Vision Voice Vantage, Inc.

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

Volume 11 Issue 132
Summer Newsletter
7/1/2017

Inside this issue:

CHANGING TRENDS	2
KNOWING THE USERS	2
QUESTIONS & TALKING POINTS TO DEFINE YOUR USER SELF-SERVICE APPLICATION	3
CONCLUSION	4

Resisting the desire to make all communication self-service

Over the 4th of July weekend I was working on an old classic car we have which is a 1966 Oldsmobile Dynamic 88 convertible. It came only with manual brakes but now conversion kits are available to convert to power brakes. I was working with a buddy and we had determined that the new master cylinder with booster was defective. In the garage, I called the supplier's 800 number wanting to discuss an exchange of that part since it was under warranty. I got an IVR application which didn't surprise me but there was no ability to transfer out to a customer service representative. What I got was a voice banner saying all exchanges needed to be done though their web site.

Of course I couldn't do this at my buddy's garage so it had to be done at a later time. Arrangements for a new part exchange were made. I am a sophisticated user so being forced to use a web self-service solution was not a problem. It did of course mean it had to be done at a later time as it was not easy to navigate a web page on a cellular phone.

The balancing act

Most firms want to reduce the cost of customer service while being responsive to their customers' needs with a friendly personal touch. IVR solutions have been around for years and help to save firms a lot of money. A self-service IVR solution will always be less expensive than a live customer service representative taking the same call. Also, if you can address a percentage of customers' needs through self-service IVR application, it frees up personnel to address a call that actually requires human involvement. There are a variety of reasons why a user may not be able to use a self-service application.

- **User doesn't have access to the self-service application. (i.e. as no web access at the moment)**

IBM Solution Connection℠
Integrates solution information with IBM eServer, software and TotalStorage technology

IBM eserver TOOLS NETWORK

IBM Server Proven
Solutions with experience

- **User doesn't have the ability to navigate a self-service application**
- **The user's need is outside a normal situation and the self-service application wasn't designed to handle that type of issue**
- **The user's needs requires personal attention**

Changing trends

Years ago, it was assumed that to provide great customer service, a live person had to answer the call and address whatever was needed. If a person was on another call or not available for any reason, a receptionist needed to write up a phone message and get it to that individual ASAP so they could return a phone call. When Voice Mail first became available, many people found that approach was not friendly and they were initially turned off. That viewpoint changed over the years where if a firm didn't have voice mail where messages could be left 24/7, it was now thought that the firm wasn't modern and responsive to the needs of its customers for business to business communication.

Viewpoints on self-service applications whether through an IVR application, web interface, or mobile apps are changing as well where users are more likely to use self-service. A user may very well want to use the self-service solution rather than talk to a live customer service representative as it is faster, easier, more private and may provide additional benefits like foreign language support. Also there is no danger of being on hold in a holding que for the next available customer service representative for a lengthy time.

Any successful self-service application design requires a complete analysis and understanding of the user and their needs.

Knowing the user

Applications that may be done through self-service

- ☎ Order Entry
- ☎ Account inquiry and changes
- ☎ Password resets
- ☎ Transaction Confirmation
- ☎ Shipping Information
- ☎ Pricing Information
- ☎ Stock Availability
- ☎ Customer Inquiry
- ☎ Available Credit
- ☎ Information Hotline
- ☎ Offsite Payroll Input
- ☎ Employee Benefit Hotline
- ☎ Customer Response
- ☎ Automated System Operator
- ☎ Automated Paging & Email Delivery
- ☎ Fax Back Systems
- ☎ Query Reports On Demand
- ☎ Human Resource Support
- ☎ Warehouse & Logistics Support
- ☎ Automated notification to personnel in field
- ☎ Audit and Log trails of all activities

Vision Voice Vantage, Inc.
1938 Zollinger Road
Columbus, Ohio 43221

Phone: 614-586-9320
Email sales@ODTVision.com

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.

