

How to Use AI to **Answer Every Call & Maximize Revenue** in Your Restaurant



Introduction

AI has now reached a point where it can be used to handle customer queries over the phone, in a friendly, on-brand and human-like manner.

By automating common tasks like off-premise orders, bookings and FAQs, restaurants can free up their staff to focus on their tasks at hand, while ensuring that every single call is answered so that there are no missed opportunities for revenue.

There are a range of conversational technologies available that provide varying levels of sophistication and quality of customer service. Some technologies are very basic and only suitable for simple tasks like call routing or answering FAQs based on keywords. Other technologies, such as enterprise voice assistants, are capable of handling more complex tasks like taking orders and processing payments.

Advanced enterprise voice assistants can be integrated directly into restaurants' telephony service quickly and simply, and **can begin demonstrating significant ROI within just 4 weeks of deployment.**

Types of Conversational Technology

Conversational tech began with very basic automation capabilities, and has advanced to being capable of holding complete conversations and resolving complex problems.

BASIC AUTOMATION



Keypad IVR

This technology provides basic intent capture & routing via the keypad (e.g. 'Press 1 for bookings').

INTERMEDIATE AUTOMATION



Conversational IVR

Conversational IVR recognises specified spoken keywords to provide basic intent capture & routing (e.g. 'if you would like to book, please say "bookings"').



Chatbots

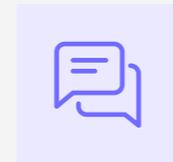
Chatbots allow customers to use a conversational interface via text – useful for website and app users, but not for those calling on the phone.



Smart Speakers

Smart speakers such as Alexa or Google Home can handle simple requests (e.g. 'Alexa, when is happy hour?'), but can only handle one or two conversational turns – not suitable for end-to-end resolution of more complex tasks.

ADVANCED AUTOMATION



PolyAI Voice Assistants

PolyAI voice assistants use next generation AI technology to hold sophisticated, multi-turn conversations, just like your best agents. They can automate many use cases from start to finish, solving a large percentage of queries without the need for human intervention at all.

Enterprise Voice Assistants: Use Cases for Restaurants



Take, amend & cancel bookings



Take off-premise orders



Process payments and refunds



Answer site-specific or general FAQs



Offer seasonal advice and COVID safety measures



All while offering an **exceptional caller experience**

How do Enterprise Voice Assistants deliver superhuman CX?

Enterprise Voice Assistants are able to offer the best customer experiences, by far. A combination of AI technologies are applied at different stages to provide service that matches that of your best member of staff. They provide this service by doing the following:

- **Understanding what your customers are saying – literally!** Speech recognition technology transcribes speech into text that an AI model can process.
- **Understanding what customers mean.** There are so many ways different to say the same thing. Spoken Language Understanding (SLU) technology can understand what a customer is saying, regardless of the words they use to say it.
- **Carrying on a natural and intuitive conversation.** Natural conversations are messy. We interrupt, ask clarifying questions, change our minds and give multiple pieces of information in one go. A good enterprise voice assistant uses dialogue policy management technology to allow for free-flowing conversions.
- **Sound natural and on-brand.** A great enterprise voice assistant will use customized text-to-speech technology to create a voice that truly embodies your brand and feels like talking to one of your best staff members.

Choosing the Best Enterprise Voice Assistant for Your Restaurant

Enterprise Voice Assistants offer the highest level of automation and best possible customer experience out of the available conversational technologies. Now comes the task of choosing the best voice assistant to serve your customers and represent your brand.

AI technology is developing rapidly, and the technology used in voice assistants is not standardized. The level of sophistication in voice assistants therefore varies greatly. Some voice assistants will still fail at some parts of the conversation if they're not using technology optimised for their deployment.

