How to Visualize your
Customer Service and IVR Experience
With the ever growing number of smartphone/device users, more and more people are connected 24/7 to the internet and as such expect their data to be available at the tip of their fingertips from anywhere, anytime and from any device. Listening to multiple and confusing options, pressing a digit that may or may not direct the caller to the correct department, repeating information and waiting on the line for the next available representative – is becoming an obsolete experience in an age of smart device mania.

**How are Customers Interacting with Traditional IVRs? Poorly!**

Researching consumer attitudes towards IVR systems, one among many surveys found that 83 percent of respondees viewed IVRs as having no benefit whatsoever to the customer\(^1\). This finding reflects the number one problem with traditional IVR systems - the constant tradeoff between usability and functionality results in cumbersome, time-consuming and infuriating user interfaces.

The IVR’s multiple options and confusing call trees are a true manifestation of this problematic tradeoff. 27 percent of US businesses that use IVR offer more than 10 options to their customers. Operations with 200+ seats make an average of 13 options available in the IVR menu, compared to 8 options for the 50-200 seat sector, and only 7 for sub-50 seat contact centers\(^2\).

What do customers do when confronted with too many options to choose from? In most cases, they will abandon the IVR session (zero out). In the “See or Hear Consumer Survey” survey\(^3\), 32.9 percent of respondees marked the option “every time” when asked “how often do you get frustrated with a the phone menu and press '0' to get to an agent?” while 28.6 percent answered “about 50% of the time”.

Human nature has evolved to select the path of least resistance and therefore if the IVR system is difficult to use, customers opt for the easy way out, either hang up or zero-out to a live representative. An inefficient IVR system may drive customers to unnecessarily select live agent support over self-service, raising inbound call volume, prolonging average handle time and poorly affecting customer experience.

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\(^1\) Research led by Liel Leibovitz, New York University Assistant Professor of Communications, commissioned by Interactions Corporation, 2011


\(^3\) [https://www.google.com/insights/consumersurveys/view?survey=b2amsjzyr5wzc&question=1&filter=&rw=1](https://www.google.com/insights/consumersurveys/view?survey=b2amsjzyr5wzc&question=1&filter=&rw=1)
Overcoming the Challenge: Visualize Voice IVR

The majority of calls handled by US contact centers originate from cellphones, and more than two-thirds of US cellphones users own smartphones⁴. If scanning a screen is much quicker than listening to call trees, why not turn the existing IVR system to a visual interface and afford your connected customers the power, capabilities and flexibility of IVR in significantly less time - ?

A Visual IVR is a visual display of the existing IVR tree, personalized with real time customer data and easily accessible by customers anytime, anywhere and from any device. There are three main entry points to the Visual IVR – from the company’s website, by launching a mobile app with Visual IVR embedded within or without requiring a native app, by simply dialing a regular phone number and receiving a text message with a Visual IVR access link.

Once in the Visual IVR, customers are guided through the user friendly, visual interface, clicking an option and quickly finding solid, real-time solutions. Paying a bill, editing information, scheduling a service, entering complex data, solving routine problems, configuring a product and many more actions can be performed in the Visual IVR by the customer without having to wait on the line, repeat information and in many cases independent of live agents.

Extending existing IVR menus as a visual display of options, presented to users via the web or smartphones makes perfect sense when studies show that navigating a Visual IVR menu is five or six times faster than listening to a DTMF IVR call tree⁵.

Not only is Visual IVR faster, but customer experience is significantly improved without sacrificing functionality or options – this is further conveyed by the findings of the “See or Hear Consumer Survey”, when 57.8 percent of surveyees marked the option “I would rather see the options” when asked if they preferred to hear or see the menu options when calling customer service⁶.

Visual IVR is becoming the solution to overcome the problematic tradeoff between usability and functionality that traditional IVR systems suffer from.

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⁵ ContactBabel, “Visual IVR: The Next-Generation ‘Win-Win’ Solution for Customers and Businesses”, p.2
⁶ https://www.google.com/insights/consumersurveys/view?survey=64mhzfudw2i&question=1&filter=&rw=1
Direct Connectivity to the Call Center at Any Point during the Interaction

The growth in communication channels provided by the business tends to fragment customer experience and amplify customer frustration. Web self-service, mobile apps, social media, complex telephony options and other service channels available to customers are usually independent and separate, requiring the user to repeat information when switching channels or reaching a live agent.

Visual IVR, on the other hand, extends voice IVR out to a visual medium across all touch points, like Web, mobile, chat and social media, while ensuring the continuous, seamless and warm transition of information from one communication channel to the next.

Assuming the customer requests live assistance, the visible path taken and data entered in the Visual IVR is available to the agent, enabling a warm and seamless transition to the contact center, chat or call back.

The Visual IVR collects customer specific data and then feeds it back to the agent in the call center for efficient handling of calls in a much shorter time frame. Customers enjoy a continuous experience across all the touch points they engage with, better routing and fast first call resolution rates.
Direct, Accurate and Fast Routing

Nearly 12 percent of calls received by large US contact centers are transferred to other agents, equating to around 4 billion call transfers per year\(^7\). Although call transfers can’t be eliminated entirely as intricate queries may often necessitate differently trained and experienced representatives - they can definitely be reduced in most contact centers.

