NUANCE

eBook
Nuance Omnichannel Customer Engagement
Cloud IVR

Cloud IVR: 4 things you'll gain by moving to the cloud

And a few things you'll give up (but we guarantee you won't miss).

Hosting critical business technologies in the cloud is nothing new

In fact, these days it's the norm for most organizations. But some business functions are still lagging on cloud adoption, and it's time they caught up.

It's time for the IVR to move to the cloud.

"The surge in remote contact center agents caused by pandemic-related office closures has driven 2020 cloud contact center penetration to 25%, up from 16% in 2019.....2024 is the first year where cloud contact center agents (56% market share) will exceed on-premises contact center agents (44% market share), a transition that will have taken two decades."[1]

For some companies, the idea of handing off their IVR (or other customer service channels) might be pretty uncomfortable. But, the advantages of cloud IVR to you and your callers simply can't be ignored.

In today's super competitive market, if your IVR doesn't deliver the experience callers demand, they'll simply take their business elsewhere. Failure of your IVR to keep up will impact your customer loyalty, your contact center performance and your bottom line.

As you think about your future IVR plans, let's review the things you'll gain by moving to the cloud. There are also a few things you'll give up along the way—but don't worry, we promise you won't miss them.

1 Gartner, Forecast Analysis - Contact Center Worldwide, Daniel O'Connell, Megan Fernandez, 19 January, 2021

Cloud IVR: What you'll gain

1. Freedom to innovate
2. Access to the latest technologies
3. Superior customer experiences
4. Omni-channel service

Gain the freedom to innovate, give up the micromanagement

With a cloud platform built for managing thousands of applications and processing billions of calls, you enjoy unbounded scalability, enterprise-level security and continuous availability. And you don't need to lift a finger.

Cloud IVR means you don't have to worry about hardware upgrades, equipment maintenance or boring, repetitive IT administrative tasks.

That means you and your team can free up the time and resources you need to deliver new applications and better customer experiences and to drive more revenue for your business—instead of spending your days dealing with server maintenance.

Cloud platforms deliver worry-free IVR operation

- Service level agreements that guarantee 24 x 7 x 365 uptime
- Dedicated infrastructure and performance monitoring
- A geographically redundant, modular, virtualized environment
- Flexible hosting and hybrid-hosting models
- Security that includes PCI, SOX, SASE16 and HIPAA compliance, certification and periodic audits

Real-time monitoring: identify issues before they impact callers

When it comes to monitoring your IVR environment, a top-notch hosting provider will have your back.

Using sophisticated tools, your provider should ensure your entire IVR ecosystem is functioning properly—all day, every day. Real-time monitoring guarantees that issues are detected early, and a modular platform architecture allows for quick resolution without service interruption.

For added peace of mind, monitoring should include your back-end systems as well as third-party systems. Hosting providers can also monitor unexpected call traffic or patterns, time-to-first-prompt, application recognition, response latency and other metrics that affect the caller experience.

Capacity on demand: pay only for what you use

An on-premises IVR is typically built to support the busiest time of the busiest day during your busiest season. (And doubled again, so you have a redundant backup on hand.) For most companies, this means paying to operate 60 percent or more of extra capacity year-round, even if it's only needed for a couple of days.

With cloud IVR, you pay for the capacity you use, when you use it. Along with sophisticated traffic forecasting and capacity planning, leading cloud providers offer excess capacity—so you're ready to handle spikes in traffic, both expected and unexpected.

Even in the event of equipment failure, power outages or natural disasters, multi-tier, geographic redundancy and failover ensure continuous system availability.

Gain access to the latest technologies, give up hunting for new solutions

Innovation in new technologies, especially AI, continues at a rapid pace. This creates pressure on organizations to keep pace. Gartner® states "On-premises contact centers will increasingly become technologically inferior compared to their cloud counterparts."[2]

Imagine always using the newest IVR technologies—without having to plan or pay for software upgrades. That's what you get when you move your IVR to the cloud.

You no longer need to spend your time pushing out updates, or looking for the next big thing in contact center technology. Your provider should handle everything, continuously delivering the latest advances.

Take advantage of the latest advances in speech and natural language, voice biometrics and proactive engagement capabilities to:

— Meet consumer expectations for fast, easy and intelligent self-service

— Gain competitive advantage through service differentiation

— Increase savings through higher automation rates

The power of conversation with machine learning and deep learning

The latest in voice and interaction technologies are powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI). Through machine and deep learning, leading cloud IVR providers are creating next-generation interfaces that offer more than your average customer engagement platform.

Machine learning is the fundamental application of AI that makes everything else possible. It automatically trawls through all your data, looking for patterns and trends, learning from what it finds. It then improves progressively—without your having to program anything—to deliver increasingly accurate predictions and insights into your business data.

Deep learning takes this to another level, applying machine learning to train the computer to intelligently apply what it has learned to your business-specific applications. In the case of contact centers, it's driven the evolution from text-to-speech to fully synthesized, human-like voices.

2 Gartner, Forecast Analysis - Contact Center Worldwide, Daniel O'Connell, Megan Fernandez, 19 January, 2021

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Natural Language Understanding: transforming IVR interactions into conversations

The truth is, people think IVRs are difficult to use.

