



Leveraging Outbound IVR and SMS As a Competitive Advantage: Seven Critical Success Factors



Proactive customer service and targeted, personalized marketing using Outbound IVR and SMS is an inexpensive way to differentiate your business, build customer loyalty and generate more revenue. However, many companies don't know how to select a vendor with the functionality and expertise needed to deliver an outbound solution that performs as promised—and without taking longer to deploy and costing more than expected. Outbound IVR in particular presents unique challenges (and opportunities) not found in an inbound IVR deployment. The right technology, paired with proven best practices, will enable you to avoid the pitfalls that result in frustration and missed opportunity. If you are ready to experience the advantages of proactive outbound communications, here are the seven critical success factors you need to understand first.

#1 MULTI-CHANNEL SUPPORT

Customer communication preferences are constantly evolving, and your outbound communications need to be adaptable. When evaluating Outbound IVR solutions, be sure you select one that allows you to communicate with your customers in the way they want to be reached, such as providing integrated support on the same platform for Outbound SMS (text messaging) and communicating proactively via social media (e.g., Twitter).

#2 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE FOCUS

In addition to choosing the proper channel of communication, having a relevant message and streamlined user interface when reaching out to your customers, partners and employees is essential. To enable personalized interactions and provide you with detailed analytics for refining and optimizing your applications, your outbound solution should also easily integrate with back-end data and business intelligence systems.

#3 CAPACITY AND UPTIME

When you need to send a broadcast message to many recipients in a short time period, such as in the case of a service outage, security threat or school closing, the ability to burst to handle spikes in traffic is critical. It's equally important to have the reliability of multiple, geographically dispersed data centers to ensure service uptime even if one site becomes unavailable. Cloud-hosted or hybrid systems (those that provide you a hosted solution that handles your normal traffic with the ability to support seasonal or event-driven spikes "in the cloud") can ensure your system always has sufficient capacity.

#4 CALL PROGRESS ANALYSIS (CPA)

Once a call is picked up, CPA differentiates between answering machines, fax machines and voicemail, as well as identifies when a person answers the call. Accurate detection – and the assumption that the call has been received by a human until proven otherwise – increases success rates and eliminates frustrating "dead air" when your customers pick up. Unfortunately, the majority of CPA solutions cannot remain in the call after their initial detection (which is often inaccurate) and therefore cannot benefit from advanced error detection techniques and business logic that helps increase success rates.

#5 SCHEDULING AND MANAGEMENT

Look for tools that make it easy to set up and schedule your campaigns, as well as the ability to offer “opt-out” and “unsubscribe” options for compliance with regulations. Also, ensure you have the analytics capabilities needed to optimize campaigns and report on success, as well as provide necessary data to refine and improve applications. Unlike VoiceXML, CCXML can capture information about the call in the application, giving developers access to fine grain call disposition details, including the type of error detected.

#6 STANDARDS

A standards-based language is key to ensuring your application performs as expected. While VoiceXML addresses the voice interface of an IVR application, Call Control XML (CCXML) addresses the need for functionality such as placing an outbound call and transferring to an agent. CCXML also allows business-defined logic to define actions based on the call being answered by a human vs. a machine. The full value of CPA cannot be realized without a call control language like CCXML.

#7 EXPERTISE

Outbound IVR and SMS present unique challenges, which translate to significant upside when well implemented. Find a vendor who understands your specific business needs and the considerations that are necessary for success. Demand verifiable expertise, proven technology and fast ROI.

Voxeo has invested heavily in its Outbound IVR and SMS capabilities, which have been battle-tested by enterprise and service provider customers over eleven years. Voxeo outbound solutions are currently deployed and actively placing millions of calls per day.

Voxeo offers:

- ▶ *Free application development, tech support and testing*
- ▶ *100% Uptime Guarantee for mission critical scalability and reliability*
- ▶ *Best-in-class Call Progress Analysis with 96% call classification accuracy — a success rate that far surpasses the industry average of 80-85%*
- ▶ *Assume Human — a Voxeo best practice that assumes all calls are answered by a live human until proven otherwise, eliminating frustrating dead air*
- ▶ *Integration with Business Intelligence systems for better personalization, analytics and reporting*
- ▶ *The most deployed CCXML engine in the world.*

Visit our Outbound IVR and SMS Resource Center for a copy of **Voxeo Best Practices for Outbound Customer Interactions** or to get your free developer account.

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