A Definitive Guide to Selecting Your AI Voice Agent

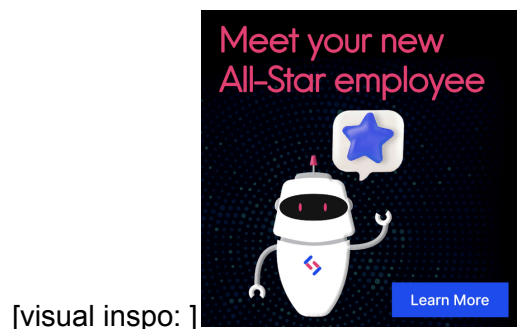## Part 1: Introduction to AI agents

Imagine a voice assistant that's designed to work alongside your team, handling repetitive tasks and freeing up more time for live agents to focus on what they truly excel at: providing personalized, human touchpoints for your customers.

An AI agent is designed to streamline operations such as call transfers and appointment scheduling, empowering employees to create better customer experiences. The AI acts as a digital tool in your team's toolkit, elevating everyone's efficiency and effectiveness.

Although you might typically build an interactive voice response system (IVR) to sort incoming calls, an IVR does not actually understand what a caller wants. It is simply there to transfer the call or repeat a pre-recorded message based on fixed logic.

IVRs that misunderstand our queries can lead to a loop of repeating instructions, leaving the caller stranded and frustrated. Whether it's calling a pharmacy, a doctor's office, or a phone service company, getting stuck in a loop with a barely-responsive phone tree that refuses to transfer you to a live agent is a poor customer experience.

An AI voice agent provides natural and engaging conversation with the caller, allowing customer service representatives to offload repetitive calls to efficiently accomplish complex tasks. The AI can perform the initial step of greeting the caller, answering questions, and troubleshooting common issues before transferring the call to the appropriate agent. And it will understand immediately if the caller cuts in and demands to be transferred to a live agent!

[visual inspo:]

In addition to frustrating callers, integrating a traditional IVR or automated agent involves complex code, logic, and engineering expertise. But what if you could quickly and easily deploy a virtual agent that goes above and beyond the capabilities of traditional IVR?

Part 2: What does an AI agent do for you?

Delivering exceptional customer service is crucial for success and plays a pivotal role in shaping a company's reputation. Customers expect personalized and efficient interactions, and businesses need to find innovative ways to meet these expectations while reducing costs and improving operational efficiency.

Relying too heavily on IVRs can lead to unhappy customers when callers find themselves stuck in long queues, or waiting for assistance from live agents when the IVR can't understand what they want. IVR systems and automated agents often lack the ability to adapt to human variance and fail to deliver the natural experience that customers desire.

An AI agent can handle high call volumes, automate routine tasks, and improve response times, all while maintaining a natural and engaging conversation with customers. It can process vast amounts of data and offers users increasingly accurate and personalized responses.

With adaptability and intelligence, AI paves the way for a new era of customer service, where robotic interactions are replaced by meaningful conversations. By automating responses to common queries, order tracking, FAQs, and basic troubleshooting, AI agents free up human agents to focus on more value-added interactions.

For businesses aiming to provide an unparalleled customer experience, AI agents offer a glimpse into the future of customer service. The ability to understand, engage, and assist customers in their preferred language while seamlessly integrating with existing systems is game-changing.

The versatility of AI agents makes them suitable for a wide range of businesses. Small businesses struggling to scale up can benefit from 24/7 availability, allowing customers to access routine information and assistance at any time. Global enterprises can use an AI agent to efficiently route calls in any language to the appropriate departments while maintaining meaningful interactions.

With an AI agent, you can ensure that your customers receive prompt and personalized support around the clock.

Part 3: How an AI agent can grow your business

The transformative technology of artificial intelligence has diverse applications across industries. Implementing AI into customer service operations is an effective way to remain competitive anywhere in today's market. According to a 2022 study by IBM, over one-third of organizations

implementing AI to improve customer care were doing so in order to improve live agent productivity and create more personalized interactions. 28% were using AI to decrease wait times.

