



MarketScope for IVR Systems and Enterprise Voice Portals

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Organizations continue to prefer voice response solutions that use Internet standards and voice portal technologies. Market consolidation drives improved integration among voice self-service, Web self-service, live-agent functions and business process management.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Providing self-service functionality is an important option for call and contact centers; it allows managers to balance costs and quality of service. Leading companies require their customer service operations to provide increased automation, offering greater levels of personalization in the self-service environment to increase usage and call completion rates, and smooth integration from automated self-service to live-agent-handled tasks. Firms also need tighter integration among customer contact channels, and the ability to respond to the fast-changing application needs of the contact center business. These business drivers, in turn, are leading to greater use of speech recognition, and a shift to standards-based platforms and Web-based architectures for voice portals. They are also increasing the need for improved administration and analytic tools to enable contact center staff to reconfigure applications more easily, better understand the dynamics of customer demand, and more closely tie together two environments – self-service and agent-assisted service – by providing consistent administration, management and reporting tools across both these environments.

Functional differences among vendor platform products will erode, and vendor consolidation will continue. Technical differentiation among vendors appears to increasingly be based in one of three areas:

- In one approach, voice response solutions become part of a contact center portfolio, with the routing function and voice response increasingly being sourced and integrated by the same vendor. This approach is generally appealing to small, midsize and large contact centers seeking to reduce operating and integration costs while maintaining a high level of service.
- The second approach seeks to offer a voice portal model. These are often stand-alone and highly scalable, offer a low per-port cost (if you purchase many ports), and are heavily standards-based. This approach is generally more appealing to large and virtual centers.
- The third model is newer and seeks to offer voice as an extension to an enterprise's Web solution. This approach is not yet heavily deployed in contact centers; but as telephony comes to resemble other enterprise applications, this approach may see increased adoption.

Organizations should review how they build, deploy and operate their respective interactive voice response (IVR) applications in light of changing needs, and should consider when a shift to next-generation platforms will offer a compelling business case. As many legacy platforms are approaching their end of life, users should review their voice response platforms and tool road maps, and their choices of strategic providers for not only premises-based but also hosted IVR solutions.

MARKETSCOPE

The primary driver for enterprise investment in voice response platforms is the strong business case for contact center self-service applications. These solutions enable customers to perform tasks via the telephone that would otherwise require a contact center agent at a higher cost per transaction. As a result of this functionality, enterprises can deliver a provable and often-sizeable return on investment. Solutions can be applied to customers, employees and others requiring assistance.

Two key technologies that enable solutions to fulfill these business demands are speech recognition and VoiceXML (VXML). Speech recognition provides a better user interface that can support a wider range of applications than touch-tone interfaces, which restrict input to digits entered on a phone keypad. In particular, the two tasks that speech recognition addresses better than touch-tone are complex data entry and complex menus. For simple menus and basic data entry, touch-tone is less expensive and works just as well or better. VXML, an Internet standard protocol, encourages enterprises to use hardware that is independent of a specific application server. This leads to an ecosystem of applications from different developers that can be deployed on a range of vendor platforms, without having to be completely rewritten. The shift to a voice portal architecture for voice response platforms, which is similar to a Web application architecture, allows companies to more easily create voice and Web applications that share the same underlying business software modules.

As adoption of these approaches has matured, the complexities and costs of developing and maintaining them have become more apparent. Successful vendors focus strongly on reducing the complexity of application development, improving the management and reporting functions, improving analytics, and providing better integration among channels and between live-agent and self-service tasks. They provide support for voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) standards, such as Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) and Call Control XML (CCXML), and drive standards that will decouple application execution from the development tools. Vendors that do well also have a strong third-party ecosystem of application partners, solution providers and hosted service providers to enable customers to select a blend of deployment models to meet their needs. Leading vendors support multiple media, such as video streaming, in addition to voice, and are evolving their platforms toward a service-oriented architecture supporting Web services.

