

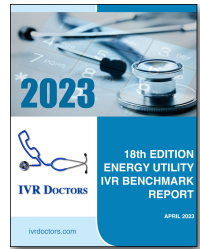


2023 Energy Utility IVR Benchmark Report — & — A Natural Language Road Map to Success

With special guest “high performing IVR”
energy utility speakers!

October 25, 2023

Today's webinar, in three sections...



2023 “Balanced” Companies



Rating Category Winners

Participant-only Special Offers

**Success
Stories**

**Special Guests:
Sherron Stevenson (Hydro One)
and Darius Lepp (LG&E-KU)**

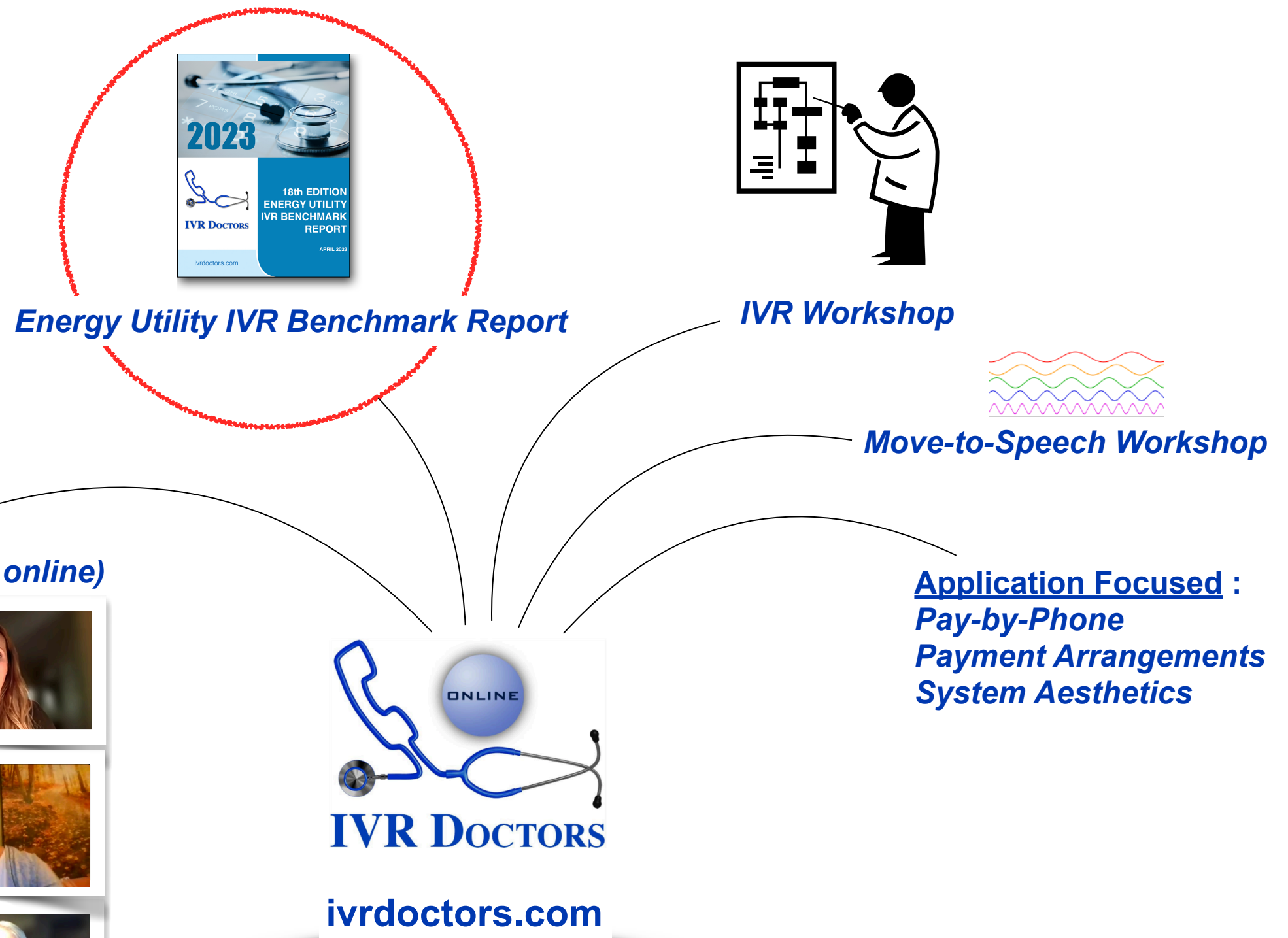


**A Natural Language Road Map to Success...
a NEW PARADIGM to consider**

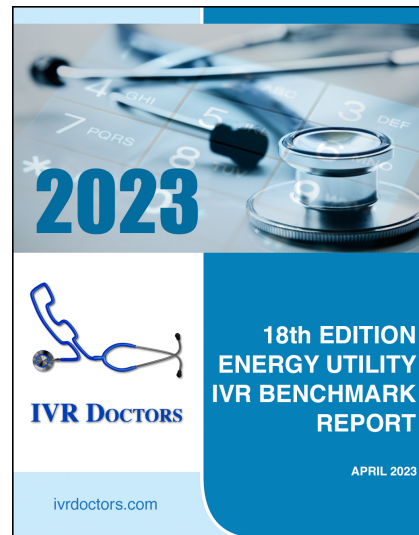
Chat follow-up and Q & A



The Energy Utility IVR Benchmark Report is just one of IVR Doctors' IVR Improvement Services.



For today's Webinar participants...



The Benchmark Report
regular price of
~~\$995~~ (IOUs) / ~~\$495~~ (Munis/Coops)
is now discounted for today's
Webinar-participant utility companies
at the Special Webinar Price
of **\$295 - if purchased by Oct. 31.***

Report buyers get 100 IVRs':

- Overall ratings and rankings
- Ratings and rankings in Functionality, Usability, and Aesthetics
- 100 Main Menus and telephone numbers
- Detailed menu design tips
- *plus* a 90-minute, custom consultation on your own IVR, with "low hanging fruit" suggestions targeted toward increased self-service containment and caller satisfaction improvement. (Prior '23 Report purchasers will receive a 30-minute session in the next 90 days.)



