

# Visual IVR can transform the service experience

Thanks to the emergence of visual interactive response technology, the frustration of listening to numerous menu options before eventually being able to speak to an agent at a call centre is no longer the case.



Bruce Von Maltiz

“Whether it is an insurer, a bank, or even a pay TV provider, consumers can easily get lost in the complicated hierarchical menu structure of a traditional interactive voice response (IVR) system. These are often poorly designed and can be incredibly frustrating to customers. Just think of how many times you have to enter your ID number or medical aid number only to have to repeat it when you are eventually able to speak to an agent,” says Bruce von Maltiz, co-founder at 1Stream.

With people having access to virtually any information on their mobile device, the digital age has created a consumer expectation of being more in control of the service experience. This shift to a self-service environment is resulting in more call centres rethinking their strategies.

“Customers are used to navigating through websites and using applications on smartphones, creating a perfect entry point for visual IVR. As the name suggests, with visual IVR, a list is displayed showing easy-to-use menu options for customers to select on their device of choice before even making a phone call. The system can also show the

expected wait time before an agent is available so a customer can decide to either click the ‘dial now’ option or have the company contact them on a platform of their choice,” says Von Maltiz.



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## Access to choices

This means that if there are, for example, ten calls in the queue ahead of the customer, the ‘call me’ option will save their position. So the call centre agent will contact them when they get to the front. With visual IVR, it is all about offering people the ability to access the choices and information that have traditionally been handled by legacy IVR systems.

“It creates an incredibly efficient way of managing customer queries and saves time for both the end-user and the agent. Thanks to the ubiquity of technology such as voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) telephony, companies do not even have to

rely on telephone numbers. Simply provide a 'call now' button on the website and a customer can instantly chat to an agent.”

Von Maltitz admits that visual IVR is still slow on the uptake in South Africa, but believes it is only a matter of time before momentum shifts. “In an ultra-competitive market facing challenging economic conditions, companies can ill afford not to be seen as customer champions. Visual IVR gives them the platform to do so. The business case for moving to this environment becomes a difficult one to ignore for too long,” he concludes.

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