
Category	Emerging Agency of the year
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Name of Agency

VERSA

In no more than 2x500 words, tell the jury about the two client case studies which best demonstrate the abilities of the agency. Client case study 1:

Flight Centre - Voice Experience Case Study

The travel retailer Flight Centre has extended its digital offering to customers with the help of VERSA, bringing the brand promise of “Lowest Airfares Guaranteed” to life via voice experience platform Amazon Alexa.

Business Challenge

Pioneering the Australian travel experience with “The Lowest Airfares Guaranteed” Flight Centre has brought this positioning to life through their omni-channel approach to customer engagement.

With Alexa launching in Australia and the successful uptake of the platform in the U.S, Flight Centre knew it had to bring “The Lowest Airfares Guaranteed” to the voice experience platform that customers would deeply engage with.

VERSA was tasked to build a travel retail skill on Alexa that engaged with consumers in a new and fulfilling way, driving travel discovery and ultimately, leads for the business.

Business / Customer Truth

Flight Centre’s digital platforms require the travel researcher and travel intender to get in touch with their consultants to get further travel information or finalise flights.

Strategy

Use Alexa to discover the ease of travel through low cost flights

Approach

The Alexa skill followed a path of customer centricity. Give the user the right information at the right time. We sought to empower our users to discover their destinations and be surprised at the cost and convenience through Alexa.

Unlike traditional UX we developed a VX (Voice Experience) flow, which maps out the dialogue that users could have with our skill. The utterances (conversations with Alexa) were derived from the most

searched travel queries from Flight centre and a series of role playing workshops with our conversation strategists, ensuring we used the right context for our conversation.

Our skill searches countries, cities, regions, airlines, cabin classes and dates and converses the best prices all at your verbal request.

To interact with the Skill, users simply say “Alexa, launch Flight Centre,” “Hey Alexa, ask Flight Centre for the cheapest flight to Asia” or “Hey Alexa, ask Flight Centre for a flight to Dublin from February 9th until the 22nd.” and hundreds of iterations in between. No matter your question or how you ask it, you will always get Flight Centre’s cheapest offer.

Once users find their preferred destination and flight, they share their mobile number with Alexa which then prompts a Flight Centre Consultant to follow up and assist with a booking.

The skill was built to discover the ease of travel through low cost flights. Travel discovery would lead to travel intent and capturing that intent via a mobile number allowed Flight Centre consultants to convert leads to sales. A perfect use of voice-commerce logic.

How it performed

Of all people who use the Flight centre skill, 14.96% of people end of giving their mobile number to a consultant to call them back. While the skill has only been in market for 3 months, it’s an indication of the future ahead, users have an appetite to discover the “Lowest Prices Guaranteed” in the age of ask.

Name of other agencies to be credited (if applicable):

As supporting material, you may supply up to five examples of the work. For images (jpegs), audio (audio files) or supporting documents (word doc or PDF), please drag and drop files into the box provided below (each individual file uploaded must be no larger than 5MB - max 5 files).

For all videos of the work in question, please supply the link (YouTube or Vimeo link) in the below fields (one link per field - max 5 links).

Client case study 2:

Dominos - Voice Experience - Case Study

Today everyday Australians with an AMAZON Alexa are enjoying a hands-free ordering experience thanks to our Domino’s Skill. It may be incredibly lazy to order a pizza without lifting a finger, but there’s something quite fun in ordering a pizza whilst you’re watching a movie and yelling at Alexa to place your ‘Quick Order’.

Business Challenge

In 2015, Domino’s pushed the envelope and made ordering possible through Ford Sync, Samsung TV’s, smartwatches and even emoji’s. In 2017, delivery innovations were trialed via Drones and DRU assist - their robotic delivery unit.

Domino's is a brand known for its radical innovation and transformation in pizza ordering, tracking and delivery. Regarding itself as a "Technology Company, disguised as a marketing company disguised as a pizza company", the brand continues to set the bar for ordering & delivery innovations.