Although there have been some high-profile public campaigns and customer reaction against voice-automated systems, the fundamental challenge remains that customer service managers must balance quality of service with cost of service. Voice self-service solutions can help achieve an optimum balance, although applications should be chosen carefully, and solutions should be developed with consideration of human factors to ensure a good customer experience. Effective tools and a third-party ecosystem are important contributors to delivering good solutions. An increasing awareness of the potential for unified communications (UC) to extend the contact center throughout a company and to its business partners is causing leading self-service vendors to put forward a vision for how voice response functionality fits in with UC. Leaders provide clear road maps for how today's new solutions integrate with a UC architecture.

Market/Market Segment Description

Voice response platforms are systems that provide voice access to information and applications, and they can perform complex call routing based on information provided by the caller. Gartner identifies two distinct classifications of voice response platforms:

- IVR – an application engine built on a proprietary platform. IVR solutions include an application development environment, a runtime engine and physical telephony access interface cards within a single platform. The hardware platform may be proprietary. APIs are proprietary, and there is a limited partner ecosystem providing packaged applications and professional services for the platform.
- Voice portal – a system based on Internet standards and open hardware platforms, providing telephony-based access. Such systems do not require that the application development or runtime environments be included in the core platform that provides the call access ports. A voice portal architecture is similar to a Web application architecture, and allows the application and the server on which it runs to be independent of the voice-processing function and the hardware that supports it. Leading voice portal solutions support VoIP standards, such as SIP, and have a strong partner program of application providers, development and operations toolkits, and analytics. Voice portals provide a telephony gateway to multiple resources, not just to one application, and not necessarily linked to speech applications. The success or failure of speech applications still depends heavily on the talent of the personnel designing, implementing, testing and fine-tuning the application.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To be included in this MarketScope, vendors must have an established market presence in one or two major regions and mind share for voice response solutions, as determined through frequency of mentions in client inquiries, or due to offering innovative solutions. At a minimum, the application portion of the solution must be located on customer premises; solutions cannot be solely hosted. Vendors with solutions that require applications and platforms to be outsourced are not included in this evaluation.

Many service providers and network operators offer hosted and managed voice response solutions. In some cases, these are hybrid on-premises and service offerings built on VXML and IP networks. The barriers to entry are relatively low, and, consequently, there are many smaller providers targeted at specific regions or markets.

Most of the following services are hosted, rather than premises-based; thus, they are not included in this MarketScope. Some of the vendors in the U.S. include carriers AT&T and Verizon, contact center outsourcers Convergys and West Interactive, and voice response service providers Microsoft Tellme, Nuance-owned BeVocal, Angel.com, TuVox and LiveVox. In Europe, vendors include Cable & Wireless and Eckoh in the U.K.; Prosodie and Jet Multimedia in France; SNT Multiconnect and DTMS Solutions in Germany; and Ydilo in Spain. In Asia/Pacific, vendors include Telstra and SingTel.

Decide on the sourcing approach that best fits your objectives, and consider these alternative sourcing options as needed.

Vendors Added:

Holly Connects – Acquired by West Interactive during the preparation of this MarketScope

Vendors Dropped:

Nortel – Acquired by Avaya

Rating for Overall Market/Market Segment

Overall Market Rating: Positive

Our outlook for this market is Positive, given the continued penetration of IVR solutions across organizations in the private and public sectors, and given the maturity of solutions being provided by a consistent group of IVR vendors, year over year. Vendors continue to adopt new technologies and trends, while expanding into new applications that enhance customer service, help desk capabilities and business process management. The steady adoption of IVR functionality enables organizations to differentiate the services they provide. In addition, adding analytics to their capabilities often leads to a gain in competitive advantage, particularly when companies that use IVR strive to optimize call routing to best match customer requirements. It is very important to monitor how different IVR providers have been weathering the economic downturn. An attractive and innovative portfolio doesn't automatically equate with good fiscal management. In addition,

vendors were asked to provide the contact information for six of their respective customers, enabling Gartner to conduct a user survey for this MarketScope. We asked questions related to the evaluation criteria described in Table 1.

Vendor Product/Service Analysis

Aspect

Aspect's vision is to expand self-service capabilities within its Aspect Unified IP (UIP) platform product, using standards such as VXML, CCXML and State Chart XML (SCXML), and to apply the self-service capabilities of its voice portal to automate business processes. Self-service capabilities will also be leveraged to enable routing a customer directly to an expert, whether the expert is in the contact center, enterprise or network of partners. Aspect UIP provides a broad spectrum of contact center capabilities that supports customer service, collections, and sales and telemarketing business processes.

