10 Ways to Provide a Modern IVR Experience

1. Migrate to a Customer-Centric Support Platform

First and foremost, moving to a platform that puts people at the center is critical, agnostic of your IVR experience. You'll be able to see a full view of your customer—what they like, what they don't and how much money they spend with you. This level of customer-detail spans across every channel, including IVR, and makes the customer's experience more personalized and unique to them. People now expect brands to know who they are, regardless of the channel they are on, even before they connect with an agent.

Arming agents with all the customer's key details enables them to skip the recap and be delighted with a more personal experience. For example, if a customer is contacting you to return a pair of shoes they recently bought, based on what they inputted in your IVR, your agents would be able to authentically recommend an alternative pair based on what they like, turning that original return into an exchange.

Lisa Rogers   Accept

Connecting...

1	2 ABC	3 DEF
4 GHI	5 JKL	6 MNO
7 PQRS	8 TUV	9 WXYZ
*	0 +	#

0:36

"Hi Lisa, are you calling about your recent purchase?"

2. Make Sure Your IVR is Built In (not bolted on) for the Best Experience

Hi there—I have a question about my reservation.

IVR CONFIGURATION
{ IF "Reservation" -> Tree 1 }

Hi Kelly—how can we help with your upcoming flight to Austin?

A lot of software out there uses 3rd party vendors to support some of their platform channels, most commonly when it comes to Voice. With Gladly, our Voice & IVR offering is natively built in, meaning no additional vendors, costs and infrastructures to manage. Aside from the obvious cost (and sanity) savings, having your Voice platform built in means a more cohesive IVR experience. From making updates to your IVR flow, to getting robust reporting, having all channels natively built into a single platform helps you see a full view of your customer no matter which channels they use.

3. Personalize the IVR Journey

No one likes to feel like they are talking to a robot. In order to make the customer's interaction with your IVR feel unique to them, it's important to leverage personalized recordings to provide a more human-like experience—even if they aren't talking to a human.

By ensuring greetings are personal and tailored to the customer calling in, they will feel more known, valued, and have an overall better interaction with your brand.

"'Hi Josh, I see you'd like to know your loyalty point balance, is that correct?' goes a longer way than 'Press 2 for the loyalty department'"

4. Give Customers the Option to Switch Channels

Sometimes sitting on the phone for a long period of time is not ideal—whether it be due to wait times, you're not in a quiet place, or you just prefer not to talk on the phone after a long day of work. Giving customers the option to switch to other channels, like IVR to Text, meets them on a channel they want while not losing their place in line, and more importantly, not having to repeat and recap what they've talked about. 86% of people actually expect to intermix channels and have agents that know past conversations.

With IVR to Text, customers can get access to the information that they want—like a quick text confirming delivery schedule—sent right to their fingertips (literally). By being able to seamlessly switch from IVR to Text, you drive down call volume, decrease costs, and keep customers happy.

Press 1 to start chatting via SMS

Hi Sasha—thanks for contacting us, how can I help you?

5. Prioritize Self-Service to Drive Efficiency

IVR technology does so much more than connecting customers to agents—they power self-service for customers who are looking to get simple information quickly on their own. In fact, 53% of customers prefer to use self-service for easy questions around shipping and tracking, for example. With Gladly's IVR technology, not only can you bring forth self-service options to increase satisfaction and lower voice costs, but with IVR to SMS, customers can get quick answers straight to their phone without ever having to talk to an agent.

Say a customer is looking for the location of a specific store, they can "Press 2" in your IVR to be texted a URL to your store locator on your website. From there, they can copy the location straight into Google Maps to get directions. Who carries a pen and paper around these days anyways?

53%
of customers prefer to use self-service for simple questions
— 2020 Customer Expectations Report

6. Leverage Intelligent Routing

Who you're connected with on the other line is crucial. It's important to be routed to the person best-equipped to help you with your issue—whether that's a product expert, world-class troubleshooter, or concierge that gives you white glove service. However, sometimes that just doesn't work out. Going through an extensive IVR flow just to learn that the agent you were connected with is unable to help you is less than ideal, but even worse, when you're transferred to another agent, you might have to repeat yourself over and over again.

Over 50% of people prefer to not have to repeat themselves to multiple agents. Since customers are at the center of everything we do, every agent has all the context, so that if a customer does need to be transferred to someone else, they don't have to recap what they just told the prior agent.

Hey Matt—I see you're interested in our custom snowboards. Anything I can help with?

Yeah, do you know what kind of camber this board has?

Yeah—it's set up with a reverse camber for better jib mobility. Floats through powder like a dream.

