

# Maximize the Impact of Every Contact

**Technical capabilities that enable the ideal outbound customer contact plus  
a look at Tellme Outbound IVR Service and Aspect ALM™**

# Technology for Today's Outbound IVR

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## Executive Summary

Proactive, outbound applications are rapidly becoming a standard technology in the contact center toolkit, particularly for companies striving to keep customers engaged, improve loyalty, and demonstrate the value of their products. As a result, contact center managers are faced with continually increasing campaign costs and complexity. At the same time, customers are overloaded by the number of communications they receive on a daily basis; individuals now filter out many corporate communications in order to focus on what is important. To succeed in this environment, companies must carefully tailor coordinated proactive communications strategies, based on carefully selected technologies that can maximize the impact of every single contact. Ultimately, these services should allow you to achieve:

- Increased campaign reach without increasing resources
- The best possible customer engagement
- Campaign insights using metrics that align with business objectives and tuning techniques that achieve results

This paper will discuss the latest technologies and recommendations for deploying outbound customer care IVR and voice portal solutions that help contact center leaders achieve these goals without over-investment or major operational changes. This is achieved through flexible calling strategies, intelligent contact list management, and high quality IVR interactions.

### Operational inefficiencies inflate proactive care costs

Industry research shows an outbound campaign needs an average of three tries to reach a live person over the phone. The primary cause of these missed connections is outreach at the wrong time, when an individual is unlikely to pick up the phone and engage in a conversation. Companies already have information available to determine the best time to call, but may not be aware of available technology to utilize this intelligence and apply it in a scalable way across large-scale campaigns.

Another missed opportunity drives up costs once successful live connections are finally made: calls are typically routed to a human agent to complete the conversation, often lasting several minutes. The costs of these activities quickly add up: money is wasted placing more calls than needed, valuable agent time is consumed by routine tasks (like authenticating callers or reading boilerplate informational messages), and off-peak calling leads to inconsistent agent scheduling. With smart use of IVR technology to automate basic tasks and contact center management software to optimize campaign deployment, companies can reduce costs dramatically and achieve ROI much more quickly on their outbound campaigns.

Ensuring maximum relevance for proactive contact also requires careful management of data and customer expectations. According to a recent study by Datamonitor, *"Finding the right balance between Inbound IVR, agent interaction, and other complementary outbound technologies, such as SMS, MMS, and email, is vital to deploying a successful outbound IVR campaign"*.<sup>1</sup> This means that companies must design outbound contact experiences to reach the customer on the customer's terms: using the right timing, choosing a channel that is both preferred and context appropriate, and providing an interaction that will solve the customers' need in the fastest and the most user friendly manner possible.

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<sup>1</sup> Hong, Daniel. "Is the Promise of Outbound IVR all talk?" *Speech Technology Magazine*. Jun 2009.

### Four technical capabilities for outbound campaign success

Through our experience in building and maintaining automated care applications, we identified four key technical capabilities that organizations should seek when evaluating outbound IVR solutions to achieve their cost savings and customer engagement goals. They are based on four key principles that define an ideal outbound customer contact interaction:

- Right person
- Right time
- Right message
- Results

#### 1 Reach the right person with Right Party Contact features

Reaching the right person is critical to deliver the proper message to the person who needs it the most. Many challenges exist: phones are shared among family members, people change residences, wrong numbers are entered into the database. Experienced companies avoid reaching the wrong person, improving utilization of time and resources, by using adaptable Right Party Contact (RPC) techniques. These techniques consist of three steps designed to maximize the probability of reaching the right person.

1. **Validate phone numbers.** An analysis of a number's prior interaction history can reveal if it was previously flagged as non-responsive, busy, or not associated with the person you're trying to reach.
2. **Only call preferred numbers.** A customer typically has many active phone numbers, including work, home, and mobile numbers. By leveraging a customer's historical response rates from the valid choices, you can predict which will have the highest probability of live answer and then prioritize the calling order accordingly.
3. **Personalize the call.** Asking for the intended contact by name increases the probability that the person who answers will hand the phone to the right contact. Having an interactive, speech-based voice user interface is beneficial, because you want to make it as easy as possible for the person picking up the phone to hand it over to the right contact or provide insights on the contact's whereabouts. Understanding phrases such as "Who's calling", "she's not here", "he doesn't live here anymore", and "call back later" and responding appropriately will help determine the right course of action for future contact attempts.