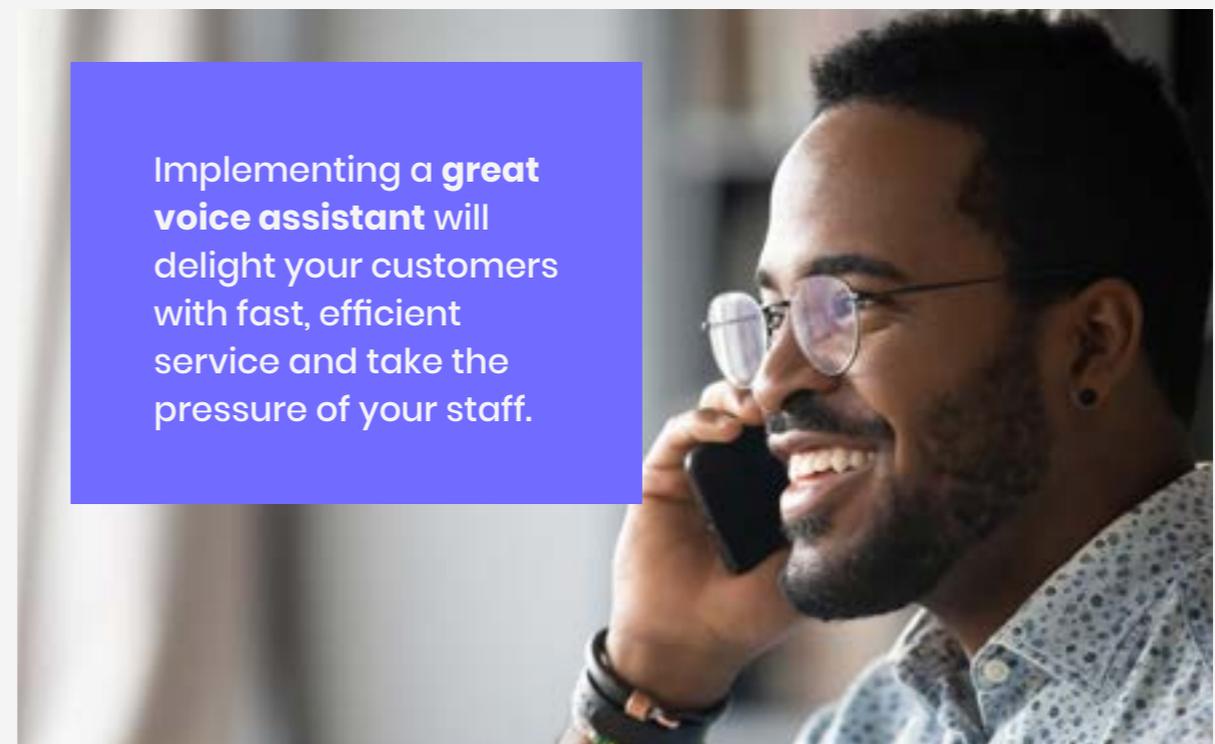
Implementing a bad voice assistant has a detrimental effect on your brand. They create bad customer experiences that don't solve your customers' queries, meaning they end up having to be transferred to your staff anyway. Or, at worst, they can drive customers away.

A great voice assistant will provide friendly and efficient service, leaving the customer feeling confident and content with their experience.

Over the next pages, we'll use real world examples to highlight the differences between good and bad voice assistants.



Implementing a voice assistant that delivers **bad CX** has a detrimental effect on your brand.



Implementing a **great voice assistant** will delight your customers with fast, efficient service and take the pressure of your staff.

Choosing the Right Voice Assistant for Your Restaurant

Understanding Beyond Keywords

You can't expect customers to know and use specific nomenclature or industry jargon, or know which department their particular query needs to be directed to.

A great voice assistant understands what a caller wants, regardless of the words they use to express themselves.

The image is a comparison of two voice assistant interactions. On the left, under the heading 'A BAD VOICE ASSISTANT Forces callers to use keywords', a customer says 'I just want to order pizza to pick up as soon as possible'. The assistant responds with 'I'm sorry I didn't understand. How can I help?'. The customer then says 'Uhhh TAKE OUT?'. On the right, under the heading 'A GREAT VOICE ASSISTANT Understands your customers however they talk', the same customer says the same sentence. The assistant responds with 'Sure, what pizza would you like?'. The entire comparison is set within a light gray frame with a white background for the chat bubbles.

A BAD VOICE ASSISTANT
Forces callers to use keywords

I just want to order pizza to pick up as soon as possible

I'm sorry I didn't understand. How can I help?

Uhhh TAKE OUT?

A GREAT VOICE ASSISTANT
Understands your customers however they talk

I just want to order pizza to pick up as soon as possible

Sure, what pizza would you like?

Impact: Reduce customer frustration by allowing callers to speak freely instead of making them guess what you want them to say.

Understanding Synonyms, Slang and Turns of Phrase

If you don't force the use of keywords, your voice assistant needs to understand what a caller means, regardless of the words they use.

The below example is based on a voice assistant we made for one of the UK's largest hospitality brands. When customers started to engage with the live deployment, we found many examples where they phrased questions in ways we could not have predicted. Fortunately, our unique Spoken Language Technology was able to understand even the most convoluted inputs.

A BAD VOICE ASSISTANT

Has limited understanding

Do I need to call to make a booking or can I just show up when I like?