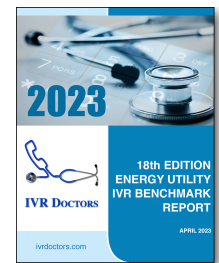
**\$5,000 off an IVR Workshop
or Usability Test
if committed to by the end
of Q1 2024,
and completed in 2024.**



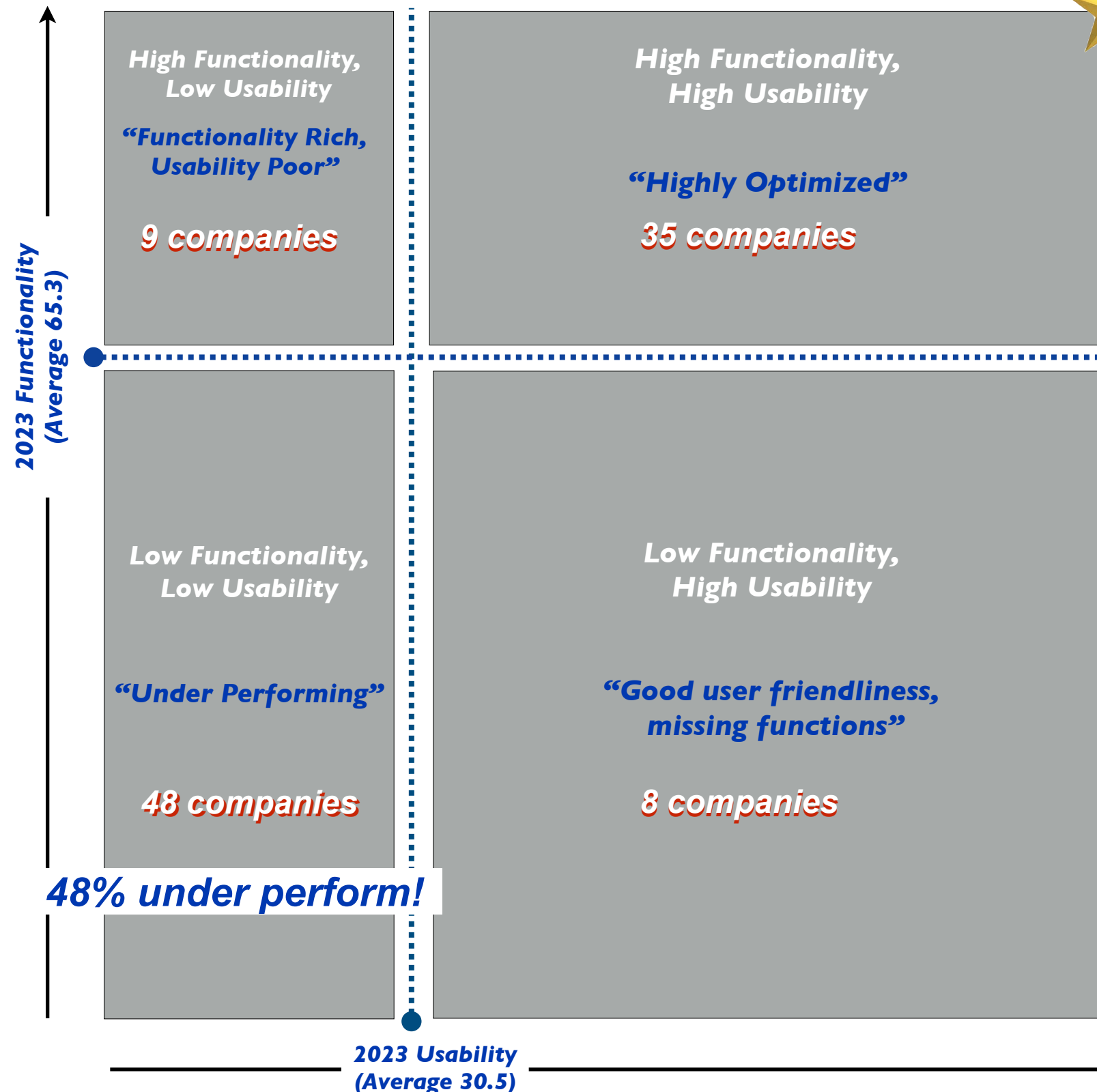


How do the 100 IVRs in the 2023 Report Score on Functionality & Usability?

Everyone wants the gold star position.



Find out where your IVR places!



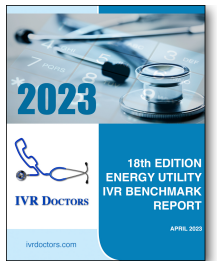
Aesthetics Key

- Top Quartile
- 2nd Quartile
- 3rd Quartile
- 4th Quartile





2023's "Balanced" IVR Companies prove it's not out of reach to achieve excellence in all categories



2023 Gold Stethoscope Winners!

11 companies' IVRs were rated in the Top Quartile in Functionality, Usability, and Aesthetics.

Alabama Power



Nova Scotia Power



Entergy



Ozarks Electric Cooperative



Idaho Power



UGI Utilities



Kentucky Utilities - ODP
LG&E



Versant Power



Lee County
Electric Cooperative



Xcel Energy





2023 Gold Stethoscope Category Winners!

Top Rated System - Overall
Top U.S. Electric-only Utility
Top Touchtone Only System
Tops in Aesthetics

Versant Power



Top Canadian Utility
Top Canadian Electric Utility

Nova Scotia Power



Top U.S. Combination Utility

MidAmerican Energy



Top Electric Cooperative

Lee County Electric



Top Gas-only Utility

SoCalGas



Top Municipal Utility

Tacoma Public Utilities



Top "Press or Say" System
Tops in Usability

Idaho Power



Tops in Functionality

NV Energy





Success Stories







October 25th, 2023

Hydro One IVR Journey



Hydro One's IVR

Hydro One IVR manages approximately 2 million calls a year.

The IVR is bilingual with French and English and is offered in DTMF as well as directed speech options.

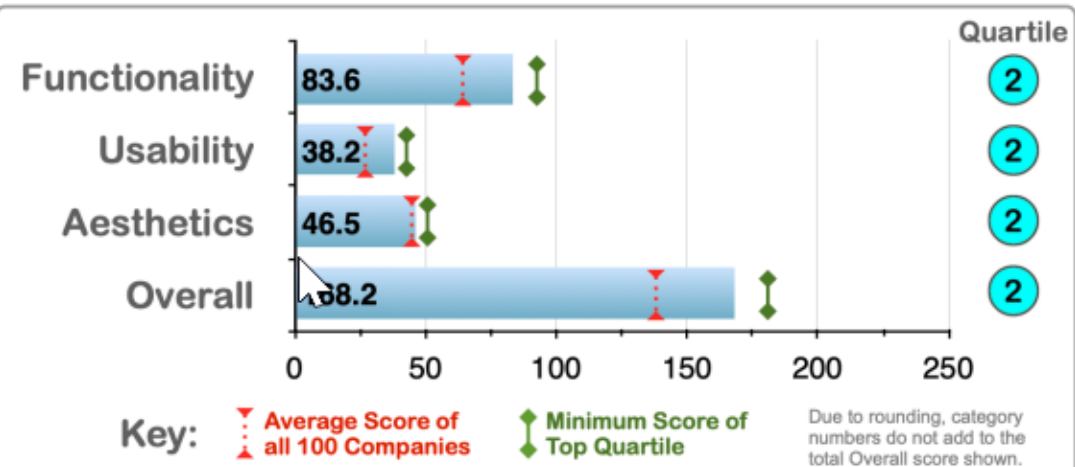
The IVR offers self service features such as Account Balance, Meter Reading, Outage reporting and Estimated time of restoration, Paperless billing

Fall of 2020, we implemented a brand new IVR call flow on a new Genesys platform.

