

Any User, Any Place, Any Time

Years ago we were called "Data Processing Managers." The main goal was to maintain the company's computer systems and back up the data. As our computer systems became a more integrated part of the firm's business strategy, the information flow became the life blood of the company. We were now called "Information Technology Directors." Many of you are old enough to remember the move from batch processing and how revolutionary it was to have real-time information. Inventory counts now represented actual stock levels.

Employees get their own information

By the early 90's, PCs were showing up on many manager's and employee's desktops. A new philosophy to allow these users to obtain their own real-time data was adoptive. This "self-serve" attitude later became the basis for the design of "Executive Systems". It is assume that if a manager has accurate real-time information and that information is presents in an analytical form, the batting

average of that manager to make the proper decision goes up. The Executive Systems were also designed to draw attention to elements which may be out of line based with some benchmark.

This allows the manager to implement corrective action immediately. In the past, action was only taken after the normal periodic report

was compiled since the abnormality was not know until that point.



Why is Customer Service So Very Important?

Whether your firm is selling a product or providing a service, "Customer Service" can be a main competitive edge in beating your competition. What every your firm does, you most likely have competition. Even with a highly technical product like our very own "ODT VISION Voice Response Unit", any new enhancement or feature will soon be on the competitor's product. Price and functionality is only one way to compete. Most importantly is our ability to provide the best customer service possible. Our
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How to beat the competition

Thoses of you who know me personally know I am a huge Buckeye football fan. While attending Ohio State University, I had a friend who played as a denfensive back for OSU and later went on to play in the NFL for the Chicago Bears. When Doug Plank finished in the NFL ,he returned to Columbus and open several Burger Kings. I stoped at one of his resturants for lunch one day with Doug. On that day, Doug was concern with some new construction which was taking place at the other end of the strip mail. Doug said, "Look at that, that's a new McDonalds,....How can I compete with that." At this point I said, "You compete with better customer service. You do it by having better food, always hot, and served quickly in a clean pleasant environment by a staff that is friendly and courteous." Doug said, "You don't understand, this is McDonalds." I replied, "Done if for years, my main competitor at the time was IBM."

Promote your self-service solution by educating your clients that this solution exists. You may even provide discounting if customers use these solutions.

clients swear by us. Great customer service is our method to take out the rival firm's product. You not only get the best telephony product in the marketplace today which is easy to customize and very affordable, but you have a business partner who will work as a team player in your voice system needs, now and in the future.

As your customer service department strives to improve, it is a blending of live customer service



representatives, self-service web applications, incoming/outgoing fax documents & emails, and

perhaps our ODT VISION voice response solution. Live representative are the most expensive way to deliver customer service but can handle any situation. There are a certain percentage of users who will not use any form of self-service and you must always build an exit strategy from a voice response unit to live representatives or from a web solution to allow live chat. Any user's request, which is handled in the self-service solution, will help optimize free up your live customer service representatives to handle calls, which require human attention immediately.

Self-service, It's a Trend

All firms have a variety of users which very from employees and customers to all types of business partners and suppliers. The 90's brought fax machines, digital pagers, cellular phones, e-mail technology, the internet, and next

day delivery. Our modern users have a **"I Need It Now Mentality."** The information request may be after hours or your current live customer service representatives may be backed up and the caller is on hold when all they want is a simple answer. Almost anyone would rather talk to a live customer service representative then communicate with some form of self-service solution. A complication to any self-service solution is making sure the information provide is synchronized and reflected of the real-time data. In general, a self-service solution will lower cost while improve the responsiveness to your users.

Many questions need to be addressed in the implementation of a self-service solution.

- Would our users rather have a web, telephony or perhaps both as their self-service solution
- What is your user's tolerance for remaining on hold and do you plan to give them the option to leave a message, transfer to an automated VRU, or give them information about your web solution
- What is the nature of your users and what are their needs

The Mobile Office

If this user is an employee, their job function may require them to be on the go. The ability to work away from the office and on the move defines many modern situations. An employee may need to go on the web or through some type of access point to work with their firms computer systems. From a cellular phone, that same individual may need to call in from a client site or on the go to get current information or generate a fax on demand report.

A client will always be off-site but that doesn't mean they don't need real-time information or don't need the ability to do various tasks with you firm even outside business hours.

The 3rd party business partner or supplier also needs real-time Information and the ability to interact with your firm. When defining this "Mobile Office" concept, always define the user's needs and implement the security where applications and information will only be obtainable based on the user's sign-on for security and their needs.



