1-800-TAXI-USA Uses Plum Voice IVR to Build a Complete Communications Suite

About

1-800-TAXI-USA is a transportation company specializing in connecting people with reliable, friendly, and locally-owned taxi services across the United States. Users can access 1-800-TAXI-USA's database via the web, telephone, or mobile app, streamlining the process of hailing a cab. 1-800-TAXI-USA is headquartered in Berkeley, CA.

1-800-TAXI-USA uses Plum Voice to connect users with taxi companies across the country. Plum's cloud IVR platform allowed 1-800-TAXI-USA to build its communications suite and easily handle thousands of calls per month, resulting in less manual work and greater automation.

1-800-TAXI-USA operates a nationwide taxi referral network that is composed of locally owned and operated, independent taxi companies. Customers can call 1-800-TAXI-USA and the company's interactive voice response (IVR) application will use automatic number identification (ANI), which is analogous to caller id, to locate where that caller is. Callers can confirm their location based on the ANI results or manually enter a different location by speaking the city and state of their current location, or entering a zip code. Upon confirming where the caller is located, the application automatically transfers them to a taxi company in the area.

The Challenge

When 1-800-TAXI-USA owner David Cardell started his company in 2004 he knew that he needed to automate many of their company's most frequent calls because manually fielding calls and relying solely on the web was not a viable long-term solution. With a strong customer-centric focus, 1-800-TAXI-USA made customer experience a priority. As a result, the company sought to improve the convenience it provided to customers who used the phone as the primary means to access their service.

After obtaining bids from four different companies, Cardell chose Plum Voice for his IVR solution, highlighting "the quality of the account managers, the close attention the IVR development team paid to our project, scalability, and price" as the primary factors driving his decision. Not only did Plum offer a great product and service, but all of the other bids were more than 50% higher than Plum's. Therefore, the cost to build, deploy, and operate a Plum system was the best option, and one that fit the budget of a new startup and left enough flexibility to allow the company to expand quickly.

The Solution

Following the selection process, when it came to actually using the Plum DEV platform, 1-800-TAXI-USA availed itself of Plum's professional services. This made the entire development process very easy and 1-800-TAXI-USA ended up with a fully customized IVR application built by Plum's experts. "The support team handled everything from the planning stages, to writing and editing code, to voice talent recording," Cardell remarked. The time to deployment was also amenable to the 1-800-TAXI-USA team, as they were up-and-running with their system in about three months, which Cardell noted was "pretty quick."

After using Plum for several years, Cardell revealed that his favorite aspect of Plum's technology is the use of industry standard VoiceXML code, which is important when the need arises to go into the backend to make changes.

"They don't insist on using their own proprietary code, like some companies do. So this means our application is fully adaptable and portable," he said. This portability means that 1-800-TAXI-USA can host their application on any VoiceXML supported hosting service of their choosing.

"Plum offers great products, great support, and great prices."

David Cardell, *Owner 1-800-TAXI-USA*

Another key aspect to 1-800-TAXI-USA's satisfaction with Plum is their support team. "The 24/7 technical support is good and always very quick and responsive," raved Cardell. "When the VoiceXML coding standard got upgraded several years ago, Plum came in and updated everything to get it up to standard. They did it for free and didn't need any handholding while they did it."

The Results

1-800-TAXI-USA receives thousands of phone calls every month. Once the IVR application was up and running it significantly reduced the company's reliance on manual processes and ushered in a new regime of automation. Using the VoiceTrends analytics toolset, the company is able to track important performance metrics, like the call transfer ratio and the absolute number of call transfers that occur. This is an important statistic, because the transfer rate functions like an inverted bounce rate on a web page. The more calls the company is transferring to their clients, the better it is for their business.

The 1-800-TAXI-USA team also integrated their IVR application with their website and mobile application, TaxiMobile, rounding out the company's full distribution suite: "Anytime we make a change to our databases on the web or mobile app, those changes are automatically picked up by the IVR platform because it's continuously communicating in real-time with our servers. This has provided incalculable benefits by reducing our time to deployment and improving our ability to pivot quickly to serve the fast-changing taxi market."

Because Plum handled all of 1-800-TAXI-USA's project development, the company was able to direct more resources towards its own business development without having to worry about the minutiae of coding, debugging, and other software-centric tasks. "Plum made it easy for us because we could focus on building our client-base of local small-to-medium sized taxi companies while the IVR development team took care of the rest," Cardell stated. "This helped us to ramp-up quickly and saved tens-of-thousands of dollars in development time. Also, this focus on establishing a foothold in the taxi market was integral in our efforts to acquire venture financing."