

Introduction: IVA Best Practices

Enterprises that use IVAs should be transparent to their customers that they're interacting with a self-service solution. As this may surprise some users, the next step, might be to ask for the chance to prove that the IVA can meet their needs. Many people will like the challenge; others will still want to bypass the system. Let them. Here are 11 best practices for implementing an effective IVA.

Source: <http://www.speechtechmag.com/Articles/Column/The-Business-Case/11-Keys-to-Designing-Effective-IVAs-126590.aspx>

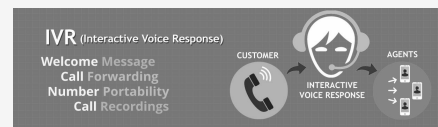
Best Practices

- 1. Be transparent:** As noted above, you should make it as clear as possible to your customers that they are interacting with an IVA or bot, not a live agent.
- 2. Keep it simple:** Make the IVA experience as straightforward and effortless as you can.
- 3. Don't try to "boil the ocean":** Identify the top 20% of self-service activities that typically address 80% of customer issues/inquiries and make them part of your IVA.
- 4. Keep it real:** Keep the conversational aspects of the IVA as natural and friendly as possible, in all channels.
- 5. Make it personal:** Leverage customer data from all available sources to personalize IVA interactions and have your IVA "remember" customer preferences, and build the integrations that will allow your IVA to provide such experiences.
- 6. Respect customer preferences:** Closely related to No. 5, make sure that it knows your customers' preferences and allows them to interact in their channel of choice.
- 7. Be consistent in all channels:** Optimize the IVA for each channel it supports, but provide the same information and options to promote a consistent customer and brand experience.
- 8. Think like your customers:** When designing the IVA conversation, look at interactions from your customers' perspective, prioritizing their needs and using their language.
- 9. Be willing to apologize:** When the IVA does not understand what it is being asked to do, script it to apologize, and transfer the call to a live agent. The IVA should always explicitly notify customers when they are being transferred.
- 10. Make it easy for customers to request a live agent:** Customers should be permitted to request a live agent at any point in a conversation. Additionally, build in transfer logic so customers are transferred automatically when the IVA decides it's necessary (and as noted above, tell them).

Best Practices (cont)

- 11. Keep the content current:** Establishing a systematic method for updating and maintaining the knowledge used by the system is essential, as a fresh, current IVA is one that customers will continue to see value in interacting with.

Interactive Voice Response



Final Thoughts on IVAs

IVAs are ushering in a new era of omnichannel self-service applications powered by natural language processing (NLP)/natural language understanding (NLU), speech recognition, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and more. Designed to emulate human conversations and interactions, IVAs can provide guided, conversational assistance for many activities, including customer service, help desk functions, product information, marketing, and sales, for a wide variety of verticals. True IVAs are self-learning; they get "smarter" over time, adapt to individual preferences, and deliver an intelligent, personalized and engaging customer experience. Using the above best practices will greatly improve your company's chances of succeeding with these powerful and highly beneficial solutions..