

Common IVR mistakes SA companies make

Interactive Voice Response (IVR) accounts for 27% of US customers' total call experience according to a study conducted by research company JD Power & Associates. Local business owners in South Africa need to pay attention to the increased usage of IVR globally, as it is often the first interaction that customers have with a company.



Ambarish Gupta

Ambarish Gupta, CEO and Founder of Knowlarity, explains that IVR is defined as telephony technology that is used to allow interaction between humans and a computer through the use of voice and tones input via a keypad. "When IVR does not lead to consumer satisfaction and quick resolutions, it is very likely that the customer will turn to a competitor for the same service."

South African businesses should attempt to use cloud telephony technology as a tool to enhance the customer's experience when it comes to IVR, he says. "By implementing the right IVR systems, this service will add value to both the business and the customer. The true value of an effective and efficient IVR should never be underestimated."

Below Gupta lists some of the mistakes that many local companies make when it comes to setting up their Interactive Voice Response and how to avoid these.

Mistake 1 - too much information

Solution - go back to basics. IVR is the starting point for most customers and therefore it should provide the caller with a quick solution to their problem, whilst providing a pleasant customer experience. The system should be customer-centric, user-friendly and not waste the caller's time with unnecessary information.

Mistake 2 - static menus

Solution - implement dynamic menus. An IVR should not consist of static layers with multiple menus, as most consumers do not value this type of automation. No customer appreciates having to listen to a five-minute long voice response when the action they require should only take two minutes.

Businesses should ensure that their menus are cleverly designed to save the customer time and does not provide useless information that is not relevant to what the caller is trying to achieve.

Mistake 3 - no option for self-service

Solution - personalise the service. It is advisable that a business' IVR system can enable the user to have a unique caller ID and when they enter their unique code, the system should pull their personalised information. This way the customer can be redirected to a menu that is applicable to their personal situation, which will eliminate unnecessary steps in order for the consumer to quickly address their specific issue.

The automation system should enable the customer to get the information they need in a rapid and effortless manner without even having to talk to an agent.

Mistake 4 - placing customers in a virtual queue

Solution - implement a call-back service. Instead of placing the caller in a virtual queue, which could take several minutes to shorten before they are assisted, the business IVR should automatically record the caller's details and ensure that they are called back within an acceptable time frame to address their issues.

"The most important aspect of IVR is to never waste the customer's time. A basic, static and personalised IVR system with an automated call-back service is the best solution for an effective voice response for most businesses. Nowadays cloud telephony empowers smaller businesses to set up their own IVR in the cloud, which in turn will save capital they would have had to spend on setting up a big call center," concludes Gupta.

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