With its large contact center customer base, Aspect can also provide stand-alone IVR via Aspect UIP Voice Portal. The Voice Portal leverages the same speech integration technologies developed for Aspect's legacy Customer Self-Service IVR product. Aspect Customer Self-Service users should consider upgrading to Aspect UIP Voice Portal with the assurance that the VXML applications built with VoiceXML Studio or third-party tools and deployed on Aspect Customer Self-Service are portable to UIP Voice Portal. For customers seeking an alternative that represents low capital expenditure (capex) and risk, Aspect UIP Voice Portal may reside in a hosted solution environment. Aspect also provides on-demand hosting solutions via Microsoft Tellme.

Based on our user survey, customers give Aspect good to very good satisfaction ratings and consider Aspect IVR solutions to be moderately priced. For companies that prefer a single telephony approach, Aspect can provision this via an offer that uses the Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007 R2 (OCS 2007 R2) platform. With Aspect UIP's scalability and multitenant features, consider Aspect UIP's IVR functionality for either midsize or large deployments.

Avaya

During 2009, a significant consolidation occurred among the IVR vendors with Avaya's acquisition of Nortel Enterprise Solutions. As a result, Avaya will be merging some IVR and contact center products from the portfolios of both companies and discontinuing others, while introducing next-generation platforms that leverage the best of Avaya and Nortel technologies.

Avaya Interactive Response (AIR) is Avaya's time division multiplexing (TDM) and VoIP-based IVR software to support self-service applications with integration to speech technologies. The solution also supports application development and runtime for VoiceXML, as well as older Conversant applications.

Evaluation Criteria

Table 1. Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Comment	Weighting
		standard
Market Understanding	Ability of the vendor to understand buyers' wants and needs, and to translate those into products and services. Vendors that show the highest degree of vision listen to and understand buyers' wants and needs, and can shape or enhance those with their added vision.	standard
Marketing Strategy	A clear, differentiated set of messages consistently communicated throughout the organization and externalized through the website, advertising, customer programs and positioning statements.	standard
Sales Strategy	The strategy for selling products that uses the appropriate network of direct and indirect sales, marketing, service, and communication affiliates that extend the scope and depth of market reach, skills, expertise, technologies, services and the customer base.	standard
Offering (Product) Strategy	The vendor's approach to product development and delivery that emphasizes differentiation, functionality, methodology and feature sets as they map to current and future requirements.	high
Business Model	The soundness and logic of the vendor's underlying business proposition.	standard
Innovation	The vendor's innovative ability to meet the specific needs of individual market segments, including vertical markets.	high
Overall Viability (Business Unit, Financial, Strategy, Organization)	Viability includes an assessment of the overall organization's financial health, the financial and practical success of the business unit, and the likelihood that the individual business unit will continue investing in the product will continue offering the product and will advance the state of the art within the organization's portfolio of products.	

Source: Gartner (July 2010)

Figure 1. MarketScope for IVR Systems and Enterprise Voice Portals

	RATING				
	Strong Negative	Caution	Promising	Positive	Strong Positive
Aspect			X		
Avaya					X
Cisco				X	
Convergys				X	
Genesys					X
Holly Connects			X		
HP			X		
Syntellect			X		
Voxeo				X	

Source: Gartner (July 2010)

Avaya Voice Portal (AVP) is Avaya's enterprise Web services-based platform for multimedia self-service. Release 5.1 supports Proactive Outreach Manager and Intelligent Customer Routing as managed applications, as well as application-level reporting. AVP provides media processing on a separate networked platform, and offers integration to various speech technologies, as well as Avaya Contact Center solutions.

Nortel heritage product Media Processing Server (MPS) is a self-service multimedia carrier and enterprise platform. It works with any vendor's standards-based switching environment. The MPS 500 is positioned for the midsize business customer, and starts at 24 ports and scales to 240 ports. The MPS 1000 is positioned for the larger enterprise customers and carriers/service providers, and starts at around 400 ports and scales to more than 11,000 ports.