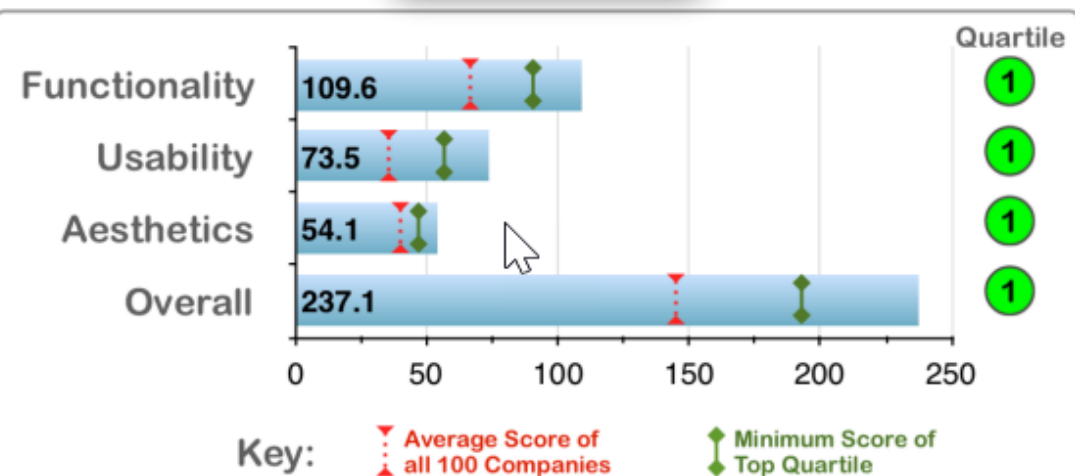
We saw a slight decline in customer satisfaction through our customer surveys as well as our speech analytics tool.

Hydro One's attention to the menus, call flow design, and system metrics has always been a critical element in ongoing overall caller satisfaction.

2021



2018



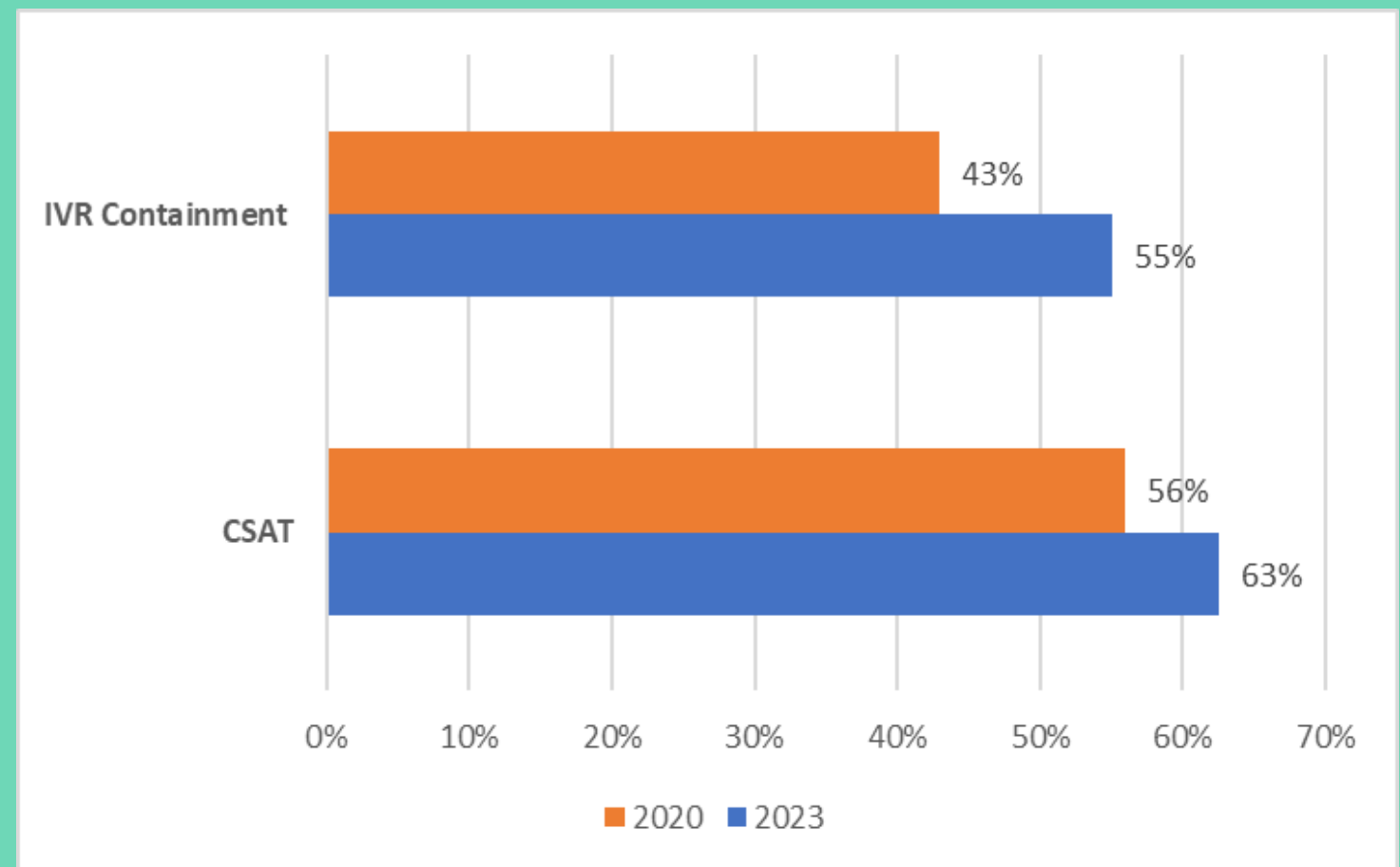
2021 – A benchmarking exercise and workshop was completed by the IVR Doctors that reinforced that the overall functionality, usability and aesthetics of the Hydro One IVR had declined compared to previous years after the deployment of our new IVR call flow.

We are on the Right Track.....



