Creative effective VUI is both an art and a science

Barbara Hawkins-Scott
07/10/2006
Speaker Profile

• Signature Voice for a number of regional and national accounts including a leading appliance manufacturer

• 20 years creating scripts and directing voice-over for broadcast and phone-cast applications

• Theatrical Director and Producer

• Worked submissions in a NYC talent agency
Art versus Science

Leonardo the scientist and Leonardo the artist were one man, not two. This isn’t surprising since many of the qualities of a successful scientist and a talented artist are the same.
Willingness to throw out the rules

Rules from the world of **Science** such as:
- The Earth is flat
- Man can’t fly
- Earth is the only planet in the universe that supports life

Rules from the world of **Art** such as:
- Subjects of painting or sculpture should not represent everyday people - only deities or royalty
- Faces must have two eyes, one nose and one mouth
Willingness to throw out the rules

Rules from the world of IVR application design:

• Technology rather than caller experience dictates design
• Callers should not be able access an operator
• Perfect grammar is a must
• A pleasant sounding voice is all that is required to define persona

_in short – not the way it’s always been done in the past_
Communicating Abstract Ideas
A Persona is an abstract idea

- Effective communication in any form (visual or auditory) relies on the ability to use common knowledge or perceptions to communicate ideas.
- When defining a persona, you may involve members of several departments – (Marketing, Customer Service and IT) in the creation process so consider using:
  - Descriptive adjectives or written descriptions
  - Resumes of ideal candidates
  - Pictures
  - Popular characters from film or television
in order to give the creative team a common starting point.
Communicating Abstract Ideas

A Persona is an abstract idea

- Discuss the reasons why certain traits are selected or rejected as they relate to company marketing and CRM objectives.

- All team members should discuss how the traits will be revealed in both visual and auditory communication.
Documentation

Includes:

• Bio and history (including geographic origin, education, work history - resume)

• Application Prompts with talent notes

• Calibration sound file
Paper to Audio

Create a “visual” world in the mind using sound
Transforming auditory stimulus into visual imagination

• Defining a Setting
• Listing a vocabulary
• Character Attributes
• Consistency in pitch and tempo
Paper to Audio

Before writing the spec / dialogue

• Ability to see patterns where others see chaos

• Effective communication in any form (visual or auditory) relies on the ability to use common knowledge to communicate uncommon ideas
Paper to Audio

• What qualities, emotions, knowledge are communicated via sound?
• How is this different from visual communication?
• Can you communicate “visual” concepts through sound?

• Need to communicate something abstract (emotions, limited expected response, tempo, emphasis)
• Use of aesthetics to capture user attention
Summary

• Choosing persona traits
• Persona documentation
• Maintaining Consistency during the life of the application
Empowering Your customers and employees with speech technologies

SpeechTEKI 2006 Empower
The Voice Solutions Showcase

Thank You