Vision Voice Vantage, Inc.

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

I don't receive Health Benefits, You don't have to pay FICA, nor do I Take Days Off

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Don't Look Now But the Nature of the Clients That You Need to Service Are Changing

It doesn't matter on what side of the national ongoing debate regarding immigration you support, …..the nature of the clients you need to service are changing. You can not count on the fact that all customers requesting support speak English as current estimates are that over 20% of the current US population does not speak English. It doesn't matter what size your firm is, what the nature of business or service your company provides or even what state you are located in, most likely you are having to deal with individuals who don't speak English as their primary language.

Customer service not only must support multiple languages but also adapt to the cultural traits associated with those foreign born clients. Of course there is a financial cost in providing specialized customer service. In most regions of the county, it is the Spanish speaking Latino individual that you may now need to support but that isn't always the case. My home town of Columbus, Ohio has a large Somalian population. Your firm may be in Los Angles where there is a large Korean or Chinese population that you need to support. This month's newsletter will deal with how to support a multi-language IVR application from the ODTVision VRU. You need to first stop and define the cultural needs of your users and what languages will need to be integrated into your telephony solution.

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For the sake of simplification, lets assume you now have to provide customer service for Spanish American customers…..How would you say something as simple as a company greeting such as...

"Hello, my name is Mary, Welcome to XYZ Company, how may I be of service to you…"

Buenos días. Mi nombre es Mary. Me gustaría mucho ofrecerle mi voz.

The first issue, do you have customer service representatives that speak Spanish American for that customer calling in? Are there any additional needs besides the translator? You might want to list what special needs each type of customer has. If this is a municipal court, a translator may need to be scheduled for the court hearing or appointment where this Spanish American speaking client will participate. You might also have to provide documentation in Spanish. Bottom-line, you need to identify this user as one that is requiring special support and then provide the services and information that match those requirements. Once an individual has been identified as one that needs these special services, your firm may want to note in client records that this individual has these requirements.

Back to the case of the municipal court, if there is an appointment or court hearing, there needs to be a translator present. In the case of customer service, there needs to be a way for the caller into our IVR application to select Spanish for this call session. The fact that they selected Spanish may be now noted by your application in their customer profile so any

documentation sent to them such as a packing slip, instructions, return policies for an order, etc. may need to be delivered not only in English but also in Spanish. These specific new client requirements need to be integrated into existing services so they are seamless and so that the cost associated with servicing a client with this demographics is kept to a minimum.

## How To Make Your IVR Application Bi-Lingual

To understand how to build a bi-lingual IVR application within the ODTVision VRU, you must realize that there are three different types of voice files that the software accesses.

Outbound Voice Files

These are the voice banners that are recorded and called by the script to be played. An example of the text spoken by an outbound voice file might be, "Please enter your 8 digit account number." These voice files are recorded with a Windows wave file recorder.

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The ODTVision is shipped with a licensed copy of "WavePad" which is an outstanding recording suite. These voice files are recorded with the following formats:
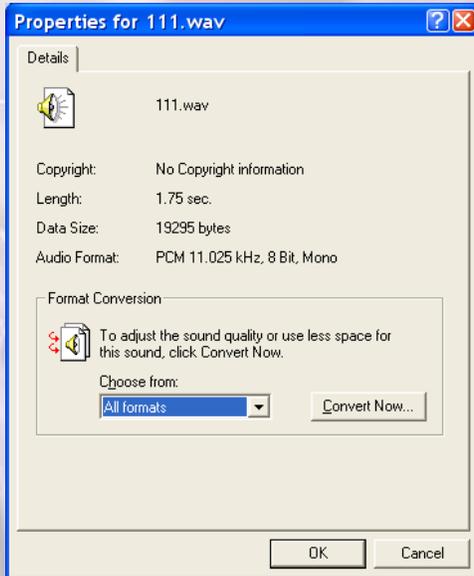
These voice files are found in the folder:

"C:\Program Files\ODT Vision\Voice Files"

System Voice Files

These are the voice files that are combined and played together to speak currency, dates, times, characters, or various values found in strings. The system comes with system voice files which can be re-recorded using the same recording formats as mentioned before. Some of the commands that would use the System Voice Files are:

SpeakDate
SpeakNumbers
SpeakDollars, etc.
These voice files are found in the folder:

"C:\Program Files\ODT Vision\System Voice Files"

Text to Speech Voices

An optional feature for ODTVision VRU is the ability to do Text to Speech. Our solution uses the Microsoft SAPI 5.1 interface. Microsoft voices for Text to Speech are very limited and do not supply the variety and quality desired. With the ODTVision, you have the ability to purchase various 3rd party TTS voices as long as they are SAPI 5.1 compliant. Many of our clients have used Cepstral. These voice files are very affordable and you have a large variety of voices and languages to chose from.

How to Build a Bi-lingual Application

You start by creating new folders for the additional languages for both Outbound and System Voice Files.

i.e.
"C:\Program Files\ODT Vision\Voice Files\Spanish"
"C:\Program Files\ODT Vision\System Voice Files\Spanish"

Next copy all the English voice files from the two respective folders into the new folders for the additional foreign language and re-record them in that language. In some languages such as French, currency is spoken differently so you may not be able to use the normal syntax such as "SpeakDollars" and in that case you will have to add the Text to Speech option and use TTS to speak currency values for variable strings.
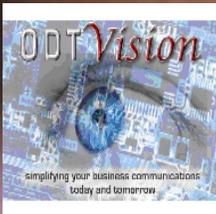
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T H I N K I N G O U T S I D E T H E B O X

Get Your Own Demo Today

Contact us to get your own demonstration of the ODTVision Voice Response Unit. This demo application 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.

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Technical Tip, Remote PC Support

Do not use Remote Desktop to manage your ODTVision VRU as it will conflict with the Dialogic Card and you will be unable to hear the wave voice files. Remote Administrator will work.

Now you will set up within the script a language menu where the caller selects the language they prefer at the beginning of the call. The code may look like this:

```
;--------------------------------
; Language Menu
;--------------------------------

rtn = Play "LangMenu.wav"    ;para informa-
cion en Espanol, marque 1, Press any other key
for English other than 1 (For Spanish, press 1

languageSelected = getdigits 1,"#",10
If languageSelected = 1 Then
    VarLangFlag = "S"  ; Spanish
    User has asked for Spanish prompts
     Language ,"Spanish"
else
     language,
     VarLangFlag = "E"
     VarLangFlag = "English"
Endif
```

Always remember to reset the language back to English during the end call section:

```
EndScript:
Language , ,
```

How to Do a Bi-lingual TTS Application

If your unit has the optional Text to Speech Feature, once you have loaded the TTS voices for any other language it is simple to go to that voice using the standard TTS syntax for changing voices. It is no different than referencing and using any standard TTS voice.

In this example, the script is selecting Cepstral Miguel.

```
voicename = "Cepstral Miguel"
```

When doing TTS in a foreign language, it is important to note that the syntax above only switches the voice. The variable string sent to the TTS engine needs to be in the language that is to be spoken. As an example, if you chose a Spanish Voice, the text will need to be supplied in Spanish.

In conclusion, it really doesn't take much to have other languages supported on the ODTVision VRU and this may very well address your firm's needs to administer to clientele that do not speak English. Being able to handle non-English speaking users has became an necessary function of almost any customer service department. You just have to plan on how to handle calls from that demographic no matter which language it is. As in any application requirement, please feel free to call us to address your needs.◘