Because reading a text is much quicker than listening to a set of instructions, Visual IVR is able to offer every meaningful routing option to the customer as the quantity of options is no longer an issue. Consequently, customers easily control the Visual IVR menu, going back a step or acquiring information on a specific option, until finally selecting the optimum solution fit to their issue.

The visual display of a more granular routing and self-service options increases the likelihood of accurate first-time call transfers in a much quicker time frame. In fact, a standard customer journey in Visual IVR takes an average of 6 seconds, as opposed to the DTMF IVR’s average of 40 seconds\(^8\).

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Authenticating a Caller’s Identity Automatically in a Matter of Seconds

64 percent of inbound calls go through some type of verification and authentication with agent input being present in 91 percent of cases. Manual verification of a caller’s identity takes an average of 28 seconds and costs billions of dollars to call centers on an annual basis.

Visual IVR is able to authenticate a caller’s identity with the speed associated with logging into a website. This is because users are requested to type their usernames and passwords on a screen – a simple task that takes less time to complete than having to struggle with the disliked speech recognition.

The caller’s authentication choices are then visible to the agent, shortening, if not completely eliminating the identification process.

Changing Customer Perception on Queue Wait

A ContactBabel survey found that 61 percent of the public dislike waiting in a queue for the next available representative in the contact center because they hate not knowing how much longer they will be placed on hold.

Statistics from many contact centers indicate that if the actual average wait time is between 20 to 30 seconds, the public perceive wait time to be 27 times longer than the reality – estimating an average of 11.5 minutes.

Visual IVR displays estimated waiting time and gives the customers options to select from: remain on hold, get called back or begin a web chat session if a multichannel agent is available.

When the customer chooses to wait, Visual IVR will prompt a functional and contextual rich self service interaction and trigger suggested solutions by displaying links or pushing relevant videos – all while keeping the customer’s place in the queue. In such a way Visual IVR encourages the waiting customer to use self-service over live assistance, cutting down inbound call volume as well as average handling time.

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11 “Your call is important to us...” Why does the British love of queuing not extend to contact centres? - Available from www.contactbabel.com without charge. Original research carried out on behalf of Vicerop.
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Tackling Pain Points Easily at No Extra Cost

Most organizations do not know how to identify where customers are experiencing difficulties in their IVRs. If pain points are identified, some organizations don’t know how to modify their IVR programs, scripts and voice user interfaces (VUIs).

Visual IVR generates graphical reports that show exactly where users are struggling, where they are changing to a voice session, where they are dropping off, and so forth. Changes can then be made and evaluated in real-time to improve interactions.

Where is Visual IVR Most Helpful?

In a variety of customer service interactions across verticals, both inbound and outbound, Visual IVR can simplify the process and reduce costs for organizations.

- **Banking Industry**: Loan application status/dispute charge/report stolen card - a customer can view the details on a mobile app and then leverage a contextual “Contact Us” menu within the mobile app using Visual IVR. Visual IVR performs an initial triage of the customer request, clarifies the call intent and then connects the customer with the contact center agent. Providing contextual self-service within the mobile app helps to significantly lower inbound call volume. In any event that live agent support is requested, average handling time (AHT) is reduced as critical call information is gathered upfront in the Visual IVR.

- **Telco Industry**: During an inbound interaction where a customer uses Visual IVR for a bill clarification - the customer authenticates and reviews an intuitive graphical representation of the bill and related charges. While the customer’s waiting to get connected to an agent, Visual IVR promotes bundling options to get more value for the customer’s money. The results are call avoidance as the bill is shown and explained visually, reduced AHT as the agent has the context of the call as well as up-sell / retention for the organization.

- **Online Retail Sector**: Visual IVR can be used for item inquiry / new order. The customer for example, reviews a product and has a question. Depending on the value of the product/ customer type, a unique phone number is presented for him to call. The customer then calls in and receives personalized service from an agent who has the complete context of customer journey. The benefits are reduced AHT as the agent has the context of the previous selections of the customer, more time for value added conversations as well as improved and differentiated customer experience.
Positive Outbound Activities, Happier Customers, High Retention

Effective outbound activities ensure positive and valuable engagements with customers. Visual IVR can be used by the company to connect with its customers – if it is to share helpful information, provide status updates, send resolutions, push forward customized deals, and so forth. Customers, on the other hand, highly appreciate positive and valuable outreach campaigns and in return show long-lasting support.

In the Banking industry for example, when the Bank wants to report a fraud alert, the customer receives a call and SMS from the Bank notifying him of a potential fraudulent transaction. The customer authenticates on Visual IVR, and then validates / reports transaction as fraudulent using a visual interface, thereby avoiding the need for a call. The immediate results are call avoidance as well as reduced AHT, in case live agent support is needed.

