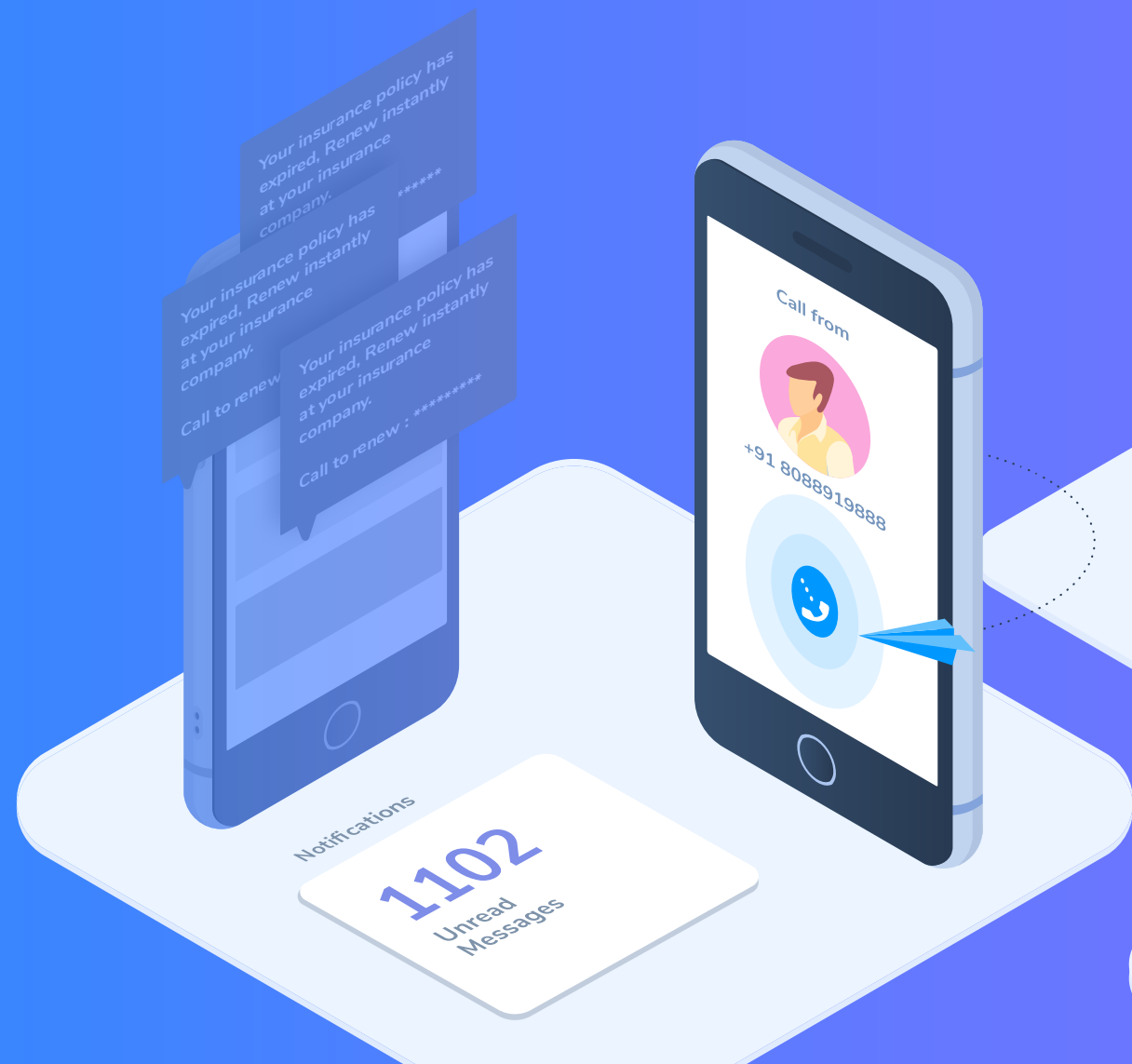


Automated calls vs SMS Reminders

Why calls win



Whitepaper

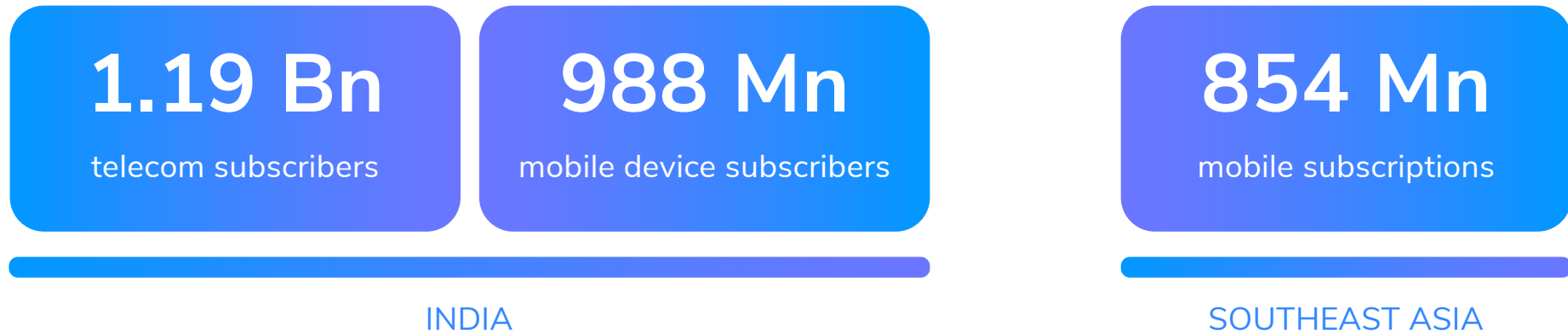


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Executive summary

By the end of 2017, India saw 1.19 billion telecom subscribers with 988 million mobile device subscribers while Southeast Asia saw 854 million mobile subscriptions. That's a lot of scope for businesses to thrive by executing the right kind of marketing automation -- via SMS or Voice or even email.



When done well, automation is cost-effective and time-saving for businesses and customers alike. In the age of instant communication, most brands prefer text messages for customer engagement and rightly so; if the customer belongs to a certain ‘younger’ age group and the industry of the brand is more ‘want’ oriented than ‘need’ oriented. For instance, a fashion website is more likely to send an SMS to engage with customers than a bank or a hospital. By contrast, the latter is more likely to choose calls as their mode of engagement considering the urgency of the sector.