Exactly what I'm looking for! Thanks! 🏂🏂🏂

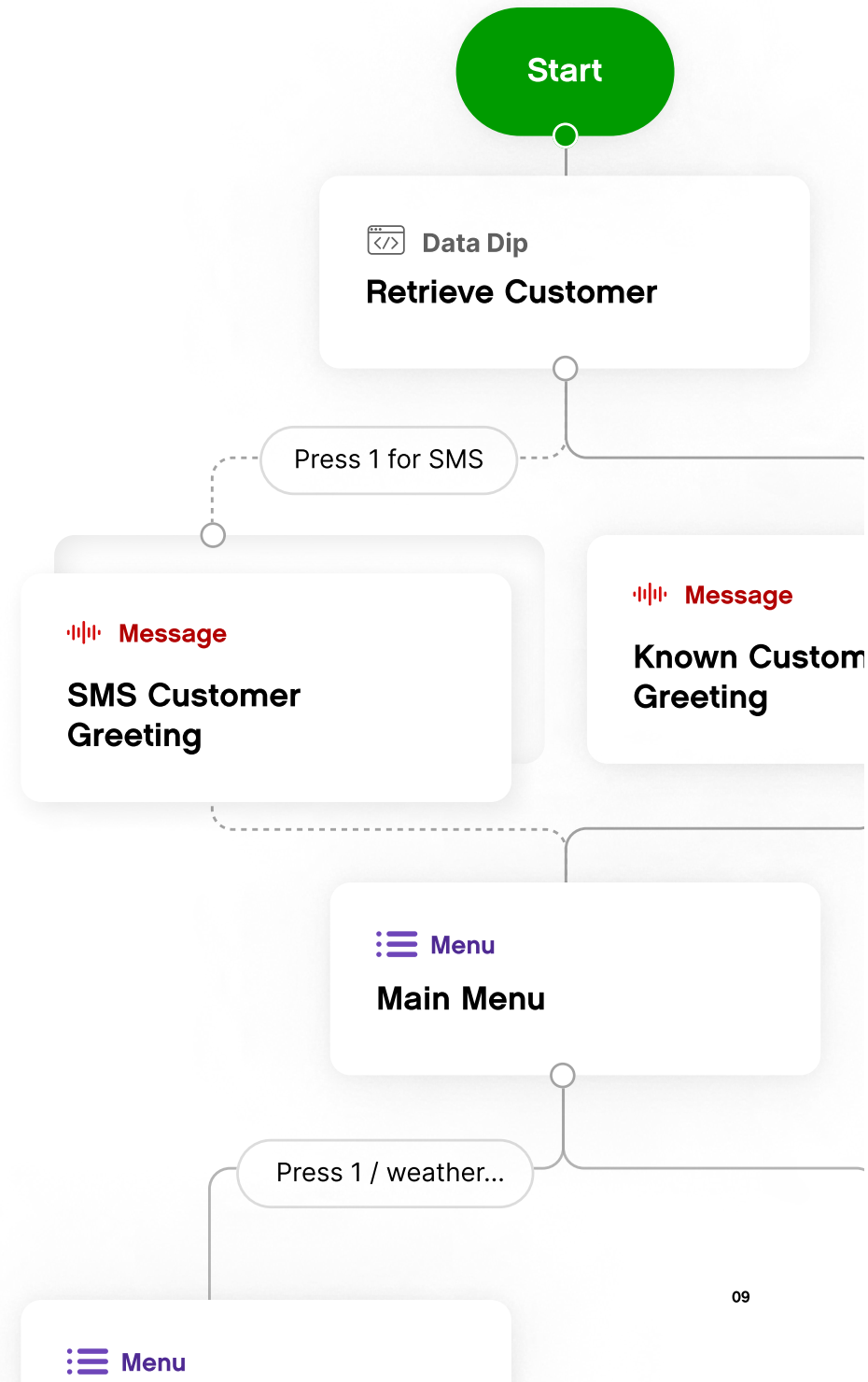# 7. Tie Every Interaction (Regardless of Channel) Back to the Customer

Whether your customer speaks to an agent, or self-serves through your IVR, it's important to save every interaction in one place. Remember when I said how I said Gladly ties everything back to the customer? That also includes every conversation they have, regardless of which channel they use. When your customers go through your IVR flow, what they input is tied to their profile in their conversation timeline for agents to reference. For example, your agent can see what menu options your customers interacted with prior to even saying "hello". If they see that John went down the path of looking to make a return, your agents can adjust to a more sympathetic tone and proactively recommend a different product instead.

8. Keep Your IVR Experience as Simple as You Need It to Be

IVRs are inherently complex by nature, and don't need to be any more confusing. Many brands make their IVRs much more difficult than necessary, especially when it comes to self-service. Keeping your IVR menus simple and messages as direct as possible, make the IVR easier to use, reduces customer confusion, and will make your customers more likely to successfully self-serve. Frustrated customers will do everything they can to bypass the IVR entirely (cue pushing the "0" button as many times as possible), and the easiest way to prevent that is to make sure it's seamless, clear, and personal.

9. Make Changes on Your Own

Rather than working with an external consultant to make changes to your IVR, it's important to be able to make those changes autonomously. Aside from having ownership of what your customers hear, sometimes changes need to happen on the fly. For example, if your store is re-opening after being closed for the holidays, rather than reaching out to an external person for help, you can adjust the hours on your own. Or maybe your hold music is causing abandoned calls and needs to be swapped out—a simple UI that lets you make changes to your IVR on your own, saves you precious time and gives you back control.

