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TOGETHER, YOU WIN.

TRANSFORMING YOUR IVR FROM FRUSTRATING TO PHENOMENAL

CUSTOMERS CALL FOR BETTER CX AND SELF-SERVICE

"I've been on hold for so long that they've run out of hold music."

"You guys need a new IVR or better prediction techniques or maybe not lie to customers."

"Haven't called back, looping the same messages, long wait in queue. Torture. Why?"

These are just three examples of the types of comments customers leave when they're dissatisfied with IVRs, but they represent how most customers feel. Research shows that over 80 percent[1] of customers are dissatisfied with companies' IVRs. In fact, for many customers, it can seem like a company's IVR is actually standing in the way of getting their issues resolved.

For companies that pride themselves on providing a good customer experience—or those who aspire to—seeing comments like the ones above can be hard to take. But these complaints need to be understood if companies want to improve not only their IVR experience, but their overall customer experience.

[1] "The State of IVRs in 2018." CRM Media, 2018.

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BUSTING 5 COMMON IVR MYTHS

IVRs may have been developed with the best intentions (helping a large volume of customers get answers and self-serve more quickly), but along the way they've developed a reputation for keeping customers away from the thing they want most: a resolution to their problem. Many legacy, premise-based IVRs cause frustration (what happens if customers want to take an action that isn't one of five options?).

Here, we break down five common myths about IVRs—and how well-designed IVRs can build up to a great customer experience.

MYTH 1:
IVRs keep customers from an agent who can solve their problems. Almost 50 percent[2] of customers are frustrated when they can't bypass the IVR to speak with a live agent.

FACT:
Poorly designed IVRs definitely disappoint, as callers who try the IVR and fail to reach an agent rate their experience as 44 out of an average of 70. However, satisfaction increases significantly for callers whose problem is resolved with the IVR interaction[3] and successfully self-serve, scoring 71 (above average).

MYTH 2:
The IVR options are different than they were last week. Customers who call an IVR regularly (i.e. to refill a prescription or make a payment) have to re-orient themselves and relearn the IVR whenever the options are updated.

FACT:
Using a speech-enabled IVR that puts the most relevant options within easy reach can improve ease of use by 40 percent.[4]

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MYTH 3:

IVRs are complicated and don't understand customers. For many customers, making their way through an IVR is like making their way through a dead-end maze with no hope for an exit or outcome. If they don't find an option that meets their needs or the IVR doesn't understand them, they have to start all over again.

FACT:

Over 45 percent of customers are annoyed to listen to a list of irrelevant options presented by an IVR system, but a speech-enabled IVR is 75 percent better at determining intent and can connect customers with the right outcome.

MYTH 4:

Customers have to repeat information that the IVR should already have. Over 50 percent of customers get frustrated when they have to repeat themselves. Customers often have to reenter information like their account number, birthdate, or phone number when the system should already have that information.

FACT:

Modern IVRs are integrated to use phone numbers, order history, support history and other customer and transactional information to predict intent and drop the caller into most relevant call flow. And speech-enabled IVR can improve conversational dialogue so customers feel understood. Personalization, intent and understanding are key factors in a successful IVR.

[2] "Almost all Americans are frustrated with voice channels to talk to companies." ZDNet, 31 Jan. 2019.

[3] "Contact Center Satisfaction Index (CCSI)." CFI Group, 2018.

[4] "Current State of the IVR." 2017.

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MYTH 5:

All your other support channels (website, social media) point customers to an IVR for a resolution and vice versa, without solving the problem. When each support channel, including the IVR, isn't integrated, it leads to a disjointed customer experience. Even if companies provide a great experience at 90 percent of touchpoints, only 30 to 40 percent[5] of customers will have a flawless experience end to end.

FACT:

