

When It Is Time To Implement Your New Voice System, It Is Time To Re-evaluate What Your Current Voice System & Customer Service Is Doing

Every quarter, we are approached by clients who want to implement our Voice Response Unit to replace existing equipment. The downturn in the economy has caused many of our competitors to go out of business. Even though their current VRU may be functional, the fact that the equipment is outdated and no longer supported could spell doom if there is a system failure. In addition, many of the existing units can not be customized by their owners and they often do not support functions and features which are standard in today's VRU technology.

It is not as easy as just cloning the exiting unit

Obviously we want to clone the existing applications as much as possible to make the switch over to the new unit easy and transparent. Existing users may not even realize a new system has been implemented. We start by the creation of a flowchart which outlines what the current system does. It is also a good time to re-evaluate what changes to the voice system would improve customer service.



We always treat a replacement unit as a brand new application

We always begin any ODT VISION implementation whether it is a new voice system or replacing an existing VRU by defining the users and their needs. One of the advantages of the ODT VISION VRU is the fact that your IT staff can modify and change what that voice system is doing

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to be responsive to the needs of your users. Your voice system should be dynamic so it can follow changes in your business. The VRU application needs to be designed to where the user will want to use it. A caller will only want to use the automated attendant if it:

- Is Easy & Friendly
- Is Functional
- Provides applications that the user truly needs
- Allows various forms of information including fax back for hard copy reports or e-mails

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Those who fail to plan, plan to fail.

Questions which Define Your Voice System Applications

1. List the applications you want to accomplish in order of priority. (Please note which needs to be done in the first phase and which will be done later if multiple phases will be used.)
2. Define the users of these applications and their needs
3. Designate a date that the project needs to be live
4. Define the computer system platform that provides the data that these applications use
5. Define the characteristics of customer service you do well and what functions can be improved
6. Define the hours of operation for customer service and strategy changes, if necessary for after hours communications
7. Define any special requirements (e.g. bank connection for credit/debit card clearance) that this application requires
8. Decide whether to implement a transfer (exit strategy) for a caller to talk with a live representative upon request or for certain conditions (i.e. Credit Hold on Shipment is met) during office hours
9. Define protocols for emergencies
10. Determine your need to support multiple foreign languages and if so, determine what they are (e.g. Spanish...etc.)
11. Define your logging and audit trail requirements

12. Define your security requirements
13. Determine your need to support 3rd party programs or connect to other devices or sensors

When replacing an existing unit, we might have some historical data which defines the number of calls and any peak periods which may define the number of lines needed. The ODT VISION VRU is dynamically scalable. The unit has built in utilities which analyze when capacity limits are being reached and there is a need to add lines.

Flowchart: A Good Place to Start

Start your project with the creation of a flowchart. This is a very useful tool in understanding what the caller's logic is and what system and data considerations there are. It also provides a visual tool to review with your associates to get their feedback on the project.



Form a Battle Plan

Once the different elements of the project have been defined, and especially if you plan to implement in phases, you need to formulate a battle plan. This plan should define:

- The elements of the project
- The time-line for implementation
- Who is responsible for which tasks
- Whether there are additional phases or future enhancements

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We congratulate Curbstone, who is ODT VISION business partner for this outstanding award.



Curbstone Card™ named to the Products of the Year

Wins Silver in "Business to Business" Category

The award, presented by the editors of TechTarget's Search400.com, were judged by the Search400 editorial staff, in conjunction with a team of users, industry experts, analysts, and consultants. The judges selected only 17 software products for awards.

"It's a good credit card processing package compared with other vendors on price and function..."

The following criteria were used when evaluating the products:

Innovation
Performance
Ease of integration into environment
Ease of use and manageability
Functionality
Value

The judges took notice of Curbstone Card's performance and innovative licensing. ■

Potpourri of Specialized Applications

This month's "Application In the Spotlight" article is the sixth of an ongoing series called, "Potpourri of Specialized Applications." Frequently, a client will install the ODT VISION Voice Response Unit for a specific large application, but its ease-of-use and simple customization will later allow for new functions to be added to provide even greater customer service flexibility. Some of these applications have already been done at our clients' sites and some are in the planning stage.

