Verascape

Building Next-Generation Self-Service Applications Using Speech and Cloud Technology

Verascape
www.verascape.com

Industry
Retail

Challenges
Varying, "spikey" numbers of calls
Need for better customer experience for both inbound and outbound calls

Solution
Automatically scaling solution with speech recognition and text-to-speech capabilities

Results
Improved outbound call completion by 10%
System handles varying call volumes with flexible licensing and platform

System at a Glance
NewNet Nimblevox
LumenVox Automated Speech Recognizer (ASR)
LumenVox Text-to-Speech (TTS)
LumenVox Call Progress Analysis (CPA)

Verascape, a leading developer of customer self-service applications for the retail industry, has leveraged its unique skills in building applications along with unique offerings from NewNet Communication Technologies and LumenVox to build highly scalable, efficient, and effective speech applications that have enhanced the user experience for retail customers.

The applications Verascape builds are focused on self-service for retail customers, enabling end customers to complete tasks such as getting the status of an order, requesting a new catalog, or submitting a return request.

"There's an excellent customer experience associated with a well-designed speech application," says Verascape Vice President Mike Browning. "We're able to move customers away from the misery of TouchTone input and provide a much more pleasant experience that meets a customer's desire for greater convenience, mobility, and time-independence."

NewNet provides an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) platform called Nimblevox which enables its partners to deploy VoiceXML applications. The platform features highly scalable technology, allowing it to flexibly meet the changing needs of its partners. NewNet selected LumenVox, which develops Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) and Text-to-Speech (TTS) technology, to power its speech components because LumenVox was able to offer a similar pricing model, providing on-demand licensing for spikes in traffic in addition to standard perpetual licenses.

This scalability is important to Verascape, as the retail vertical market experiences large "spikes" in call volumes around specific times, e.g. a retailer might be busier during the holidays than during other times. Using the NewNet solutions allows Verascape to readily meet the changing needs of its customers.

"When the demand goes away, so do the licenses," says Verascape COO Steve Thomas. Verascape is thus able to combine its own managed hardware and software with LumenVox on-demand licenses and the flexible solution from NewNet to meet unpredictable customer capacity needs.

"The Nimblevox environment is able to bring enhanced speech technology to everyone because of the flexible licensing model provided by LumenVox," says Kutluk Uslu, president of the Nimblevox business unit. "Nimblevox and LumenVox together can give small businesses the same IVR advantages as large corporations."

Nimblevox supports a GUI for building applications, making it easier for small and mid-sized companies to build and deploy speech applications.
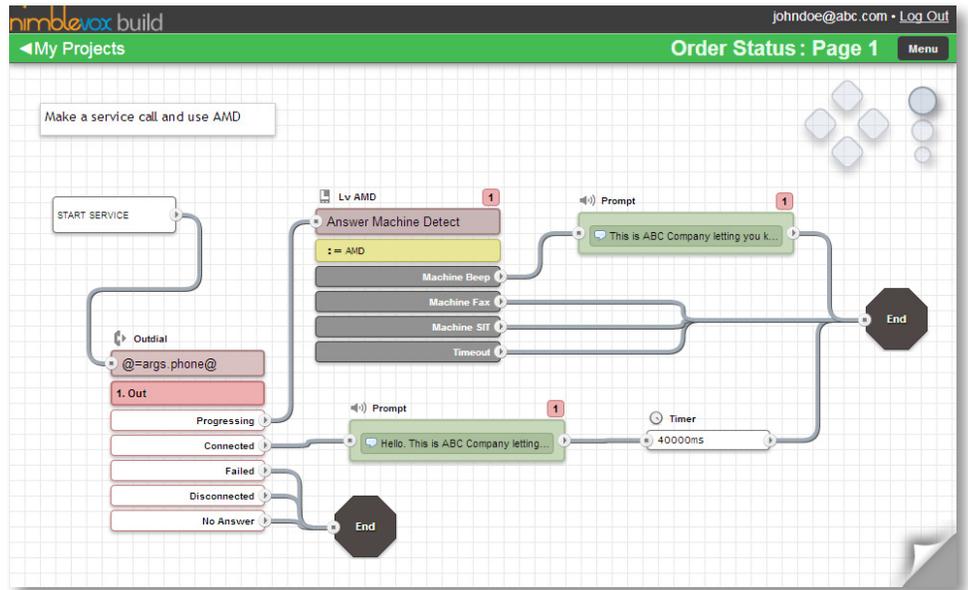
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Mike Browning
Vice President,
Verascape

One particular way in which the companies are able to work together to deliver superior customer service is in outbound calling.