IVRs have consistently had a bad rap and been the brunt of jokes. Your callers have had it with navigating menu mazes that don't make sense. Finding what they need takes too long and requires too much effort. In this day and age that just won't do. They just want to ask a single question and get an answer—fast.

This "Siri-effect" has re-set people's expectations for how easy it should be to interact with devices and systems, including the IVR. They're becoming accustomed to performing tasks just by speaking naturally.

Voice is everywhere, and that's why more companies are using Natural Language Understanding (NLU) technology—powered by machine and deep learning—as the foundation for their IVR and other voice-enabled channels.

NLU reflects how your customers speak in the real world. So, instead of having to match predetermined triggers, your callers can simply talk and describe their issues in their own words. The AI core of NLU allows your voice channel to intelligently infer meaning from what your caller is saying—instead of just interpreting it literally—and respond with tailored, meaningful responses.

With cloud IVR, you get the latest, most innovative technology as it becomes available, without having to overhaul your infrastructure—it's simply implemented behind the scenes by your provider.

The NLU conversational approach not only simplifies the caller experience, but also delivers:

- Reduced call length
- Improved routing accuracy
- Higher self-service automation rates
- Valuable caller intent data that drives continuous IVR improvement

Gain superior customer service, give up poor performance

As many as 96 percent of customers are likely to become disloyal to a company after a high-effort customer service interaction, while only four percent are likely to repurchase after a high-effort experience.[3]

These days, your callers are expecting more. It's critical that your self-service channels can advance to meet customers' rising expectations, without adding to your contact center costs.

By letting your hosting provider tackle the tasks associated with integrating and operating the technologies, you can focus on important business initiatives that improve customer satisfaction and top-line revenue.

Humana®

Humana's cloud IVR:

— Lets callers speak in their own words

— Recognizes and predicts more than 1,000 complex customer intents

— Accurately transfers customers to the area of the business they need.

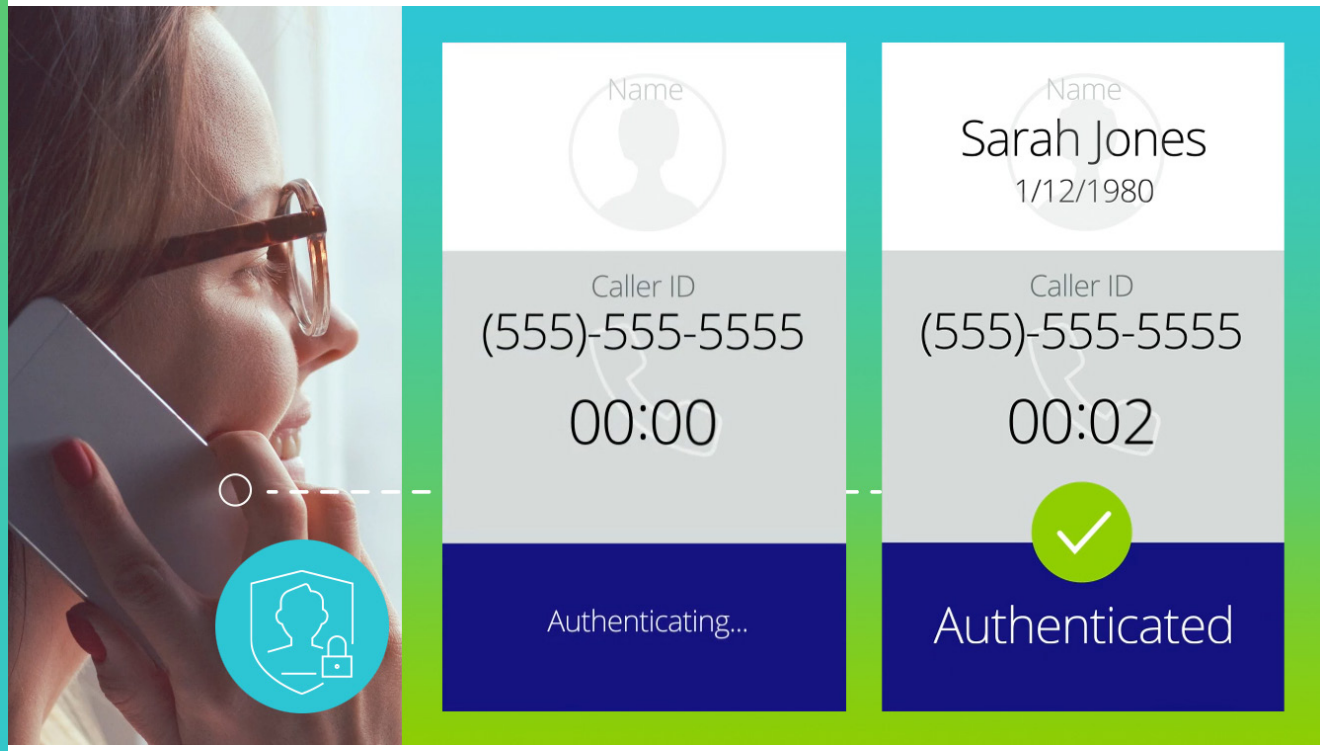
The Results: 80% rise in IVR net promoter score.