2022 – IVR Recommendations were implemented:

- Various menu enhancements
- Consistent wording in all menus
- Removed lengthy upfront messaging & shortened menus
- Ensured consistent pausing/pacing between all options



Hydro One Rebounded in 2023



March 2023 – IVR

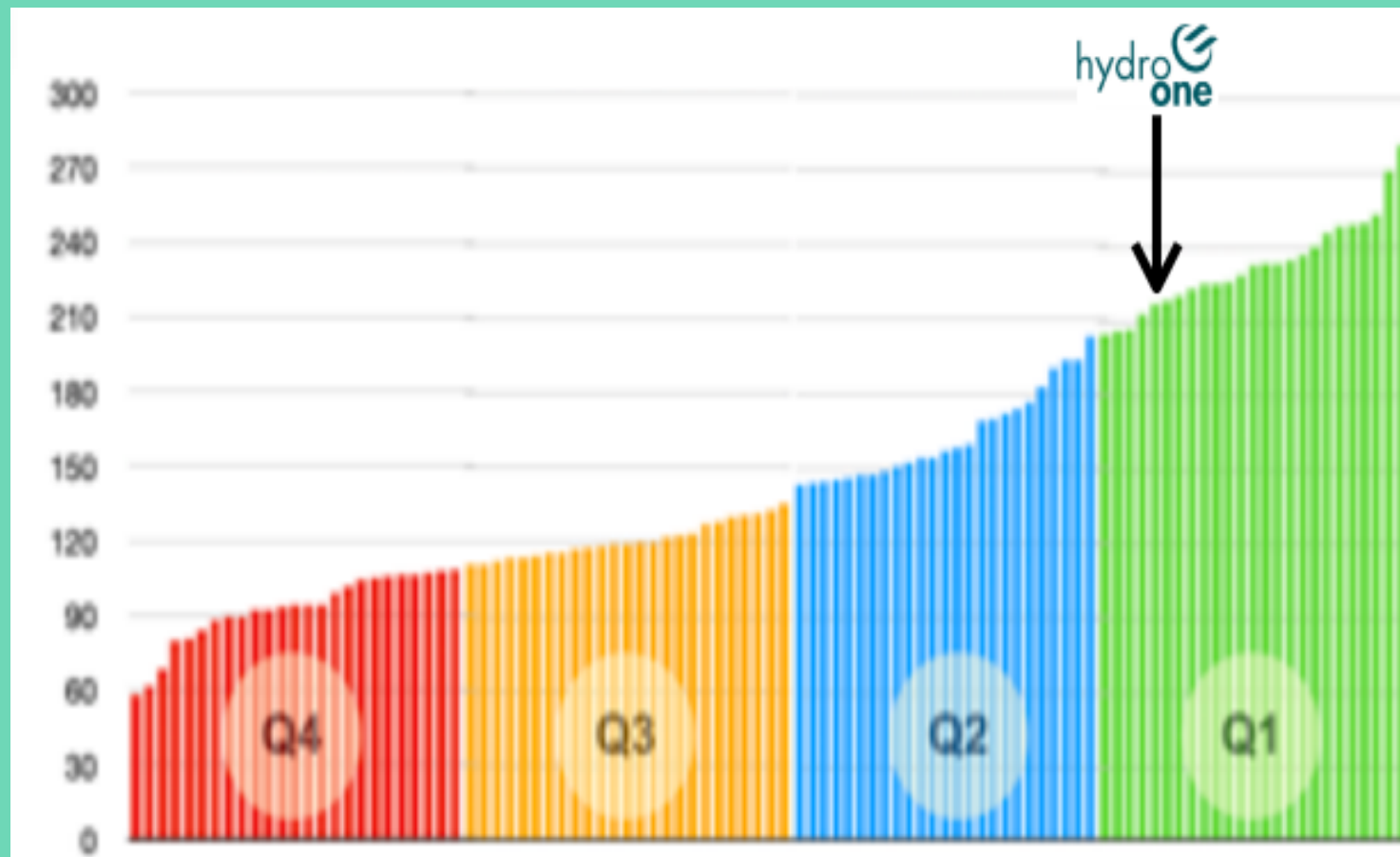
Doctors did a deep dive into the IVR and benchmarked the most recent changes to the top quartile of IVRs.



We still have room for improvement though!!!



June 2023- Using a Canadian recruiting firm, we engaged Hydro One customers to complete 61 role plays with the IVR Doctors through Zoom to get to their honest feedback on call flow recommendations and the usability of the Hydro One IVR.





Thank you!





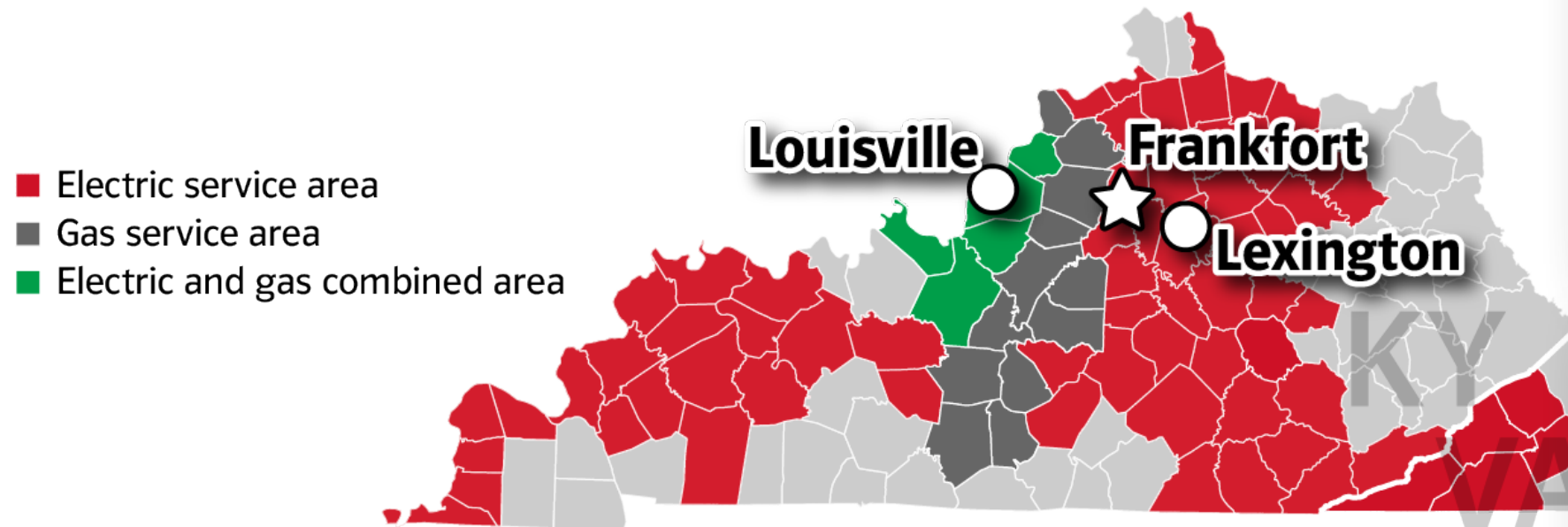
Focus on Customer Experience



LGE and KU's IVR



LG&E and KU overview



Louisville Gas and Electric

- Serving Louisville and 16 surrounding counties
- 429,000 electric customers
- 333,000 gas customers
- 2,760 MW of regulated generation
- 6,636 miles of electric distribution
- 4,788 miles of gas transmission and distribution