How many people would you like to book for?

A GREAT VOICE ASSISTANT

Understands synonyms, slang and turns of phrase

Do I need to call to make a booking or can I just show up when I like?

We recommend booking to guarantee a table. Would you like me to make a booking for you?

Impact: Most conversational agents will require you to specify exactly what words and phrases a caller can say. Using a pre-trained model, you can deploy a voice assistant that customers love in as little as 4 weeks.

Understanding Story-Telling

People are typically more verbose and less precise when speaking than they are when typing. Rather than stating our issues concisely, we tend to share the story surrounding the issue. A great voice assistant needs to be able extract meaning from longer stories.

The following example is based on a real call our voice assistant took for Golden Nugget.

A BAD VOICE ASSISTANT

Struggles to understand intent from long stories

Hi, my mum made a booking for tonight, it should be under the name Jenny? She forgot to mention that we need a high chair, can we add a high chair to the booking? It's at 7

Yes, we do have high chairs at all of our restaurants. Would you like to mae a booking?

No... we already have a booking

A GREAT VOICE ASSISTANT

Understands intent from longer explanations

Hi, my mum made a booking for tonight, it should be under the name Jenny? She forgot to mention that we need a high chair, can we add a high chair to the booking? It's at 7

Okay, I have a booking at 7pm tonight under Jenny Hills, is that the one?

Yes that's it!

Okay, I've added a high chair to that booking.

Impact: Increase speed to resolution by understanding what the customer needs when they're uncertain.

Understanding Multiple Pieces of Information at Once

Customers may give multiple pieces of information in one go. A great voice assistant needs to pick out useful information as it is given, instead of asking customers to repeat it later in the call.

A BAD VOICE ASSISTANT

Can only understand one new piece of information at a time

Can I order a large pepperoni pizza, a large meatlovers and a bottle of Coke?

Okay, I've added the pizzas to your order. Would you like a drink with that?

A GREAT VOICE ASSISTANT

Can pick out multiple pieces of information given at once

Can I order a large pepperoni pizza, a large meatlovers and a bottle of Coke?

Sure, I've added those pizzas and a 2L bottle of coke to your order. Would you like anything else today?

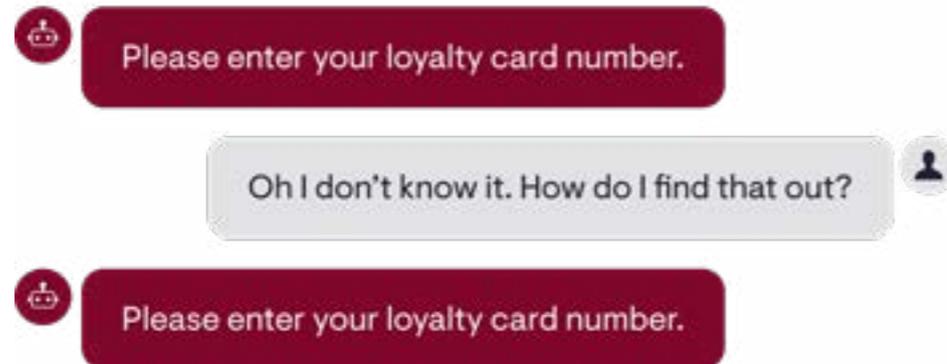
Impact: Improve customer satisfaction with short, snappy interactions that get straight to the point.

Understanding Natural Digression

Customers often answer questions with questions. Sometimes, these are follow-up questions for clarification, sometimes they are the result of customers changing their mind, and sometimes they come completely out of the blue. A great voice assistant will be able to respond to questions as they occur, and then bring the call back on track.