The brief to VERSA was simple. How do we get Australian customers to order pizza in a new and exciting way?

Business / Customer Truth

Use technology to make life easier for our customers.

Strategy

Hands-free ordering.

Approach

With a team spirit of "anything is possible" a mantra from the 2010 era of Domino's management - VERSA worked in collaboration with AMAZON and Domino's to create one of the fastest to market Voice Skill that engages users and makes ordering pizza truly hands-free.

The digital roadmapping journey for this project and the Domino's Australia team wasn't about everything that the Amazon Alexa could do for ordering, but rather what was the one thing we could do really well. Every great digital experience comes from an iterative approach and we knew this was no different.

We designed a skill around simplicity & convenience.

To place an order using the skill, users must first set up a Quick Order in their Domino's account. Users interact with the skill by simply saying "Alexa, ask Domino's to order my favorite".

The "quick order" is the cornerstone of our skill, ultimately building frequency of purchase and simplifying the order process. From here, users are able to track their order - "Alexa, ask Domino's to track my order" and even discover weekly discounts "Alexa what are the Dominos specials this week?".

The skill is in its first iteration and the goal is to grow the voice experience intents alongside the platform growth of the Australian market. Domino's is the first of its kind to launch voice ordering via Amazon Alexa here in the Australia market and VERSA was the first office to have pizza delivered to their door via Amazon Alexa.

Performance

37.3% of all users who intend to purchase on the Dominos skill end up ordering on the platform.

This is a phenomenal result for Domino's, it suggests the platform and skill are fit for purpose and we've been able to truly deliver a hand free ordering experience.

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In a further 500 words or less please provide an overview of the rest of the year's best WORK.

VERSA has not only established and cornered the commercial voice experience market in Australia since its doors opened in late 2017, the agency has gone global, hopping the pond to deliver multi-lingual experiences in France, Germany, and Japan.

The success of VERSA is fuelled by a light bulb moment, bravery, and a hunger for innovation. With large platforms such as Google Assistant, Alexa, Cortana and Genie as the primary delivery platforms, the bar for voice has been set very high. In such a short period of time, VERSA has delivered 11 clients projects and set its sights on rapid global expansion. VERSA has delivered a series of highly engaging experiences such as the first voice ordered pizza for Domino's, finding the cheapest flights on Flight Centre and exploring cinema times for Village Cinemas for the much-anticipated launch of Amazon Alexa in Australia.

VERSA is the first agency to have delivered an unprecedented fully-certified commercial voice experience in 20 working days with zero errors. The stringent certification process for voice is not for the faint-hearted, with global teams working around the clock to bench-test voice experiences, hunting for bugs, errors and best-practice, not allowing anything to enter the marketplace without full and rigorous testing.

VERSA prides itself on a close working relationship with Google and Amazon and has been invited to present at a number of key speaking forums with the Alexa team in Australia and abroad including ADMA, SXSW and AGDA, as well as leading voice hack days for the Victorian Government, hosting our very own voice education evenings, *VERSA Voice Sessions*, and we are actively involved in the developer community with various industry meetups. We have also worked closely with consultants such as KPMG and PwC to educate and advise on voice for their clients.

The client and respective project list have expanded significantly, with almost a dozen key projects in the pipeline, from functional / utility-oriented pieces to more entertaining releases coming to the Australian and international markets in 2018.

Says Kath Blackham, Founder and Managing Director of VERSA: "It's been a wild ride and I am thrilled at what we have achieved in such a short period of time. Our client list has grown from zero to eleven. We have a number of voice projects around the globe and we are iterating on a platform that has only been commercially available in Australia for less than a few months.

The unique skill-set we've developed during this time has enabled VERSA to not only embrace the complexity of VX at the enterprise level but to deliver engaging and sticky customer experiences that have yielded some fantastic results for clients."