[visual: one-third of organizations implementing AI to improve customer care were doing so in order to improve live agent productivity]

47%

According to Elsevier Health, nearly half (47%) of U.S. healthcare workers plan to leave their positions by 2025.

There are many ways to use AI to cut costs, improve efficiency, and grow your business. With an AI agent, any call center functions can be easily streamlined, like sorting incoming support calls, summarizing the issue before transferring, recording customer issues and troubleshooting. There are also some specific use cases where AI agents excel:

Use Cases
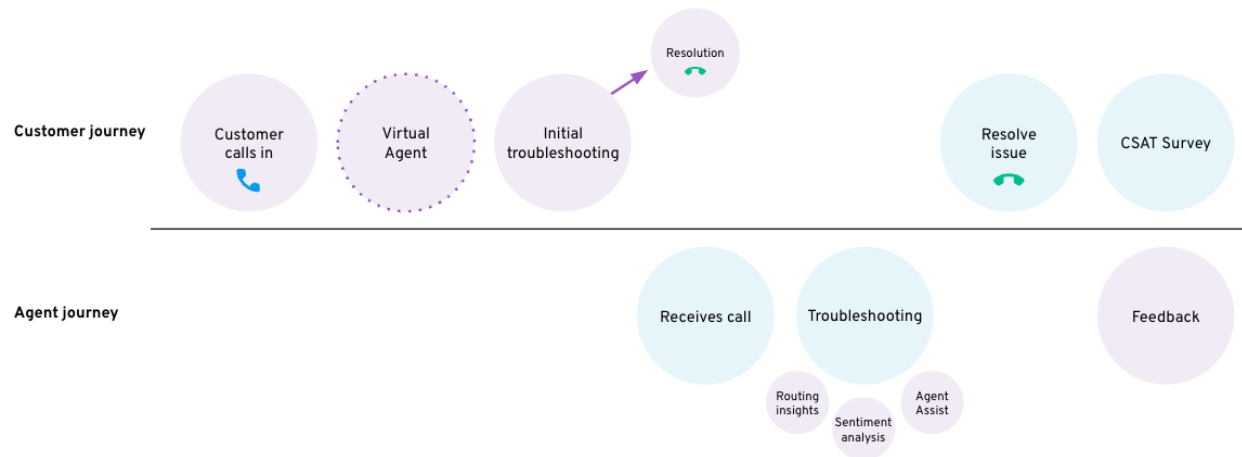
Virtual receptionist

AI agents are proficient virtual receptionists. They optimize calls with intelligent automated conversations, providing personalized greetings and instant information retrieval.

Virtual receptionists do more than just replay pre-recorded messages; they can perform actions such as transferring calls, scheduling meetings, or taking messages, allowing the human receptionist to focus on more involved tasks. This not only improves efficiency but also delivers exceptional first impressions to callers.

If a customer were to reach out at 2AM, a virtual assistant could provide this customer with immediate, AI-powered support. Calls are answered during off hours and important information is recorded for those who need it the next day.

Customer support

[visual inspo: customer support routing through ai agent]

AI agents empower customers by providing intelligent self-service and accurate issue resolution. By retrieving customer information and taking actions to open or close support tickets, the AI agent streamlines incoming support calls.

The AI can summarize the issue before transferring the call to live support, reducing response times and increasing agent efficiency. Customers can get the help they need faster, and even successfully troubleshoot and resolve basic issues.

Managing reservations and appointments

AI agents efficiently manage reservations and appointments. Whether it's booking a table at a restaurant or scheduling a medical check-up, the AI system streamlines the process, ensuring accuracy and convenience for both businesses and customers. This automation improves customer experiences while reducing administrative overhead.

If a medical practice were to implement an AI receptionist, for example, patients could book appointments, inquire about clinic hours, and receive automated reminders for upcoming visits. This streamlines administrative tasks for the healthcare staff, allowing them to dedicate more time to patient care.

Sales and marketing insights

AI agents' ability to observe customer behavior at scale allows for the collection of more data than humanly possible. An AI agent can record and even transcribe invaluable data, including customer interactions, preferences, and pain points. This can be used to inform sales, marketing, and other analytics efforts, allowing you to optimize strategies and tailor marketing campaigns for maximum impact.