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### 2 Identify the right time to call using interaction history

Calling someone at the right time doesn't always mean calling when that contact is most likely to pick up, but also determining a time when the call will be most beneficial to them. Identifying this optimal calling window requires firsthand knowledge of customers' previous contact center interactions, both inbound and outbound, the context under which the call will be made, and the level of response based on different calling times of the day. For example, a health clinic customer will appreciate a reminder to take medication in the evening, right after their dinner time because:

- a) She's previously called in after 8 pm to ask questions about taking the medication
- b) The medication requires intake at 11 am and 9 pm
- c) And, when previously called about a similar topic between 12 and 6 pm, she simply hung up or did not answer.

The technology you choose must continually store and categorize this type of customer information as well as have intelligence to predict the best time to call to maximize chances of call pick up and call appreciation.

### 3 Present the right message with customer segmentation support

When you call your customers with an important message, they may not initially recognize its importance or be receptive to it. Since you are taking up their valuable time, you need to make sure the information you provide is appreciated. The challenge is that a company's relationship with each customer is different, in terms of how long they've been with the company, their loyalty status, and their style for responding to questions. The customer may also not trust an automated system initially so the interactions you provide will need to make the customer feel comfortable. The best way to present the most targeted messages for your customers is to develop a segmentation strategy. Using segmentation features in your outbound campaign technology, you can subdivide customers into specific call lists and assign target messages to these lists. Each message in a segment can be tailored to speak directly to the audience in the list by focusing on the segments' needs and its willingness to engage in over-the-phone interactions.

Segmented call lists can be defined based on the amount of business a customer does with your company (for example, Gold, Silver, or Bronze status) and each caller experience can be tailored directly to that status level. For example, when sending out information about airline upgrades, Gold customers can qualify for first class upgrades, Silver members for free flight meals, and Bronze members for free luggage check-in. With the right outbound campaign technology, prior call and customer profile information such as frequency of contact, purchase history, and demographic information can create more targeted messages. Additionally, messages can be prioritized for specific customers to make sure they get the most important messages (e.g. fraud alerts) first, before getting less important messages.

### 4 Drive results with automation and optimization metrics

Outbound campaign success can be defined on many levels, from the business ROI (revenue gained, savings from diverted calls) to the task and sub-task detail (collecting on a bill, rescheduling a flight, or refilling a prescription). Having metrics at your fingertips that measure task completions and provide reasons for task failure is a critical step in campaign tuning and ultimately improving your ROI.

An outbound campaign may contain numerous tasks; some calls may involve more attempted tasks than others, depending on the caller's response to the information delivered. For example, tasks for a flight delay notification might include:

1. Reach a person over the phone
  - a. If nobody answers, leave a voicemail message
  - b. If there is a pickup, ensure that you have the right person on the phone with touchtone confirmation
2. Announce the new flight departure time
  - a. Offer to transfer to a live agent for rebooking
  - b. Automate the rebooking task with speech interaction
    - i. Provide alternative flight options
    - ii. Confirm the rescheduled flight choice
    - iii. Offer to SMS the new flight information to the customer's phone

By tracking the attempts and success rate of these tasks, you can obtain a wealth of insights about your campaign and the contacts' behavior in response to your message. By analyzing the tasks and subtasks, the campaign management can determine:

- What is the optimal time before a flight to reach the customer?
- How often do flight delays drive rebookings vs. informed hang-ups after the notification?
- Are the available alternative flights satisfactory for the customer's travel needs?
- How often does a customer attempt automated rebooking and succeed?
- How many rebookings can be automated to maximize efficiency for the customer and save agent costs?

Above, there are several benefits demonstrated for speech-enabled outbound IVR. First, speech allows companies to automate complex tasks much like those provided in inbound IVR applications. Second, automated tasks can be measured in much finer detail to understand what sub-tasks need tuning (compared to a single resolution recorded after an agent interaction). Third, automated tasks can quickly and efficiently address a customer's need without adding extra burden on the contact center. This final benefit can prevent long hold times during unexpected spikes in flight changes due to unpredictable events such as regional storms which might normally overwhelm a contact center. The yield is higher overall customer satisfaction, improved revenue, and reduced development costs.