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Australia's first enterprise-level voice experience agency
- 8 new Australian clients
- 3 new global clients
- Educated and delivered insights to the Global Speaker Circuit
- Fastest delivered and certified enterprise-level voice experience

- 100% staff retention
 - 1.5% million revenue in year one
 - 29% EBIT Margin
 - 5 FTE's with 4 open positions
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As supporting material, you may supply up to five examples of the work. For images (jpegs), audio (audio files) or supporting documents (word doc or PDF), please drag and drop files into the box provided below (each individual file uploaded must be no larger than 5MB - max 5 files).

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<https://vimeo.com/261428353>

COMMERCIAL SUCCESS, INDUSTRY IMPACT AND MOMENTUM: The jury will be looking for evidence that this is the agency's year - please share details of commercial success over the 12 months including client retention and account wins, tell us how the agency has moved forward during the last year and please set out the contribution of the agency and its staff to the wider industry. Where possible, please provide actual revenue and profit numbers; where not possible please provide percentage comparisons to the corresponding 12 months.

"What an incredible 6 months. The uptake of Versa's service offering has been fantastic and revenue is currently growing at 20% month on month. We are forecasting the first 12 months of revenue to be \$1.5m. "

Anthony Brian, Finance Director.

In the 6 months since incorporation VERSA has secured 11 projects wins valued at \$550k. To date, they have completed \$400k throughput and for the last 3 months have been trading at a 29% EBIT margin. VERSA now has 5 FTE's and will be looking to expand this team in the coming months with over 9 opportunities currently being negotiated and an ever-growing pipeline.

We have seen phenomenal growth and momentum in the last 6 months. Below is a snapshot of our achievements:

Australia's first dedicated voice-experience agency opened its doors to establish the market.

Gone from Australian market to Global market with projects in France, Germany and Japan.

11 projects confirmed.

Working with some of Australia's top brands including:

- Flight Centre
- Dominos Australia
- Village Cinemas
- RACV
- Coastal Watch
- Victorian State Government
- Australia's largest car share company (confidential)

- Leading Australian financial company (confidential)
- International Beverage Company (confidential)
- International Food Brand (confidential)
- International Food Brand (confidential)

Key partnerships with Google, Amazon, and Microsoft.

VERSA has successfully educated the Australian market in voice via presentations and workshops at ADMA, Melbourne Design Week, Academy X, AGDA, REA, Data Day and Pausefest.

VERSA has worked with PWC and VicGov to help ideate a solution to bring voice across the whole of Victorian state government.

VERSA has built the first voice experience lab in Australia.

Ordered the first hands free pizza delivery in Australia.

CULTURE: In no more than 500 words outline details of the organisation's innovation in recruitment and retention, focus on staff development, insight into building a wider team culture and delivery of high-performance outcomes. Please set out details of gender and cultural diversity within the agency and outline what specific plans you have in place to build on this. Please include details of staff retention, including a specific percentage of staff employed by the agency on the first day of the judging period who were still on the payroll on the last day. (The agency may also enter the Mumbrella Award For Culture based on this portion of the agency of the year entry if it wishes).

VERSA has been born out of innovation and the hunger to really give everyone a voice including our staff. Our team comes from all walks of life, at VERSA we focus on passion and drive and encourage our staff to try different things. Whether you are a Voice Producer with an interest in development or an Account Director with a flair for scripting, we will support it. Our aim is to help our staff grow with the agency and give them the opportunities to develop into the person they want to be inside and outside of the agency. It is an old aged approach to restrict people by their CV, we are staunch in our approach to recruitment - we hire the person, not the role.

It is about giving our staff the freedom and the space to do what we love; to innovate. We have a dedicated Voice Lab kitted out with the latest voice tech and internet of things to allow our staff the build, break and refine new ideas at any time of the day. We offer all our staff flexible working hours so they never have to retrofit their personal life around work but fit work into their lives how they wish. We have found this has been instrumental in the delivery of high-performance outcomes such as our voice development for Domino's Pizza. Built in 20 days, and delivered long before the deadline and passing certification in the first attempt, this is a great example of allowing our team to work how they wish at the time they wanted too.

