

# Voice ASP Best Practices, Edition 2.0

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## REPORT SUMMARY

This report is an update and refresh of a research document published by Opus Research in August 2004. It contains research findings based on a series of executive interviews coupled with a thorough literature review to identify "best practices" exhibited among providers of hosted or managed automated speech processing. Throughout the document, Opus Research uses the term "Voice Application Service Provider" (Voice ASPs) to refer to a growing mix of third-parties that own and operate computing, switching and voice processing resources in 'server farms' which host or execute applications on behalf of their customers.

As for "best practices", it is a subjective that is best thought of as "what's working now?" Opus Research positions this document as a reference guide regarding real-world implementations focusing on the Five 'Ps' common to business analysis: Pricing, Promotion, Product, Partnerships and Personnel. In this report, we highlight techniques which correlate both with business success and customer satisfaction.

In the past document, we paid special attention to the vendor selection criteria and decision variables that that held the greatest weight with business decision-makers. These included:

- Understanding of a customer's core business needs and willingness to share business risk
- Support of multi-vendor and heterogeneous computing and telecommunications infrastructures and a willingness to absorb the technology risk associated with moving to service-oriented architectures (SOAs)
- Increased automation rates (as a result of a better user experience) driving better ROI, customer satisfaction and, ultimately, retention

This year, the pantheon of decision criteria has changed quite a bit, reflecting technological challenges confronted by prospective purchasers who now attach high importance to the following:

- System integration and understanding of underlying business processes that fulfill business objectives tied to customer satisfaction and retention
- Attention to new tools for monitoring performance variables that include automation rates, first-call resolution, problem tracking and reporting
- Security features that are key enablers for distributed solutions because they allow clients to conform to regulatory strictures and give clients the mechanism to control private, customer records and transaction data while executing business logic and applications on their own server farms

- Broad product offerings that 'blend' voice self-service, enhanced call routing and live agent services into a coherent set of business solutions
- Next-generation customer care platforms that combine voice, text-messaging (SMS), multimedia messaging (MMS) and streaming media to better respond in real time to customer needs. A good example of this approach is Vodafone Interactive Care, hosted and managed by Spain-based Ydilo, which also melds basic customer care with service delivery, such as downloading of streamed content.
- Finally, a considerable amount of anxiety surrounds the notorious "Katz Patents" – referring to a broad collection of 55+ process patents involving phone-based interactive services. Some of the longest-standing, voice ASPs were among the first to settle with Ronald A. Katz Technology Licensing, LLP.

In structuring this report, Opus Research has collected and compiled information by conducting interviews with a diverse cross-section of the hosted and managed speech solutions providers in North America, Europe and the Pacific Rim.

The report includes data collected from the following service providers:

<b><i>Pure Play ASPs</i></b>	<b><i>Telcos</i></b>	<b><i>Hybrid &amp; Integrated</i></b>
Angel.com	AT&T	Contact Solutions
BeVocal	Verizon Business (including MCI)	Convergys
Rogers Canada	Telus	Eckoh
Tellme	Qwest	First Data Voice Services
Vail Systems	Telstra	Intervoice
Voxeo	XO Interactive	Intellivoice
Ydilo	DTMS	West Corporation

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