This white paper aims to bring out the unique benefits of automated calls for reminders as opposed to SMS reminders which have a long-standing reputation of being spam and ubiquitous.

SMS vs Calls

What gives

The shortcomings of SMS reminders

While SMS marketing is still very relevant today, the power of SMS is easily abused. From sending irrelevant content to frequent texts, SMS is considered fleeting and unimportant, at best.



In 2017 alone, India was found to have the most spam SMSes sent globally. And that's counting the number of offensive and inappropriate texts that are sent to women on a weekly basis (one in every three or 33 percent of women).

Despite controlled regulations on SMS as well as calls on unsolicited marketing, the SMS has emerged as the new email inbox. Texts increasingly go unread because the preview is enough to let a consumer know whether it's of significance or not. And the general conception

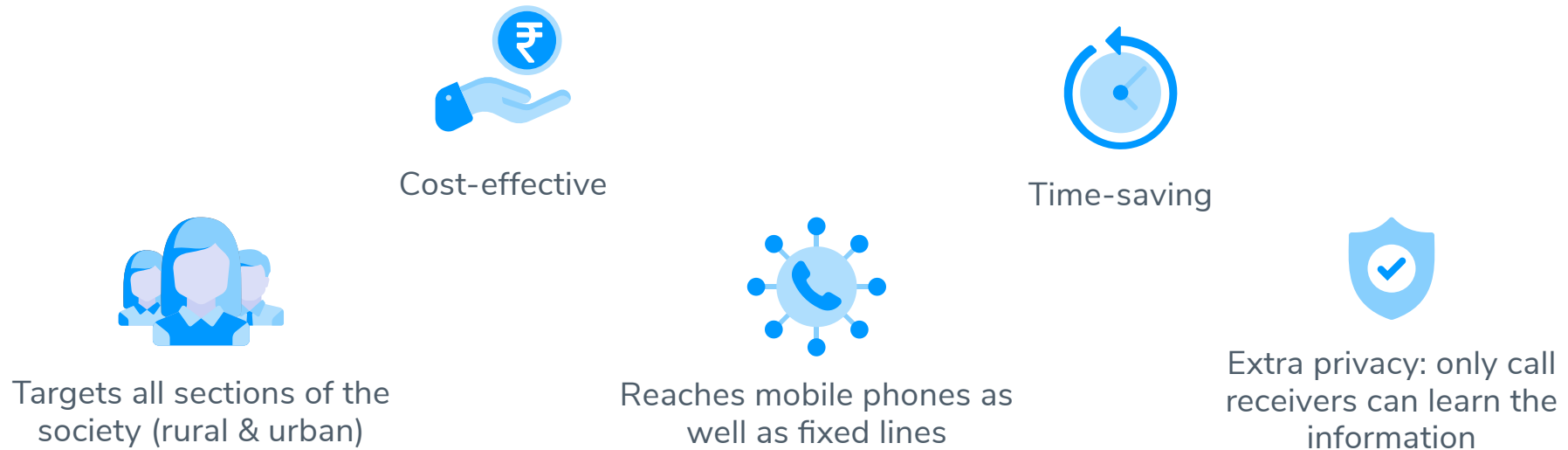
of any important communication coming through phone calls rather than texts.

