

Customer engagement, Voice & IVR

Avoiding the 5 hidden pitfalls of DIY customer experiences

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Nuance's David Ardman looks at how technology leaders can implement a DIY strategy for conversational experience development that delivers meaningful business outcomes.

Whose app is it anyway?

We've seen a big shift over the last few years toward a do-it-yourself (DIY) approach to customer experience. In a world where customers will abandon the interaction at the first sign of inconvenience, few enterprises have the appetite to wait for vendors to build or make changes to vital CX applications.

In the cloud-native and API era, we now have relatively simple ways to quickly bring together best-in-class technologies from multiple vendors, making DIY a much more viable option. Of course, there are still many challenges to overcome to align these technologies with your architecture and strategy, but it's certainly far easier than it's ever been to choose "build" over "buy."

Caution: Hazards ahead

As anyone who's been in the enterprise tech industry for a while will know, DIY customer experience development isn't always a walk in the park.

While accessing third-party services isn't a problem, accessing the *right* services—and ideally, all in one place—can be tough. Often, the control and flexibility you get from a DIY approach come at the expense of the speed and quality that customer experience programs demand. What has become very clear here at Nuance over the past several years is that a great customer experience demands a great design and development experience.

That's why we created Nuance Mix—the DIY platform that makes life simpler for technology leaders and their teams. In this article, I'll show how Mix can help you avoid the five biggest pitfalls of DIY conversational AI development.

Introducing Nuance Mix

Nuance Mix gives you a single conversational AI tooling platform for the entire software development lifecycle. Cloud native, API-based, and deployable anywhere, Mix gives your teams easy access to the same market-leading technologies we use. And that means you can bring greater control, speed, and agility—and enterprise-grade quality—to your DIY conversational experience programs.

1. There's no substitute for expertise

Advanced conversational experience development isn't easy, but many DIY vendors simply throw their APIs over the wall and wish you luck.

Our customers have told us this isn't good enough; they don't have all the expertise they need to develop advanced customer experiences in-house, and they find some skills—such as conversational design expertise—are expensive and difficult to hire.

Nuance Mix lets you do it yourself, but you don't have to do it alone. With Mix, you can always tap into our expertise at any point in the process. We can provide conversational design expertise when it's needed while you do the rest. We can help you support and optimize your applications. We can even build everything for you and then train your teams to manage it.

The point is, you're in control of how and when you call on us to fill the skills gaps in your teams. And if you've got all the skills in-house, you can simply power up the tooling components you need on the Mix platform.

2. Poor collaboration slows time to value

With most DIY tools and platforms, there's no simple way for non-developers to collaborate with developers on a project. That lengthens the software development lifecycle (SDLC), slowing down time to market and value generation.

Mix brings everyone together on a single platform and gives them access to the same tooling we use ourselves for design, speech, natural language, dialog, and testing. Developers, designers, data and speech scientists, QA engineers, testers, and business stakeholders—everybody involved in the project can collaborate quickly and effectively. What's more, audit trails created by Mix allow business stakeholders and legal teams to approve dialogs and application flows without ever going onto the platform.

Another way Mix accelerates time to value is the excellent developer experience it offers. This is one of the most important aspects from a technologist's point of view and giving developers conversational AI technologies that plug into the interfaces they want to use is very powerful. Plus, prebuilt designs, tutorials, and forums in Mix help novices think like experts.

3. More channels = more work

In a typical DIY setup, when you want to replicate a customer experience in another engagement channel—such as deploying your virtual assistant experience on your IVR—you have to start again from scratch.

Mix is designed to support consistent, omni-channel experiences, letting your teams quickly modify multilanguage conversational AI applications for deployment across IVRs, smart speakers, chatbots, messaging, and more—all in a single project. That's a massive reduction in time and effort compared to the old days of one channel, one project.

4. Deployment models are too rigid

In some cases, for example, if you rely on cloud vendors that sell DIY tools for simple chatbots, you lose the right to choose where you run your own applications. It's their way or the highway, which puts unnecessary constraints on your technology strategy. And a good technology strategist always likes to

keep their options open.

Mix lets you run *your* applications where *you* want to run them. On-premises, in the Nuance cloud, in a third-party cloud, or in a hybrid environment—Mix gives you the flexibility and control that are vital for business agility.

5. Core technologies are more entry-level than enterprise-grade

This is the big one. With most DIY conversational AI tools on the market, even the best designers and developers will only ever create simple experiences such as basic FAQ chatbots.

Those simple bots can be useful, absolutely, but differentiated customer engagement depends on enterprise-grade applications. To meet customer expectations for natural, conversational experiences, the technologies behind your apps need to be the industry's finest.

With Mix, your teams can access battle-hardened speech and natural language understanding technologies built on more than 25 years of innovation leadership and relied on by 75 percent of Fortune 100 companies. That means you can craft intelligent conversational experiences that meet your unique business needs (and evolve with them), rather than nail together the same flatpack bot as everybody else and hope it stands up.

DIY done right

Over the years, I've seen DIY projects succeed, and I've seen them fail. I've seen how a DIY approach to customer experience can be incredibly valuable—if it's supported by best-in-class core technologies, a single platform for the entire SDLC, and specialist expertise where it's needed.

That's why I believe Mix can be a very powerful ally in any brand's efforts to thrive as connected, conversational experiences become the norm, not the exception.

If you'd like to learn more about Nuance Mix, [head over to our info hub](#), where you'll find plenty of resources to help you assess if it could be a good fit for your own DIY strategy.

Tags: [Customer experience](#), [Conversational AI](#), [Nuance Mix](#)

More Information

Create great conversations.

Nuance Mix conversational AI tooling platform empowers organizations to quickly and easily create and maintain their own enterprise grade, omni channel customer service experiences for IVR, chatbots, and more.

[Learn more](#)



About David Ardman

David Ardman is Senior Vice President of R&D and Conversational AI at Nuance. A technical leader who grounds his approach to innovation in real problem solving, Ardman brings with him two decades of experience running integrated product, research and development and engineering teams. He received his Bachelor of Engineering from McGill University and resides in the Montreal, Canada area.

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