Avaya has clarified its IVR and self-service directions for the AIR and AVP products, as well as for the acquired Nortel Equipment Solutions (NES) products. AVP will be the flagship self-service platform and will continue to incorporate capabilities as it evolves as Avaya's multichannel experience portal. The AIR product will be discontinued for sale in 2011, but will continue to be supported through 2014. The AVP platform will be enhanced by technology from the Nortel portfolio, providing a single, consistent environment for routing self-service and assisted-service contacts based on AVP's development tools. Nortel customers will have access to Nortel heritage Interactive Communications Portal (ICP) and MPS offerings for several years. In addition, users will be provided incentives and application extensions to migrate to AVP.

Avaya Dialog Designer (DD) is an open standards integrated development environment (IDE) for voice and video self-service applications that builds Java-based servlet/VoiceXML/CCXML applications. Significant functions include the ability to program and simulate not only Java, VoiceXML 2.0/2.1 and CCXML, but also video applications. This allows application developers to develop and simulate complex call control, voice dialogue and communication-enabled business process applications from within the environment without the need to deploy it on a live platform.

Based on our user survey, customers give Avaya good to excellent satisfaction ratings, but consider Avaya IVR solutions to be somewhat high priced. New Avaya customers should focus their self-service solution purchases on the AVP product, while enterprises and call centers with AIR, ICP or MPS solutions need to consider their migration options and develop their plans. Avaya offers porting tools and the capability to run existing VoiceXML applications from ICP and MPS on AVP.

Although Avaya solutions are often expensive compared with those from other vendors, consider Avaya for large-scale requirements with integration among Avaya live and self-service channels. However, be cognizant of the company's product migration road maps for the next year or two, and periodically scrutinize how well Avaya is delivering on its evolution plans.

Cisco

Cisco IP IVR utilizes a premises-based IVR model, using the IP network for voice and data transport. Cisco IP IVR comes in a bundled suite deployment as part of the Cisco Unified Contact Center Express, which provides a complete distributed IP contact center solution. IP IVR is an option on the Cisco Unified Contact Center Enterprise package, as well as for small deployments with Cisco Unified Communications Manager.

Cisco Unified Customer Voice Portal (UCVP) provides voice browser, application server and service-creation capabilities, as well as reporting and centralized management and provisioning in an enterprise voice portal implementation. This Cisco solution can be deployed in centralized and distributed models to meet a customer's specific business requirements. UCVP can be stand-alone, like any enterprise voice portal, with TDM or IP telephony. UCVP can also run in conjunction with any third-party automatic call distributor (ACD) or as part of Cisco Unified Contact Center Enterprise. However, UCVP does not require the latter.

UCVP is a VoiceXML-compliant solution that is composed of Cisco IOS gateways providing VoiceXML 2.0/2.1-compliant browsing, a VXML server, a Java Platform, Enterprise Edition (Java EE) application environment, and a call server component that provides SIP call control and computer-telephony integration (CTI) interoperability. This solution offers prompt/collect, speech recognition, and text to speech (TTS), as well as additional features like queuing calls at the edge of the network, and call-switching over IP. UCVP can be deployed in an enterprise environment or as a hosted service by a service provider or outsourcer. In the outsourced model, the VoiceXML application and associated data may reside on the customer site or within the service provider network based on a customer's business requirements.

Based on our user survey, customers give Cisco very good satisfaction ratings and consider Cisco IVR solutions to be moderately priced. Consider IP IVR for IVR requirements with Cisco Unified Contact Center solutions, where 128 ports are sufficient for future capacity. For large-scale enterprises and service providers, consider UCVP with Unified Intelligent Contact Management (UICM) for a network-based IVR platform in front of varied vendor switches. Cisco UICM is an application server that supports customer interactions with a contact center by phone, Web, text chat or e-mail message, and provides centralized management control over customer contacts, allowing users to implement a single set of business rules that uniformly addresses customer needs, independent of contact channel or resource location. Virtual contact center routing solutions also require UICM, which adds cost and complicates management reporting. However, UCVP does not require UICM for stand-alone self-service, or if virtual contact center routing is not needed.

Convergys

During the past year, Convergys has been merging the products of Intervoice, the company it acquired in September 2008, with Convergys' own product suite, delivering a portfolio of solutions focused on the customer experience and intelligent use of customer data.

