

# IVR Persona Design

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## Introduction and Overview

This document is one of a series of white papers prepared by Enterprise Integration Group (EIG) to help clients understand methods and processes. EIG is a leading provider of design and evaluation products that deliver superior customer self-service solutions to the enterprise.

### What is persona design?

All Speech and Touchtone applications exhibit a persona – the perceived personality of the application. The usability of the application influences that perception, along with factors such as voice quality, gender, tone of voice, wording, audio effects and ambient music.

The EIG Persona development process is designed to help develop requirements for an IVR persona. The result is a design for the desired persona - ready for use by user-interface designers, voice talents, and studio professionals.

### Who needs persona design?

Persona design is no substitute for a well-designed IVR application. However, for organizations where customer satisfaction and brand are high on the agenda, persona development complements the normal process of usability engineering for IVR.

## Methodology

### The persona discovery process

At the core of the EIG Persona Design is a consensus-based discovery process. This is a structured face-to-face workshop, facilitated by an EIG consultant. The goal is to gather subjective and objective data from key stakeholders.

The workshop falls into three key sessions:

1. **Strategic requirements.** This session establishes a consensus on the strategic requirements of the persona. These include key brand issues, marketing associations, and customer demographics.
2. **Subjective Data Gathering.** This session gathers together subjective opinions regarding the IVR persona. These include likes and dislikes of any current IVR, what constitutes an exemplary agent, and the social roles of the IVR.
3. **Objective Data Gathering.** This final session uses novel extensions to well-established techniques from the psychology community to gather raw data from the group as a whole. A Myers-Briggs questionnaire for the desired IVR personality administered. This is followed by a group ranking process which places the persona along four new personality dimensions developed specifically by EIG for this task.

## The persona design

The results from the persona discovery process are then analyzed by EIG and presented back to the stakeholders along with a design for the persona. The design is layered as follows:

**Vocal attributes:** Gender, Approximate age, Fundamental frequency, Accent group,

**Vocal style:** Prosodic range, Speaker rate, Degree of 'smile' etc.

**Dialogue style:** Speech vs. Touchtone, mixed-initiative, directed dialogue, spontaneous. Turn-taking attitude (silence rations, aggressive, versus passive).

**Scripting style:** Grounding phrases (e.g. 'ok', 'got it!') and Discourse markers (e.g. 'lets get started'). Recommended narrative voice for questioning and error-recovery prompts. Formal versus informal scripting – including use of jargon and slang.

**Personification:** Appropriate use of self-referential prompts, choice of pronouns (first/third person), Degrees of self-deprecation and humor.

**Sound-scape:** Use of tones, ambient music and sound effects.

This design may then be used to realize the persona in your IVR.

## Realizing the persona

The persona design provides an input to the following IVR development activities – voice talent selection, dialogue design and scripting, voice talent coaching and recording session, sound-scape generation.

These activities may be take place in your organization, or you may want expert assistance from EIG to realize the persona design on your behalf.

## Timing

The persona design process will typically take approximately two weeks from the persona discovery workshop to the presentation of the persona design.