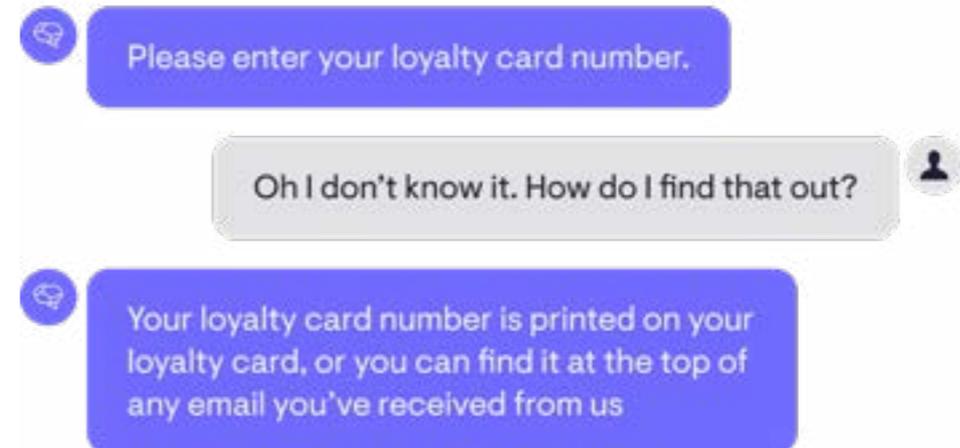
A BAD VOICE ASSISTANT

Gets confused if a customer goes off script



A GREAT VOICE ASSISTANT

Is open for digressions and clarifying questions



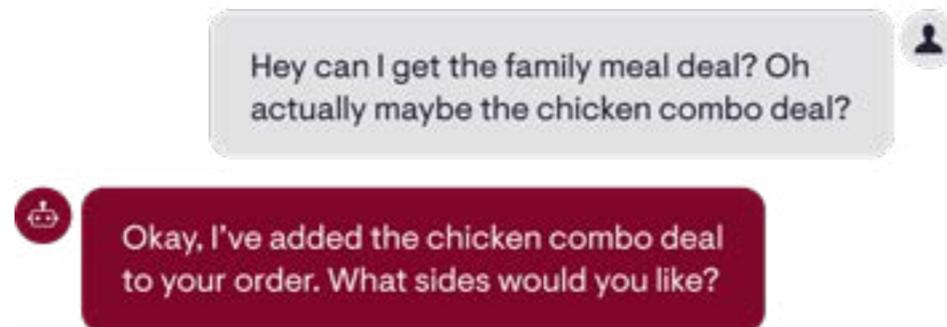
Impact: Support customers by allowing them access to information as and when they need it.

Asking Clarifying Questions

You can't expect callers to know exactly what information they should provide in order to resolve a query, so a great voice assistant needs to be able to ask questions in order to diagnose a problem and/or find a solution.

A BAD VOICE ASSISTANT

Makes assumptions about customers' intent or information



A GREAT VOICE ASSISTANT

Asks clarifying questions



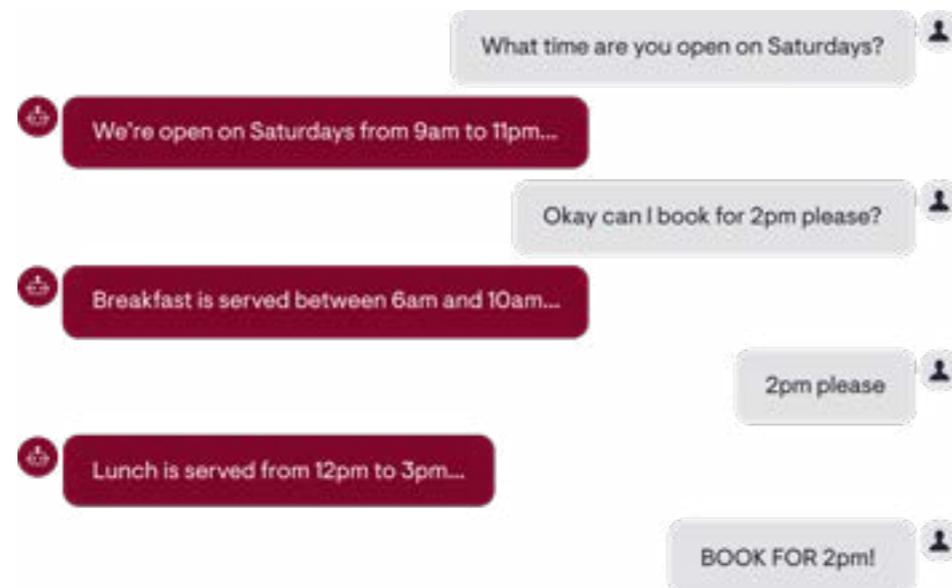
Impact: Increase call containment with robust voice assistants that don't fail.

Handling Customer Interruptions

Sometimes customers want to get on with the conversation and won't want to listen to full responses, and that should be fine. But sometimes, you don't want customers to interrupt because the information you are giving is important or required by regulations. A great voice assistant will allow callers to interrupt when it is beneficial to the customer experience but not when it is critical.