Intelligent Self-Service (ISS) is the primary offering in the enterprise IVR space. The solution combines Intervoice Voice Portal (IVP) with its Dynamic Decisioning solution, and is based on VXML, CCXML, SCXML standards that can scale up to 720 TDM or IP ports in a single server. Media Gateway allows up to 20,000 simultaneous calls and is designed to fit within a service-oriented architecture. The platform provides a migration path from Intervoice's legacy IVR offerings, while supporting the development, delivery and management of speech and multimodal self-service applications. Also available are a comprehensive set of application services, broad system management and reporting tools, a development tool suite, and core infrastructure components leveraging the standards-based Interaction Composer tool. The Developer Zone site allows clients to download the tool, which is used for developing and testing applications when they are completed. Convergys personnel provide end-to-end services that include platform deployment, application design and development, system integration, and speech integration. Hosted and managed service options are also available.

Convergys Interaction Portal messaging has been updated to Convergys Intelligent Interaction Solutions, which includes ISS for inbound transactions, Intelligent Notification for outbound transactions, Voice Authentication, eServices for agent desktop, and Intelligent Automation, which leverages the Dynamic Decisioning platform. The offer includes not only IVR capabilities, but also contact center functionality, call routing based on customer requirements, and outsourcing to live agents.

Edify Voice Interaction Platform (EVIP) supports both VXML and traditional applications with App Builder and App Modeler tools that support dual-tone multifrequency (DTMF) and speech. The platform is still supported, but Convergys also offers a migration path to ISS for all EVIP customers.

Based on our user survey, customers give Convergys good satisfaction ratings and consider Convergys IVR solutions to be moderately priced. Consider Convergys when requirements call for an open, scalable, switch-independent IVR platform, and intelligent call routing applications that require balancing self-service to live-agent interactions, or when Convergys-hosted IVR solutions can complement the company's enterprise-based offers.

Genesys

On 1 January 2009, Alcatel-Lucent (ALU) created a new Applications Software Group that combines multiple ALU software businesses, including Genesys. Beginning in 2010, the go-to-market activities of Genesys and ALU's Enterprise business were combined into the ALU Enterprise Markets Group. Sales, services, marketing operations and partner management are centralized in this group. The R&D and marketing activities for the combined portfolio of Genesys and Enterprise solutions became part of the Applications Software Group.

Genesys is focused on continuing to evolve its self-service capabilities by meshing its voice portal with Web investments to leverage applications, development tools and personalization. For example, as part of a solution called the intelligent Customer Front Door (iCFD), Genesys Voice Portal (GVP) adds a layer of contextual information, through a new offering called Conversation Manager, into every interaction by leveraging CRM and Web-based integrations. Genesys has also introduced Composer, an Eclipse-based development environment for self-service and assisted-service applications. Genesys continues to build on its multivendor support strategy by leveraging integrations and Genesys SIP Server to connect to VoIP environments.

GVP 8, which merges GVP 7.x and VoiceGenie (VG) 7.x, is a standards-based offering that supports channels such as voice calls, video, Web and Short Message Service (SMS). E-mail and chat are handled via the Genesys framework. Platform development emphasizes the use of voice-enabled Web applications to help customers locate the most appropriate resources. A key element of the latest release focuses on customer-facing IP-based applications. GVP 8.1 builds on its previous release with added support for platforms, speech engines and the ability to migrate older GVP and VG customers into the GVP 8.x platform. Genesys allows customers to run existing TDM connectivity and SIP connectivity in the same system, facilitating either a dual operation or phased migration to SIP. GVP 8.1 includes full multitenant capabilities that allow hosting providers to bill, provision and manage resources for customers in an efficient manner for SIP and TDM environments.

Genesys specifies that it remained profitable independent of ALU, and added many new customers. However, based on our user survey, there seems to be evidence that ALU's efforts to combine Genesys with ALU's Enterprise organization is negatively affecting Genesys' consideration rate in the market, due to a decline in the quality of the sales execution capabilities of Genesys. Given the size of its customer base, which includes many Fortune 500 companies with very complex requirements, Genesys currently maintains a Strong Positive ranking in this MarketScope. Although Genesys solutions are often seen as expensive, compared with those of other vendors, consider GVP for large-scale, complex multivendor requirements with integration among live and self-service channels.