Questions and talking points to define your self-service application

- 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. Does this type of project require a capital budget expenditure and if so, when does the new period begin?
- 5. Identify a customer service representative that currently knows how this application is done.
- 6. What computer system platform provides the data that these applications use.
- 7. Identify the technical contact for the computer system, who can provide technical information regarding the host system.
- 8. Define the characteristics of customer service you do well and what functions can be improved.
- 9. Define the hours of operation for customer service and strategy changes, if necessary for after-hours communications.
- 10. Define any special requirements.(e.g. bank connection for credit/debit card clearance) that this application requires
- 11. How many calls does the department where the ODTVision VRU will be used currently take?
- 12. What is the average length of call within this department?
- 13. Are there any peak periods during the day or week?
- 14. Identify future applications.
- 15. 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.
- 16. Define protocols for emergencies.
- 17. Define if you need to support personnel in the field or individuals on call.
- 18. Define your logging and audit trail requirements.
- 19. Define your security requirements.
- 20. Define if you need to support 3rd party programs or connect to other devices or sensors.
- 21. Does this self-service application need to be live 24/7?
- 22. How many concurrent sessions are needed?
- 23. Define the type of user you have and their needs. Do you have different type of users?
- 24. Do you need multiple types of self-service applications such as some users will use the IVR application while some will communicate through the web or mobile apps?
- 25. Will the application itself with what is available be defined by the user? (i.e. different in wholesale vs. end user application or manager vs normal employee)
- 26. To perform some parts of the application, are their addition security requirements?
- 27. Does the application need to be multilingual?
- 28. Do you want the ability for the user to have a chat conversation with a live custom-

Vision Voice Vantage, Inc.
1938 Zollinger Road
Columbus, Ohio 43221

Phone: 614-586-9320
Email sales@ODTVision.com

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

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.

Improving Customer Service Affordability

Get free project analysis regarding your telephony application or submit technical questions at:
TechSupport@ODTVision.com
Or Call: 614-586-9320

IBM Server Proven
Solutions with experience

IBM Solution Connection
Integrates solution information with IBM eServer, software and TotalStorage technology

2005 Products of the Year GOLD Search400.com

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

er service representative in a web or mobile application?

- Do you need confirmation email or texts sent of the activity during the self-service application?

Once a project is defined, we can start by building a flowchart of what the project will look like. This flowchart will show the logical paths that a caller goes through as they call into your IVR self-service application. We also examine where the data is and in what format it is stored. This will define the means of connectivity for IVR application.

CONCLUSION

Having self-service applications will reduce the cost of providing customer service, free up personnel to address customer calls that require human attention and take your customer service to 24/7 status. It is becoming more widely accepted and no longer has the stigma of not being personal. Many users would rather use the self-service approach for its speed, accessibility to do things, and privacy. The question which was asked in the beginning of the newsletter, "Resisting the desire to force all users to self-service" is a critical consideration when designing your self-service application. The bottom line, while self-service is efficient and reduces cost, I will be the first to tell you it is not an answer to all issues and needs of all your users. A number of years ago we were dealing with the largest closeout firm in the US. If I called in to check the status of one of our own invoices, as soon as I identified myself as a supplier, I hit my own IVR product as this firm took the position they would not waste valuable personnel time address the needs of a vendor. I also saw a client onetime identify the customer and if their account showed they were purchasing less than $15,000 of product a year, they knew they were just ordering supplies and caller was forced to go to self-service. By defining your user and their needs, you can determine when self-service is proper and when your user need to address their needs with a live customer service representative. If the need is an emergency and afterhours, your self-service application needs to have within it logic with the ability to get human attention. We always advocate the ability to transfer to a live representative during office hours if the user requires that. This is especially true if the need is outside your existing self-service application logic. It is important to build an audit report of how the users are using your self-service application. If there are hang ups we want to know where and why as well as the frequency of these hang-ups. If there are call transfers, we also want to know why and how often. It is recommended that the self-service application is modified to match your users' needs once you go live and see how it is being used.