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Enterprise

Four steps to modernizing government IVR

Citizens have become accustomed to modern voice experiences and they expect the same conversational, convenient, personalized and intuitive interactions from government agencies. What can these organizations do to modernize their IVR programs?

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Despite the public's prevalent use of websites, mobile applications and social media to access information and conduct business, phone calls are still a primary link to government service.

Although government entities have long used interactive voice response (IVR) to alleviate the burden on call center agents and route calls more efficiently, citizens are weary of antiquated call systems that rely on touchtone input and outdated speech recognition. They have become accustomed to the modern voice experiences they encounter with banks, airlines and in their home; and they expect the same conversational, convenient, personalized and intuitive interactions from government agencies.

Artificial intelligence (AI), natural language understanding (NLU), voice biometrics and other innovations are revolutionizing self-service. Whether a citizen wants to pay property taxes, schedule a doctor's appointment, check the status of a disability claim or inquire about a court date, modern, conversational IVR can intelligently route them to the right self-service application or agent while reducing agent call volume, improving the citizen experience and increasing efficiencies. In addition, organizations can realize operational efficiencies that reduce overtime, improve employee retention and more.

Modern IVR solutions address the challenges of dated speech technology and enhance citizen self-service by using natural, language-based voice technology, AI and other innovations to make interactions faster, cheaper, smarter and more human. Read the Center for Digital Government's whitepaper on Taking Citizen Self-service to the Next Level: Four Steps to Modernize Interactive Voice Response for a thoughtful discussion of how to get there. Or, read on for a quick overview:

1. **Create an intuitive first point of contact.** Automatic number recognition and voice biometrics are two modern IVR tools that streamline the initial contact process, enhance the caller's experience, reduce costs and strengthen security. The Australian Taxation Office uses voice biometrics to enable a single credential for authentication across multiple channels, including its call center, IVR and mobile applications. With these changes, ATO reduced the average call time for repeat callers by 48 seconds.

2. **Deliver natural, conversational interactions.** Thanks to breakthroughs in AI and NLU technology, modern IVR allows callers to interact with the system using their own words as if they are conversing with a human being. New York City's 311 services (NYC311) use their modernized IVR to significantly enhance self-service options, reduce wait times and streamline caller interactions with agents. NYC311 has increased agent availability by up to 25 percent and call center capability by more than 20 percent during high-demand days and emergencies.

3. **Make every call personalized, predictive and contextually aware.** Modern IVRs use AI to analyze a caller's browsing history, transactions, scheduled appointments, past interactions with the call center and other back-end information to anticipate the reasons for a call and deliver accurate, relevant and easily understood information. Imagine greeting a caller with a personalized message: "I see your license is expired and that you also have two unpaid parking tickets. Are you calling to pay the fines?"

4. **Adopt an omni-channel approach.** Modern IVRs that incorporate omni-channel

capabilities allow callers to transfer between IVR and digital channels flexibly, seamlessly and securely — without having to repeat information. Work done in one channel is automatically reflected in other channels, enabling seamless transfer from the IVR to a digital experience. So picture this engagement: "Okay. A live agent can help you with that; the wait time is about five minutes. Or, you can chat with an agent right now via text message. Would you like to chat instead?"

Government organizations require improved service delivery, lower call center costs, strengthened security and compliance, and the ability for all citizens to have equitable access to government services. Given the opportunities that modern voice services present, organizations may want to consider the suggestions in CDG's whitepaper to get started.

Tags: Artificial Intelligence, call containment, government, Intelligent self-service, IVR, natural language understanding

More Information

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	Download the whitepaper and learn how to modernize your IVR.
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About Vance Clipson

Vance Clipson, senior principal, industry solutions for Nuance Communications, focuses on vertical-specific strategy and marketing with an emphasis on healthcare, financial services and government. Clipson brings 25 years of experience translating industry needs and data into market strategy and programs for Milliman, PacifiCare Health Systems and other organizations.

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