play in the RCS era?

In 2026, SMS remains indispensable despite the rise of RCS. In the US, SMS marketing is on track to reach \$9.96 billion by 2030, growing steadily at 20.8% per year.

## SMS is the default fallback

Even the most enthusiastic RCS users recognize the critical role SMS plays in the event that their RCS message doesn't go through. Having the ability to fall back to SMS is a critical differentiator compared to over-the-top (OTT) applications like WhatsApp, which are completely reliant on a mobile user's data access. Think of it like iPhone users seeing a blue bubble turn green when iMessage isn't available. The text may be slightly less rich, but most importantly, the message still gets through.

## The two most common SMS fallback scenarios

- **Internet interruptions:** Text messages come in handy when connections are spotty. RCS needs data, SMS doesn't.
- **Device or carrier constraints:** SMS makes sure everyone gets the message, on the (increasingly rare) occasion that a phone or network does not support RCS.

## SMS is the price-conscious choice

If budget matters more than bells and whistles, SMS can tick off the basics on your messaging to-do list at a lower price point.

## Where SMS provides the most obvious value

- **Transactional messages:** For quick reminders that don't require much interactivity (e.g., "Out for delivery" order updates).
- **High-volume alerts:** Perfect for notifications that need to go wide (e.g., snow day and school closure warnings for students and parents).
- **Time Sensitive:** SMS balances reliability and low cost in urgent situations (e.g., time-sensitive texts like two-factor authentication codes).

## SMS is the starting point

The industry consensus suggests perfecting your SMS strategy before adopting RCS. In automotive terms, ensure you've maximized your sedan's potential before making the leap to Formula 1 technology.

- **SMS is your trusty sedan.** It's not fancy, but it gets great mileage.
- **RCS is your F1 race car.** It does everything a car can do, but with a lot more finesse.

## Simply put...

Each channel serves its purpose. Use the basic option (SMS) for simple tasks and the advanced solution (RCS) for complex needs. When your requirements vary, maintaining both capabilities allows you to deploy each where it performs best.

# 10DLC registration for retail businesses of all shapes and sizes

US messaging registration requirements can feel extra complicated for certain business types, like retail franchises and ecommerce businesses selling on third party platforms. Here are three tips for ensuring a smooth path to market:

## 1. Make sure the brand has a clear privacy policy and terms and conditions.

Brands need messaging-specific Privacy Policy and Terms & Conditions for 10DLC approval. They can be posted on the brand's website (upload URL during registration), hosted on Google Drive/Dropbox, or attached as a PDF on the 10DLC registration form. Note that these shouldn't be generic templates, but should include the brand's logo and full contact information.

## 2. Ensure the opt-in/opt-out process is clearly defined

You must prove clear, voluntary opt-in (e.g., website phone entry + checkbox, keyword text, button click, or in-person signup). Opt-ins must include the brand name, frequency of messages, "msg/data rates may apply," and HELP/STOP information.

For the opt-out process, use intuitive words like STOP, END, UNSUBSCRIBE, CANCEL + brand name, and a no-more-messages confirmation.

## 3. Include clear sample messages

Don't leave reviewers wondering what you're sending on this number. Explain the campaign and give real example messages to provide context.

For more tips, see this article on [10DLC registration for non-traditional brands](#) →



### Anxiety over new registration requirements?

- Occasionally (48.39%)
- Never (27.5%)
- Yes (24.11%)

			Verdict
<b>Marketing campaigns</b>	<p>Sending a promo code? An SMS will get the job done.</p>	<p></p> <p>More advanced marketing campaign? Try RCS for videos in webview, images, and interactive features.</p>	<b>RCS has the edge.</b>
<b>Time-sensitive notifications</b>	<p></p> <p>For most simple reminders, SMS does the most important job: grab the mobile user's attention.</p>	<p></p> <p>For notifications that require increased trust, consider using RCS for its brand verification.</p>	<b>Depends on the use case—consider both.</b>
<b>Customer support</b>	<p>SMS may work for simple, standard, text-based support, like requesting appointment times.</p> <p>Need Voice? Customers can call 10DLC or Toll-Free numbers directly, but only if that number supports both your customer support line and your messaging campaign.</p>	<p></p> <p>RCS is set to be an ideal customer support channel with suggested actions and replies. Need Voice? Add a suggested “Dial” action to your message that calls out to your preferred customer support line.</p>	<b>RCS has a major edge.</b>
<b>Customer surveys</b>	<p>SMS messages can contain a link to a customer survey—but URLs can be tricky.</p>	<p></p> <p>Build a customer survey right into your RCS message with suggested replies.</p>	<b>RCS wins by a landslide.</b>
<b>One-Time-Passwords (OTP) or 2-Factor Authentication (2FA)</b>	<p></p> <p>For most simple OTP or 2FA messages, an SMS message does the most important job: put the password where the mobile user can see it.</p>	<p></p> <p>For OTP or 2FA messages that require a high level of trust, consider using RCS for its brand verification.</p>	<b>Depends on the use case—consider both.</b>