Kentucky Utilities

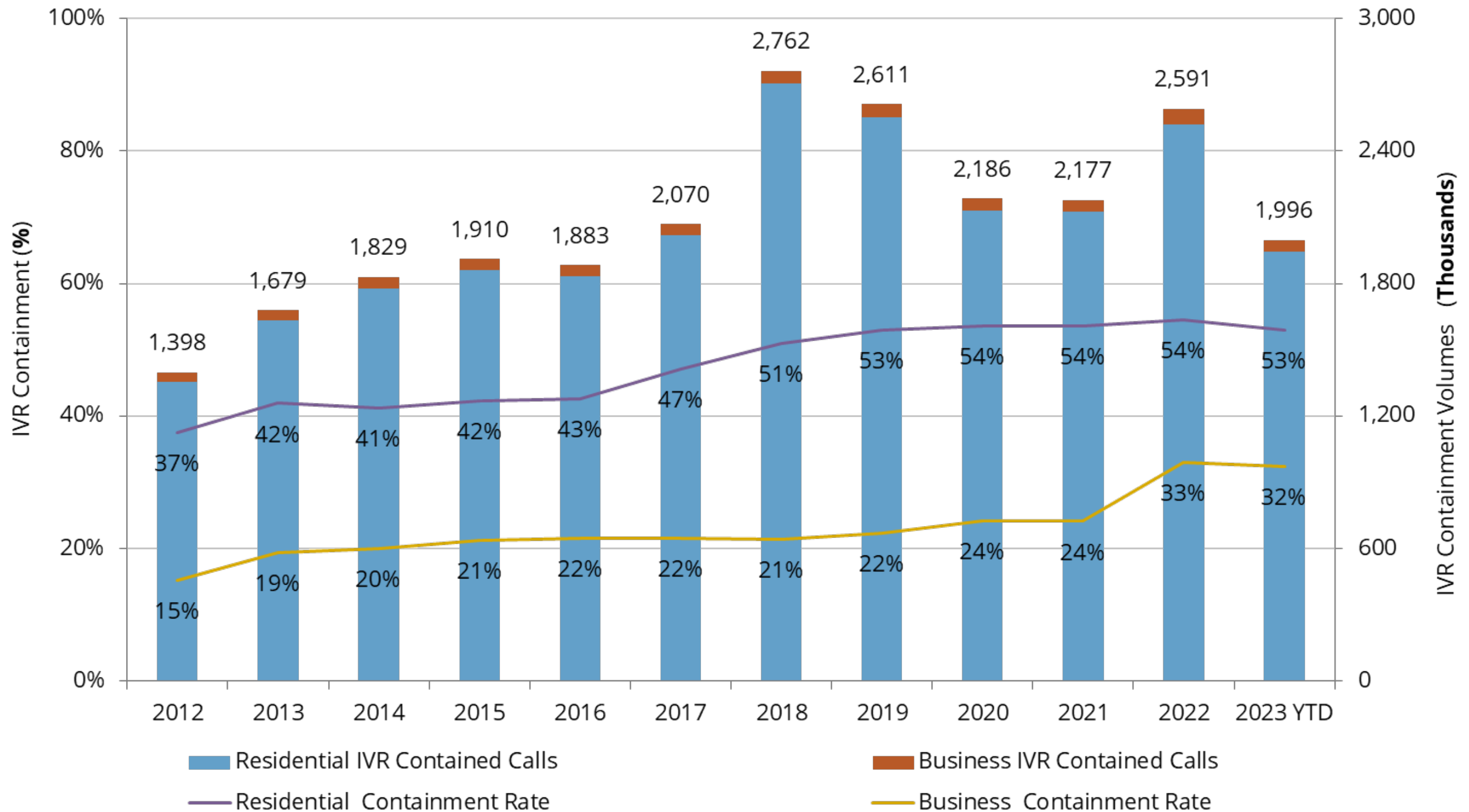
- Serving 77 counties in Kentucky and 5 counties in Virginia
- 566,000 electric customers in Kentucky
- 28,000 electric customers in Virginia
- 4,775 MW of regulated generation
- 4,056 miles of electric transmission
- 16,745 miles of electric distribution

Effective Self-Service for Customers

- Make the IVR a useful resource for customers who prefer the phone as a channel to interact with us
- Available 24x7, high availability for electric outage and gas emergency reporting
- Identified the need to improve self-service containment in 2010, due to increase in workload from care system upgrade
- Making the IVR more than a way to get calls to people
- Worked with the IVR Doctors to streamline and enhance functionality and creating paths customers could remember
 - Payments are easy as 1-2-3
- Continued to add and tweak service options to increase containment

