

# Evolving IVR into multi-channel customer engagement

Putting the customer at the heart of your self-service



**Eckoh**

## Are you truly giving customers what they want?

Forward thinking organisations believe that an IVR is the gateway to the future of multi and omni channel customer engagement. That's because they see that it forms a fundamental part of delivering self-service as well as semi-automated customer engagement. It would seem customers think the same as, over the last few months, the desire to self-serve and embrace degrees of automation have become top priorities for many.

The fact is that today customers like to engage in the way that they're comfortable with. Some are happy to sort things for themselves, while others don't mind a degree of automation but ultimately want to speak to a human. Only an IVR self-service can cope with these diverse preferences and be able to switch between them seamlessly.

But just 'any old' IVR won't cut it anymore. Customer demands and expectations need to be met because competition is high and your service will be compared to others. So, if it doesn't come up to scratch customers may vote with their feet if they aren't satisfied with their experience.



**60%**  
of consumers prefer  
an automated self-  
service for simple  
customer service  
tasks <sup>[1]</sup>

# Why do you need IVR self-service?

If you haven't yet embraced an IVR or you've had one for years but not done much with it now is the time to consider just how much effort you should invest and why. Here's Eckoh's top 3 reasons to invest in your IVR.

## 1. Retain customers

Without an IVR some customers may be put off your brand and choose to look elsewhere simply because they don't want to wait for an agent, are tired of being passed from agent to agent or they simply prefer to self-serve.

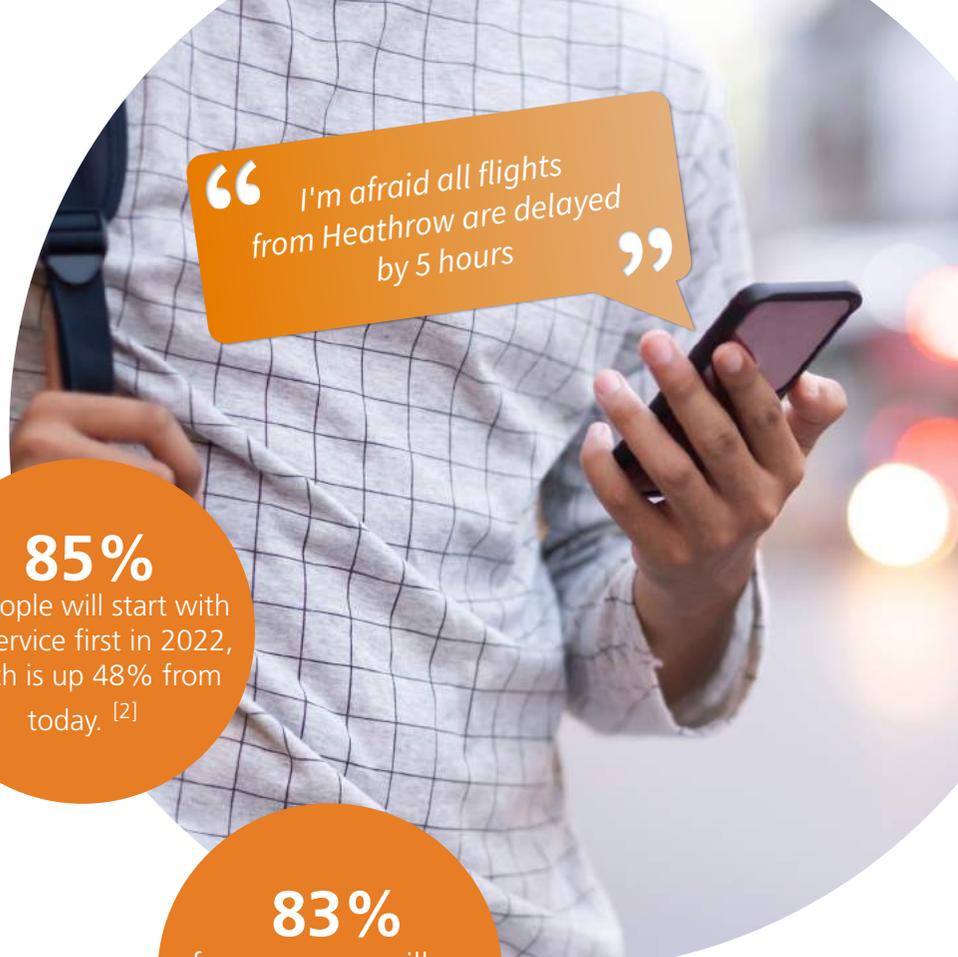
If you offer them a poor, cheaply built IVR engagement, that is aimed at saving money rather than providing service, then you'll serve only to frustrate customers with a bad experience. This could lure them away to a competitor without you even realising it and the chances of you getting them back are slim.