*“Speech-enabled task automation can address customer needs without overwhelming contact centers during unpredictable spikes.”*

### Optimal outbound contact with Tellme and Aspect

Tellme has partnered with Aspect to offer an outbound customer service suite focused on maximizing the impact of every contact with innovative and flexible features that ensure calls occur at the right time, reach the right person, present the right message, and maximize results. These features drive fewer call attempts, more efficient interactions, improved task completion rates, and happier customers, translating into lower telecom and agent costs, and increased revenue opportunities. Major feature sets include:

#### **Campaign Strategy Services: Create and optimize campaign strategies to maximize penetration rates, right party contacts, and call relevance.**

**List Management** – Intelligently manages your contact lists so you can segment your customers to target them with messages that cater to their exact needs. With this feature, you can manage multiple call lists, associate lists with campaigns, assign contact and time zone preferences, and link customer data so you can make clear decisions on when to call and what type of message to present.

**Campaign Management** – Creates sophisticated, high yield campaigns that deliver the right message to the customer at minimum calling costs. Guided by real-time business intelligence, you can run multiple campaigns using disparate host data, customer interaction history, and complex business rules.

**Campaign Optimization** – Using a patented and industry leading “best time to call” algorithm, Aspect® Campaign Optimizer™ can increase Right Party Contact (RPC) rate by 20% - 45%. Aspect Campaign Optimizer uses a SmartLearn Database, Demographic Probability predictor, and Precision tuner to learn customer behavior from every dial attempt, predict likely chances of pick-up, and update behavior models with every new call. These methods are then used for future call scheduling and predicting call attempts when the person is most likely to pick up.

#### **Outbound IVR Services: Designed to provide customers with highest levels of task completion and caller experience.**

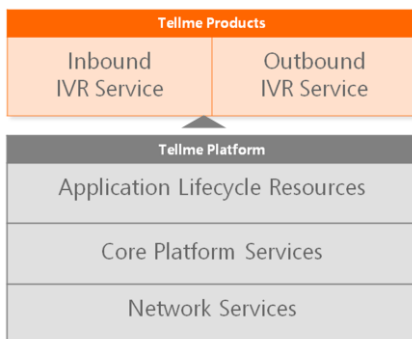
**Answering Machine Detection** – Tellme’s answering machine detection algorithm is able to confidently and consistently detect whether the phone is answered by a machine or a human. Unlike other detection algorithms that need a few seconds of silence in the beginning of the call to detect the machine, Tellme’s algorithm uses a combination of silence detection, multi-stage hypothesis, and speech-based phrase detection to increase the likelihood of obtaining the correct identification without any impact to user experience. Based on these optimized detection results, you can adjust your campaign logic appropriately by either choosing to leave a message with a call back number, calling back at a later time, or engaging the customer with an IVR or agent conversation. The results are accurately targeted messages that reduce customer confusion and achieve maximum message penetration.

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**Personalization** – Provides the ability to “know” your customers and their needs before you call them or they call you via a sophisticated customer data management system. Knowing more means you can make conversations friendlier and more efficient; customers notice when a company is respectful of their valuable time. Using personalization capabilities, you can tailor each Outbound message to the specific need of the customer, ensuring higher response rates and increased revenue. If a customer calls back your call center after you've left a message on their answering machine, you can also personalize their experience to offer your announcement up front so they don't have to traverse through multiple IVR menus in order to get the information you contacted them about.

**Advanced Speech Recognition** – Speech recognition drives richer, outbound applications by permitting a faster, more streamlined interaction than touchtone prompts. Tellme's on-demand speech platform learns from millions of incoming speech interactions applied to adaptive acoustic models to continuously improve the quality of interactions across all applications on the platform. Tellme enhances its pronunciation dictionaries (a key resource for the recognizer), with over 500,000 hand-tuned pronunciations to improve accuracy for regional accents.

**Audio Libraries** - Tellme offers a wide variety of pre-tuned audio libraries that read back common phrases like dates, times, numbers, financial information, proper names, and other useful data. Domain-specific data recorded by professional voice talent and earcons, or auditory feedback, help improve caller retention and shorten call times. By leveraging Tellme's expertise in this area, clients and partners can reduce audio production costs and speed time to market.