Sub-contractor Posting System 24/7

One of the main difficulties for general contractors can be the communications with sub-contractors on construction sites. Whether residential or commercial, the General Contractor may have problems managing the progress of a construction project when it involves independent sub-contractors. Communications are usually complicated in several ways, such as when the construction site is remote to the GM's corporate offices, when multiple independent sub-contractors are hired for differ-



ent aspects of the project, and when work is done or completed outside of the corporate office's hours of operation.

The work that needs to be preformed by a sub-contractor on this project may depend on a prerequisite being done first. For example, a sub-contractor may need to find out if the drywall has been completed before they can hang the kitchen cabinets. The ODT VISION VRU can provide centralized information for users to inquire on the stages of the project and also to post their task's progress. In addition, if there is some form of emergency, information can be posted and the project manager for that site can be notified immediately even if the user doesn't know who that is. Since a cellular phone is common to most foremen and managers, they can communicate with the corporate offices 24/7. The access of real-time information allows these managers to manage their work force and this results in a more efficient use of labor. This is a simple "executive system" where the project

manager is now making decisions on real-time information and he can manage by exception (when problems arise in which his input is critical) instead of trying to manage every action.

Distributor/Store Location System

You may want to provide to your potential customers the locations of your firm's nearest store, service center, hotel, distributor, restaurant, service personnel, or any corporate resource. If you have a database created that sorts these elements based on caller input, the ODT VISION VRU can provide information to the caller 24/7.

This routine can exist so that the caller obtains their information through different methods. You can ask the caller to answer some questions that will define their needs. They may enter a zip code or, for a much slicker approach, the ODT VISION can retrieve their CallerID to determine where they are calling from. If this application is for a user who is on the go, we may ask what area code, city, state, or any location identifier we can use off the database to locate the resource they need. ■

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Get Your Own Demo Today

Go to www.ODT VISION.com to get your own demonstration of the ODT VISION

Voice

Response Unit which will run on any Windows based PC of Windows 98 or later with sound card and speakers. This is a simplistic order entry and shipment status system which is running off a Microsoft Access database. The demo is in the test mode and you will be using the "Test Phone" feature of the ODT VISION VRU to simulate a phone call to the data. Manuals and case studies are also available on the web site.

Improving Customer Service Affordability

Submit your technical questions or get free project analysis regarding your telephony application to: TechSupport@ODTVISION.com Or Call: 614-985-3814

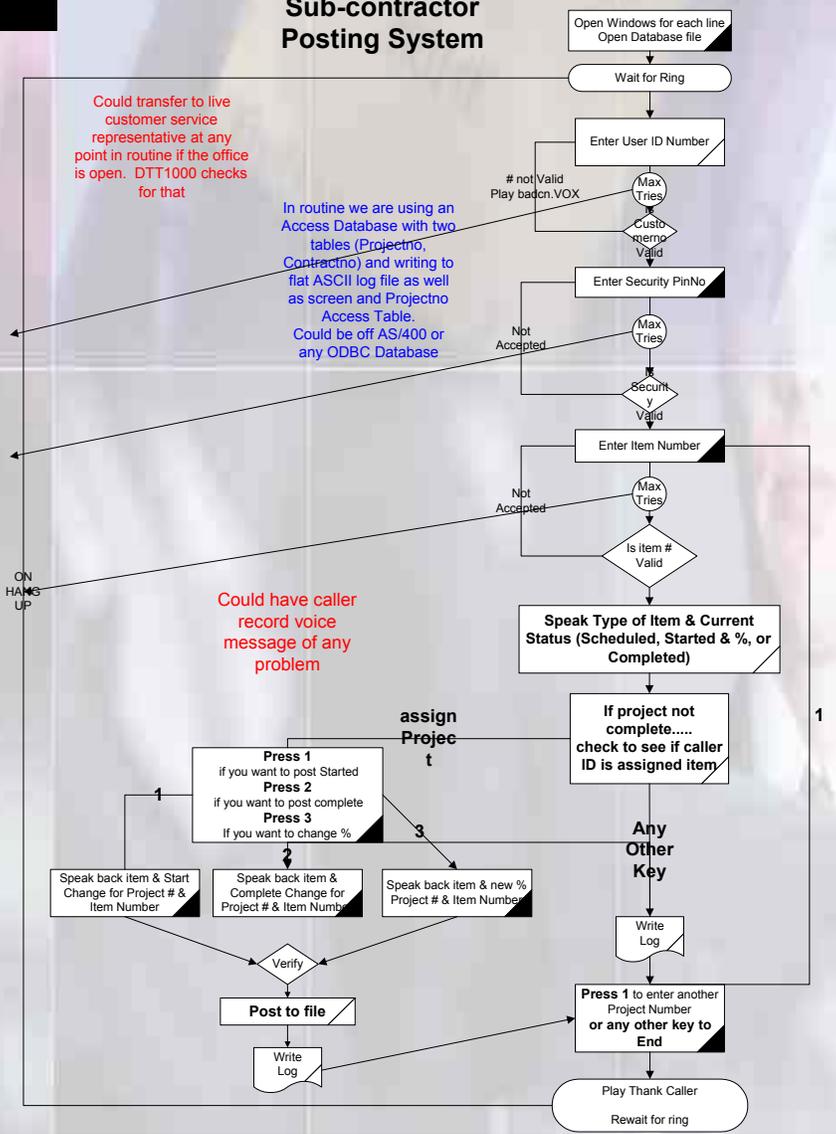
HOW DO THEY DO THAT? Syntax for Sub-contractor Posting System