Holly Connects

On 1 June 2010, West, a leading provider of voice solutions, acquired Holly Connects, a provider of carrier-grade voice platforms that are also sold to enterprises. Holly Connects was founded in Australia and has an established client base in that region. The company has expanded into North America and Europe. Holly Connects will retain its brand within West's Communications Services segment. Gartner expects little change in the Holly Connects' brand; executive team, staff and offices will remain. This relation provides West with an assured technology base for its hosted self-service solutions, while offering Holly Connects' resources to expand its market reach.

The Holly Connects' IVR solution is based on a carrier-grade, high-capacity (20,000+ port) platform. It integrates with major speech solutions, switches and call center environments. The solution targets high-end deployments that would be found in larger enterprise contact centers. Holly Connects has limited deployments globally, and enterprises should carefully consider whether the tools and support required can be met by Holly Connects. It's worth noting that, based on our survey, users give Holly Connects, a stand-alone organization, very high satisfaction ratings and consider the company's prices to be very competitive.

HP

The HP Network IVR solution is made up of the following components: the HP Network IVR Service Execution Environment, the HP OpenCall Studio, the HP OpenCall Media Platform, the HP Media Content Manager and the HP CDR Collection and Processing System.

Historically, HP has sold its IVR platform and media servers exclusively to service providers, especially in the telecommunications sector. However, in 2008, HP formed the Communications and Media Solutions business unit, which is expanding beyond service providers into the broader enterprise contact center market.

HP has a broad set of channels, system integration and hosting partnerships, as well as a large global support organization. Additionally, HP is developing a relationship with Microsoft that will allow integration of UC contact center applications. Although HP has a substantial business as a system integrator, major challenges are lack of presence in the mature enterprise contact center market, and lack of a tightly integrated broader set of contact center functions. While HP's scalable, software-based architecture can match large and smaller end-user requirements, HP's overall market approach is currently oriented toward larger contact centers.

Since no HP references participated in our user survey, we cannot comment about customer satisfaction levels and how the market perceives HP IVR pricing.

Consider HP for large-scale IVR deployments when HP is also functioning as the system integrator, or if there is a pre-existing relationship with HP, such as for managed services or outsourcing.

Syntellect

Syntellect is a division of Enghouse Systems, a Toronto-based public company, with focus on growth through new customer acquisitions and product lines to include complete contact center solutions. Syntellect provides self-service speech and contact center solutions for financial services, utilities, healthcare, consumer products, cable/media, high tech and government/education. Its direct sales and solutions service organization supports end users, while Syntellect continues to build an indirect channel through systems and service providers that are typically focused on midmarket opportunities.

Syntellect's flagship IVR product is the Syntellect Communications Portal (SCP). The SCP is a tool for creating and managing enterprise voice portals and other voice-enhanced communications solutions. SCP enables development of systems that incorporate a wide range of telephony, voice, speech, database, e-mail, Web and data communication technologies such as VoiceXML and CCXML. SCP is an open standards-based platform with an integrated application development suite and management components for developing, deploying and managing voice and IP communications solutions.

Syntellect's traditional IVR platform development product is CT Application Development Environment (CT ADE). CT ADE is intended for software developers using VB.NET, C++, C#, Delphi, and other software development languages to create voice portals and other voice messaging applications. CT ADE provides a platform that supports over 1,000 ports per server.

Syntellect partners with a wide range of organizations with complementary products to create total solutions. Partnerships include network service providers and technology vendors. For example, the company resells Dialogic telecom boards and software to IVR and voice portal customers, and partners with telephony providers like Avaya and Mitel to integrate its IVR/voice portal products with respective IP PBX and PBX portfolios. The company can satisfy self-service requirements, offers single-source capabilities, and has professional services with expertise in integrating IVR and speech applications in enterprise contact centers. The Syntellect Communications Portal is available for hosted and managed voice applications, or disaster recovery for customer premises equipment (CPE) customers through the Syntellect Hosted Solutions Group.

Based on our user survey, customers give Syntellect good marks for sales execution and service, as well as ranking Syntellect's pricing lower than its competitors. Consider Syntellect for competitively priced applications, especially when a single point of contact is desirable for coordinating the efforts of multiple technology providers.