"As a Father of 2 amazing girls, I try to be as present as possible. VERSA truly understands that I am a Father first and always goes above and beyond to ensure I don't miss a thing. It is great to work on projects such as Domino's where the team is aligned, we have a goal and we ensure we deliver without compensating our personal lives." Guy Munro, Business Director.

Although in our infancy, since beginning this journey over a year ago, we have retained all our staff we couldn't be prouder. To be at the forefront of the future of Australia can be a daunting prospect, but we are stringent on our approach to support and training. We have invested significant time and money by sending our team to be trained by the leading voice agency in the US, Rain.

Finally, although flexible towards many things we are strict on one thing and that is to give everyone a voice, regardless of age, gender, experience or race. Founded by Kath Blackham, VERSA is committed to gender equality and that's why we love voice. Voice is the most inclusive user experience we have ever experienced and that is reflected in our team. We ensure everyone has a chance to voice their idea or opinion and we work together to ensure we produce the best work as a team.

INNOVATION AND BRAVERY: In no more than 500 words, explain what the agency did to change the game in the year under scrutiny, whether internally or externally. (The agency may also enter The Mumbrella Award For Innovation and the Mumbrella Award for Bravery if it wishes).

"Going into the market where there is no voice skills or devices whatsoever and very little or no understanding of the industry overseas, is in equal parts brave, crazy and brilliant."

Andrew Howlett Rain.

Exactly 12 months ago, Kath Blackham (Founder and Managing Director at VERSA) went to SXSW with fellow SoDA member from Rain, one of the world's leading voice experience agencies based in the US. After hearing the transformation Rain experienced through introducing voice, Kath knew this was the next big thing. What started as a conversation late into the night, turned into many early morning phone calls as it became obvious to Kath that "Voice" was already huge globally and only a matter of time before it took Australia by storm. And so Australia's first enterprise-level voice experience (VX) agency, VERSA, was born. Starting the company was easy, the rest was a deep breath, innovation and a lot of hard work.

With a stroke of luck and persistence, Kath managed to get a meeting in Singapore with Jeff Gibb, who was launching Alexa in India at the time. This is where the pair began to set out a plan for launching Amazon Alexa in Australia. Not long after, we sent a team to work alongside Google to release assistant apps across the market.

With no voice skills at all in Australia, the only option was for VERSA to send all of our team to Utah to be trained by Rain. This was a big investment for an emerging agency. There were very few people in Australia who had heard of Alexa or Google Assistant/Home and we were still months away with nothing in the market. VERSA set out to educate everyone via a series of voice workshops, hack days, keynotes and events. Getting brands to understand why they should care about Voice has been one of Kath's biggest challenges; pitching an idea that has no visual cues is incredibly hard.

We have now built or in the process of building more than 11 Alexa skills and Google Actions and have built great relationships with both Amazon and Google. This journey has been true innovation from the beginning. Voice is unique from other digital platforms; it is true human-centered design. We are continuing to innovate and have launched a number of products into the market that supports clients from a voice perspective including a "VMS" (CMS for voice) and a framework called VOXA. It is still early days for Voice in Australia but we believe that Australians are innately forward-thinking and love new tech which is a perfect environment for Voice to thrive.

We trained a team, implemented new processes and set up a company before the product we were building had even been announced, let alone launched. Stupid or brilliant - that one still remains to be seen but we are on track to turn over \$1.5 million in the first year so there are at least a few believers along for the ride with us!

Please upload a team photo (files must be no larger than 5MB)

[Download File:MumbrellaAwards_EmergingAgency2018_HL_v01.pdf](#)

Please upload an EPS file of your company logo (files must be no larger than 5MB)

[Download File:VERSA.eps](#)

If i am successfully shortlisted, I agree to a face-to-face session with the Jury on May 23 2018. Please ensure that this date goes into the appropriate calendar now, as inability to present will disadvantage the team.

Yes

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