# Deliverability is *still* the name of the game

A flower delivery company sent Mother's Day promotions a week before the holiday. The result? Zero messages delivered. The culprit was a misunderstanding. The word "flower" was flagged as a false positive for [SHAFT-C](#) because cannabis companies were using it as code to bypass carrier restrictions.



John Wright, CEO of TrueDialog, shared this story on the State of Business Texting podcast. You can watch the full episode to learn how TrueDialog saved the (Mother's) day with pre-send vetting.

[Watch the full interview with John Wright of TrueDialog →](#)

Hi Ashley, make this Mother's Day extra special with a flower delivery. Use code Flower25 for 25% off your order!

Message failed to send



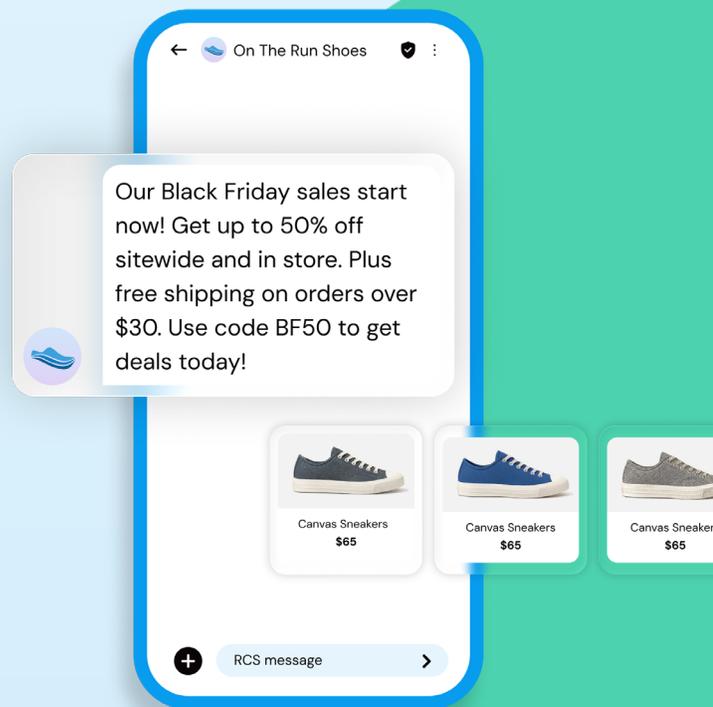
# For the most successful ecommerce messaging platforms, every day leads to Black Friday

Capitalizing on the biggest revenue-driving weekend of the year requires always-on diligence. And one less glamorous but critical piece of that planning is list hygiene. Here are three steps to ensuring you've got a clean send list ahead of the holidays:

Run a [number lookup tool](#) to make sure all the numbers in your database can receive texts.

If you're sending traffic over 10DLC numbers, make sure your [10DLC campaign is registered properly](#). If it's not, start the process now so it's ready to go in November.

Verify that your messages offer—and honor—clear opt-ins and opt-outs. Remember, opt-ins and opt-outs are required to [maintain compliance](#).





**Be sure to follow Bandwidth for more insights and education around business text messaging:**

[Discover how ecommerce and retail companies are winning with Bandwidth](#) →

[Learn about our Messaging API](#) →

[Get started with the RCS Planning Playbook](#) →

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**Maximize your messaging investment today**  
**Our experts are ready to show you how one platform, smarter analytics, and unmatched support drive real results.**

[Talk to an expert today](#) →