## 2. Increase sales

By not offering self-service payment options you're expecting your customer to wait on the phone to pay, perhaps with no idea how long they'll be there. Consumers today want speed when they decide to make a purchase, so if they won't hang around, they may abandon the purchase altogether.

## 3. Build and maintain your reputation

Keeping customers informed has been shown to be an important part of maintaining reputation and customer satisfaction – in good times and bad. Without an IVR how can you post relevant announcements to keep customers informed about service availability, reactions to major world events, seasonal weather disruptions, accidents, or just to offer promotions and sales? You're missing the chance to deepen your relationship, and loyalty, with customers.



“ I'm afraid all flights from Heathrow are delayed by 5 hours ”

85%

of people will start with self-service first in 2022, which is up 48% from today. <sup>[2]</sup>

83%

of consumers will use self-service options when available <sup>[3]</sup>

60%

of customers say that their 'go to' channel for simple enquiries is digital self-service <sup>[4]</sup>

# What can IVR self-service do for me?

Realising an IVR's importance is the first step. Now you need to consider what you actually want, or need, your IVR to do – because they can do more than just answer and route calls.

**Imagine this:** a customer orders an item and wants to know when it will arrive. They phone up the retailer and are greeted with a simple prompt of: "How can we help you today?" to which they simply reply: "When will my new shoes arrive?". They provide the order details and the system gives them an estimated delivery date. The customer follows-up with "Can I get them sooner?", and the system offers them expedited shipping which the customer accepts and then goes on to pay the extra charge via Apple Pay.

In this example the customer didn't need to navigate a complex set of menus and the whole automated conversation could have taken less than a minute.



Answer Calls



Route Calls



Take secure payments



Let customers  
serve themselves



Be open for longer



Serve customers  
around the world



Get to right person  
first time

# The evolution to multi-channel

Now comes the crucial part - building or re-designing it so that it's something special. Something that will make your customer engagement a real customer pleaser and rather than a customer deterrent.

To achieve that put the customer first while thinking about this as an evolution to a multi-functional, multi-channel self-service platform. After all, an IVR is not just a platform to save you money. But, built in the right way, with the customer at the centre, it will undoubtedly save you money. Here's some of the key characteristics of a customer-centric multi-channel self-service platform.

**Find out who you're talking to** - use identification and verification (ID&V) technology from the start, collecting a range of personal information so agents know the customer, their history and possibly why they're calling. It makes for a personalised interaction that saves time and money

**Let customers speak** - conversational IVR enables human-like interactions to aid customer self-service. It delivers an intuitive service experience that anticipates the callers' needs using **natural language and AI** technology. Customers are greeted with 'how can I help you?' and they respond in their own words

**Keep it simple** - IVRs work best when they are kept simple and will only be effective if it is easy to use. It's also important to always give your customer the option to speak to an agent if they get stuck.

**Signposting** - let customers know where they are in the queue and how long they may have to wait. You can offer them a self-service option in case they don't want to wait or prefer to sort things out for themselves.