"One of the trends we're seeing across the industry is customer services that were typically reactive are becoming proactive," says Browning. "There is a segment of the population that does not use e-mail very often, so the phone is still a very useful vehicle to communicate status on a proactive, outbound basis."

For instance, a Verascape application might send an outbound call to a customer's phone number to let the customer know their order has shipped. By being proactive about making sure the customer is informed, Verascape can reduce the likelihood that the customer will call into the call center in order to get a status update. And because the end customer received a phone call without having to do anything, their overall experience is enhanced, improving the brand and customer service profile of the retailer.

Those inbound calls to agents can be costly, so reducing their frequency reduces call center costs. But more importantly, it frees up agents to focus on more complex transactions instead of just handling simple update notifications. Instead of replacing live agents, the Verascape self-service applications are complementary to a call center's operations.

Outbound calls are made effective and simple with the underlying platform provided by NewNet, which supports both easy-to-use web-based GUI tools allowing users to upload lists of phone numbers and kick off outbound campaigns, as well as APIs that allow advanced users like Verascape to integrate the NewNet service into their custom applications.

These outbound campaigns in turn use the LumenVox Call Progress Analysis software, which accurately detects and differentiates between live humans and voicemail systems. It's also able to determine when a voicemail system is encountered, allowing the outbound application to leave a message for the customer.

"With the beep detection, we're able to deliver a much higher quality of service," says Sharon Zeleny, Senior Solution Architect at NewNet.

The high quality of the LumenVox speech technology coupled with the scalability and reliability of NewNet's platform helps to guarantee that Verascape's services are consistently delivered.

The Nimblevox GUI allows developers to easily and immediately use the LumenVox Text-to-Speech server, Automated Speech Recognizer, and Call Progress Analysis. Using TTS is as easy as typing in the prompt text and press 'OK.
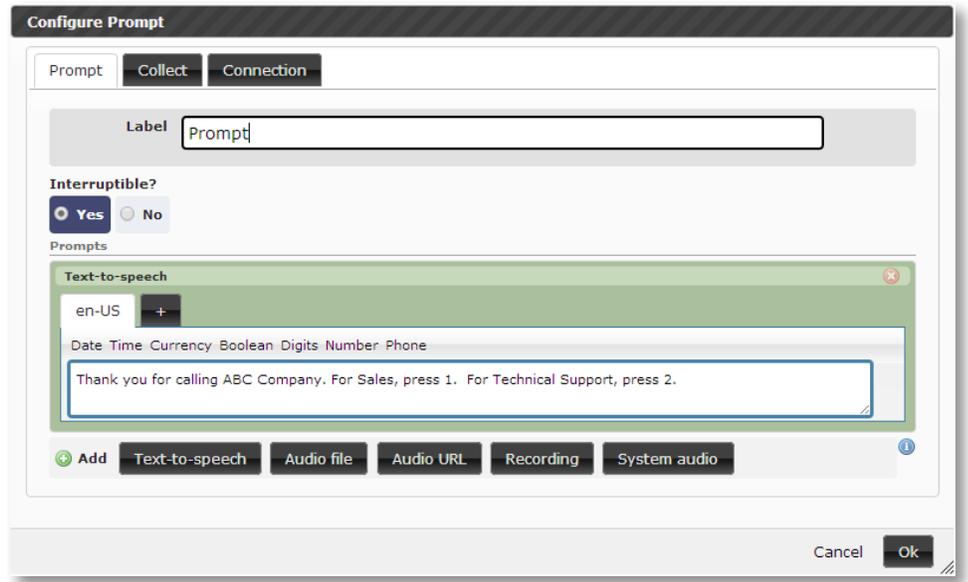
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Kutluk Uslu
President of Nimblevox Business, NewNet

For More Information
www.lumenvox.com/products
www.nimblevox.com
www.newnet.com

Verascape has experienced a significantly higher call completion and message delivery rate since moving to the combined solution provided by LumenVox ASR/CPA and NewNet Nimblevox service. These call completion and message delivery rates have increased as much as 10 percent over previous performance numbers.

NewNet's suite of hosted services provides a variety of functionality aimed at different users, from advanced speech developers like Verascape to those building their first IVR. One compelling product is an easy-to-use VXML designer. It relies on LumenVox TTS to make it simple for developers to prototype and test IVRs.

"Anyone can sign up and build an IVR application with our Nimblevox Build tool without needing to record and upload prompts," says Zeleny. "They can just type the text to play and it's done."

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