

### The Ever Changing Needs In Telecommunications and Telephony Applications Lead Corporations to the Addition of a ODT VISION VRU

A decade ago, voice mail didn't exist in most corporations. In fact, it was initially opposed with resistance as users found it impersonal and they felt that it was difficult to actually reach a person live on the phone. As in any new approach, there were tradeoffs. The user could now leave or retrieve an important message on a 24/7 basis. That message was routed to the proper person and could be saved for future reference or in many systems, forwarded to another individual if needed. This new innovation

- Lowered the cost and improved communication with individual personnel
- Allowed a user to be on a call but not miss an important message
- Allowed personnel to screen voice mails and return them in order of their priority
- Allowed mobile personnel to obtain communications which came into the corporate office
- Gave a user a 24/7 message center

From a negative first perspective, it is now a common belief that if a company doesn't have voice mail for key personnel, there is something wrong with this firm's approach to customer service. Voice mail is now an intergraded part of business today. Voice mail has greatly improved communications between the caller and the individual or departments that they need to speak with. If your firm doesn't have voice mail service, perhaps you should consider using



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the ODT VISION VRU to provide this feature for your telecommunication and customer service needs.

Next in the evolution of telephony came in the replacement of the receptionist, who would ask the caller what they needed and transfer the call appropriately. This concept worked well during office hours but what was needed was a method where the call could be transferred if you knew the desired extension. **Automatic Call Distribution (ACD)** was the next level of telecommunications enhancements to enter the market place. The caller would enter the extension number desired, enter a number of letters of the person's name or hear a menu to select which department was needed. This allowed the call to be automatically transferred to the proper extension. Many times the user was prompted to answer some simple question which also directed the call to the proper extension. **Once again, this was as tedious but it ; freed up the receptionist, allowed after hours transfers, and was a more efficient use of existing personnel while improving customer service.**



This approach also became a part of most business environments. If your firm doesn't have a form of automatic attendant for automatic call distribution perhaps you should consider the ODT VISION VRU.

### Sample Caller's needs:

- Transfer based on application needs or department
- Transfer based on level of need (i.e. Need Doctor or Nurse)
- Transfer based on level of urgency especially if it is a true emergency after hours
- Transfer based on type of caller (i.e. an insurance firm may allow a transfer of a paying customer to a live customer service representative while a provide must obtain their information from some type of self-service solution)
- Transfer based on application request (i.e. an utility company may take payments through a voice response unit such as the ODT VISION VRU and not need a live customer service representative or perhaps all the caller needs is some form of inquiry which once again can be addressed with the VRU)
- Transfer based on foreign language where caller doesn't speak English
- Transfer based on the need to filter off routine calls to VRU for self-service applications and to only transfer calls requiring live customer service representatives to better optimize existing personnel and to lower over all cost for customer service.

### Self-service solutions

The title of this publication is **"Thinking Outside the Box In Customer Service"**. Over the years, this has been a common thread found in this publication. The ODT VISION Newsletter always suggests methods and ways to improve customer service and do so with less cost". The largest expense of delivering customer service for any organization is its cost for personnel. Any call that can be handled by some form of self-service solution rather than a live

customer service employee optimizes existing personnel while reducing cost. Many firms have added web solutions, but a web self-service application may not address every type of user or every situation. Your self-service application may need to address the needs of an un-sophisticated user, some one that is mobile or someone who just doesn't have internet access at the moment in which they need assistance. Additionally, not only does an IVR application using the ODT VISION VRU allow any user with a phone to do some form of self-service application but it requires no training of that user. This application also has a very short/low cost development cycle.



Report generation or form delivery on demand via fax/email is another form of self-service solution. The ODT VISION VRU can serve as the

terminal that initiates the fax/email and this solution is quite popular. This approach can be used to delivery custom reports, forms to be completed & returned, or some type of data sheet or instruction document on any topic at the user's request.

Your users may need ultimately a true Interactive Voice Response System. An IVR application is when the user responds to voice prompts to interact with live data from their profile. This can be anything from an inquiry type of call to actually paying a bill. The ODT VISION VRU is very affordable and easy to customize on most platforms/databases to

**"We are always suggesting methods and ways to improve customer service and do so with less cost".**



provide this IVR solution. Customization cycles are very short and most self-service applications can be developed around your interactive self-service users' needs in a short time frame with a high ROI.