**81%**  
of organisations  
understand the  
value of IVR  
investments <sup>[5]</sup>

**Right first time** - make sure your call routing is intelligent to ensure that the call is delivered to the exactly the right agent, department or self-service option to resolve their query – first time.

**Harness SMS** - avoid tying up agents' time by automating outbound customer updates, offers and confirmations so they don't have to call back and check. One and two-way messaging saves everyone's time and helps cope with peaks in demand.

**Be honest** - use a tone of voice and language that reflects your business and values. It will reassure your customers that they are dealing with a genuine brand.

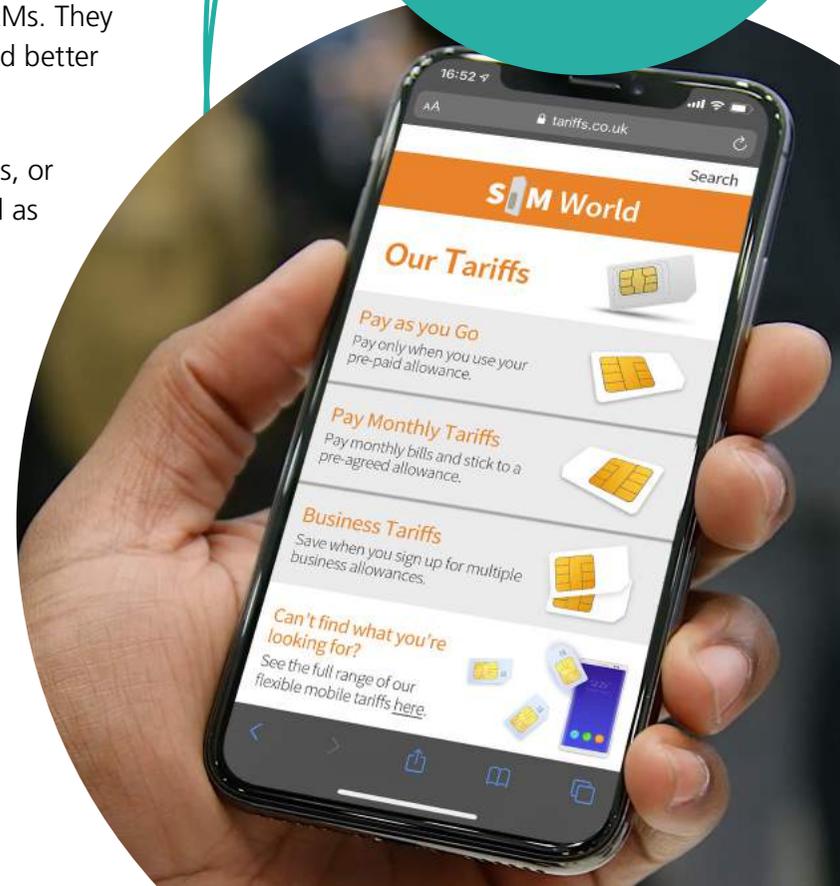
**Make it intelligent** - build a powerful **Knowledge Base** to provide the right responses, options or services that suit the customers issue. Smart Knowledge Bases can be built using your existing company information from Word documents, PDFs, websites, FAQs, SEO and CRMs. They learn as they go, picking up words, phrases and matches to continually provide better and better answers.