In Sales sector, customers can receive an SMS about an offer they qualify for, based on their location (geo-fencing), account data or other preferences. The link in SMS launches into a Visual IVR experience that helps them configure a new product / service offer and complete the purchase. Customers can also connect with an agent at any point during the interaction. The benefits are the up-sell options as well as customer retention.
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How Does Visual IVR Work:
Reuse Existing IVR Scripts, Rapid Implementation, Consistency to Users

Visual IVR will work seamlessly with your existing IVR by reusing your IVR scripts. This allows you to leverage your existing IVR investment and extend the reach of your IVR even further. Because we reuse your existing IVR scripts, you can be up and running in weeks, not months.

Visual IVR menu systems integrate with existing DTMF structures and reuse the same VoiceXML scripts. Modifications to the DTMF IVR system will be automatically replicated regardless of channel or device. It can render as HTML4 or HTML5 for display on smartphone browsers, automatically selecting the correct language depending on the user’s browser. Visual IVR can also be embedded in existing websites using JavaScript.

Once you have Visual IVR, you can now use an Interaction Designer to create new self service flows that can help you reduce inbound call volume further. The visual channel is far more powerful and capable than audio, so you can present sophisticated self service flows to the customer as changes to call flows and improvements in the customer journey do not require dedicated IT resources.

It is up to you whether you want to reuse your existing IVR, build new self-service flows or do both.

Supported Formats: Web, Web Mobile, Native

- **WEB**: Visual IVR can be easily embedded in your existing website or web self-service site. With plug-ins for all the major CMS systems plus provided JS Widgets, embedding Visual IVR takes minutes.

- **Web Mobile**: Visual IVR can render as HTML5 for display on all major smartphone web browsers. Automatic browser sniffing will select HTML4 or HTML5 depending on the users browser.

- **Native**: Native iOS and Android support make it easy embedding Visual IVR in your existing mobile application.
Hot ROI & Business Case

The typical business case for Visual IVR is primarily made on tangible ROI composed of these four components:

- **Average Handle Time (AHT) Savings:** Typically 60-80% of the ROI is derived from AHT savings as a result of the continuity Visual IVR offers. For instance, Visual IVR can collect information from the customer before it is passed to the agent, as alphanumeric input is far easier. Customers won’t have to repeat information, and handle times can be reduced.

- **Agent Calls Avoided:** Another large driver of the ROI is in call deflection/call containment. If Visual IVR improves the Self Service success percentage, this adds up to significant savings. For initial ROI projections we assume a marginal increase in SS capabilities.

- **Call Transfers Avoided:** As a result of “zero-outs” in the traditional IVR, many calls are internally transferred to the correct department or agent queue. Visual IVR minimizes zero outs and call transfers with the visual representation of multiple options that facilitate accurate routing. Call transfer avoidance promotes a major ROI savings opportunity.

- **IVR minutes deflected:** A smaller component, but there are savings to be realized in actual IVR costs (including Telco).

A typical ROI for Visual IVR will be attained within 4-9 months. Some further research has presented the following ROI opportunity analysis:

- Automating identity verification and authentication processes saves about 39c per call, without negatively affecting the customer experience.

- The average cost of an inbound call tends to be around $5.50. Call avoidance through an increased use of self-service, encouraged by the user-friendly nature of Visual IVR, can potentially save very significant amounts, especially in high-volume environments.

- With the typical length of the time taken to transfer a call being between 30 and 60 seconds (which does not include the very real possibility of the second agent having to check the identity of the caller once again), a reduction in call transfer rates can immediately be quantified as a significant cost saving, especially in larger contact centers.

- Typically, Visual IVR will be around 10% of the cost of automated speech recognition, which can be seen as a competitive technology, in that it too is attempting to deepen self-service functionality and improve routing.

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Summary: Visual IVR Key Takings

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>For your Customer</th>
<th>For your Business</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Easy Visual Navigation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dramatically Reduced Costs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No listening to complete menu trees</td>
<td>• Lower AHT based on better information</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Quick access to desired selection</td>
<td>• Lower IVR and Telephony charges</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>No Repeating Information</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reduced Call Times</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Discover customer intent</td>
<td>• Rich screen pop means less repeating</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Less customer frustration</td>
<td>• Asking complex or additional questions</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Better Customer Service</strong></td>
<td><strong>Easy Implementation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Reduced call times</td>
<td>• Extend and reuses your existing IVR</td>
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<td>• Reduced hold times</td>
<td>scripts for better routing and improved</td>
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<td></td>
<td>self-service capabilities without major IT investment.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Build new flows to reduce AHT</td>
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Visual IVR Drives Efficiencies and Immediate Results

Giving customers direct and continuous access to a visual IVR without having to dial into the call center, listen to endless options and wait on the line, is a win-win solution, generating immediate results for the customer and business.

Less inbound calls make it into the call center and those that do, are significantly shorter. Consequently - average handling time drops, wait time decreases if not eliminated altogether, and the customer experience dramatically improves by providing efficient solutions anywhere, anytime and from any device.

For more information, visit Visual IVR