3 Dixon, M. The Effortless Experience. 2016. California Municipal Utilities Organization. 2016. http://cmua.org/wpcmua/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/8-CEB-CCC163703PRINT-OS-Effortless-Experience-06-29_3-pillars.pdf

Easier and secure caller authentication
Many IVRs still rely on knowledge-based authentication, requiring customers to remember multiple passwords and security questions. But people forget their username and passwords and many end up having to authenticate with an agent anyway. Plus it's much easier to steal passwords and expose your organization to fraud. Organizations relying on passwords create an easy-to-exploit threat surface as 20% of breaches are carried out using lost or stolen credentials.[4]

And this trend will only get worse as the number of stolen usernames and passwords in circulation has increased by 300% since 2018.

Voice biometrics does away with all this by authenticating through natural voice patterns. Callers simply say a passphrase and the IVR analyzes hundreds of unique voice characteristics and validates them against their voiceprint. It's fast, effortless and more secure than knowledge-based authentication.



How it's said is as important as what is said
The quality of what your customers hear is just as important as your IVR's ability to understand what they say.

Until recently, creating natural, dynamic IVR conversations was a real challenge. Most IVRs use a complicated web of thousands of words and sounds, which are often recorded over the course of several years—meaning a consistent tone is out of the question.

When someone calls, these bits of audio are 'stitched' together. The result? Robotic audio that's awkward, difficult to understand and slows down the interaction.

Thankfully, there's been significant advances in speech technology, allowing for more human-like IVR conversations—seamlessly synthesizing pre-recorded prompts into a single voice.

And, because it's cloud-based, performance data can be collected and analyzed automatically, allowing for continuous improvement, with no intervention from you.

4 Forrester: Using Zero Trust to Kill the Employee Password (Aug 2021)

Gain omni-channel service, give up organizational silos

The secret to great customer service is connecting their experience across every channel you have.

Customers don't always start and end their service journeys within your IVR. Many of them will visit your website first or try live chat. And, sometimes, they'll leave the IVR to find their answers through your other channels.

So, this isn't just about your IVR—the right hosting provider should help you deliver a consistent, connected service using your outbound channels, virtual assistants, mobile apps, SMS, web chat and anything else you use. Connecting your channels also helps break down silos in your customer service function, so you can share data easily.

Here's where we can help—with this, and everything else we've outlined in this ebook.

Meet Nuance Cloud IVR
The Nuance cloud platform delivers intelligent customer self-service for both inbound and outbound engagements across multiple experiences including SMS, email, IVR and the web.

Our platform integrates core Nuance technologies, such as speech recognition, Natural Language Understanding, and voice biometrics, and integrates with your existing ACD and CTI systems.

Its core functions include an open, high availability, cloud-based architecture, extensive 24x7x365 proactive monitoring and seamless maintenance and upgrades.

The benefits of Nuance Cloud IVR add up quickly:

- Achieve 20-30 percent higher automation compared to other IVR platforms
- Use the newest conversational technologies
- Gain insights for continuous IVR improvement using powerful reporting tools
- Get the expertise of the world's largest team of IVR and design experts
- Leverage your speech investment and extend your use of conversational technologies to other channels

Cloud IVR: a better experience for callers, innovation and savings for business
IVR in the cloud doesn't mean a storm is coming. It means a worry-free IVR that's always available, up to date and ahead of the curve (without using up your time, resources or increasingly precious budget).

To keep pace with growing consumer expectations and rapid advancements in technologies, cloud IVR has become less of a nice-to-have, and more of a strategic necessity.

But, even if it's a massive shift in how your organization handles your IVR, there's so much to gain:

- The ability to focus your resources on strategic advances, not operational tedium
- The latest technologies, delivered automatically as they become available (and saying goodbye to the time, effort and expense involved in upgrades)
- Unprecedented speed and ease—for you and your customers—all while giving up the operational burdens
- A competitive advantage through superior self-service and savings, replacing an outdated caller experience that costs you in customer satisfaction and loyalty
- The ability to extend your IVR assets, such as NLU and audio persona, to other self-service channels, while getting rid of a siloed customer experience across channels

Ready to put the power of the cloud to work for you?

Step up to the most advanced customer service platform

Discover how Nuance Cloud IVR, the largest conversational, omni-channel customer service platform in the world, can help you transform your customer experience and business—in the IVR and beyond.

Learn more

See how your IVR stacks up

Take our quick, online IVR assessment to get instant recommendations on how to modernize your IVR.

Online assessment

We're here to help.

Contact one of our customer experience experts to learn how we can help you take your IVR to the next level.

About Nuance Communications, Inc.
Nuance Communications (Nuance) is a technology pioneer with market leadership in conversational AI and ambient intelligence. A full-service partner trusted by 77 percent of U.S. hospitals and 85 percent of the Fortune 100 companies worldwide, Nuance creates intuitive solutions that amplify people's ability to help others.

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