Companies that adopt an omnichannel strategy achieve over 90 percent[6] greater year-over-year customer retention rates compared to those that don't.
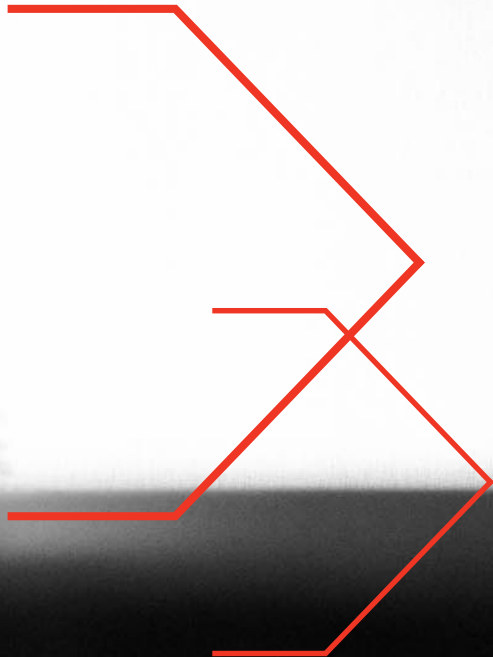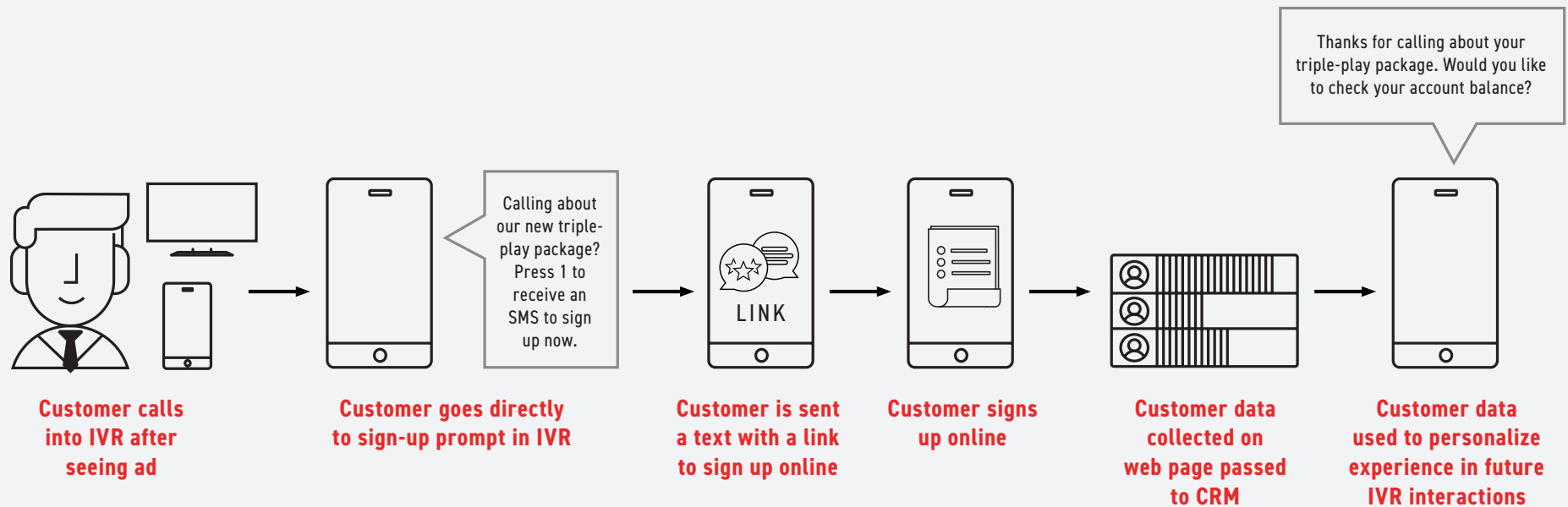
[5] "Linking the customer experience to value." McKinsey & Company, March 2016.

[6] "Survey: Businesses that Use Omni-channel Strategies Have Far Better Customer Retention Rates." Loyalty360, 31 Jan. 2014.

FROM ROADBLOCK TO GATEWAY

For many customers, IVRs are a last resort. But companies have a chance to change that perception. IVRs function best when they're a link in a seamless experience, routing the customer to a resolution or integrating with other channels. Think of an IVR as a gateway—a channel that helps customers solve problems quickly, on the channel that best suits their needs.

Customer calls into IVR after seeing ad

Calling about our new triple-play package? Press 1 to receive an SMS to sign up now.

Customer goes directly to sign-up prompt in IVR

LINK

Customer is sent a text with a link to sign up online

Customer signs up online

Customer data collected on web page passed to CRM

Thanks for calling about your triple-play package. Would you like to check your account balance?

Customer data used to personalize experience in future IVR interactions

Here's an example. Let's say a customer sees a triple-play package advertised on TV and calls the number at the end of the commercial. Since that phone number (and back-end IVR) is associated with the TV campaign, the IVR can determine that the caller's intent is to sign up for the triple-play package. The customer doesn't have to go through a menu and is immediately sent to the part of the IVR where they can sign up.

The IVR then requests permission to send the customer a text message with an embedded web link. The customer clicks on the link to a landing page where they can sign up for the triple-play package. Once their account is set up, all the details captured via the web page are shared with the IVR so that those details can easily accessed and incorporated into future interactions.

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In the example, the IVR functions as an initial point of contact, guiding a customer from the beginning to the end of the sign-up process across channels in one seamless interaction. The IVR provides a connected experience—and it does it in three key ways.

1. **The IVR connects to the right data sources for the right context.** As mentioned earlier, one of customers' biggest frustrations with IVRs is that they have to re-enter their information every time they call. While this is partly used to verify identities and account information, it's easier for customers if some of that information is already stored, decreasing customer effort and time to resolution.

