



## Fantasy Utility IVR

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No one IVR implementation is flawless, but we've brought together some of the best task submenus from different utility IVRs to create a dream IVR—or something close to it. For this report, the *E Source Utility Customer Care Service* is trying something new: an online report that allows you to listen to real examples of IVR menus rather than reading them on a page. We present sound clips of some of the best treatments we found for the tasks utility customers most want to accomplish on the telephone along with analysis of what makes these "good," and where even they fall short of perfection. We've removed company names from the sound clips and, in some cases, made other small deletions to improve the "customer" experience.

We based our choices on established best practices and the results of our recent benchmark study, in which five reviewers listened to 103 utility IVRs.

Here is just one part of our Fantasy Utility IVR report:

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*BEGIN Report Excerpt*

**Please note:** This report utilizes audio recordings. You will need to make sure that your computer's sound output is activated and at a comfortable listening level. The audio is delivered by Adobe Flash Player, which may already be installed on your computer. If it is not, you will be prompted to install it. The installation only takes a few minutes and does not require a restart. If you use ad-blocking software that disables the Flash Player, you will need to allow this page to load in order to play the audio.

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## PAYMENT AND BILLING OPTIONS

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Flash

### Analysis

The main purpose of this option is to collect billing and payment options in one place. Payment and Billing Options is another menu section that often falls short, whether because the payment options are scattered around the menu, because the caller authentication routine is misplaced and locks customers out of public information such as payment locations, because the payment option names are vague or jargony, or because of any of several other missteps. The example we offer here avoids these pitfalls.

### Best practice

- Payment and Billing Options are consolidated or adjoining
- Distinguishes between automatic monthly withdrawals and a one-time payment
- Menu provides callers with sufficient information about the payment process to make necessary decisions
- Offers plenty of options for processing payments
- Menu available on public side of IVR

- More than one way to identify account

### Things to avoid

- Order of options is convoluted or illogical
- Cluttered by repetition or wordiness
- Exposes customers to long blocks of talk
- Options are scattered across IVR
- Irrelevant options
- Located under vague heading such as "other types of calls"

*END Report Excerpt*

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### More Information

- [E Source Utility Customer Care Service](#)
- [E Source 2007 Review of North American Electric and Gas Company IVRs \(115 KB PDF\)](#)

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