Project Item Inquiry

```
;-----
; Get the Project Item Number
;-----
ItemNo:
-----
If ErrorCt = 3 then if 3 errors
rtn = Play "MaxEr.vox",0,"@";"Exceeded max
tries..."
GoTo Endscript
Endif
Cleardigits
Rtn = Play "Item.vox",0,"@" ;
"Please Enter the 10 digit Item Number"
Rtn = GetDigits 10,,25
ItemInput = DigitBuffer
Rtn = Play "Yourent.vox" ;you enter item num-
ber .....
Rtn = Speak iteminput
cleardigits
Rtn = Play "lToAccept.vox",0,"@"; "Press 1 to
accept..."
OkInput = GetDigits 1,"@",5 ; "or any other
key to cancel"
If OkInput <> 1 then
GoTo ItemNo
Endif
;-----
; find Item number in database table
;-----
SeekDB Projectno, =, ItemInput
If MatchDB then
ErrorCt = 0
msgbox "item number found in Database"
else
rtn = Play "baditemno.vox" ; "You entered a bad
Item Number"
ErrorCt = ErrorCt + 1
Goto Itemno
Endif
x = left iteminput, 2
projectno = Projectno.projectno
Rtn = Play "thisproj.vox" ; this project is...
ProjType = "P" & x
projtype = Projtype & ".vox"
Rtn = Play projtype
Rtn = Play "Loc.vox" ; "Which is located at...
ProjLoc = "L" & projectno
projloc = ProjLoc & ".vox"
Rtn = Play projloc
Rtn = Play "Currents.vox" ; the current status
of this item is...
If Projectno.completion = 0 then ;"Not completed
If Projectno.Started = 0 then
Rtn = Play "Notcomp.vox",0,"@" ; "Is
not completed at this time however is schedule for comple-
tion on..."
Rtn = Speakdate projectno.schedule, "DDD MM DD
```

```
YYYY"
compstatus = "No"
Else
Rtn = Play "Started.vox",0,"@" ; "Is not completed at
this time however was started on..."
Rtn = Speakdate projectno.startdate, "DDD MM DD YYYY"
compstatus = "Started"
Rtn = Play "Percent.vox" ; the percentage of completion for
this item is...
Rtn = Speaknumbers projectno.percent
Rtn = Play "Percents.vox" ;percent
Endif
Else
Rtn = Play "Wascomp.vox",0,"@" ; "Was com-
pleted on..."
Rtn = Speakdate projectno.Postdate, "DDD MM DD YYYY"
compstatus = "Yes"
Endif
```

Sub-contractor Posting System



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