Results

Annual IVR Volumes and Containment Rate

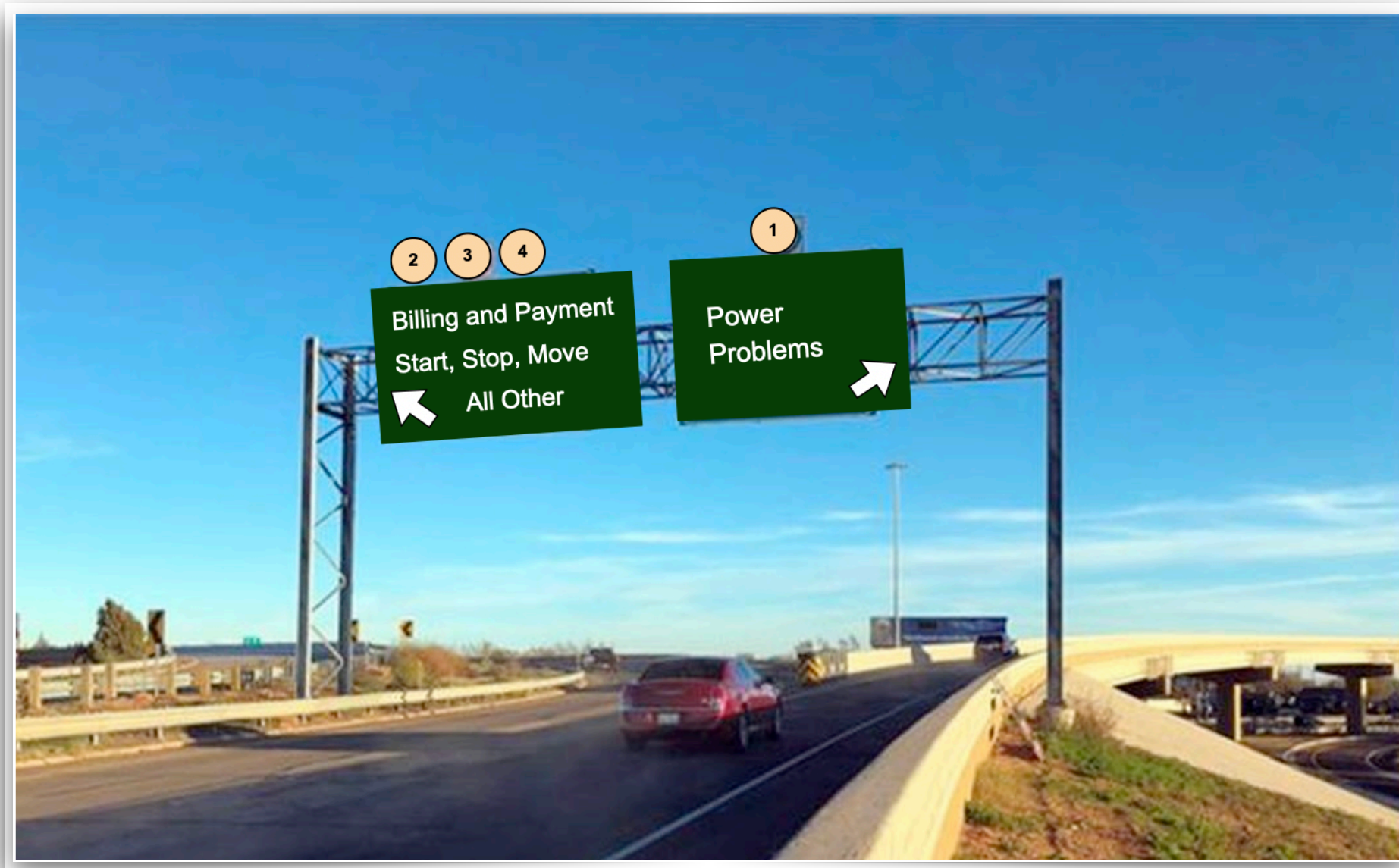


Note: 2023 YTD includes Jan 1 – Sep 30.





Your IVR is your callers' audio highway to do business with you.



Your “audio exit sign options” are critical to your callers’ ease of use...
but with options for touchtone only,
directed speech commands (e.g., “*You can say...*”)
and natural language (e.g., “*How can we help you?*”) alternatives,
your callers’ experiences are evolving, and so are their expectations!





A brief overview of a very lengthy, complicated and still-evolving landscape

Speech recognition was invited in 1952 @ Bell Labs... but is only now emerging from its 'adolescence.'

Speech in an IVR context can offer valuable advantages for callers,...

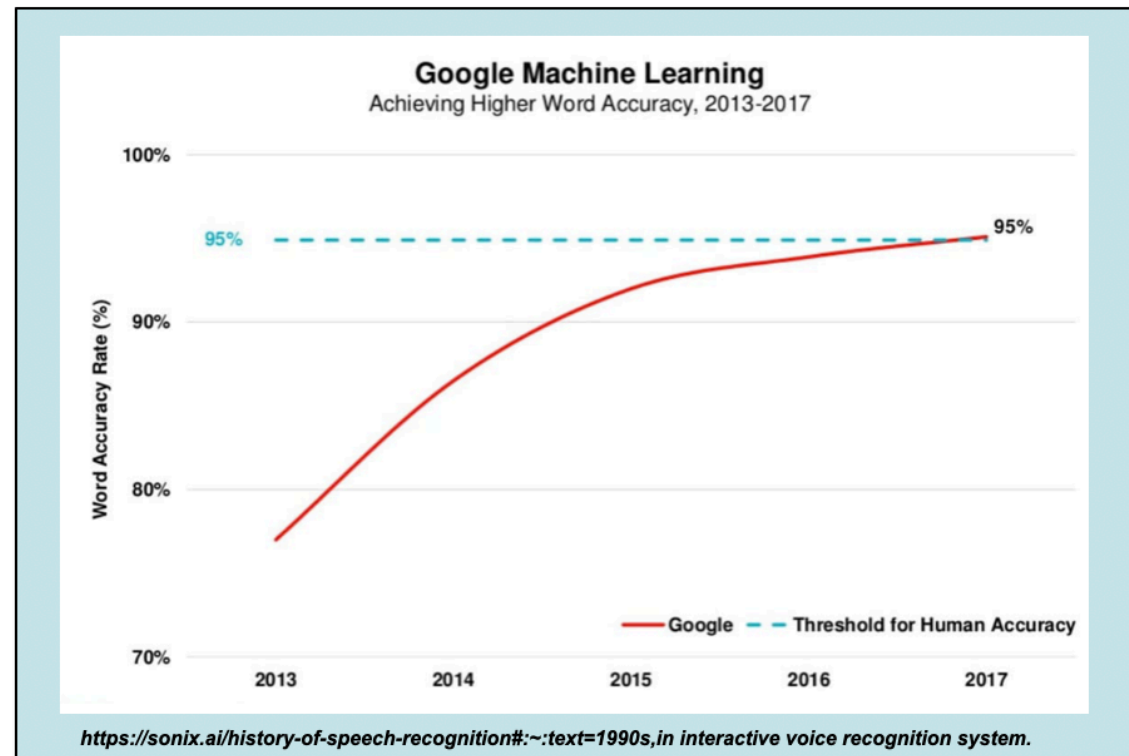
- Level compression
- Assistive support for the visually impaired
- Hands-free communication

Speech recognition [complexity involves] accent, pronunciation, articulation, roughness, nasality, pitch, volume, and speed. Speech is distorted by a background noise and echoes, electrical characteristics. Accuracy of speech recognition may vary with the following:

- Vocabulary size and confusability
- Speaker dependence versus independence
- Isolated, discontinuous or continuous speech
- Task and language constraints
- Read versus spontaneous speech
- Adverse conditions

With continuous speech naturally spoken sentences are used, therefore it becomes harder to recognize the speech, different from both isolated and discontinuous speech.

With isolated speech, single words are used, therefore it becomes easier to recognize the speech.



...but also has concerns.

- Speaker accent/tone/timbre/speed
- Background noise
- Vocabulary constraints

Error rates increase as the vocabulary size grows:

e.g. the 10 digits "zero" to "nine" can be recognized essentially perfectly, but vocabulary sizes of 200, 5000 or 100000 may have error rates of 3%, 7%, or 45% respectively.

