



Case Study

## UK Financial Leader

When a major UK-based financial services group rolled out a new natural language speech program to improve their customer experience, they turned to Cyara to meet a tight deadline for the project launch. Cyara cut testing time and testers by almost two-thirds and customer satisfaction with the IVR has increased by 15 points.

“If we had done the tests manually, we were looking at between 12 and 14 weeks. We did it in 5 with Cyara.”

**SR. MANAGER, TELEPHONY AUTOMATED SERVICES TEAM**

CYARA 

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## Cyara Helps Major UK Financial Services Company Implement Natural Language to Improve Customer Service

Automated Testing Cuts Development Time by More Than Half Saving Resources and Costs

### CHALLENGES

- The IVR menu was full with no room to continue to automate actions
- High transfer rate once the call went to an agent
- Natural language project required 1,000 test cases and would stretch the project timeline and resources

### BENEFITS

- Cut estimated project testing time to 5 weeks from 12 to 14 weeks
- Cut the number of testers needed from 15 to 4
- Cut Average Hold Time by 14 seconds
- Reduced call transfer rate to between 8 and 10 percent
- Raised customer satisfaction scores for the IVR by 15 points

### SOLUTIONS:

Cyara Cruncher  
Cyara Pulse  
Cyara Replay

A crowded IVR menu with no room for additional automation options, a high transferred call rate, increasing pressure on resources to do more, and a mandate to provide an outstanding customer experience led a major UK-based financial services leader to develop a natural language application to better serve their customers.

The UK-based financial services leader provides a wide range of banking and financial services with a focus on personal and commercial customers. The company's main business activities are retail, commercial and corporate banking, general insurance, life insurance, pensions and investment provision.

### UK Customer Experience Environment

Thirteen contact centres located throughout the UK handle the approximately 100 million calls annually from the financial service leader's customers. Their customer experience environment is primarily built on an Avaya telephony platform and Nuance Recognition for Speech. All development and system testing is done offshore.

The telephony automated services team is responsible for all 24 of the IVRs for the company. “We manage them from a day-to-day basis, but we are also responsible for recommending improvements or developments going forward,” said the team's senior manager. “We also resolve issues and set the strategy for the applications going forward,” she added.

### Putting the Customer First and Making It Simple

Before developing the natural language application, the lengthy set of options in the IVR was often confusing for customers. The team wanted to automate additional tasks, but there was no room left to expand the IVR menus. Another issue was a high rate of transferred calls. Once a customer

reached an agent; often it was the wrong agent. The solution was to design a new customer experience that would put the customer first and simplify interactions.

The natural language project grew out of a relationship with the University of Exeter, a well-respected research university in Southwest England. The University conducted live, controlled experiments with groups of 100 to 150 customers using mock-ups of IVRs. The senior manager for the telephony automated services team explained that the University used “Wizard of Oz” tests where a controller in another room entered information into a computer simulating the IVR's response to the live customer input.

From these sessions, the team was able to determine what type of prompts got the best utterances from customers and where to place the prompts within the call flow. “I would recommend this approach to anyone who was thinking of implementing natural language,” the senior manager said.

### Engaging with Cyara

The natural language project was the driver to get funding to engage with Cyara. While automated testing was something the team had wanted to incorporate, getting funding was a challenge. “We had been looking probably on and off for quite a few years to find a tool that would take the pressure off of our testing resources. And, I wanted to make sure that the tool gave us everything that we needed,” the senior manager said. In fact, the team had been talking with Cyara for about two and a half years before making the purchase.

“Before we got Cyara, we were using people. All of our testing was done manually,” explained the senior manager. “We would have carried on with the project and tested it manually, which is how we have done every other project if we hadn't gone to automated testing.”

The natural language project delivered new functionality and had high visibility within the bank. “So, it was important to test thoroughly prior to launch. In fact, the project team identified that they would need to run over 1,000 test scripts, which would take months.” The stakeholders decided to go with automated testing instead to meet the project’s five-week testing timeframe and bring the project online as soon as possible.

There were significant savings using automated testing for the project instead of paying people to do the testing, the senior manager said, “but this was in the thousands of pounds on a project that was in the millions. This is not to say that the savings weren’t worth it, as they totally were. The time savings was the key driver, in this case, however, rather than the pound note.”

## Deploying the Project

The natural language project was implemented in a phased manner so that the financial services leader could migrate slowly to the new system to make sure everything was working properly.

“When you are moving a project live, you have to be very considerate of the overall operation,” the senior manager said, “and the last thing we wanted to do was to increase the number of customers who were breaking out of the IVR.”

“Two-weeks before we went live, I think there was a change just about every night. That’s where Cyara proved itself with testing these last minute changes,” she added.

## Improved Customer Experience Metrics

The natural language project produced improved customer experience metrics almost from the very beginning. One significant number is the improved rating for the IVR. “We originally said we would get a +5 improvement, and then I spent three months of sleepless nights thinking how are we going to get this +5,” the senior manager said. Instead, the IVR quickly got a +15 improvement and is averaging a 52 percent favorable rating and customer complaints about the IVR have been cut in half. “Getting the +15 was a massive, massive win since you don’t know how your customers are going to react to a change,” she added.

In addition, average hold times have decreased by 14 seconds when customers give a call in reason. This decrease is more than the team anticipated when planning the project. The call transfer rate has also decreased by

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8 to 10 percent. “What I find we are doing from a ‘business as usual’ perspective is an almost constant analysis of the data, continually tweaking the call routing to see if we can get even better results,” the senior manager said.

## Cyara’s Ongoing Value

Now that the natural language project is over, about 20 people in the company continue to use Cyara regularly for testing and monitoring. “Every two weeks, we do regular deployments of code to live over a two-day period. If we were doing this manually, I would need 15 people to support that testing over the two days. Using Cyara, I need 4,” the senior manager commented.

The senior manager also said they use Cyara Pulse more and more for monitoring their 24 IVRs, running the same test on each box. “What this tool does is it gives you back minute detail that you cannot get by testing manually, no matter how good you are at testing. It comes back and says that box responded at 3.1 seconds and that one at 3.36 seconds,” which she said helps identify possible issues with an IVR before it fails. “We’ve also got a project coming up towards the end of the year where we are going to be building a new infrastructure, and Cyara is going to be invaluable for that.”

“Cyara has made our testing cycles for any projects much easier, and it is invaluable now for the actual deployment of the code and from the proactive ability of being able to keep up with how the sites are performing, which is becoming more important than we ever realised before,” she said.

In a typical case of success breeding success, the senior manager says that with the positive results from the natural language project, many other teams are looking at Cyara and saying, “I’ll have some of that. It looks good.” For this reason, the number of applications that are being tested continues to increase.

CYARA partners include:



## ABOUT CYARA

Cyara was founded in 2006 with a mission: gather the best expertise in the industry to reinvent customer service. Today, Cyara has fulfilled that promise, as market-leading provider of an omnichannel discovery, testing and monitoring SaaS platform. Over 150 employees around the globe help the world’s most elite companies use Cyara’s platform to accelerate the delivery of seamless and frustration-free customer experiences across every channel. Thanks to Cyara, organizations with combined revenues of over \$3 trillion deliver billions of flawless customer interactions every day. Cyara was named a Gartner Cool Vendor in CRM Customer Service and Customer Support in 2015.



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