

Customer engagement, Voice and IVR

A bright future for voice with intelligent IVR solutions

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With digital channels taking all the headlines, there's a danger that brands will forget about voice. Here's why voice matters more than ever—and how to create conversational experiences that wow your customers and reduce your costs.

The rumours that voice is dead turned out to be a little premature. When they want answers, customers still pick up the phone. Maybe it's the way they prefer to engage with brands. Maybe they don't have any other way to get in touch. Or maybe they've tried all the other channels and struck out each time.

Whatever the reason, contact centres still handle massive call volumes. In fact, the most recent study by Call Centre Helper showed that voice accounts for more than half of all inbound interactions to UK contact centres.

Most of the time, callers are greeted by an aging IVR system that baffles them with complex menu trees and limited response options. Too often, customers either zero out and vent their frustrations online, or end up queuing to speak to a live agent.

It's a bad experience for customers, it damages brand perception and loyalty, and it adds unnecessary expense for the business. So, intelligent, conversational IVR solutions that quickly and effectively resolve customer queries can really help your brand stand out from the crowd.

AI-powered IVRs turn the equation on its head, enabling brands to deliver satisfying, conversational experiences, increase self-service containment, and boost contact centre efficiency. This combination of higher CSAT and lower costs makes good business sense. That's why, despite the rise of digital, voice is far

from dead—it's the future of customer engagement.

What do intelligent voice experiences look like?

To differentiate on customer engagement, brands need IVR solutions capable of delivering experiences that are:

- **Personalised:** The IVR identifies returning customers, accesses recent interactions and purchase history, and greets them by name. The best IVR solutions can even use customer information and context to predict the reason for a call and offer immediate assistance.
- **Conversational:** Advanced natural language understanding (NLU) technology allows the IVR to accurately identify customers' specific needs based on their natural speech, and offer an appropriate resolution.
- **Adaptive:** Intelligent IVRs understand when the context of a conversation shifts, and they can adapt as customers change their minds, move between topics, or have multiple queries to resolve.
- **Connected:** A conversational IVR should also be seamlessly connected to other engagement channels and business systems, so it can escalate calls to live agents when necessary, or send customers links to continue their journey in digital self-service.
- **Secure:** Building voice biometrics into the IVR means customers can be authenticated in the background of the conversation by comparing over a thousand characteristics of their voice to a recorded voiceprint. It's faster, simpler, and much more secure than traditional passwords and security questions.

A leader in voice

Building great voice applications isn't simple. It takes a long time to understand all the intricacies of speech and how to design automated conversations that accelerate resolutions but still feel natural and human.

Here at Nuance, we know a thing or two about what it takes to get voice right. We've been defining the state of the art in voice for more than 25 years, and now we deliver voice solutions built on deep experience in the industries we serve and over 31 billion customer interactions every year.

And the reach of Nuance voice solutions extends way beyond customer engagement. In fact, the core technologies that underpin our conversational IVR (our market-leading speech recognition, text-to-speech, speech-to-text, NLU, and voice biometrics) have an enormous impact on every aspect of our lives.

Our voice solutions help banks protect customers from fraud. They help doctors improve patient care. They help police officers serve their communities. And they help students with special needs to reach their full potential.

Back in the contact centre, where voice is the first choice or the last resort for so many customers, Nuance IVR solutions help brands wow customers with conversational, cost-effective experiences.

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About Sebastian Reeve

Seb Reeve is a customer experience industry leader who is always seeking to provide thought-leadership, lateral-thinking and decision-support for Fortune 1000 Enterprises who are both his customers and partners. Reeves has more than fifteen years of experience in deploying technologies to improve the user experience. In his current role at Nuance as EMEA Director of Product Management and Marketing, he is responsible for defining and evangelizing the Nuance customer care proposition across Europe, the Middle-East and Africa – sharing how companies can create extraordinary automated experiences which their customers actively choose to use rather than simply tolerate and complain about, promoting best practices in AI and Machine Learning to the world of Customer Experience.



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