Vocabulary is hard to recognize if it contains confusing words:

e.g. the 26 letters of the English alphabet are difficult to discriminate because they are confusing words (most notoriously, the E-set: "B, C, D, E, G, P, T, V, Z" — when "Z" is pronounced "zee" rather than "zed" depending on the English region); an 8% error rate is considered good for this vocabulary.

...and it's not as simple as just having a backup up to touchtone.





Context is important...

- As we have said since our founding in 2008, speech is here to stay!
- With the expansion of Siri and Alexa into our daily lives, there may be a perception that it always works perfectly. It doesn't.
- That said, speech in an IVR not a (short-term) imperative, and it depends on:
 - ➔ Budgets (e.g., Amazon, Apple, vs. yours)
 - ➔ Staffing
 - ➔ Expertise (internal and external)
 - ➔ Error tolerance (may vary by industry segment: a single speech reco failure may be catastrophic!)
 - ➔ Your caller base...age, income, technology fluency
- In live system Usability Testing, we've seen that when it works well, it's slick and well received, however...
- ...when it goes badly, there's a building annoyance level, especially if there's no escape from "IVR jail/hell," as callers call it.

Maximizing the customer experience and minimizing customer effort is paramount!





One way to do that is to offer callers a modality choice

Here's what typical utility callers say about that:

**"A
choice is
always
better."**

**"I think that
[pressing or saying] would be more
helpful because it would always give you [a
choice]. if you're comfortable pressing numbers,
you would have that choice. If you're comfortable
speaking the numbers, you would have that choice.
Background noise could eliminate you speaking the
numbers, because it would interrupt whatever
you're saying. So pressing the numbers may
be even more of a helpful thing for
some people than others."**

**"[I entered enter the
numbers] for clarification,
to make sure that we're all on
the same page. Because some
voice recognition is better than
others,...the numbers are
just easier."**

**"I feel like being able to press and say
would just make it a whole lot convenient.
Especially for people who may be in noisier settings. They
may say 'extension,' but the automated system may not be
able to pick it up because of all the excess noise. So if they
could just press that number, the system will know
exactly where they're trying to go."**

**"I think
there should be a
button to press. If
you've got that many
service areas, let
me press my
area."**

**"Sometimes
the words don't
work, you know. It
depends on where
you're at. They
can't hear you."**

**"I like that it gave me
the option to just type the
number instead of saying it.
Even though it was saying, 'Tell
me your phone number.' And I
just typed it in. I liked that.
Not all the time you're able
to do that."**



A proposed system-design future

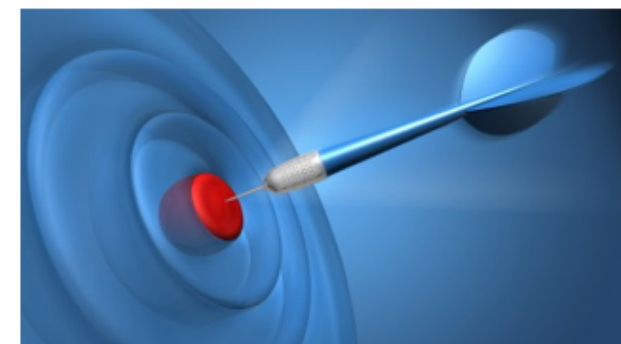




An expanded hybrid modality system design positions you to:



- leverage upfront natural language and speech level-compression
- offer both touchtone (still most callers' preference) & directed speech in a consistent, dual-modality format
- take pressure off the need to reach an agent
- engage callers quickly to build call momentum
- address caller pain points
- reduce caller effort
- maximize caller satisfaction and build better engagement



In a potential natural language system, all callers are backed up by a fully-structured, dual-modality IVR

For **ANI YES** - with no known account status/information, and **ANI NO** callers

"Welcome to
SunStar Electric.."

"(In a few words)
How can we help you?"

"Web
help"

"An outage
update"

"A pending
disconnect"

"A pending
move"

"A solar
question"

"Main
Menu"

Greeting/
Main
Menu

Optional -
Could be in
All Other
Matters

Programs

All
Other
Matters

Update info

Rep

Billing
and
Payment

Start /
Stop /
Move /
Const.

Rep

Specialist

Specialist

Acc't
ID

Place account ID/authentication protocol where appropriate.

Level compression in an expanded-modality IVR can deliver callers to the right sub-menu, application, or appropriate representative, based on key words related to a specific call type.

If any speech call processing problems,
(background noise, response not coded, unintelligible responses, no response etc.), **route callers seamlessly to a well constructed, press or say dual-modality Main Menu and system structure, for call completion.**



ANI YES call flow* using one Yes/No confirming question leverages the best of a hybrid speech, dual-modality menu system

* Where there is known account status/information.

"Welcome to
SunStar Electric."

"Are you calling about..."

web
help?

an outage update?

a pending
disconnect?

a pending
move?

a solar
matter?

"Yes"

"Yes"

"Yes"

"Yes"

"Yes"

"No"

or

"(In a few words)
How can we help you?"