Start

Data Dip
Retrieve Customer

Press 1 for SMS

Message
SMS Customer Greeting

Message
Known Custom Greeting

Menu
Main Menu

Press 1 / weather...

Menu

10. Test and Retest

You might not correlate A/B testing with an IVR, but having a test and learn mindset will ensure that you are putting your best foot forward in terms of your customer's interaction with it. With Gladly's ability to let you make changes to your IVR when you want, coupled with powerful reporting tools, you will get a full picture of what's working and what's not when it comes to your IVR. For example, you might learn that a vague recording like "Press 1 for Sales" might not be as effective as "To speak to a sales representative, press 1".

Being able to quickly adapt to what resonates with customers will not only drive more efficiencies but keep customers happier by providing a more optimal experience.
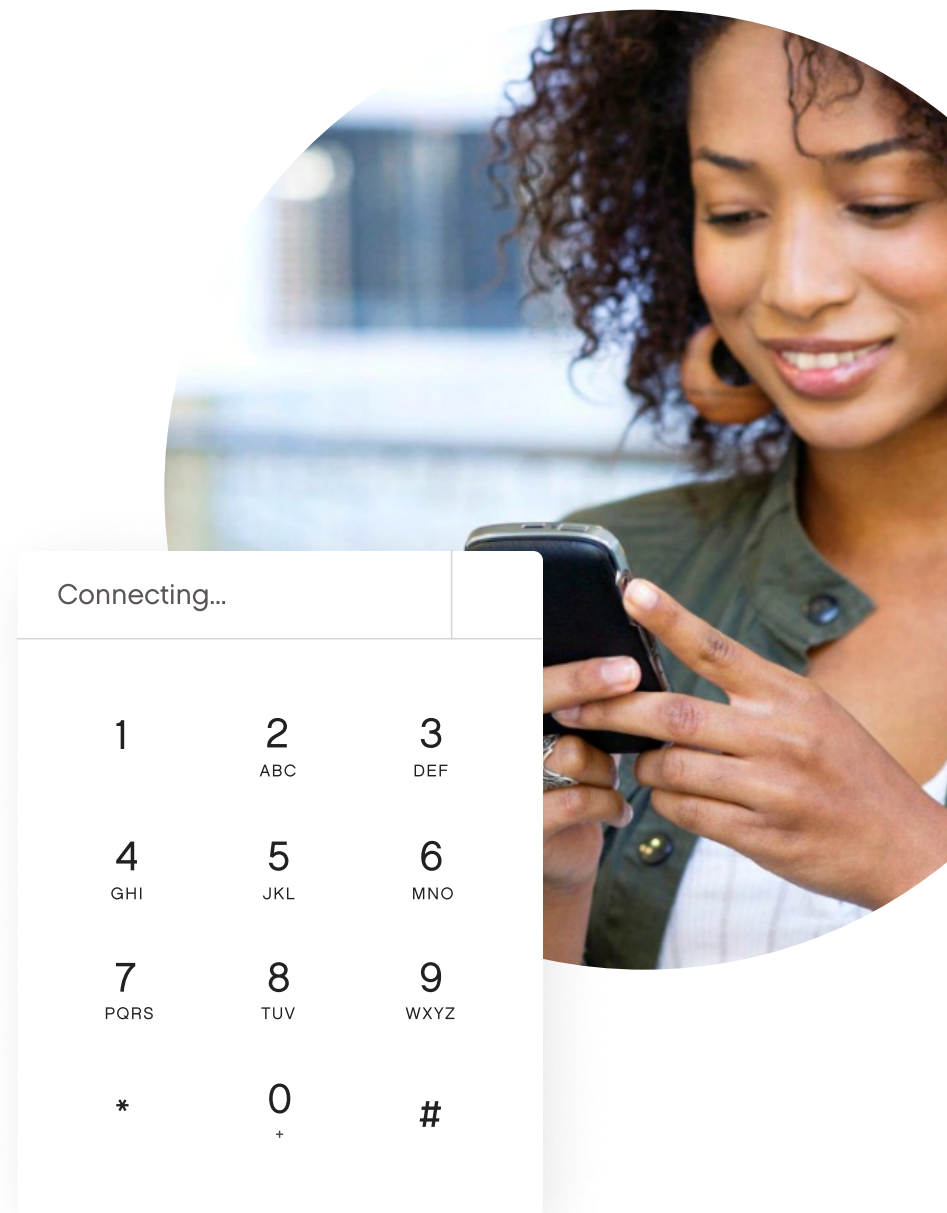
In summary, IVRs have come a long way. From being a channel that solely helps connect the right customer to the right agent, to a strong means that drives self-service, it's safe to say your IVR is an important channel to keep your contact center running properly. With today's 21st century customer, adapting to the ever-changing environment and keeping up with their desire to get access to "instant everything" means ensuring that your IVR is modern, personal and puts the customer at the center.

⊕Gladly