   By connecting IVRs to data sources like CRMs and billing systems, companies can customize experiences based on customers' history, habits and preferences. Integrating with the right data sources adds context to IVR interactions and helps customers resolve their problems quickly, without needing to re-enter information. An intelligent IVR knows customers' recent interactions, reasons for calling and whether they hung up before completing an action, and uses that to inform the interaction.

2. **The IVR connects the customer with the right resolution.** Since the IVR functions as a gateway, its purpose is ultimately to help the customer take the steps needed to resolve their problem on their own, or route them to an agent who can help. IVRs should be designed so they accommodate different courses of action taken by the customer, or give them an option early on to connect with an agent.

   Giving customers the option to connect with a live agent early on is important—at the beginning of a customer experience, 90 percent[7] of customers want to speak with a live agent.

[7] "Customer service on hold: we hate phone menus and don't trust virtual assistants like Siri." The Conversation, 7 Apr. 2016.

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3. **The IVR connects the customer with other channels and functionalities.**

   Today's customers expect an omnichannel experience, one that's available anytime, anywhere on any device. Unfortunately, they don't always get what they want—87 percent of customers think brands need to work harder to create a seamless experience.

   The IVR is just one channel that companies have available, and should integrate with other channels to deliver a seamless experience. Customers should be able to initiate an interaction within the IVR and continue it across other channels without losing context, as shown in the TV sign-up example.

   Bots and virtual assistants are added functionalities available across channels, both leveraging artificial intelligence. Instead of relying on a touchtone IVR where customers have to listen to options, natural language processing (NLP) lets customers explain what they want to accomplish, then routes them to the corresponding point the IVR. An intelligent IVR should also be able to handle multiple customer intents, helping customers resolve calls before escalating to a live agent.

READ ON TO FIND OUT HOW ONE COMPANY WENT FROM A FRUSTRATING TO PHENOMENAL IVR EXPERIENCE.

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COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE PROVIDER DELIVERS BETTER CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE WITH CSG IVR

Case Study

This company was in trouble. Their IVR was a tangle of menu-driven paths that weren't user-friendly, and if customers wanted to make a payment over the phone, they had to reenter their payment information each time they called. There were also too many exit points for customers to leave the IVR, leading to lower call containment.

The company sought a solution that could increase call containment within the IVR, provide a better customer experience and allow them to quickly make updates and changes to their program when needed. That's why they partnered with CSG to improve their IVR experience.

First, the teams met to review which call flows were working—and which ones weren't. By streamlining the best call flows, the company could retain customer familiarity within the IVR while improving functionality.

To fix their menu problem, the company implemented speech recognition, allowing customers to speak naturally. Instead of having customers wait through all the IVR options, they can simply respond to the IVR prompt, "Tell me why you are calling."

The company's IVR also predicts the caller's needs and gets them to the right point in the IVR faster. Using historical data analysis of the customer's interactions and current account status, the IVR can anticipate why a customer is calling and present a predictive prompt based on that customer information.
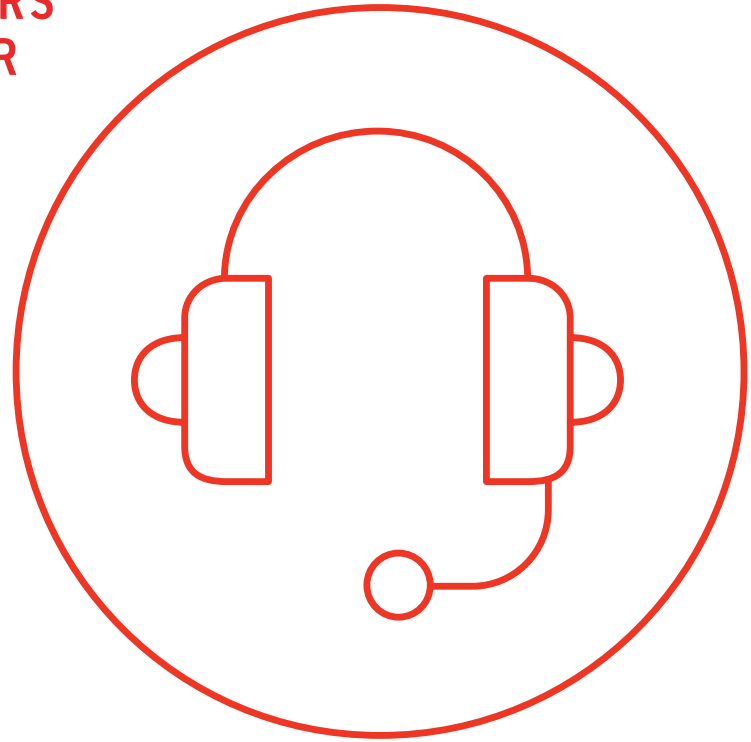
WITH THEIR NEW IVR, THE COMPANY HAS BEEN ABLE TO HELP 40 PERCENT OF CUSTOMERS RESOLVE CALLS WITHIN THE IVR, MEANING CUSTOMERS ARE ABLE TO GET THE ANSWERS THEY NEED IN LITTLE TO NO TIME.

