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How Voice-Driven Calling Assistant Technology Improves Customer Service Experience

In the fast-moving and diverse marketplaces of today's world, all enterprises should strive to put their customers' experience and perceptions of their business at center stage if they want to maintain their competitive edge. The healthcare sector is no exception to this.

The Way It Is

Perhaps more so than other types of organization, healthcare providers have traditionally relied on phones as the primary communication channel between themselves and their patients.

The reasons for this are manifold. Phones provide an instant and immediate means of communication. A patient can usually get to speak to medical personnel quickly, which is a clear advantage during potentially stressful life situations. In addition, phones have long been a near-universal communications device to which almost everybody has access. As the Harvard Business Review put it, "the majority of respondents would call instead of reach out online because they're looking to get a quick answer (59%) or talk to a real person (57%)."

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Room for Improvement

But despite the device's popularity, there are still multiple challenges surrounding the provision of high-quality patient service via the phone, which begin to mount up the moment a patient first places a call.

When a patient initiates a call, it is usually to the center's main phone line. At this point, the call is processed by multi-stage DTMF menus and human phone operators who handle the call manually. Finally, the call is transferred to the requested medical department.

The whole process can easily take five minutes or more, especially when there is limited operator availability. Not only that, there will also likely be fewer operators on duty during weekends and holidays, causing further delays in transferring calls to the right destination.

Making the Best of It?

To try to address these concerns as best they can, some medical centers have embarked on a two-pronged strategy.

Firstly, complex routing mechanisms based on interactive voice response (IVR) systems have been introduced. But these systems also have their own technical limitations. They can be difficult to use and often cannot incorporate a full department or destination list, making them unsuitable for large healthcare facilities. Worst of all, patients are forced to deal with medical terms that they might not be familiar with.

Secondly, some facilities have tried to speed up call transfers and improve service simply by recruiting more operators. But this has the obvious drawback of increased payroll costs to cover the extra staff, while not completely solving the availability issues. Furthermore, employing too many operators can mean inconsistent and uneven customer service experiences, not to mention that adding to the employee headcount is taking a step backward at a time when businesses need to cut costs as much as possible.

Even though these steps may bring some minor short-term improvements, all these issues can still quickly add up to an unsatisfactory patient experience, leading to increased rates of call abandonment along with all the other known downsides of the live agent experience.

But interestingly enough, according to Business Insider, "45% of consumers don't care who they interact with — live agent or chatbot — as long as the service is effective, accurate, and handled quick."

The Right Way to Do It

It is clear the time has come to do things differently. What if there was a solution to make every patient's interaction with a healthcare provider a positive experience? Where each patient came away with the feeling that his or her call had been dealt with quickly and efficiently by a personalized call assistant?

Imagine the impact that this would have. After all, a happy patient is a satisfied patient, and a satisfied patient is far more likely to remain with a particular medical center in the future if he or she is treated in a professional and prompt way.

Such a solution would reduce the costs associated with customer service and maximize work efficiency. It would reduce the dependency on a human workforce, while enhancing staff productivity by allowing them to focus on more complex tasks where human handling is essential. Customer service would be significantly upgraded, giving an immediate and decisive advantage in a sector where there is fierce competition for patients amongst providers. Call abandonment rates would drop and per-patient revenue would be maximized.

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Is there a voice-driven call routing solution that meets these criteria?

Speaking Your Customers' Language

The AC Voca voice-driven calling assistant solution delivers on all these counts. Using natural language alone, with no need for medical knowledge or even the correct terminology, AC Voca automatically routes callers, 24/7, to their desired medical service or department.

AudioCodes' deep knowledge and wide experience of the healthcare sector untangles complex healthcare jargon and provides callers with a smooth, friendly service experience.

AC Voca's smart technology brings instant, wide-range coverage of medical departments and services, and can easily handle general non-medical terms used by everyday callers.

Say What You Want

For healthcare facilities that need to handle a vast amount of incoming calls, and are looking to delight their customers, the AC Voca solution provides external callers with an innovative yet simple and intuitive calling experience. Patients simply say the name of the desired medical department or service they want to reach, with no phone operators required and with zero waiting time.

This leads to a reduction in caller waiting times and call abandonment rates, making patient revenue erosion a thing of the past. And most importantly, customers are left happy and satisfied by their experience.

One Solution, One Vendor

The AC Voca solution is unique in its ability to deliver advanced voice recognition technology and industry-leading PBX connectivity from a single vendor, thereby avoiding multi-vendor customer interfaces or reliance on third-party voice recognition technologies. Combined with AudioCodes' specialized expertise in the healthcare domain, all this results in reduced operational costs and delighted customers.

So, whether you're just considering — or actually want to try out — voice-driven call assistant technology, we have the know-how and the tools to get you where you want to be.

AC Voca powered by AudioCodes

About AudioCodes

AudioCodes Ltd. (NasdaqGS: AUDC) is a leading vendor of advanced voice networking and media processing solutions for the digital workplace. With a commitment to the human voice deeply embedded in its DNA, AudioCodes enables enterprises and service providers to build and operate all-IP voice networks for unified communications, contact centers and hosted business services. AudioCodes' wide range of innovative products, solutions and services are used by large multinational enterprises and leading tier one operators worldwide.