4 STEPS
TO CONVERSATIONAL AI

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We have become accustomed to using speech to interact with devices in our everyday lives.

Voice-controlled digital assistants such as Google Home™ and Amazon Echo™ help us get information from the Web, set timers, play our favorite music, and much more. Now, you can leverage this technology in your contact center to give your customers the seamless, low-effort experience they deserve.

This paper outlines some fundamental steps to get you started on the path to leveraging conversational AI in your IVR.

1

Review your customers' journeys through self-service.

First, look at how your customers are currently using your IVR—and, most importantly, the level of effort they must expend to perform a given task. Different technologies provide different experiences:

- **Touchtone** requires mapping from service categories to single digit numbers (0-9), which callers press to make their requests, often forcing contact centers to summarize multiple choices into a single menu option. Multiple menus can create a frustrating customer experience. When callers have a question on their account that cannot be matched to the menu options, they frequently "zero out" of touchtone menu trees or hang up and call again later. This leads to low self-service rates and inefficient use of customer service agents.

- **Directed dialog** uses voice, but often still requires the caller to say what they are calling about in a way that matches the menu. This experience can prove simpler than touchtone, but the caller has to navigate predefined menu options to complete their desired tasks.

- **Conversational AI** uses natural language understanding (NLU) to replace menus and options with a human-like conversational interface, allowing callers to say what they want in their own words. This technology is easier and faster, reduces costs by eliminating misroutes, and improves automation rates by getting more callers to their desired self-service information.

The most sophisticated conversational AI solutions take customer care to a new level by enabling unstructured free speech, with no predetermined event flow. In these platforms, the dialog is driven by the customer, not by the system, and the platform is context sensitive, so it remembers the entire customer dialog, from the beginning to the end of the conversation.

2

Consider how your customers can benefit from conversational AI.

- **Control of the conversation**—By allowing the caller to say anything, conversational AI gives control back to the caller, but still provides directional prompts where appropriate, such as when a banking customer needs to enter their account number and PIN.

- **Enhanced recognition of caller intent**—The design of a conversational AI-enabled IVR, with its use of keywords and sentence patterns, enables caller intent to be correctly captured, even when callers say a phrase in a different order than in the sample utterances that were used to build the conversational AI solution.

- **Reduced frustration**—Callers find menu trees frustrating because they are forced to hear multiple, irrelevant options, and in many cases, they are not sure which category best fits their request.

- **Increased efficiency**—Because the caller can say exactly what they need, their experience is more efficient and streamlined.

3

Determine what success will look like.

As business management expert Peter Drucker noted, "If you can't measure it, you can't improve it." With this in mind, be sure you are prepared to measure the success of your conversational AI implementation. You can use a variety of key performance indicators (KPIs), such as:

- Customer satisfaction

- Call containment

- Task completion rate

- Agent average handle time (AHT)

