



We Share Our Knowledge

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**Personal Marketing with
Outbound IVR**

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1. Background

The IVR channel is one of the most cost effective marketing channels available today. However, many organizations doubt its effectiveness and worry about the possibility of it irritating the customers.

The term IVR is associated mostly with recorded messages used in the last national elections. But IVR is much more than that. It has proven itself in the Israeli market, and has greatly contributed to improving business results.

This article will illustrate ways of dealing and overcoming such obstacles, so that the organization can continue maximizing its marketing abilities and converting them into business success.

2. Communication with the Customer

The process of communicating with the customer should include all of the following elements:

1. The ability to recognize voicemail: we can choose whether to leave a voicemail to the customer, pending the marketing message, but usually, leaving a voicemail is ineffective.
2. The ability to recognize a fax machine.
3. The ability to preset calling times (sans weekends, holidays and critical hours).
4. The ability to control the call frequency in real time.
5. The ability to recognize and differentiate between mobile and landline numbers, and to make the calls to each number at different hours. For example: calling the mobile number between 10a.m and 8p.m, and the landline between 5p.m and 8p.m.
6. Most importantly – enabling the customer to press a digit and make the purchase. An IVR message to a customer ending with the phone number of the call center, is never as effective as enabling the customer to call the organization's inbound IVR, directly reaching the relevant calling tree.

3. IVR Language Selection

The use of the language choice function in inbound IVR systems is usually done while the customer is being forwarded to the relevant service rep. But language selection in outbound IVR systems is also crucial, specifically to the message's contribution to response rates:

1. The marketing teams need to set up as many call trees as there are languages.
2. The IVR system should enable the customer to make the initial steps in any language he chooses, and to change the language at the very beginning of the call, which will require a shift from one call tree to another, while the message is still being played.

4. Activating the Product/Service

The IVR channel is mostly used for the purpose of transferring information, rather than for calling for immediate action. However, the IVR's ability to transfer information included in the channel can be used as a *call for action* for the customer during the conversation, and even to complete the purchase of a product or a service offered:

1. During the call, the customer should be given the option to react by pressing a phone key. By pressing the relevant key, the operating system receives an indication to perform an action such as adding a service, purchasing a product, or joining a program. This process should be carried out automatically by the operating system. In order to apply such functions, as part of the segmentation process, the organization should verify the customer's eligibility for such offers and also establish means for

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monitoring the process, so that the operating system can validate and verify the execution of the customer's choices.

2. In order to fully complete the communication with the customer, after having performed the action, the customer should be able to receive a verification number for that action, either at the end of the call or later, via email (in order to reduce mailing costs).

5. Routing the Call to a Human Call Center

In rare cases, when there are complicated marketing actions involved, or when the product/service offered are at risk of generating a large amount of incoming calls to the call center, the IVR should enable the customer to be routed to a human rep in order to finalize the purchase/action, but only at the end of the call, when all the possible information had already been given.

This way, only critical calls that must be handled by human reps, will be routed to the call center.

If the IVR system is integrated with the call center's systems, service rep availability will not have to be confirmed, since the IVR system will time the calls according to representative availability.

If the IVR system is not connected to the call center, coordination with the call center will be needed, and proper human resources will need to be allocated prior to each call.

6. Information Enrichment

The IVR system can be used to conduct surveys as well as enrich the database with customer details:

1. In order to conduct surveys, the system should enable unlimited formation of complex call trees for several phases of the call, and allow for multiple choices in each phase.
2. In order to enrich the database with customer information, and in order to reuse campaign launches, the customer must be able to feed the system with certain details during the call (e.g. mobile number, birth date, etc.). The system should record those details and input them into the organization's database.

7. Feedback

For the purpose of evaluation and learning, the system should be able to produce status reports that will include *at the least* the following parameters:

1. The action code and the customer's full name.
2. The phone number the call was made to.
3. The number of dialing attempts.
4. The exact date and time of dialing.
5. Dialing status (voicemail, fax machine, answered/unanswered).
6. Message language default.
7. Customer language change/choice.
8. The codes of all call tree phases chosen by the customer during the call.
9. Call results (message conveyed, service/product activation):
10. This will enable re-contacting customers who received the information but did not accept the marketing offer.
11. Call length (from the minute the customer answered until the call ended).

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About Synergy

Synergy is an international consulting company, specializing in Analytical CRM solutions.

Synergy offers marketing oriented business ventures, formed by a team of leading local and international industry experts.

Synergy aims to provide its customers with the ability of acquiring commercial advantages by informative analysis of their customers' shopping data.

Synergy has vast experience in working with leading commercial organizations, both locally and internationally, and its clientele includes foremost industry leaders in the communications, financial and retail fields.

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