



**CASE** STUDY



**CITIZEN SERVICE LINE 115  
GIVES ALL THE RIGHT ANSWERS**

Interactive Voice Response supports  
Berlin administration's central telephone service



INES FIEDLER,  
ITDZ BERLIN CHAIRWOMAN

*"The central public administration line, 115, upholds high quality standards and undertakes to provide citizens with the administration's services in a fast and easy way. We have been looking into voice dialog systems intensively so to be able to keep up our service quality in view of our growing caller numbers. Having opted for CreaLog, we are relying on an internationally proven technical solution."*

**"WELCOME TO 115.  
YOU HAVE REACHED THE SERVICE CENTRE IN BERLIN ..."**

The voice of the citizen service line 115 utters this sentence around 5000 times each day. It is the friendly welcome for callers from the voice-enabled computer that handles call forwarding to a range of different advising teams in Berlin and helps call agents give frequently requested advice.

What exactly is this voice enabled computer in Berlin all about? Who operates said Service Centre that deals with citizens' concerns day in, day out? This task is assigned to the state-owned IT Service Centre (ITDZ – IT-Dienstleistungszentrum) of Berlin, which develops innovative IT solutions enabling the Berlin administration to offer their citizens efficient services. Providing centralised advice support for the 115 service line and others forms a major element of ITDZ's services.

**INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY HELPS RESOLVE ISSUES**

With call volumes continuously on the rise or additional work needing to be done at the service centre, the essential question is: An-

noy citizens with long waiting queues or employ innovative technology?

**STANDARD QUESTIONS AND ROUTINE ADVICE: INTERACTIVE VOICE RESPONSE IN ACTION**

Working with CreaLog, a concept was elaborated defining the following core objectives:

- Improve effectiveness and economy of the Citizen Line 115 information service
- Unburden advisory staff of standard questions and routine advice

**THUS THE INTERACTIVE VOICE RESPONSE SYSTEM IS CURRENTLY USED AS FOLLOWS**

- During office hours from 7 am to 6 pm, service centre staff members help citizens by giving them useful information. In concluding the calls, the staffers transfer callers to the voice enabled computer that will then patiently repeat the requested information to the caller—for instance, opening hours, required documents, or fees. This enables significant cuts in call durations.
- Outside office hours, from 6.01 pm to 7.59 am, the system provides general information on top subjects. This can make calls placed during office hours unnecessary and so reduce call volumes.

**INFORMATION OFFERED TO CITIZEN LINE CALLERS**

The 115 Citizen Line offers information answering the most frequent questions regarding the Berlin administration's activities and services. Callers learn:

- Which municipal department to turn to for their concern
- Where they can find that department and what its opening hours are
- Which documents they will need for their concern to be handled
- Whether a fee is payable and if so, in what amount
- Details of the contact person at the department

CreaLog's Interactive Voice Response system helps service centre staff members inform citizens in a friendly, qualified, and comprehensive way. If an enquiry cannot be answered conclusively in the first instance the caller can optionally be transferred to the relevant department directly or even be forwarded to the appropriate contact.

Subjects most commonly named when calling 115 range from ID card or passport applications to new owner registrations for vehicles through to business registrations.

### SILKE MEUSER WOULD LIKE TO REGISTER HER NEW CAR

The deal is closed. Silke Meuser is happy with her new used car and would love to go for her first spin right away. But she hasn't yet been registered as the car's new owner, and it hasn't got valid number plates either. What exactly must she do now?

"Why don't you call 115", her husband Marcus suggests.

Silke grabs her mobile, dials 115 and, after the welcome announcement, chooses the first menu item. In no time, she is connected to a team member who offers her a choice of appointment times at the proper vehicle registration office and also explains which documents she will need to bring with her.

### WHEN MICHAEL MAIER NEEDS A NEW PASSPORT

The Maiers are both looking forward to their planned vacation in the Caribbean. During the weekend, Michael Maier is appalled to find out that his passport is going to expire in a few days. What can be done? He has read somewhere that the 115 line can help him even if the civil service offices are closed. After greeting him, giving some advice, and quoting the starting menu, the voice-enabled computer presents him with these choices in a personal document menu: „... to apply for a passport, press 2 ...“. No sooner said than done – and after a few short minutes Michael Maier knows when he can apply for his new passport in which citizen centre and using which documents.

THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION LINE, 115, ACTS AS A HOTLINE AND FIRST CONTACT POINT FOR ALL KINDS OF QUESTIONS FOR MORE THAN 400 LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND 12 FEDERAL STATES IN GERMANY.



### THE VOICE-PORTAL ALSO WORKS FOR THE FOREIGNERS' REGISTRATION OFFICE AND THE STEGLITZ TAX OFFICE

The CreaLog solution also offers basic information on the topics of residence permits, Schengen visa and residence legislation for callers of Berlin's Foreigners' Registration Office. They can learn on which of the administration's Web sites they can make appointments, which documents they need, when the office is open to visitors, and how to get there by car, bus, or train. During normal office hours those seeking advice can also have their call transferred to an office staff member, of course.

*"I am committed to create Germany's most advanced governmental organization by the end of the now beginning legislative period. The citizens' line, 115, offers our citizens excellent services today. We are investigating the assistive use of interactive voice response solutions intensively in an effort to expand this service and at the same time operate it more economically."*

SABINE SMENTEK, BERLIN'S  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ICT



The dialog system's job at the Steglitz tax office is to route incoming calls to the ITDZ's service centre or to the tax offices' second level in a sufficiently intelligent way to allow even high call volumes to be handled without unduly long hold times. Apart from general information about the tax office's opening hours, address, or Web site, callers can choose from these menu items:

- Information concerning the tax identification number
- Queries about wage tax classes, allowing for deductions from source levied wage tax, or the so-called ELStAM method
- Questions concerning an individual letter from the tax office, the processing status of a tax return as well as information on payments or amounts due.

The Senate Administration for Internal Affairs and Sport and the Berlin ITDZ Berlin will continue to expand the voice dialog system, basing their decision on its great success and efficiency improvements.

## CUTTING EDGE TECHNOLOGY IN ACTION: A SHORT OVERVIEW

The ITDZ operates two IVR systems with 60 lines each. State-of the-art software is used for best possible voice recognition. All dialogs can be configured in a flexible way by the ITDZ's staff themselves. New administration locations can be integrated into the dialog pool quickly and easily.

## ABOUT THE ITDZ

The Berlin IT Service Centre (ITDZ – IT-Dienstleistungszentrum) is the central solution provider for the federal state of Berlin. Acting as an interface between public authorities, business, and science, the ITDZ develops major IT solutions for the Berlin administration, enabling its staff to provide Berlin's citizens with efficient administrative services. ITDZ is a public law institution and is financed by its rendered services. For nearly 50 years, ITDZ has been holding core competencies in the areas of voice and data communications as well as smooth operation of an IT infrastructure for the State of Berlin.

For more information please visit [www.itdz-berlin.de](http://www.itdz-berlin.de)

## ABOUT CREALOG

A cutting-edge company with all the best references, CreaLog is a leading vendor of Voice Portal solutions across 30 countries in Europe. Fully web-administrative, the CreaLog Platform is on stream with a total of 60,000 installed lines at more than 400 customers from over 30 industries.

Our clients include major corporations such as PAYBACK, UniCredit and Savings Banks, interactive TV channels like 1-2-3.tv and Sky, as well as value added service providers and Telcos like Deutsche Telekom, Vodafone, A1 Telekom Austria and Swisscom.

More information at: [www.crealog.com](http://www.crealog.com)



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