Voxeo

The Voxeo on-premises solution set is built from three product areas: the Prophecy Unified Self-Service platform, the VoiceObjects Application Lifecycle Suite, and the Prism UC application server. The Prophecy solution is Voxeo's on-premises voice portal and self-service platform. Prophecy includes the VoiceXML browser, CCXML browser, call recording, audioconferencing, bundled English automatic speech recognition (ASR) and TTS, VoiceObjects Designer and support for third-party ASR and TTS. The Prophecy Pro edition includes the full VoiceObjects suite – analytics, Eclipse-based application development and tuning. Voxeo also offers the VoiceObjects Suite for deployment with non-Voxeo voice portal platforms, such as those from Avaya, Cisco and Genesys. Voxeo Prophecy IVR Hosting is an on-demand IVR hosting service. VXML/CCXML applications can reside at the customer premises or within Voxeo's data centers using Voxeo collocated and managed server options.

During 2009, Voxeo acquired ClackPoint, Motorola VoiceXML Browser and related patents, Adhearsion and IMified. As a result, Voxeo has been advancing the concept of Unified Self-Service, which uses VXML to build a single application once that works via voice, Web, SMS, instant messaging (IM) and video. In 2008, Voxeo acquired MicroMethod and its SIP application server, SIP proxy/presence server and SIP Session Border Controller (SBC), which positions the company to support customers adopting UC strategies, including the integration of IM capabilities.

Voxeo solutions are typically low-cost, scalable and well-suited for organizations with application development and system integration skills. Voxeo has a history of providing innovative, standards-based solutions. The company has an internal professional services organization and a growing set of business partners. While the company's brand has limited visibility outside the U.S., it is expanding international operations and has offices in Cologne, Germany, London and Beijing.

Based on our user survey, Voxeo receives consistently very good to excellent customer satisfaction ratings. Users view Voxeo as being competitively priced, which helps explain why the company grew rapidly in 2009, despite the difficult economic climate. Among the smaller vendors in this MarketScope, Voxeo is proving itself to be a standout, as evidenced by its positive ranking.

Vendors Added or Dropped

We review and adjust our inclusion criteria for Magic Quadrants and MarketScopes as markets change. As a result of these adjustments, the mix of vendors in any Magic Quadrant or MarketScope may change over time. A vendor appearing in a Magic Quadrant or MarketScope one year and not the next does not necessarily indicate that we have changed our opinion of that vendor. This may be a reflection of a change in the market and, therefore, changed evaluation criteria, or a change of focus by a vendor.

Gartner MarketScope Defined

Gartner's MarketScope provides specific guidance for users who are deploying, or have deployed, products or services. A Gartner MarketScope rating does not imply that the vendor meets all, few or none of the evaluation criteria. The Gartner MarketScope evaluation is based on a weighted evaluation of a vendor's products in comparison with the evaluation criteria. Consider Gartner's criteria as they apply to your specific requirements. Contact Gartner to discuss how this evaluation may affect your specific needs.

In the below table, the various ratings are defined:

MarketScope Rating Framework

Strong Positive

Is viewed as a provider of strategic products, services or solutions:

- Customers: Continue with planned investments.
- Potential customers: Consider this vendor a strong choice for strategic investments.

Positive

Demonstrates strength in specific areas, but execution in one or more areas may still be developing or inconsistent with other areas of performance:

- Customers: Continue planned investments.
- Potential customers: Consider this vendor a viable choice for strategic or tactical investments, while planning for known limitations.

Promising

Shows potential in specific areas; however, execution is inconsistent:

- Customers: Consider the short- and long-term impact of possible changes in status.
- Potential customers: Plan for and be aware of issues and opportunities related to the evolution and maturity of this vendor.

Caution

Faces challenges in one or more areas.

- Customers: Understand challenges in relevant areas, and develop contingency plans based on risk tolerance and possible business impact.
- Potential customers: Account for the vendor's challenges as part of due diligence.

Strong Negative

Has difficulty responding to problems in multiple areas.

- Customers: Execute risk mitigation plans and contingency options.
- Potential customers: Consider this vendor only for tactical investment with short-term, rapid payback.