Enhanced spam filtering

Security is paramount, and AI agents can play a pivotal role in blocking out spam and scam calls. It can filter spam by analyzing incoming caller IDs and detecting potential bot calls, safeguarding your business from fraudulent activities and ensuring a secure communication environment.

Polling data and surveys

AI agents can efficiently conduct polling by making automated phone calls, gathering data on a large scale. This automation not only saves time but also ensures accuracy in data collection.

Election season in the United States involves extensive phone banking and outreach. Instead of relying solely on traditional phone polling, interviewers can deploy AI agents to reach a broader audience. These agents can [conduct surveys](#) via phone calls, collecting valuable data on voter preferences, concerns, and demographics.

Part 4: What to look for in an AI Agent

[visual: what to look for in an AI agent - voice capabilities, Efficiency, Personalization, Multilingual capabilities, data-driven insights, adaptability, low-code, no code options, programmable actions]

Customer service no longer has to be a mundane task handled exclusively by human agents. AI agents can step in to revolutionize the way businesses interact with their customers. Depending on your company's needs, there are a few features that are key to think about when it comes to finding the right AI voice agent for you:

Voice, not just chat

AI-powered chatbots are quite common, and have been around for years. AI voice agents introduce a novel approach to customer service with AI-powered voice. These agents are designed to replicate the experience of talking to a real person and respond to human variance, parsing nonsense from the real logic behind inquiries.

Efficiency

AI agents should speed up response times and connect callers to the right agents more efficiently. They handle routine questions, allowing human agents to focus on more complex issues. They deliver consistent service quality, ensuring a positive customer experience every time. Their 24/7 availability guarantees customers receive support regardless of the time zone or business hours.

Reduced costs

By automating repetitive tasks, AI agents in turn save money on labor and operational costs. AI agents also only incur costs while they are on the phone; they do not need to be paid by the hour or by the day. Additionally, eliminating the need for complex code reduces the reliance on specialized expertise, which significantly lowers development costs and accelerates the time-to-market for conversational AI.

Personalization

A good AI agent offers nuanced, context-aware, natural interactions. It's not just about automated responses; it's about understanding your customers' needs, preferences, and providing tailored assistance. Integrations with backend databases and third-party applications enable personalization and data analytics, delivering a high-quality user experience.

Multilingual capabilities

AI agents should enable you to connect with a diverse global customer base with support for various languages. This is particularly valuable if you have an international clientele. With multilingual support and the ability to understand different dialects, AI agents allow businesses to engage with a global audience effortlessly, breaking language barriers and expanding your reach.

Data-driven insights

Unlike traditional systems, AI agents can offer in-depth analytics and collect data beyond what is humanly possible. An AI agent can not only record calls, it can transcribe them, making it simple to sort through customer conversations later on. This data can be used to understand customer behavior, preferences, and pain points, helping you optimize your strategies.

Adaptability

An AI agent's intelligence extends beyond pre-defined instructions. It possesses the ability to comprehend and respond to queries beyond a scripted format. This adaptability should enable it to engage in meaningful conversations with customers, enhancing the overall customer experience.

While traditional IVR systems may struggle with the natural variance in human speech, AI agents excel. They should be able to understand and respond to queries beyond scripted formats, engaging in meaningful conversations with customers and getting smarter with every call, enhancing the overall customer experience.

Low code, [no-code](#) options

Anyone should be able to build their own AI-powered voice applications. Easy-to-use interfaces allow for quick deployment of simple AI agents with absolutely no code.

Implementing AI solutions can be challenging, especially for small and midsize businesses that lack the resources, skills or infrastructure to develop and deploy AI applications. But a no-code builder allows anyone, even those with no engineering background, to quickly build and deploy an AI agent.

A no-code platform simplifies the process of building AI applications that are easily trained and customized. This simplicity streamlines the development process, which delivers AI applications to your existing infrastructure faster.

A user-friendly interface is a necessity. With basic technology skills and plain text language, users should be able to make quick and effortless changes to their AI agents, eliminating the need for time-consuming coding and deployment cycles.

