



Directed Dialog vs. Natural Language

Speech-enabled IVR helps brands acquire customer information with efficiency and accuracy, and empowers callers to self-resolve more complex issues than would be possible with touchtone/dual-tone multifrequency (DTMF) alone. And though both are powerful speech solutions, Directed Dialog and Natural Language applications are not interchangeable. Here's how to distinguish between them...



Directed Dialog

Directed Dialog presents callers with a list of options and directs them to repeat the selection that most closely fits their needs.

Example

- System Prompt: "Do you want us to text you your need password? Say yes or no."
- Caller Response: "Yes."

Directed Dialog is ideal in situations where potential customer responses are relatively limited, yet a personal touch is warranted.

VS.

Natural Language (NL)

One of the biggest gripes customers have with IVR systems is that they feel that a "robot" cannot adequately address their sophisticated issues. NL addresses this common concern by allowing customers to speak freely, as if to a live person.

Example

- System Prompt: "What would you like help with today?"
- Caller Response: "I'm locked out of my account."

When DTMF is best...

Certain tasks are simply too complicated and frustrating to perform by keying in numbers! But, while speech technology can create greater CX flexibility, DTMF still has its place. Consider it if:

- Service offerings are limited and simple to understand
- Consumers have to provide a long series of digits, like an account number
- Callers may be in an environment where confidentiality is critical

Thinking about introducing Natural Language to your customer experience ecosystem? [Click here](#) to read some tips about how to get started.