**Shared Strength** Tellme's Inbound IVR and Outbound IVR services draw from the same high-performance speech platform.

**Agent Connect** – In many cases, such as with bill payment or appointment rescheduling, your customers will want to speak directly to an agent after receiving the outbound call. Using Computer Telephony Integration (CTI), Tellme provides the ability to seamlessly transfer to an agent, while preserving the data entered in the IVR and making it available to an agent via a screen pop. As a result, the conversation with the agent is more to the point enabling quicker resolution, saving money for your call center and valuable time for your customer.

**Unified Inbound IVR Services** – The Inbound IVR Service complements the Outbound IVR Service, providing contacts with call-back capabilities to complete tasks, toll free calling, and superior user experience. Tellme's Inbound IVR Services are known industry-wide for their exemplary caller experience and proven performance record. Companies can leverage inbound IVR assets and call flows to speed the deployment of outbound IVR experiences. Additionally, the combination Outbound and Inbound IVR services provides customers with a consistent, personalized experience across proactive notifications and inbound voice portals. This unified experience allows your callers to have the same expectations of IVR functionality regardless of interaction.

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**Unified Reporting and Administration: Comprehensive analytics, reporting, and management tools enabling campaign tuning and seamless change management.**

***Unified Reporting*** – The reporting infrastructure provides data and dashboards that deliver a comprehensive view into your campaign performance while eliminating the need to integrate reporting data from multiple sources. The reports allow you to look at penetration rates, caller outcomes, top dispositions, task completion percentages, and automation rates. Using this information, you can develop a tuning strategy that caters to your specific campaign goals.

***Unified Administration*** – A unified campaign command and control center leverages centralized, dynamic provisioning capabilities to enable you to make real-time changes to list, campaign and system setting, without stopping and starting systems or services.

## Conclusion

The rapid deployment of outbound IVR services alongside inbound IVR Services in customer service-focused contact centers has already shown that proactive outbound campaigns improve customer loyalty, a company's brand value, and return on investment. The challenge that companies face is choosing an outbound solution that can realize these benefits quickly, continuously, and with minimal administrative headaches. The Tellme Outbound IVR Service, with Aspect Advanced List Management (ALM) delivers on these promises with industry leading IVR and campaign management functionality leading to timely, customer friendly, and actionable campaigns that maximize the impact of every contact and help you to rapidly achieve your business goals.

### About Tellme

Tellme is the world's largest VoiceXML platform, improving automation and customer service performance for businesses across 2 billion+ calls every year. To deliver this world-class service, Tellme builds and maintains an award-winning platform that encompasses the following features:

**Application Lifecycle Resources:** Customers, partners and developers who build applications on the Tellme platform use Application Lifecycle Resources to develop and optimize their applications throughout the lifecycle of the application. Tellme offers a variety of tools to ease voice application management and drive insights that can increase task completion rates. Tellme helps you accomplish tasks such as: building and testing voice applications, changing your voice application in real-time, recording calls for tuning purposes, analyzing user segmentation and calling patterns, and much more.

**Core Platform Services:** Tellme experts manage, maintain and optimize the Core Platform Services to deliver the best performance on core platform functionality. Tellme's expertise in speech, audio and integrated customer experience enhance the quality of your inbound and outbound voice applications to enrich the caller experience, increase task completion rates and create opportunities for further business growth.

**Network Services:** Tellme's industry leading carrier-grade network is optimized for scalability, security and reliability due to its attention to Network Services. Tellme customers enjoy both peace of mind and flexibility with a carrier-grade platform that supports the latest in technology. Tellme's powerful network-based platform encompasses carrier-grade TDM and VoIP telephony infrastructure to support your inbound and outbound voice traffic, as well as a highly reliable web infrastructure to support data transactions. With capacity on-demand, Tellme can easily handle seasonal or event-driven spikes in call volume, ensuring you are always available to your customers, and there's no bottleneck for important outbound communications.

For more information, visit <http://www.tellme.com/business>.

### About Aspect

Aspect provides software and consulting services that turn the potential of unified communications into real business results across the enterprise and in the contact center. Applying 35 years of insight and experience, Aspect helps more than two-thirds of the FORTUNE Global 100, as well as small and medium enterprises, power their business processes with communications. For more information, visit [www.aspect.com](http://www.aspect.com).