What is a Mobile Business Strategy

No firm can compete in today's climate and ignore the fact that our society is becoming very mobile and there is an increase demand in the level of customer service required. The world is changing and people are always on the go. You will need to support not only internet self-service solutions but cellular phones, PDA, Laptop computers. Always begin the planning stage of a Mobile Business Strategy by reviewing the nature and needs of your various user types. For example, a salesman may work from his desktop, laptop or cellular phone base on location, time of day, and information request at the monument. A comprehensive remote connectivity strategy will not only combine all those needs but give the user flexibility and at the same time, improve information flow. ■

Potpourri of Specialized Applications

This month's "Application In the Spotlight" article is the seventh 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.



This same type of reservation system could be used for all types of scheduling functions. For example, a tool rental store can report if a tool is available and reserve it for a user. We have seen this from a city parks and recreation department scheduling a shelter house to a golf course scheduling tee times. Any resource management can be maintained through a voice system.

Class or Resource Scheduling

A school, community center, church, or private organization may want to set up a class scheduling system where a potential student could call in to inquire about a class, schedule it if it is open, and even make a payment if this class requires a fee. This is a simple process where all classes have numbers and the student has an ID. This system would allow the class inquiry and scheduling to occur on a 24/7 basis and not require any sophistication or equipment from the user. The information is real-time and if a class is full, this individual could be placed on a wait list in case a spot opens up. In addition, if the wait list becomes large, it may be justified to add a new class of this type. Benefits of this system is 24/7 support, no personnel costs, information on the system is:

- The information is in real-time
- The system is open to all users and doesn't require internet connectivity or costly web development
- The personnel costs are low

Utility Billing

We have seen a number of accounts which are using our unit in Utility Billing. A customer may call in to inquire on account balances, make payments, enter meter readings, get bill payment drop box locations, obtain office hours, obtain payment mail address, start or stop service, request appointments, or report emergency situations.

One of our accounts doing this is Middletown, Ohio. They are using their ODT VISION VRU in "[Utility Billing](#)" for callers to make payments on their utility bills automatically on a 24/7 basis. This type of function can be used for all your clients as it doesn't require any sophistication of the user and is quite popular with the explosion of check cards. Benefits to the utility company is the improvement of customer service which is now 24/7 and better serves their clients. In addition, the payment processing cost will be lowered as the cost of processing the payment will result in a personnel savings even though there are associated costs in processing a credit/debit card. ■

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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 Class Registration System

Find Class Number in Database and see if open and Reserve after user has already signed on with Student ID

```

;-----
; Request Class Number
;-----
Classno:
    Cleardigits
    Rtn = Play "6Classno.vox",0,"@" ; "Please enter the 4 digit class
number...
    Rtn = GetDigits 3,,15
    classinput = DigitBuffer

;-----
; find Class number in database table "Class"
;-----
SeekDB class, =, ClassInput

If MatchDB then
    ErrorCt = 0
-

If Class.ClassCount = "0" then
    Rtn = Play "6Classfull.vox" ;this class is full and not available
    GoTo Classno
Endif

If Class.classcost = "0" then
    RTN = Play "6NoCost.vox" ;there is no costs for this class
Else
    RTN = Play "6ClassCost.vox" ;the cost for this class is....
    RTN = SpeakDollars Class.Classcost

If Class.ClassDeposit <> " " then
    Rtn = Play "6Deposit.vox" ;the required deposit for this class is...
    Rtn = Speakdollars class.classdeposit
    Rtn = Play "6SendDep.vox" ;please send the deposit to.....

Endif
Endif
    
```

```

Cleardigits
Rtn = Play "6Select.vox" ;Press 1 to register for this class...
Rtn = GetDigits 1,,15
Selectinput = DigitBuffer

If Selectinput = "1" then
    Editdb class
    availcount = class.classcount
    Availcount = availcount - 1

    Class.classcount = Availcount
    updatedb class
    GoTo Log

Else
    GoTo Classno
Endif

else
    Rtn = Play "6Classnobad.vox" ; the class number entered is bad
    errorct = errorct + 1
    GoTo Classno

Endif

log:
name = member.pr_name
Street = Member.streetaddress
City = Member.cityaddress
State = Member.stateaddress
zip = Member.zipaddress
Phonenumber = member.Phoneno
comma = ","
Open "parkfile.dat" for output as OSFile ; open the custn.data file
    Output OSfile, custinput, Comma, Classinput, Comma, name, Comma, pho-
nonenumber, comma, Street, comma, City, comma, state, comma, zip, comma dtvar, Comma,
LineNo ;write cutomer number
    Close OSFile

x = Custinput & "," ;customer number
x = x & Classinput ; class
x = x & ","
x = x & phonenumber ; phone number
x = x & ","
x = x & name
x = x & ","
x = x & Street ; house street address
x = x & ","
x = x & City ;house where city is
x = x & ","
x = x & state
x = x & ","
x = x & zip
    
```

log x

□