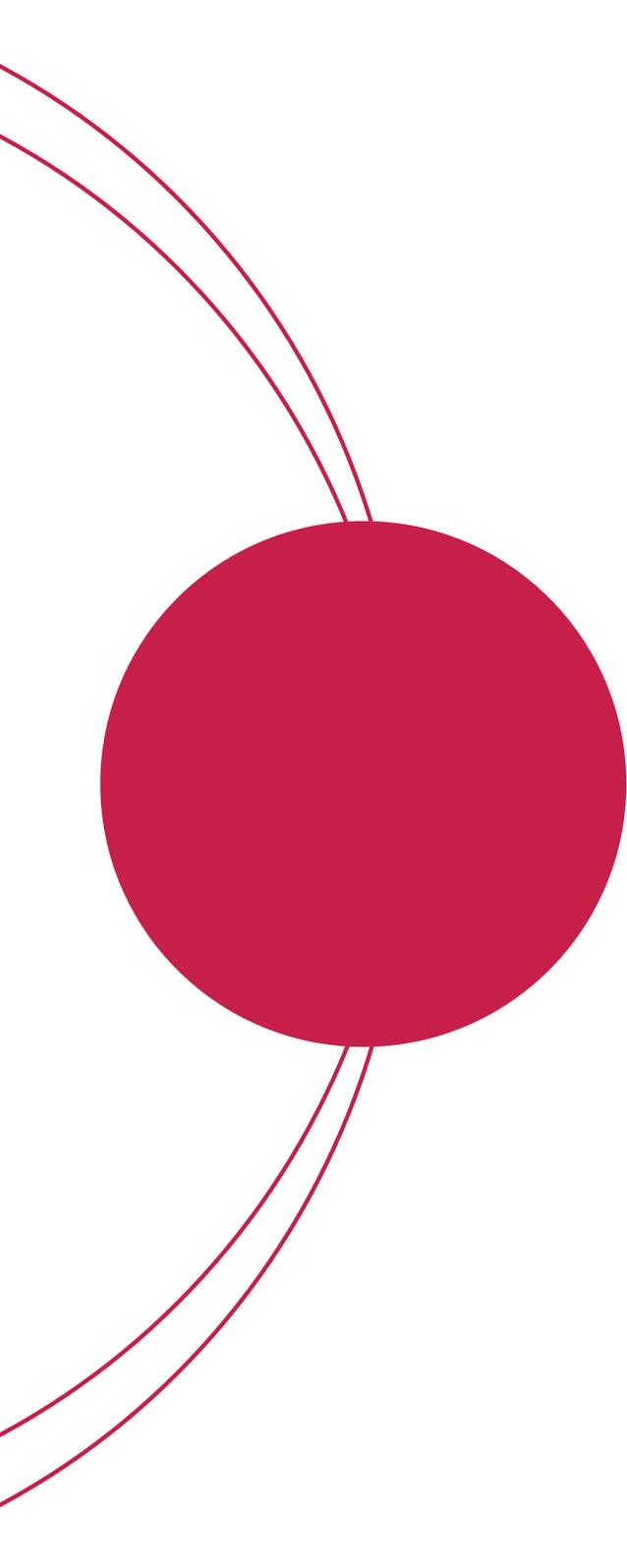
**Make it visual** - having the ability to send links to more information, tutorial videos, or just long documents such as T&Cs adds a deeper engagement to your IVR service as well as helping to resolve queries faster.

**Keep it fresh** - don't let your IVR go stale, constantly review and refresh messaging and options so nothing is ever out of date.

**Ask for feedback** - people love being asked what they think, so use their insight to continually make your IVR better.

**51%**  
of customers are likely to use Visual IVR when given the option <sup>[6]</sup>





## What's my next step?

**If you want to deliver consistent, seamless and responsive IVR engagement you need to work with an expert who can help you deliver an IVR that is right for your business and your customers.**

**Look for a provider who can offer you an IVR platform so you can add solutions and channels as you need them or as customer demand dictates.**

Remember...the best self-service IVR technology is easy for consumers to use and simple for you to deploy. You don't need to turn your business upside down or spend a fortune, with cloud-based services you can adapt – to whatever comes your way.

At Eckoh we provide our clients with a comprehensive Customer Engagement toolset - **the Eckoh Experience Portal** covering Self-Service, Agent-Assisted and Secure Payment solutions.

Web Chat | Social Agent | Messaging | Self-Service  
ID&V | Visual IVR | Chatbot | Email Management  
Knowledge Base | Natural Language | Agent Payments  
Automated Payments | Web Chat Payments | Alternative Payments

# Eckoh<sup>o</sup>

To enhance your customer engagement start a conversation...

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