PARTNER SPOTLIGHT
OpenMarket and RCS

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—Jay Emmet,
General Manager, OpenMarket

1. Can you tell us a little about OpenMarket and the work you do?

At OpenMarket, we help global enterprises and brands use SMS, MMS and RCS mobile messaging solutions to provide a better experience for their customers and employees. We believe that text messaging will transform internal business processes and help our clients develop long-term relationships so they can be there for their customers at global scale. We call this concept the Empathetic Interaction™, and it's changing the way companies engage with their customers to a much more personal and meaningful level.

2. What can you tell us about the work you are doing with Google, carriers and brands with regards to RCS?

This past winter, OpenMarket debuted the capabilities of RCS in a live demo with Google at Mobile World Congress in Barcelona. Our presentation showcased a recent use case with Virgin Trains, a major brand and OpenMarket customer who has been using SMS to create a better boarding experience. We worked with Virgin Trains to realise how the customer journey could benefit through using RCS messaging, and then showed the results live at our booth. Our Virgin Trains demonstration was very well-received, and it immediately stirred creative ideas by brands on how they could do more with mobile messaging.

OpenMarket also exhibited RCS combined with IoT at LiveWorx in May. The demonstration showed how Samsung's Smart City modules can be used to detect events like tilting or damaged utility poles in need of repair. The poles include IoT sensors that trigger an SMS or RCS alert to the maintenance crew's mobile device with diagnostics and a detailed map pinpointing the exact coordinates of the pole. By using mobile messaging, the city is able to disseminate critical information via RCS without ever having to build and maintain a separate mobile app.

More recently, we worked with our partner, Ecrio, to announce the first US operator-based RCS A2P proof of concept demonstration of IoT use cases running on T-Mobile's network. T-Mobile has long been a leader in RCS, and currently has the largest active base of RCS subscribers in the U.S.

About The GSMA RCS Initiative

The GSMA RCS initiative brings together the mobile industry's leading operators, vendors and service providers to shape the RCS specification and implementation. Participating operators have the opportunity to work with software and handset developers, and product and technology experts, to shape the personal and business messaging future for the mobile industry.

Learn more about RCS >

This fall, OpenMarket will be exhibiting RCS at Mobile World Congress Americas in San Francisco (booth #1581). We'll show how businesses and brands can now serve consumers via next generation mobile messaging, creating a superior experience and increasing customer engagement and loyalty.

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3. Why has OpenMarket decided to offer this messaging service now?

Over the past 20 years, we've seen traditional text messaging evolve from communicating with friends and family into a preferred method for consumers to interact with brands. With Google's news that it will bring RCS messaging to Android users worldwide, we've entered the next phase of mobile messaging that will enhance and modernise this technology.

Another important point is that there is a significant decline in app usage due to the lack of coverage and user adoption. The ability of RCS to offer app-like features without the need to download or create an account is a key advantage. While SMS may have been due for an upgrade, RCS brings new and improved experiences to compete in the ever-changing mobile mindset of consumers while still leveraging the most commonly used feature on any mobile phone – messaging.

4. How will RCS improve the messaging services consumers can already access?

Our own survey data shows that 77 percent of consumers, especially millennials, prefer communicating with businesses via SMS over any other communication channel. RCS embraces these customer preferences for more visual information and gives them more options to interact using mobile messaging. Essentially, RCS is a platform that can bring OTT-style features to the standard messaging app on Android devices – which in laymen's terms means two-way communications that include group chat, high res graphics, video, voice, read and delivery receipts, maps, upsale buttons, QR codes, menus and even payments.

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5. What advantages does RCS give to brands over traditional SMS? What are the benefits to customers?

The biggest advantage for brands and marketers is the massive amount of benefits RCS provides to consumers, and therefore, their target audience.

RCS allows consumers to have a mobile app-like experience in their mobile messaging inbox in a much more convenient way than requiring them to download yet another app or have them toggling back and forth between web pages. Through simply pushing call-to-action buttons on RCS messages, consumers can access a simpler and richer user experience. By making customers' lives easier and delivering them the information they need, when they need it, marketers are being empathetic to their customers while encouraging brand loyalty and ultimately, more dollars in the door.

There is the additional benefit of increased data and analytics that will result from RCS. Information such as delivery receipts, read receipts, and interaction data will help brands better understand what is working and why in terms of valuable customer engagement.

6.   What challenges does RCS face in being more widely adopted?

Our perspective is that there are three main challenges: 1) fragmentation in terms of different implementations of RCS which GSMA is currently addressing, 2) mobile operator adoption and deploying RCS solutions within their networks, and 3) handset manufacturers must deploy client software to support RCS features with messaging apps.

It's clear that we have pent up demand for RCS, so if these challenges are addressed, then it's likely we will have a new mobile messaging channel very soon.
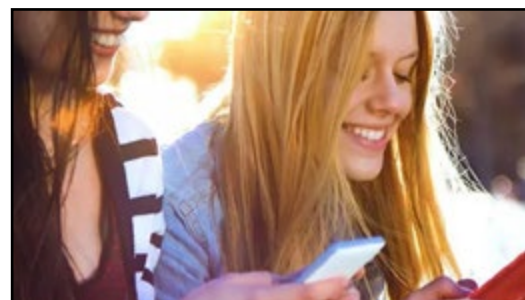
7.   Why is OpenMarket supportive of the GSMA A2P Future Messaging community?

OpenMarket has been a mobile messaging leader, influencer and advocate for over 18 years. We remain committed to driving innovation and creativity in the mobile market by influencing trends and consumer behavior. This means being focused on reducing industry friction, market fragmentation and streamlining the methods for conducting business in the mobile channel for all parties involved.

We passionately support GSMA's A2P Future Messaging community that brings stakeholders from the entire mobile ecosystem together to propel RCS to become an industry-leading A2P messaging platform.

We have a shared purpose to help brands and enterprises deliver a better experience to consumers through mobile messaging.