As far as responsiveness is concerned, calls and texts get nearly the same amount of response. However, thanks to the rising number of unwanted SMSes, reminders are constantly missed. Meaning, important reminders of bill payments or hospital appointments get buried in the flood of text messages, which ultimately don't serve the purpose. This has paved the way for healthcare, finance, and insurance industries to look for another cost-effective alternative.

How calls for reminders emerge as winners

Apart from the natural inclination to attend phone calls, reminders are best sent over voice calls for more than the obvious reasons. Considering the immense presence of varied age groups across different industries, voice calls are barrier-free. Which means, the persons on the receiving end of the calls needn't necessarily be literate or even own a cellphone. That's the power of a voice call reminder service: it literally surpasses all barriers, or in this case, all demographics and populations.

Considered a legacy tool, most customers (millennials included) prefer to be reminded of appointments and events via voice, and so do businesses. Here's why:



Automated voice call reminders have a proven track-record of churning better results with respect to hospital/ clinic appointments, and even encourage better healthcare in the poor minorities. While younger generations still prefer texting as the mode of communication, the older generations, who prefer talking on the phone, are the majority of the consumers to the greater section of the industries.



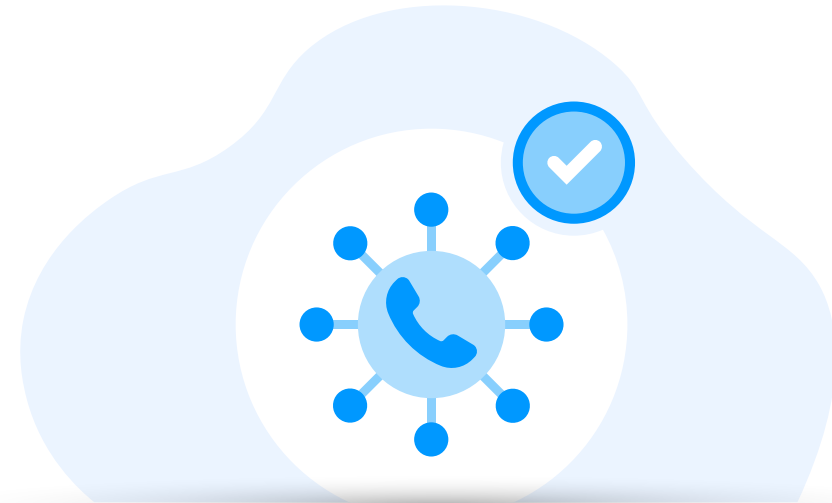
Busting myths and stereotypes about call reminders

Calls are equally annoying to customers - NO

As long as the call is relevant and timed with precision, customers are not likely to treat phone calls with the same disdain they have for SMS. With any channel, the key is to keep it simple, straightforward, and useful to the customer. Unless the company plans on bombarding its customers with phone calls everyday, voice call reminders might work to the benefit of the company and build greater customer loyalty.

Do people even listen to automated calls? - YES

Any channel can easily turn to a customer's least favorite mode of communication -- if not executed right. Automated calls are similar too. When the recording is simple, gets to the point fast, and has a clear CTA that allows the listener to easily respond to, the automated call reminder is the most profitable for both, the customer and the company. Instead of sticking to the age-old methods of robocalls, if the voice recordings are tweaked to sound more personal and direct, companies have chances of greater success.



Can I measure the call success? - YES

A specific, clear CTA at the end of the reminder calls is all it takes to see if it has worked or not. By making it easy for customers to talk to a live agent at the end of a call, or even record their response if that's what they want to do, you get access to more insights. You understand who was on the line, how long they were listening to the recording, what buttons they pressed, and when they chose to hang up. Using this data, businesses can customize experiences to their users and continuously improve their service delivery.