Programmable actions

With programmable voice capabilities, you can create more dynamic and versatile voice applications. For creators and developers, a robust AI agent enhances customization and flexibility with [programmable actions](#). You should be able to integrate with backend CRM systems for relevant responses and specific actions if desired.

This enables you to, for example, send SMS messages or access customer information from backend CRM databases. These integrations empower AI agents with real-time access to relevant data, enabling them to handle customer queries more efficiently and deliver high-quality personalized interactions.

Part 5: What to look for in a vendor

If an AI agent sounds like something that could help your business reduce costs, increase revenue, and decrease repetitive tasks for employees, the next step is to evaluate vendors. The number of products leveraging AI is expanding rapidly. Consider what functions are necessary for your AI agent, any data it will need to access, and the technical requirements involved to implement AI.

[visual:
What does your business need from AI?
        Cost benefit analysis
        What role will AI take on?
        What problem will AI solve?
        What functions does your AI agent need to have?
        What are your technical requirements?]

Once you understand your own needs from AI, and you have evaluated individual products, look to vendors who have:

Strong documentation and developer community

Resources for getting started and maintaining new technology are key to the success of any project. Look for extensive, user-friendly documentation to assist developers in integrating AI agents seamlessly into their systems.

Engaged, active developer communities are also helpful when trying new technology. Look for a vendor who fosters a thriving developer community where you can learn, share, and collaborate to maximize the potential of AI voice agents.

Responsive customer support

Responsive customer support is the biggest necessity for any technical product. You need a team that is committed to providing world-class, responsive assistance to ensure a seamless experience.

Seek out a vendor who takes pride in providing world-class customer support. With a responsive and helpful team, your questions and concerns will always be addressed promptly.

Depth of Knowledge

Look for feature-rich offerings in an AI agent. When assessing vendors, it's essential to compare the features they offer, and how they respond to specific requests about your use case. When it comes to AI voice agents, you don't just need a partner who excels at AI technology - you need a partner who excels at voice capabilities and is familiar with other communications technologies.

About [SignalWire AI Agent](#)

SignalWire's team is the driving force behind the creation of the AI Agent. Built by the minds who created the [FreeSWITCH](#) open-source project, SignalWire has unmatched, extensive expertise and a profound understanding of voice technologies.

With a responsive customer support team unrivaled in the industry and a thriving community of developers behind it, SignalWire offers an AI agent that is backed by all the resources you need to get started. Options for programming your own custom AI are available, but with a user-friendly design that requires minimal coding for rapid development. This makes our AI Agent accessible to individuals with varying technical backgrounds.

Users can easily instruct the SignalWire AI Agent on how to respond and behave in different scenarios with plain text instructions. And when it's not easy, the support team and the community can be reached quickly.

[visual:

Checklist for SignalWire

- ☑ ~~Strong documentation~~
- ☑ ~~Thriving developer community~~
- ☑ ~~responsive customer support~~
- ☑ ~~Depth of knowledge]~~

][visual: Find your best new employee
Friendly, helpful, always in a good mood +
Doesn't need breaks, Available 24/7 +
Depth of knowledge

Be Proud of Your Cloud

An omnichannel platform cloud should have several important characteristics, including:

Low Latency

High network latencies will erode the quality and performance of your platform, and make it much more difficult to deploy new solutions.

Scalability

The cloud should be designed as a distributed system with nodes that are built to run across multiple cloud providers, ensuring maximum performance and scalability—so the platform can grow as the business grows.

Data Sovereignty

The cloud should not have to rely on external services or proxies to manage the provisioning state. This ensures better resiliency and cross-cloud support.

Smart Routing

The network should be able to route data through the closest media server, the closest endpoint and to multiple PSTN providers.

Reliability

A cloud is only as good as its uptime.

SignalWire AI Agent is designed for business leaders who are focused on delivering best-in-class customer experiences. No minimums required; pay only for what you need. Whether you're a small business looking to scale or a larger business aiming to cut costs, SignalWire AI Agent can streamline your call center operations and improve your customer experiences.

Buttons:

View demo

Learn more about SignalWire AI Agent