

Vision Voice Vantage, Inc.

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

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Running Multiple Applications on the Same Voice Response Unit

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It is not unusual to see multiple applications running on the same **Voice Response Unit (VRU)**. This month's newsletter will take an examination of why that may be done and how you can tailor your **Interactive Voice Response (IVR)** application to accomplish that.



Whenever we start the design of a new IVR application for a new customer, the customer always has preconceived notions as to what that self-service application through the VRU needs to accomplish. The planning of this design starts with the listing of those talking points and goals. At this point, we always ask the new client to define the user or groups of users and what the application needs to accomplish for them. Any successful self-service IVR application may have various aspects which define the logical choices and paths for the call as it progresses which are based on the type of user that is connected during this particular session.



General User Requirements to Consider

-  General Class of Users
-  Language Requirements
-  Level of User
-  Level of support needed
-  Statuses
-  Whether the user can transfer
-  Emergency or After Hours Requirements
-  Special Needs



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It is always important to first examine the user and user's needs before you look at the design of your IVR self-service application.

General Class of Users

It may be easy to define specific groups of users that will be using your IVR self-service application. For example, you may have customers, employees, and 3rd party companies that need to be users on the new application. Each group of user has their very own needs which can easily be defined and a decision needs to be made how to accomplish that in their call. You may choose to have all those classes of user call into the same line where either a menu or prompt separates the logic paths which that user can access during this particular session. Another way to go is to have the types of applications separated into different phone line hunt groups that are directed to ports running a customized script specific to the applications required for that type of caller.

Now within a group of users, there may be additional options defined and available. For example, you may have an HR application set up for employees but if a supervisor logs onto the system, that individual may be able to select the sub-menu option to enter remote payroll entry. That payroll entry option would only be available if the employee sign-on shows that that employee ID is allowed to do payroll entry.

We already discussed the caller defining the type of user they are by menu prompt or through their sign-on itself. There is a third way this can be accomplished. If your application is setup to recognize the caller through their CallerID, the application may not only log the user into their profile automatically but also be able to define the type of user they are automatically.



Applications Language Requirements

We are in a business climate now where your users may require a language other than English. This can be selected through a language sub-menu, through their sign-on to their account or automatically from CallerID if your application supports that. Obviously if the caller needs Spanish voice files to be used in this session, the VRU will automatically use the proper voice files and then switch back to the default language at the end of the session.

Level of User defines support needed

It is obvious that you may need to provide various levels of support based on the type of user calling in. One issue may be a senior citizen that does not like a machine answering their call and has difficulty navigating through menu prompts. If this is the case many times you will notice in call logs that there will be no response when a menu prompt is given. If you know going in that you have many callers in this class of users, you may want to allow the call to be automatically transferred to a live customer service representative during office hours after a certain number of loops where no response is given by the user. Many applications may also allow the input of the character "0" to signify the need for a transfer.



Statuses

Many times as soon as a user is identified, we will be able to define a status that gives the call direction. Perhaps this is an insurance application where it has been noted that the policy is canceled due to non-payment and we want to not only inform the caller of this but to go directly to the collection of the payment to get the policy reinstated. The status of the user within their profile may be used for a lot of different logical path definitions.



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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 ODTVISION VRU to simulate a phone call to the data. Manuals and case studies are also available on the web site.

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<http://www.ibmssystemsmag.com/ibmi/productnews/productreviews/Product-Review--DTT1000-from-Ohio-Data-Transfer/>

Whether the user can transfer

I am a firm believer that most self-service applications need to provide the ability for a caller to transfer to a live agent from the self-service application. You may choose to determine the availability of this option based on the type of caller, as contact with a live representative is always more expensive than resolution through the VRU. For example, we may want the ability for a customer to be transferred to the live customer service representative during office hours. At the same time, we may not want to allow an employee to transfer as we want them to get their answers from the self-service approach.



Emergency or After Hours Requirements

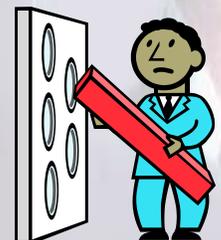


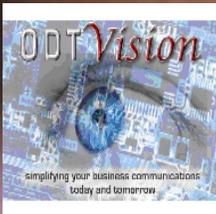
Question: Is there a need for after hours callers to be able to notify you of an emergency situation that needs immediate attention, and how should the IVR self-service application address that? Is it going to make a phone call, send an email, or send a text message with information to alert the on-call person to take action? Like all options available within the self-service IVR application, the emergency routine may be based on the class of the user.

Special Needs

Meeting your caller's particular requirements is a topic that could cover just about anything. Let's say the user is calling into the self-service application of a medical provider. The question arises, do they need to speak to a doctor, a nurse, or other office personnel? The type of user may define that or at least will help direct the path of the call. This caller may be a non-customer that wants to establish a business relationship with the firm. In this case, information is gathered which will be forward to the marketing department since the call came in after hours. Now the potential new customer will be contacted directly by a representative from the firm and a business relationship can be established. Or the caller may be an existing patient who needs to speak to someone concerning a medical issue and they can be connected to an on-call doctor or nurse.

In conclusion, in order to make your self-service as friendly and useable as possible, try to limit the choices so that the caller does not head down the wrong path and end up where they just don't understand what is needed. Your application can be designed to have some built in logic to know what they need. Understand that the best self-service application is not provided by creating one standard routine to fit all users but by one that is tailored to the needs of individual callers. ■





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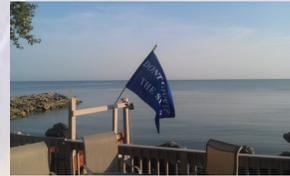
Battle of Lake Erie Reenactment

In September of 1813, during the War of 1812, Oliver Hazard Perry of the U.S. Navy and his crew of 557 brave patriots prevailed over the British fleet in the Battle of Lake Erie near West Sister Island. This Labor Day, the battle will be reenacted by 16 tall ships. Activities are planned for all weekend in Put In Bay, Port Clinton and surrounding communities. You can learn more about the activities at:

<http://battleoflakeerie-bicentennial.com/>



Buoy that marks the battle site.



Perry's battle flag displayed a famous quote from Captain Lawrence,

"Don't Give Up The Ship"



Perry's victory gave the US control of the great lakes and was a major victory in the War of 1812.

Perry's battle report to General William Henry Harrison was the famously brief quote:

"We have met the enemy and they are ours; two ships, two brigs, one schooner and one sloop."

If you live in the Midwest, I would recommend you take in the activities as this is a once in a lifetime event.