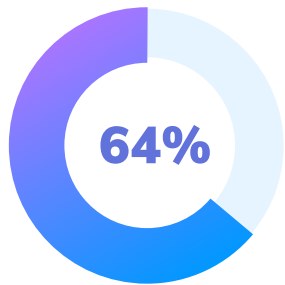
Who can use automated calls

Call reminders can be used to the benefit of companies in numerous ways by industries in healthcare, finances, educational institutions, and even governmental organizations.

- **Payment updates:** helps fastrack bill payments and even by helping the customer plan their expenses. For financial institutions, it lowers the likelihood of bad debts too.
- **Doctor appointments:** a quick confirmation call or an option to reschedule appointments, or even a recording of a test report -- hospitals use automated call reminders extensively to manage missed appointments and missspend of resources.
- **Confirmation calls:** whether to speed up an application process or confirm the identity of the customer.
- **School notifications:** be it about exam rescheduling or an emergency, educational institutions find automated calls a more reliable method of communication.
- **Events and campaigns:** any organization with an event or campaign with a specific goal can customize automated calls to suit their business.

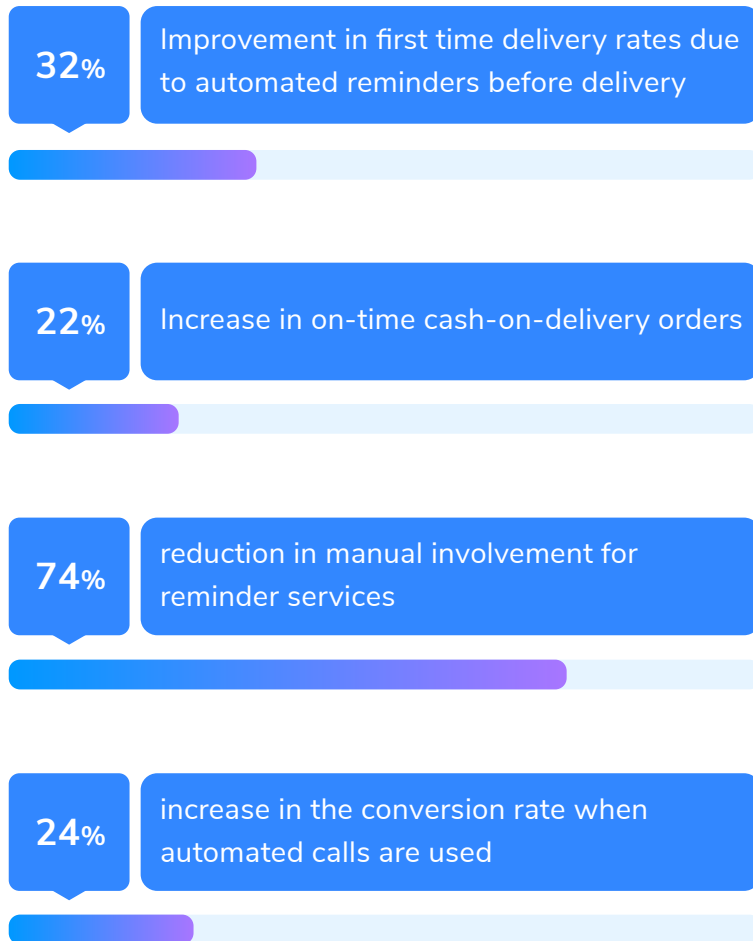


Effectiveness of automated IVR calls



Success rate due to robust features like

- Dynamic caller ID
- Retry limits
- Retry intervals
- Local language support



Conclusion

While SMS continues to be the popular choice amongst media, it's imperative that voice reminders also be taken into consideration. It is under-utilized and underrated. What may be a viable option for some businesses may not be for another. By choosing based on what works best for your business and the demographics, automated calls can act as the turning point to your customer loyalty and satisfaction.



PUT AUTOMATED CALLS TO TEST

About Exotel

Exotel is one of Southeast Asia's largest cloud telephony companies. Our aim is to help large businesses streamline and bring efficiency to their voice communication. We take away some of the biggest pain points of traditional systems like EPABX and PBX and allow businesses to use world-class APIs to build a reliable communication system.

At Exotel, we have worked in easing call automation implementation for businesses, while bearing the customer comfort in mind. Our powerful voice solutions are built for reliability and scale.

Ready to automate your customer calls? Schedule a demo to see how it's done.

BLOCK CALENDAR FOR DEMO

