Managing Speech Projects for Maximum Efficiency

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Agenda

• How to get started with speech
• Elements of a speech project
• VUI design tips
• Development and testing requirements
• Planning for the future
Getting Started

• Create a great team
  – Diverse group with representatives from the management team, business unit, contact center management, agent pool, sales, marketing, IT, telephony and development
  – Let everyone have a voice

• Do your research
  – Carefully examine customer service operations and business processes

• Determine your speech strategy
  – Speech enabling existing IVR solutions
  – Leveraging speech to create new customer services
  – Enterprise-wide speech deployments to increase productivity
Plan, Plan, Plan

- Carefully outline the project’s requirements
  - Functional Specification
    • Project scope
  - Voice User Interface Specification
    • Directed dialog, natural language or mixed initiative
    • Call flow
    • Prompts, grammars, error handling, live assistance offering…
    • Include information on persona within the documentation
  - System Requirements Specification
    • Network layout of speech servers to maximize response
    • Integration with data sources to provide input/output for speech solutions
  - Deployment Plan
    • How the solution will be tested and deployed
Set Expectations

- Educate the entire team on everything
  - Not everyone understands the technical details that go into a project
  - Developers can create better solutions when they truly understand a company’s business model and goals
  - Agents provide important information on customer attitudes and needs
- Create realistic timelines
  - Make sure everyone understands what they need to deliver and when
  - Leave room for extensive testing and application tuning
- Set clear goals
  - Make sure everyone has agreed on what you are trying to accomplish (offer a new service, offload x% of calls from agents, lower costs by y%, etc…)
- Provide major stakeholders with regular updates and continue to get buy-in as you go
Design a Great User Interface

• Consider your solution’s “persona”
• Make it fast & easy
• Use silence
• Speak in a common language
• Take errors seriously
• Make sure grammars carefully match prompts
• Consider offering multiple languages to better serve your entire customer base
Create a Development Plan

• Speech application projects require multiple disciplines
  – Project Management
  – Voice User Interface design
  – Application logic
  – Grammar development
  – Backend integration
  – Telephony programming
  – System integration
• Know when to tap consultants
• Consider using specialized development tools to augment in-house capabilities
• Check for pre-built grammars and packaged applications that match your application needs to speed development
• Use open, standards-based development methods and deployment platforms to ensure portability and smooth integration with other systems
• Leverage existing application development efforts. Create a speech interface for existing web and business applications.
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Test, Test, Test

- For new self-service applications, consider providing agents with the dialogue scripts to determine caller acceptance and responses.
- Consider “Wizard of Oz” testing prior to development to monitor response to a variety of prompts.
- Design an extensive QA program:
  - Ensure internal test groups feature multiple dialects and accents.
  - Create pilot programs for each self-service application:
    - Divert a small portion of calls to the test site to better understand the “tuning” required to perfect each application.
  - Be ready to adjust call flows, prompts, speech grammars, thresholds and other parameters as testing continues – even after the cutover.
Launch Training

• Make sure everyone is aware of the scope and goals of your speech project before it goes live
  – Project team
  – Management team
  – Business unit
  – Agents & contact center personnel
  – Customers & partners

• Educate contact center personnel on how to handle confused or irate customers
Plan for the Future

• Create and analyze customer satisfaction surveys
• Tweaking prompts to shorten navigation as users become more sophisticated
• Evaluate solution from IT perspective to reduce latency
• Update grammars as needed
• New applications
For Additional Information

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