Greeting/
Main
Menu

Optional -
Could be in
All Other
Matters

Power
Problems

Billing
and
Payment

Start /
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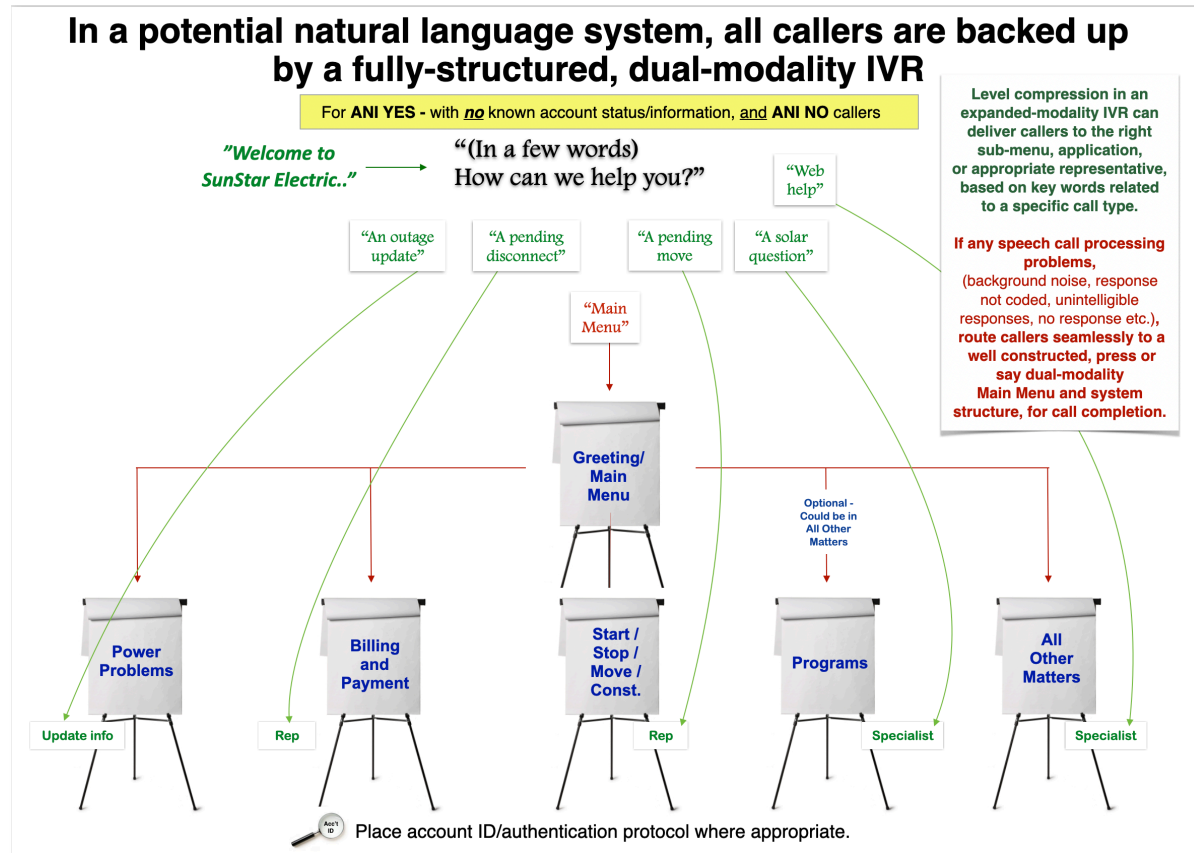




Comparing the expanded hybrid modality system designs:

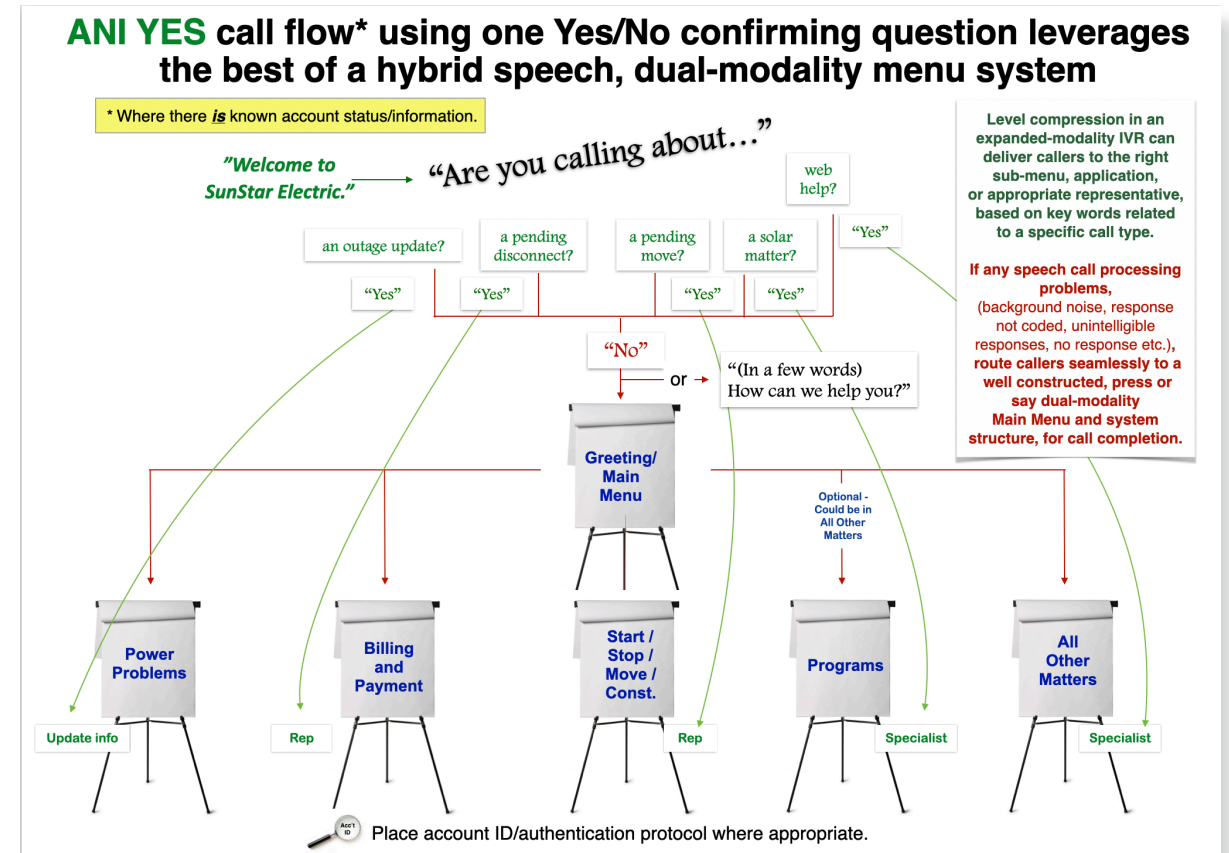
Basic - Step 1

Hybrid modality



More sophisticated - Step 2

Based on "One Confirming Question"



As noted, both of the designs here:

- leverage upfront natural language and speech level compression
- engage callers quickly to build call momentum
- offer both touchtone (still most callers' preference) & directed speech in a consistent, dual-modality format
- take pressure off the need to reach an agent
- address caller pain points
- reduce caller effort
- maximize caller satisfaction and build better engagement

Note: Neither is based on "predictive" or "presumptive" routing."

You don't have to (and probably shouldn't) try to 'guess' the reason for a call. Let callers themselves drive routing for their call.

Your wrong guesses add to caller frustration, especially if the IVR doesn't provide a quick and efficient way to continue call momentum and resolution.

Both of these designs provide what callers want and expect: direct call routing or fast recovery if there's a problem.



Bonus Reminder:

- To see where your company ranks,
 - learn how you can improve its position, and
 - increase your customers' IVR experience,
- take advantage of
your Webinar Benchmark Report discount
(\$295 for the 2023 Report*),
schedule your 90-minute
CUSTOMIZED IVR CONSULTATION
and position your company for
a \$5,000 discount
on an IVR Workshop or IVR Usability Test committed to
by the end of Q12024 and completed in 2024.



Q & A

Follow-up chats & Final questions for us?





IVR DOCTORS
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Camack Consulting, Inc.