### **E-mail Support**

The ODT VISION VRU has an optional E-mail interface to Microsoft Outlook which can forward e-mail, data, and attachments at the direction of the ODT VISION IVR customization script. A typical example might be where a caller enters an order and a confirmation, including line items, is emailed to their location.

### **Store/Forward**

Your self-service application may require the caller to record information in an audio format which needs to be forwarded. For example, a restaurant company may be providing a customer survey application where if the caller had a bad experience, they want the user to record the nature of the problem which is forwarded to the proper individual in quality control. The ODT VISION VRU can convert this audio recording into a standard "wav" format (which can be played through any standard soundcard) and then either write them to a disk or e-mail them to an e-mail address. If this is an after hour emergency which is being reported, the VRU may also call out to key personnel and play the recorded message. We recently did a city hotline which allows for a city manager to call into the ODT VISION VRU and give the hotline an emergency status. In this process, the manager has to enter a

security code and either turn off or turn on the emergency status. If the manager is turning on the emergency status, they can also record the message that will be played if anyone calls into the ODT VISION VRU while the hotline is in the "emergency" status. This recording could be about an emergency weather condition, a city emergency such as a chemical spill or any topic where the city needs to make available a city wide notification. The ODT VISION VRU could also automatically contact key personnel, local radio/TV stations and city residents.

### **Scheduling Routines**

Built within the ODT VISION VRU is a scheduling program which can run off of a clock to activate a regiment of processes or routines. Each day the ODT VISION VRU assembles the overdo invoices, daily schedule deliveries, or production schedules and either e-mails or faxes them to the proper departments or individuals.

### **Third Party Program Calls**

One of the little know features of the ODT VISION VRU is its ability to do 3rd party program calls. This means that in an application, the unit can actually make a 3rd party program call which activates another program such as a bank connection. This might require the unit to run a windows program to initiate a connection through a dial up modem. Another example of a 3<sup>rd</sup> party program call is where the unit polls sensors off a clock to collect data.

Almost any electronic monitoring appliance can be interfaced to the ODT VISION VRU if the device supports an API to a Visual Basic routine.

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THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

## Get Your Own Demo Today

Go to [www.ODTVISION.com](http://www.ODTVISION.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

Get free project analysis regarding your telephony application or submit technical questions at:  
[TechSupport@ODTVision.com](mailto:TechSupport@ODTVision.com)  
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### Customization Made Easy

Your own voice response applications can be created using the script compiler. ODT VISION® uses an easy to learn "Basic" - like scripting language allowing you to quickly create your own voice applications from any display screen application from the ISERIES/AS400 or from linked micro databases.

The ODT VISION Software can also be loaded on any PC linked to your ISERIES/AS400 so development and testing can be done without disrupting the production unit and run in what is called the "Test Mode". This Test Mode development will allow your firm to be Sarbanes-Oxley compliant where you can't work with live data due to accounting restraints within that legislation.

### Creation of the Voice Prompts

Outbound voice files can be recorded using a standard Sound Blaster card. Built within the ODT VISION VRU is a "Voice Manager" utility which will convert these recorded voice prompts to the "Vox" format required by the Intel/Dialogic voice cards.

### System Monitoring

The ODT VISION® provides user interfaces for the setup and monitoring of your telephony applications. There is also a graphical interface, which shows a snapshot of current line usage. This is a helpful tool in the analysis of peak periods and capacity issues. Log files can also be used to show all activity in detail. This solution is vary scalable and additional lines or units can be added in the field as dictated by the user usage.

### Openness

Finally, there is no unit in the field which offers more openness than the ODT VISION VRU. It connects to almost any type of platform or database and supports most Microsoft standards. This includes:

- ODBC
- SPAI 5.1 (Microsoft Speech Application Interface)
- Outlook
- Rumba HLAPPI screen scraping

What ever your self-service application needs are, run them by us to see how the ODT VISION VRU might be used to provide the best customer service solution possible . ■

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