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HOW TO DESIGN A GOOD IVR

A good IVR experience should be quick, intuitive and seamless. Customers dial in, provide context for their call to achieve resolution, whether it's self-service such as completing a payment or checking an order's status, or transferring to an agent for more complex interactions.

But for many companies, that's not the case. Customers are frustrated with the state of IVRs today, and companies need to make a change.
Here are five steps companies can take to design a better IVR.

Be succinct and to the point.
Over two-thirds of customers[8] are only willing to wait two minutes before they hang up—they don't have the time to wait through endless prompts. Use open-ended prompts like "Tell me the reason for your call," and leverage Natural Language Understanding (NLU) to route customers to the right point within the IVR.

Deliver a personalized experience.
Your customers expect you to have basic information like their name and phone number right at your fingertips, along with their purchase history, knowledge of their recent activity, and more. Simply sharing information between platforms and facilitating channel switching are essential considerations when designing your IVR.

From the greeting (personalized with name, and/or tailoring which language and menu options are presented), to the hand-off from the IVR to a call rep, combining Natural Language Processing (NLP) and artificial intelligence allow you to direct the customer down a call path that best aligns with their intent and profile. This creates an engaging, positive customer experience.

[8] "Arise Customer Service Frustration Series: Phone Hold Times." 20 Feb. 2019.

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Understand intent.
Customers don't want to be greeted by cold touch tones or trapped in a never-ending IVR menu. Modernizing your IVR with NLU allows callers to say what they want and be routed appropriately, instead of "zeroing out" of menu trees and getting dropped on an unsuspecting agent.

Make sure the experience is omnichannel.
You can't improve your customer experience without improving the experience across all channels. Take stock of what channels customers use to interact with you, then map out customer journeys across these channels so that customers can come in at any point without losing context.

Leverage the right technology.
Whether you're looking to create an end-to-end conversational commerce experience that uses AWS cloud services and Lex, or just can't afford to have simple changes take weeks of development effort to implement, the right technology plays a critical role in your success.

To be sure your IVR meets your customer needs, you'll need to be able to test and iterate. With simple drag-and-drop configuration, you can make your own immediate updates. That's significant, as is the ability to integrate GPS data, voice biometrics, and other tech innovations to provide a more intuitive customer experience.

IVR BENEFITS

If you've designed your IVR right, it will deliver several key benefits:

→ Improve brand loyalty, with a better, more seamless customer experience

→ Help customers self-serve within the IVR or route customers to the right skilled agents

→ Decrease cost and time to resolution

→ Design call flows and self-management capabilities for multiple channels

→ Reduce churn and customer frustration.

But you'll really know you've done it right when you customers start going from this:

"How many hours should I plan to wait on hold to get help?"

To this:

"Your customer service was stellar tonight! Good IVR flow, no wait time, solved problem myself."

A NEW IVR IS WAITING. WE'RE READY WHEN YOU ARE.

CSG INBOUND SERVICES

CSG Interactive Voice Response (IVR) is an enterprise inbound voice services package customized to your business needs. CSG IVR can be provided as a simple inbound application for cost-effective self-service, or as a more comprehensive interactive voice application customized with integrated text-to-speech and speech recognition capabilities. Build your own IVR application with our platform as a service, or let our experienced team build it for you.

The solution features:

→ Highly customizable IVR experience

→ Advanced Speech Recognition or Text-to-Speech for personalized interactions

→ Make efficient transfers to attended contact centers provisioned with Computer Telephony Interface (CTI) screen pop or cost-effective "whisper greet" feature

→ Virtual assistance, NLU/NLP, omnichannel offerings, etc.

READY FOR A NEW IVR? CONTACT CSG TODAY TO LEARN MORE.

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![CSG logo] TOGETHER, YOU WIN.

ABOUT CSG

CSG simplifies the complexity of business transformation in the digital age for the most respected communications, media and entertainment service providers worldwide. With over 35 years of experience, CSG delivers revenue management, customer experience and digital monetization solutions for every stage of the customer lifecycle. The company is the trusted partner driving digital transformation for leading global brands, including Arrow, AT&T, Bharti Airtel, Charter Communications, Comcast, DISH, Eastlink, iFlix, MTN, TalkTalk, Telefonica, Telstra and Verizon.

At CSG, we have one vision: flexible, seamless, limitless communications, information and content services for everyone. For more information, visit our website at csgi.com and follow us on LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook.