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Cyara Automated IVR Testing for Contact Center ROI

See how Cyara's AI-powered automation cuts IVR testing time by up to 90% and shortens release cycles by half, driving stronger ROI.

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Automated IVR Testing for Contact Center ROI

How AI-powered automation reduces IVR testing time by up to 90% and cuts release cycles in half

Introduction

What does an “exceptional” customer experience look like to your organization?

From IVR systems to conversational AI-driven chatbots, to whatever the next evolution in contact center technology might be, delivering flawless CX requires your contact center’s many interrelated systems and channels to work in harmony. For example, your IVR and digital self-service channels must meet strict quality standards, provide the right responses, and direct customers to the correct solutions to their queries. In addition, your agents must be receptive, empathetic, and able to offer efficient resolutions. At the end of the day, your goal is to ensure that your customers leave the interaction with a sense of satisfaction and relief, confident that their question has been fully answered.

Unfortunately, this is much easier said than done. Even in the best of cases, there are many factors that can still lead to disaster. Maybe that’s why, while 87% of companies say they are providing excellent CX, **only 11% of customers agree**.[1]

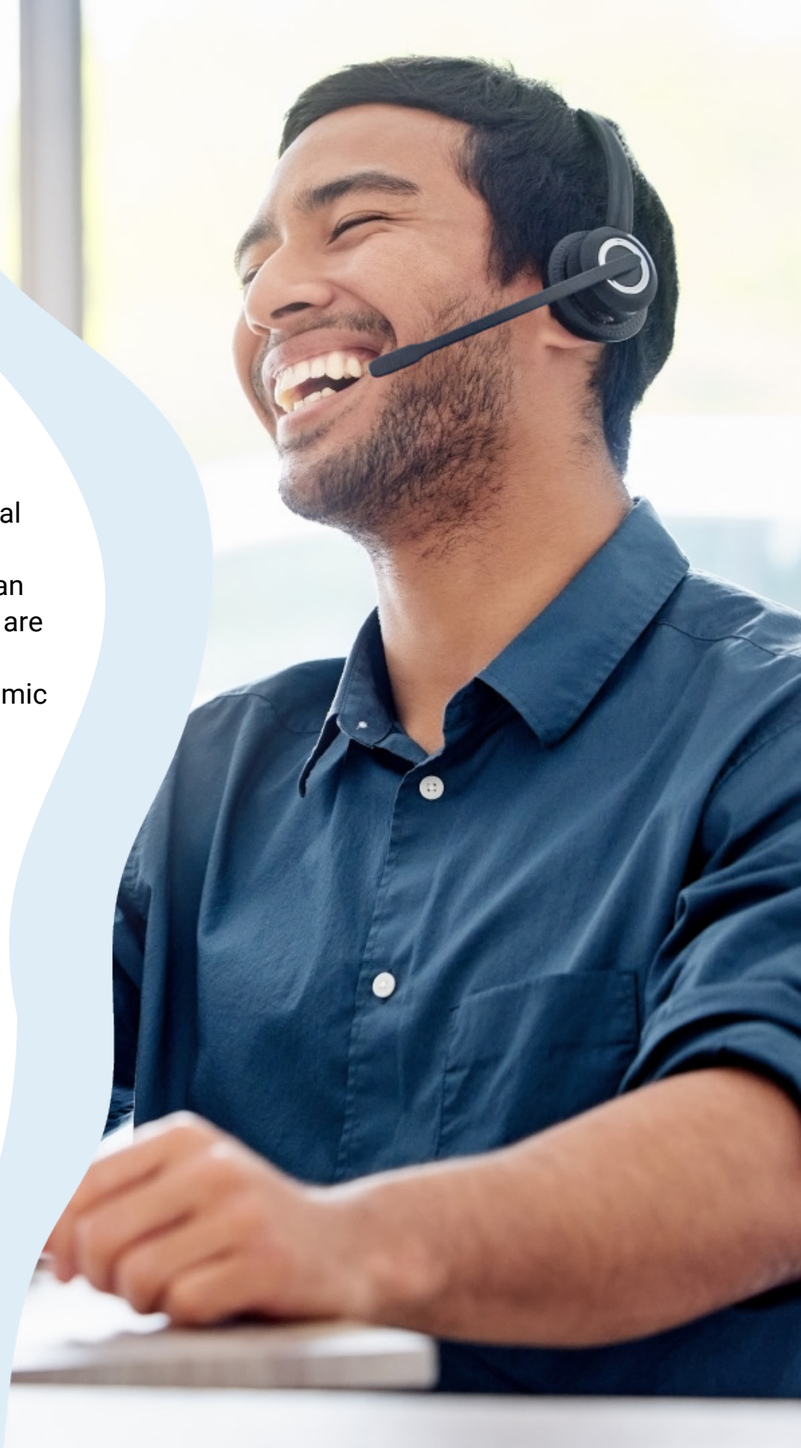
Your contact center’s IVR rests at the heart of the matter. IVRs are a key component in your CX strategy, serving at the front line of almost every customer interaction. These automated, input-driven systems can handle high volumes of self-service tasks and are responsible for minimizing unnecessary agent interactions by providing customers with answers to simple questions.

The benefits of implementing IVRs are well documented, from improving call containment to providing substantial cost savings. Yet, despite these advantages—and even after decades of functional IVR improvements—**60% of customer state that they would rather bypass the IVR entirely to connect with a live agent right away**.[2] The only question is, why? Is your IVR to blame, or is it something else?

We’ll go ahead and say it: It’s not the IVR’s fault.

Instead, it’s the contrary. With today’s conversational AI continuing to evolve, IVR technology is better than ever, offering more benefits by the day. Amid an increasingly competitive business landscape, IVRs are essential to stand out from the competition and to protect your contact center during uncertain economic times.[3]

An IVR on its own simply can’t deliver great CX at scale. IVRs interacts with many other systems such as agent routing, CRM, financial systems, and the agent desktop in a complex web of technology. But how can you be sure that each aspect of your contact center’s infrastructure is working together as designed? Without a comprehensive testing plan to support it, your IVR is destined to fall short of expectations. At the end of the day, your IVR is only as good as your testing solution. With the right tools, you can set your IVR up for maximum efficiency and scalability, factors that any recession-ready contact center would place at a premium.



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Let's explore why contact center IVR testing must be automated, the demands these systems bring, types of failures that manual process can cause, and how you can maximize your IVR's potential with automation.

Chapter 1:
Is Your IVR Putting a Hidden Strain on IT Resources?

IVR systems are designed to lessen the burden on contact centers. An effective IVR should be able to ease the strain on resources and make it easier for your agents to deliver exceptional CX.

Your IVR should be able to:

- Meet customer expectations for self-service: Studies show that approximately 70% of customers want to resolve issues on their own.[4] So, your IVR must empower self-service when handling simple issues, such as checking a bank balance or reviewing the status of an insurance claim.
- Improve agent experience: By cutting down the number of calls funneled to agents, IVRs can reduce wait times and improve CX. This means callers who do connect with agents will be less frustrated and more patient with agents.
- Reduce contact center costs: Depending on your industry and the complexity of customer requests, IVR-handled calls cost significantly less when compared to calls handled by a live agent.[5]

Altogether, IVRs provide many significant improvements or contact centers. However, for your IVRs to deliver on these promises, your systems must work well. While most customer service managers and representatives seek reliability in their tech stack, ensuring consistent performance requires constant testing and monitoring—and that's where it gets messy.

The Testing Demands of an IVR System

Imagine testing an IVR system for a major international brand. This company has customers all over the world and must manage thousands of phone lines across hundreds of markets and regions. Those lines must be kept updated with accurate mapping, up-to-date call menus, and current scripts. Each region may have different call volume demands and self-service requirements. For this company, consistent CX requires frequent updates to the IVR system and continuous testing and monitoring to ensure those updates run smoothly.

As any contact center manager knows, these tests aren't simple or quick one-offs. They run the gamut from unit, regression, and user acceptance testing to major volume, extended-time soak, and heavy-load stress tests.

Running even a fraction of these tests manually calls for an extensive amount of IT labor. Each test call requires that a team member manually calls in and follows a test script, dialing through menu options to log customer journeys. It may even take multiple calls to receive a complete picture. If your team identifies an issue, you must set aside additional time to log and report every step of the process. This doesn't even include the resource demands of monitoring the live environment for problems. When put together, it's virtually impossible to complete all this manual testing—at least to any meaningful extent.

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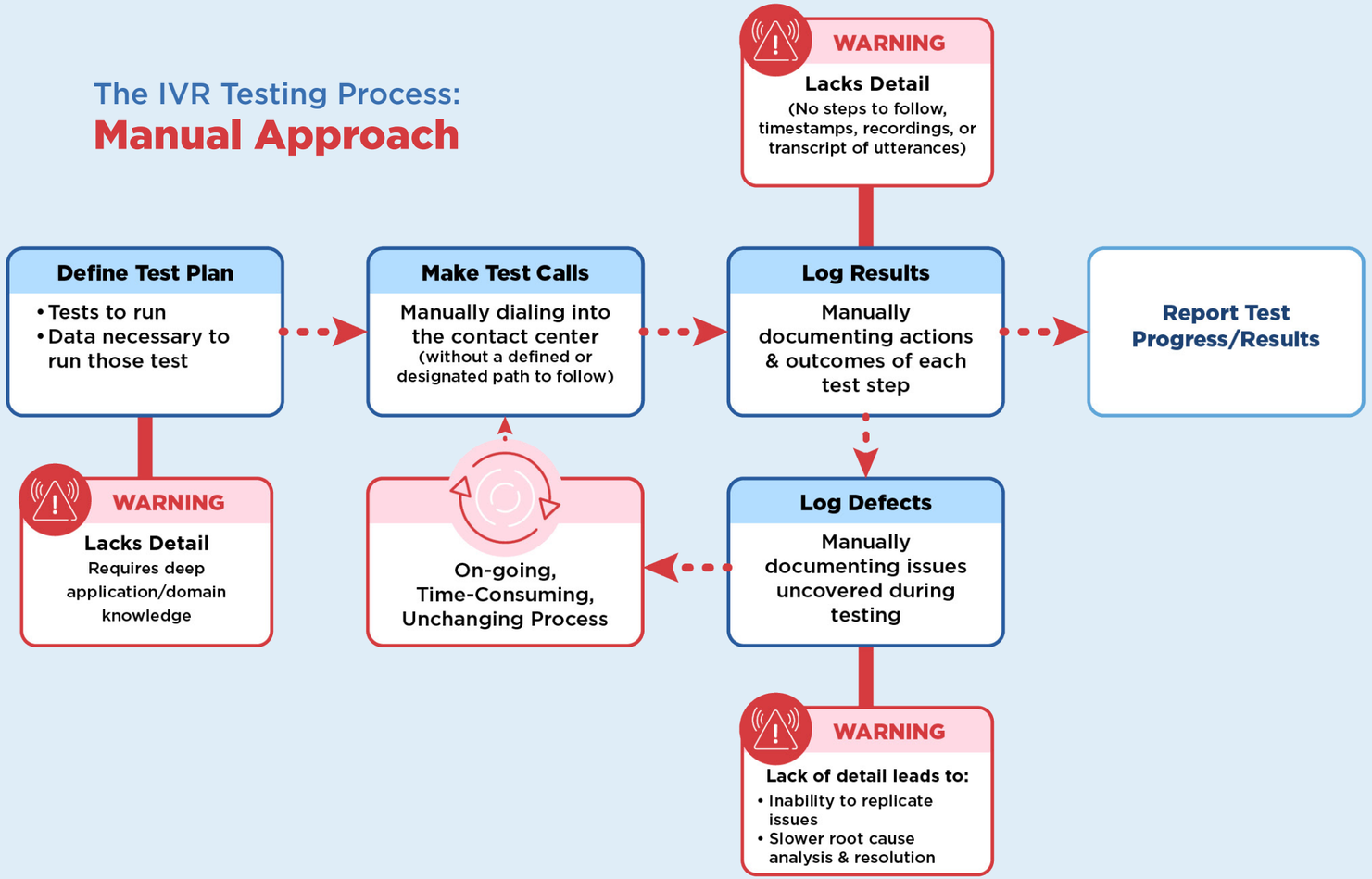
Contact centers that rely on manual processes for their IVRs are forced to settle for executing only a fraction of the required tests, which can lead to many severe issues further down the line. Allowing an error to escape into production will inevitably lead to other CX problems including dropped calls, poor call routing, ineffective menus, and more. And these CX failures aren't just bad for your NPS score—they reduce your sales, damage your brand reputation, and erode customer confidence. They also drain your team's resources by forcing you to prioritize IVR fixes over other important initiatives.

For one Cyara customer, this reliance on manual IVR testing led to what they called the "Monday morning dread." As a CX-focused insurance provider, team members would come in after a weekend update with gritted teeth, prepared to deal with outages and other significant service failures, simply because they weren't able to perform adequate testing prior to the release. This led to frequent delays, increased frustration from the team and customers, and significant damage to their CX.

This type of result drains your IVR's potential and makes your entire team—including customer service agents and IT staff—ineffective and inefficient. To truly understand the damage of deploying IVR without automated testing, though, we need to delve deeper into the CX setbacks it creates.



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Chapter 2:

IVR Without Automated Testing: A Missed Opportunity

An effective IVR system is complex and contains many layers. When designing the system, you must think through every potential customer issue and journey, then create menus and scripts to account for each possibility. Then, IT must write the correct code to ensure that your system functions as desired based on customer feedback. Throughout the entire development process, there are infinite possibilities for mistakes.

We've all experienced CX failures from the customer perspective. Perhaps you've called and followed a menu, only to wind up at a dead end with no way to get back. Or you've experienced jarring volume or voice changes in different menus. Other common issues include low quality audio recordings that are difficult to understand, unorganized menus, or difficulties getting through to an agent.

Whether these defects are rooted in poor IVR design or software malfunctions, they all lead to poor customer service and frustration. Regardless of the source, it's up to you to discover and rectify the problem before your customers are impacted.

> ***"You don't know whether it's been going on for an hour, two hours, days, or longer, and you have no idea how many customers may have been affected by it."***
>
> — Philip Moore, Operations and OSS Manager, One New Zealand

The Cost of the Unknown

One New Zealand, a major telecom provider in New Zealand and Cyara customer, learned the cost of IVR malfunctions during its transition to the cloud. While testing prior to the migration, One New Zealand discovered that one of its IVRs was experiencing a hidden error. Though the IVR was answering calls, it was delivering incorrect answers, with no indication of how long this had been going on. By leveraging Cyara's live monitoring tools, Vondafone was able to identify and issue a solution moving forward, but there was no telling what had already been lost.

This is just one example that highlights the ultimate cost of manually testing your IVRs. Despite your best efforts, you simply don't know what type of issues may be lurking under the surface. Because you can't keep up with the required testing, your infrastructure remains unprotected against potential risks.

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Every $1,000 you invest in automated testing now could save you $9,000 in correcting CX failures later

The Cost of Remaining Reactive

Even worse, you may only become aware of issues after a customer has filed a complaint regarding an incident. In these cases, you can only react to the issue after your customer relationship has already been damaged, rather than proactively mitigating the problem.

Maintaining a reactive approach comes at a much steeper price than taking on a proactive stance. One of the best ways to illustrate this is with the 1-10-100 rule. Simply put, this rule highlights the true cost of fixing errors and inaction during the development process, with the cost rising exponentially the longer it takes to catch the defect. If you catch an error preemptively in design, it doesn't cost your organization anything to fix. However, if the error escapes into QA, the cost rises, and so on, with errors in production costing the most to rectify.

Based on the 1-10-100 rule, every problem you fix in production costs 10 times what it would have cost to fix in the testing phase. This means that for every $1,000 you invest in automated testing, you're saving $9,000 by avoiding costly CX issues down the line. This can be quantified in several areas, such as avoiding lost revenue from CX failures, optimizing your agents' time, and recovering IT resources that would have been spent manually determining the root cause of CX defects.

When you consider the costs of manual vs. automated testing in these terms, the choice seems clear.

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Chapter 3:

Unlock Your IVR's Potential with Automated Testing Solutions

While your IVRs are critical to your contact center's success, they simply cannot deliver quality CX without the addition of automatic testing.

Let's return to One New Zealand as an example once again. Discovering the hidden defect was only one of the benefits that automated testing and monitoring provided. By leveraging Cyara's award-winning CX Transformation Platform, One New Zealand reduced the time necessary to identify and report IVR issues. As opposed to a time-consuming, multi-step process to manually flag the defect and notify the right person, Cyara's solutions use API integrations to send automated alerts whenever your CX might be at risk.

These alerts come through immediately as an issue occurs, allowing One New Zealand to address the defect right away rather than waiting for disaster to strike. This proactive approach has proven even more valuable to One New Zealand's success as they cater to customers dealing with sensitive data in the government and financial sectors.

This outcome is common for Cyara customers and is a direct reflection of the benefit of automatically testing and monitoring your IVRs. By moving away from manual procedures, contact centers are empowered to engage in comprehensive testing and accelerate issue identification and remediation.

Increasing Scope with Automated Testing

Let's look at another example to illustrate how Cyara allows you to make the most of your IVR's capabilities with automated testing.

The process begins with a defined testing plan. Instead of having your team members manually crawl each test path for breakpoints or hidden defects, the automated test works in the background to capture all the details that you'll need to improve your overall CX.

The solution logs data about the call, including any present errors, and documents each step so that you can forward the relevant details to your team. You'll receive a notification if a defect is present, thereby accelerating your root cause analysis and troubleshooting. These tests are also easily repeatable, allowing you to run the same test script again and

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again to verify that your changes have been accurate and that the defects have been effectively resolved.

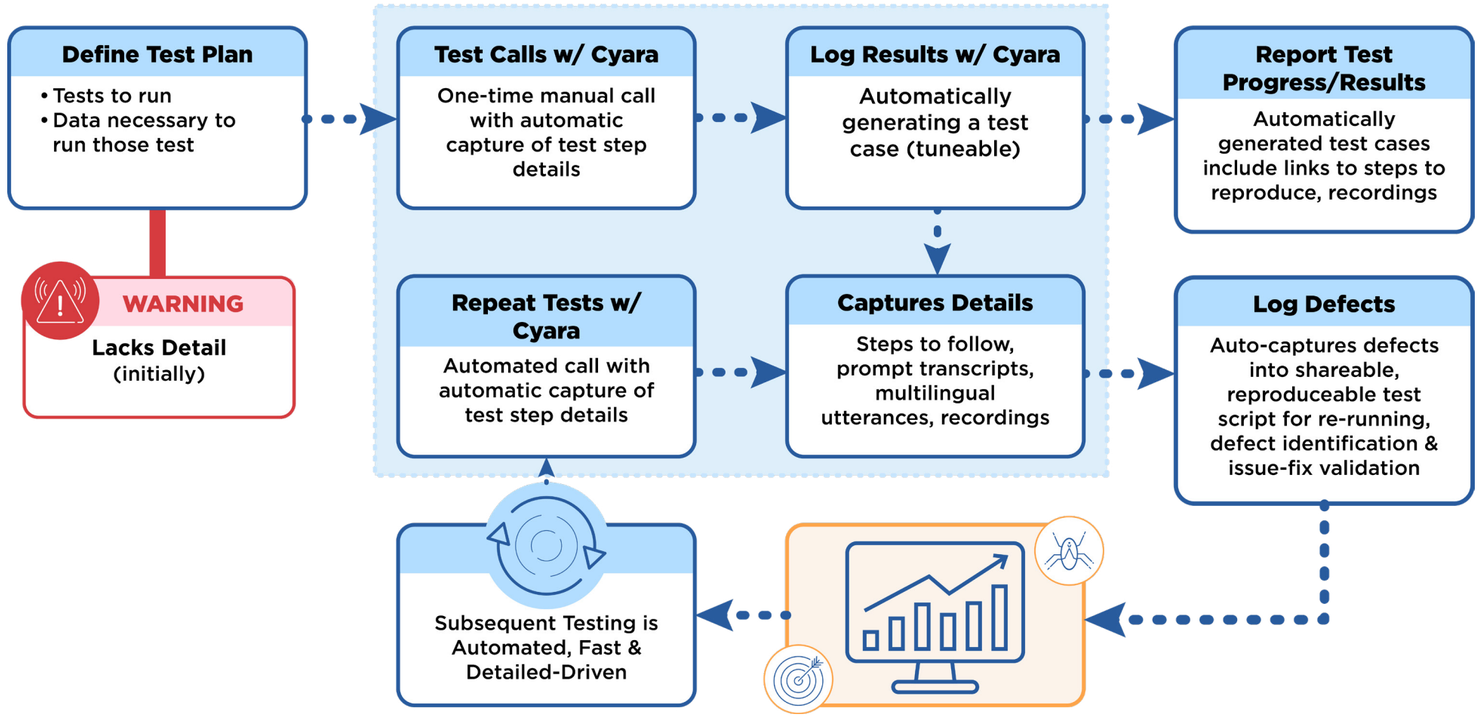
Wheras manual processes can take hours to test and fix a single journey, automated tests are completed in a fraction of the time. And this is vital to helping you expand the scope of your testing.

While speed is a benefit entirely on its own, the drain of time-consuming manual tests holds your CX back and keeps you from assuring quality. With manual tests, there simply isn't enough time to verify that every path is performing flawlessly. There may be errors waiiting just under the surface, but remain undiscovered because time contraints forced you to cut your testing short.

By contrast, automated testing increases the scope of your testing, so that you can confirm performance in every layer of your CX infrastructure. Additionally, when you roll out another update or add another journey, automated regression tests can help you test 100% of your CX and eliminate any defects from escaping into production. From design to updates in your live environment, you can be confident that you're reducing potential risks and that you haven't introduced any new bugs that will cause problems later on.

And, in short, expanding your testing scope allows you to assure quality and make the most of your IVRs.

The IVR Testing Process:
Automated Approach



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The ROI of Automated IVR Testing

One New Zealand NZ isn't the only company to benefit from Cyara's streamlined, automated, and continuous testing solutions. A major Canandian bank, for example, used the data-driven insights from Cyara's platform to feed its machine learning (ML) modules and identify issues faster than ever before.

Automation is about much more than fixing one defect—it's about propelling your CX and capitalizing on your potential. When you can catch and correct issues ahead of customer impact, you'll discover the difference by eliminating the laundry list of nuisances that diminish your brand reputation and customer loyalty. When you invest in automated solutions, it's easy to address information inaccuracies, voice and volume inconsistencies, poor-quality recordings, and much more. These subtle improvements quickly add up to reduce churn and set your brand apart from the competition.

The benefits aren't merely abstract or anecdotal, nor are they limited to customer interactions—the numbers speak for themselves.

In 2023, Forrester™ interviewed Cyara customers to determine the Total Economic Impact™ (TEI) and net benefits of Cyara's automated testing solutions. The analysis uncovered several key insights, such as:

- Cyara customers reduced IVR testing time by 90%
- Contact centers released IVR updates 50% faster
- Customers received a 334% ROI payback in less than six months

When put together, it's clear that the rewards of automatic testing go far beyond simple cost savings. Automatic testing solutions are a investment that bear significant returns and will help your brand stand out achieve long-term CX success. Regardless of what may come next, you can ensure that your contact center is prepared to weather the storm and scale your IVRs with automated testing services.

Outcomes Realized by
Cyara Customers

Businesses reduced IVR testing time by 90%

Contact centers released IVR updates 50% faster

Customers received a 334% ROI payback in less than six months

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Conclusion

Automated Testing Is Essential, So What's Holding You Back?

With automated testing in place, you're able to scale up your IVR's potential and improve your contact center's ability to provide exceptional customer journeys.

It's time to eliminate costly and time-consuming manual processes that are putting a drain on your testing labor and reducing your IVR's efficiency. Automation paves the way for you to avoid costly downtime, assure CX quality, and significantly scale up your contact center's reach. In today's business landscape, these benefits are more than a nice add-on; they're necessary to propel your business forward.

This raises a fair question—if automation is so easy and provides so many clear benefits, then why isn't everyone doing it? One reason may be the belief that integrating automated solutions is difficult. Although automation yields smoother, more streamlined processes in the long run, it requires some initial change management and work on the front end to make the transition. Contact centers may stumble in the early stages to build test cases that can be used for automated tests.

But this doesn't need to be the case. Cyara's platform is specially designed to remove this roadblock. Our AI-Led CX Transformation Platform allows you to automate from the outset, including the creation of your test cases. Effortlessly build out our tests, run them, and document everything automatically, all from one initial test call. When you partner with Cyara, it couldn't be easier to get started.

Footnotes:

1 Businesswire. "87 percent of companies state they provide excellent CX, only 11 percent of customers agree." Jan. 25, 2022.
2 NICE. "Is Your Self-Service IVR as Effective as it Could Be?"
3 The Conference Board. "The Conference Board Economic Forecast for the US Economy." Aug. 10, 2022.
4 Zendesk. "Zendesk Customer Experience Trends Report 2023." 2023.
5 DMG Consulting. "IVR Optimization Improves Service and Reduces Costs." April 25, 2017.

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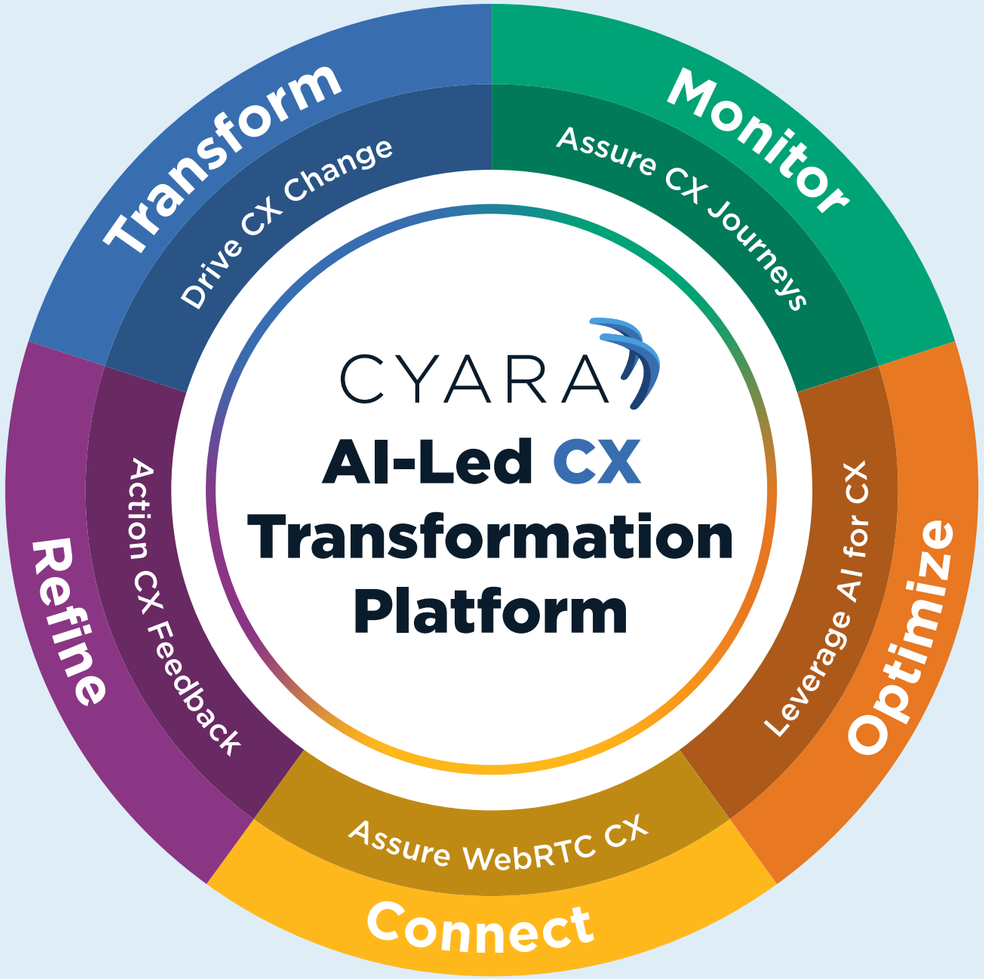

AI-Led CX Transformation Platform

Assure Journeys. Transform Experiences.

Are you ready to accelerate your IVR's ROI potential?

Don't rely on manual testing any longer. Request a demo to learn how you can unleash your IVR potential with automated testing solutions.

Visit cyara.com/demo

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