

IVR · CONVERSATIONAL AI · 2026

Press 1 Is Over: AI Answers Every Call Now

The phone menu was invented to solve a problem that stopped existing about fifteen years ago. It survives because nobody revisited it, and because until recently there was nothing better to put in its place. There is now.

A menu exists because answering used to be scarce. When you had four physical lines and one receptionist, sorting callers into buckets before a human touched them was a genuine efficiency. On a cloud platform that constraint is gone. **everything can be answered immediately, every time, in parallel**, so the menu is now solving a problem you no longer have while creating several you do. **The structural failure is this: a menu asks the caller to translate their problem into your organisation chart.** They are not ringing your accounts department; they are ringing because an invoice looks wrong. Menus are also linear and unskippable, cannot handle anything outside their options, and routinely collect information that then gets asked for again by a person.

■ The short version

Failure	What it looks like	Why a better menu does not fix it
1. It asks the caller to do your filing	Options are named after your departments. The caller has to work out which internal team owns their problem	Callers do not know your structure and should not have to. They are not ringing "accounts", they are ringing because an invoice looks wrong. No wording fixes the mismatch
2. It is linear and unskippable	You must hear options one, two and three to reach four, every time, at the speed of the recording	The repeat caller who knows they want option four still waits through the whole list. Speed is capped by the medium, not by the caller
3. It cannot handle the unanticipated	Anything that is not one of the five options has nowhere to go. So people press whatever seems closest	A menu can only contain what you thought of. Callers then arrive at the wrong team, who transfer them, and the wait restarts
4. It collects what it cannot use	"Please enter your account number", then a person asks for it again	This is the single most reliably infuriating thing a phone system does, and it happens because the menu and the person are not connected

■ Also worth knowing

What you will find	What is actually behind it
The same percentages repeated across dozens of pages	Almost all of them are published by companies selling AI voice agents, and cite each other rather than a study
No named survey, sample size, year or country	Which means the figure cannot be checked, and may not describe an Australian business at all
Numbers that are suspiciously round and suspiciously convenient	They are being used as marketing, and they are aimed at you

The constraint has gone, and the response to it has not

On a cloud platform there is no fixed line count. Ten simultaneous callers can all be answered on the first ring. Answering is no longer the scarce thing. **attention is**. But the menu was designed to ration answering, so it goes on rationing a resource that is now effectively free, while consuming the one that is not. That is the whole argument in two sentences, and everything below is detail.

■ Questions the full guide answers

- ☐ Are IVR phone menus obsolete?
- ☐ Why do customers hate phone menus?
- ☐ Are the IVR frustration statistics online reliable?
- ☐ How do I measure whether my phone menu is working?
- ☐ What replaces an IVR menu?
- ☐ What is the accessibility problem with phone menus in Australia?
- ☐ When should a business keep its phone menu?

This is the summary. The guide has the detail.

Every point above is worked through in full on our site, with the Australian context, the numbers and the exceptions. If you would rather talk it through, call **1300 881 662** or visit **unidenvoice.com/get-started**.