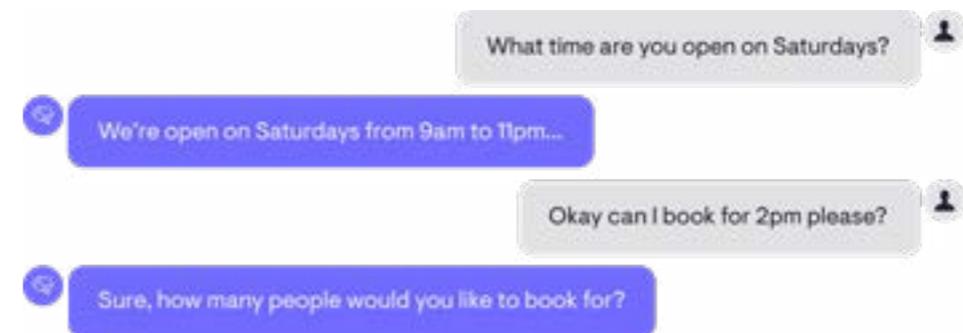
A BAD VOICE ASSISTANT

Will not allow customers to interrupt



A GREAT VOICE ASSISTANT

Knows when to allow for interruptions



Impact: Allow customers to self-serve quickly without having to sit through frustrating speeches.

A Natural Sounding Voice

If you record a conversation between two people, you'll notice natural pauses between one person speaking and the other. If somebody answers a question too quickly, it can be disconcerting. But natural pauses should be by design, and not the result of latency in your tech. Pauses that are too long leave callers wondering if they've been heard, often resulting in the caller repeating themselves as the voice assistant begins its response, confusing everyone on the call!

A BAD VOICE ASSISTANT

Has no emotion and awkward pauses



Are you calling about order number ... 115 30294 ... placed ... today ... at 2:30pm?

A GREAT VOICE ASSISTANT

Sounds natural and emotive & has natural pauses, not lags



Are you calling about the order you placed at 2:30pm today?

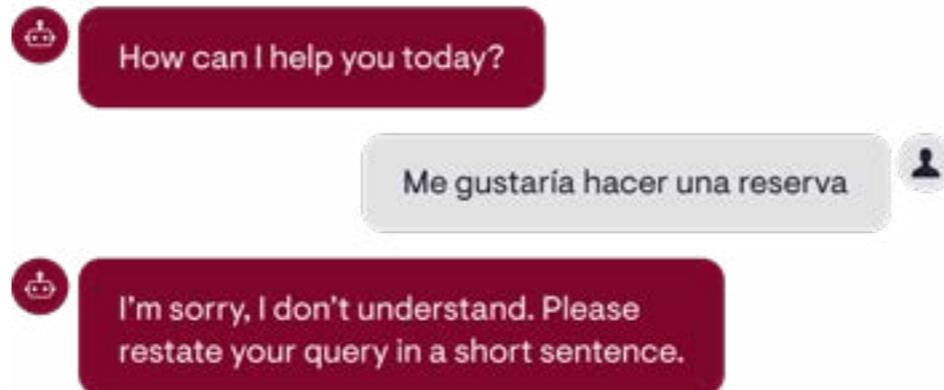
Impact: Reduce customer frustration with smooth, natural conversations.

Multilingual Capabilities

If your customer base is multilingual, your voice assistant should be too. This creates a superhuman customer experience that allows for consistency and inclusivity across multiple languages. A great multilingual voice assistant can intelligently pick up what language a customer is speaking, and respond in that language.

A BAD VOICE ASSISTANT

Forces customers to speak its' programmed language



A GREAT VOICE ASSISTANT

Can detect and speak different languages



Impact: Give a consistent customer experience across all languages, and add new languages quickly and easily.



Conversational Quality Checklist

When comparing voice assistant technologies, you should ask the following questions.

Can the voice assistant:

- Understand synonyms?
- Understand turns-of-phrase?
- Understand different accents?
- Handle multiple intents?
- Handle multiple values given at once?
- Handle a combination of values and intents?
- Allow for digressions/clarifying questions?
- Ask clarifying questions?
- Sound natural?
- Understand and speak multiple languages?

A great voice assistant should tick all of these boxes to avoid failing at any stage of the conversation.

Talk to an Expert

Talk to us to find out more about how PolyAI can help your restaurant implement a sophisticated voice assistant that delivers superhuman customer experiences.

In an initial meeting with you, we might discuss:

1. What calls a voice assistant can handle for your restaurant
2. A comparison of the different platforms available for building a voice assistant
3. How to build a successful voice assistant with minimal data
4. How to capture your brand's identity in the voice channel
5. How to build a voice assistant that understands any accent
6. How to port your voice assistant into all the languages spoken by your customers

[Request a Demo](#)