- IVR AHT

- Agent-to-agent transfer rate

If your KPIs are new, make sure you have a way to compare your new app against your old app, and make sure you have a defined control population against which you can measure your KPIs. You may need to put logging in the existing application for future comparison early in the process. Also, during development, make sure to test your logging and calculations to ensure they are correct.
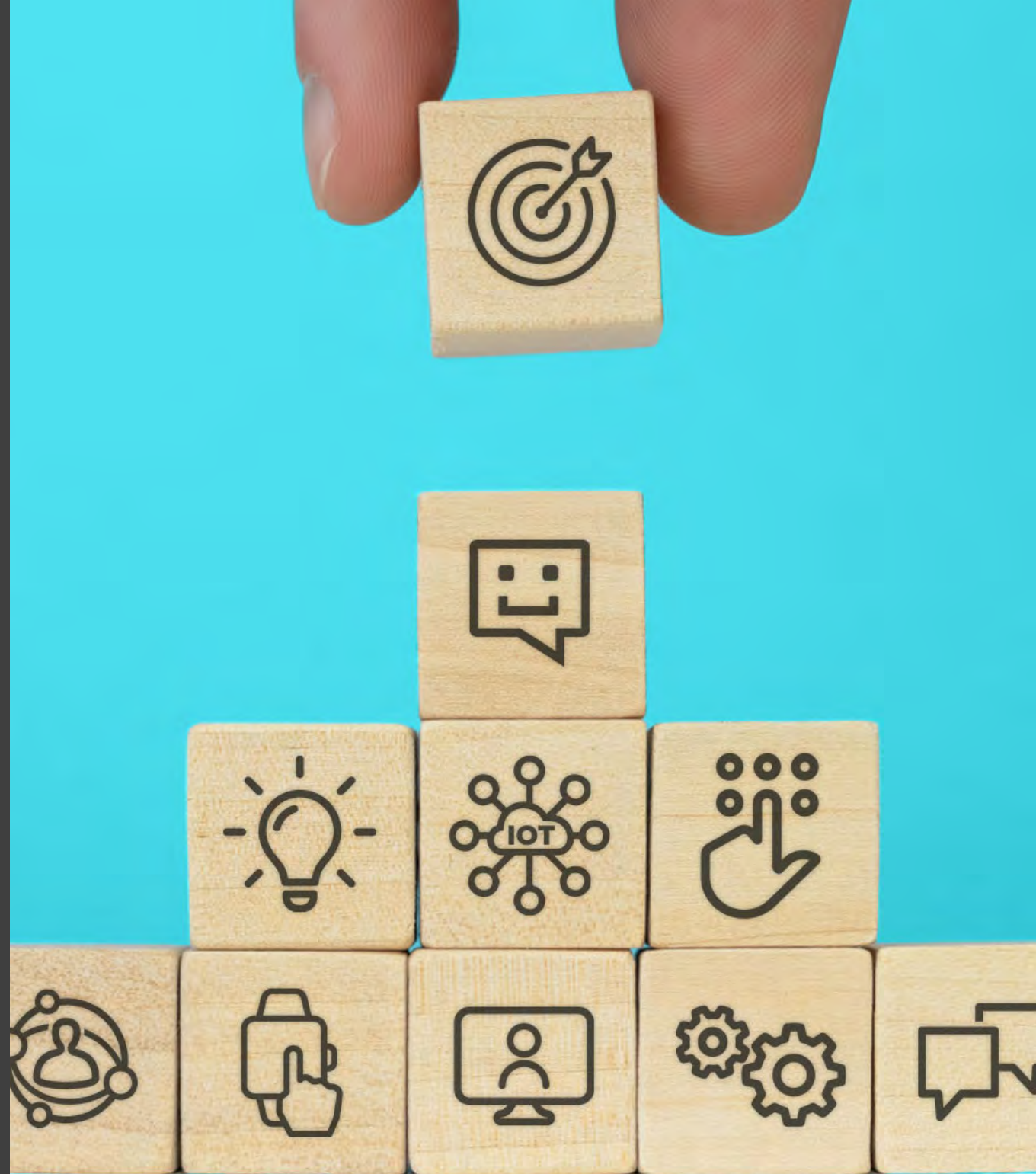
CONVERSATIONAL AI IN ACTION

After implementing conversational AI, a leading banking and financial services provider's IVR utilization increased from 67% to over 70%. Each point of utilization is equal to approximately $3M annual cost savings for the client. In addition, the client ranked #1 in the J.D. Power 2019 U.S. Credit Card Satisfaction Study.

4

Pick the right platform.

All conversational AI platforms are not created equal. When you are selecting a vendor, ask them:

- Does the same platform support all channels?

- Can the platform maintain context throughout the entire dialog?

- How well does the platform's speech recognition engine perform?

- Can the vendor provide the deployment and support resources you need to succeed?

- Will the vendor be able to provide periodic tunings?

- Can the vendor help you build a strong business case for conversational AI by measuring the *true automation* of your existing IVR?

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GET STARTED NOW.

Your IVR reflects your company's brand. Following these simple steps will help ensure it gives your prospects and customers the best experience possible.

Concentrix can help you create personalized, contextually relevant customer experiences, with outcome-based approaches that minimize the risk of digital transformation.

To learn more about conversational AI, visit our website at **www.concentrix.com/solutions/digital-self-service/conversational-ai/.**

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