

Voice Assistance Marketing

The value of conversation

- ⌘⌘ How advancing technology forces us to fix mistakes from the past.

Introduction

This document is an attempt at exploring the chances of voice assistant marketing for brands and entire organizations alike.

This exploration is divided into five parts:

01. An overwhelming success story.

This section highlights the significant development of the voice assistance market.

02. Putting things into perspective:

Less promising numbers and some historical context.

03. Tasks & chances for brands:

To-dos and opportunities for brands based on this context, and therefore relativized assessment.

04. Call to action:

How organizations should utilize voice assistance marketing.

05. Best practices:

Recommendations for designing conversational interfaces successfully.

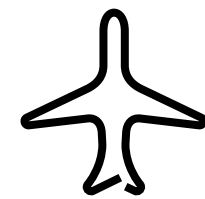
01

An overwhelming success story

[An overwhelming success story]

Market penetration

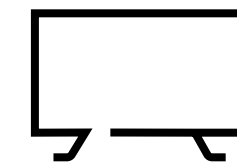
Here are some technologies, machines or devices and the time it took them to be used by 50 Million people worldwide.



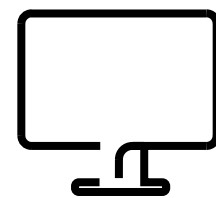
Airplane
68 Years



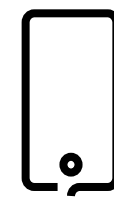
Telephone
50 Years



Television
22 Years



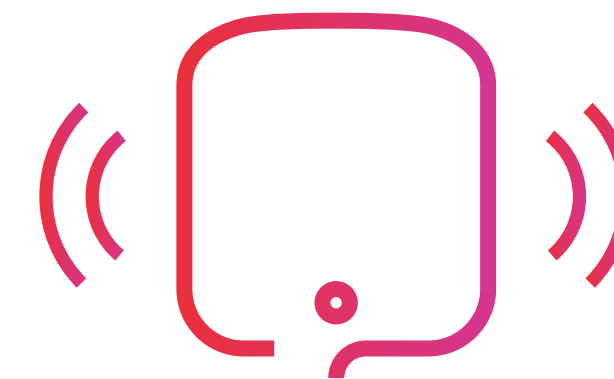
Computer
14 Years



Cell Phone
12 Years



Internet
7 Years



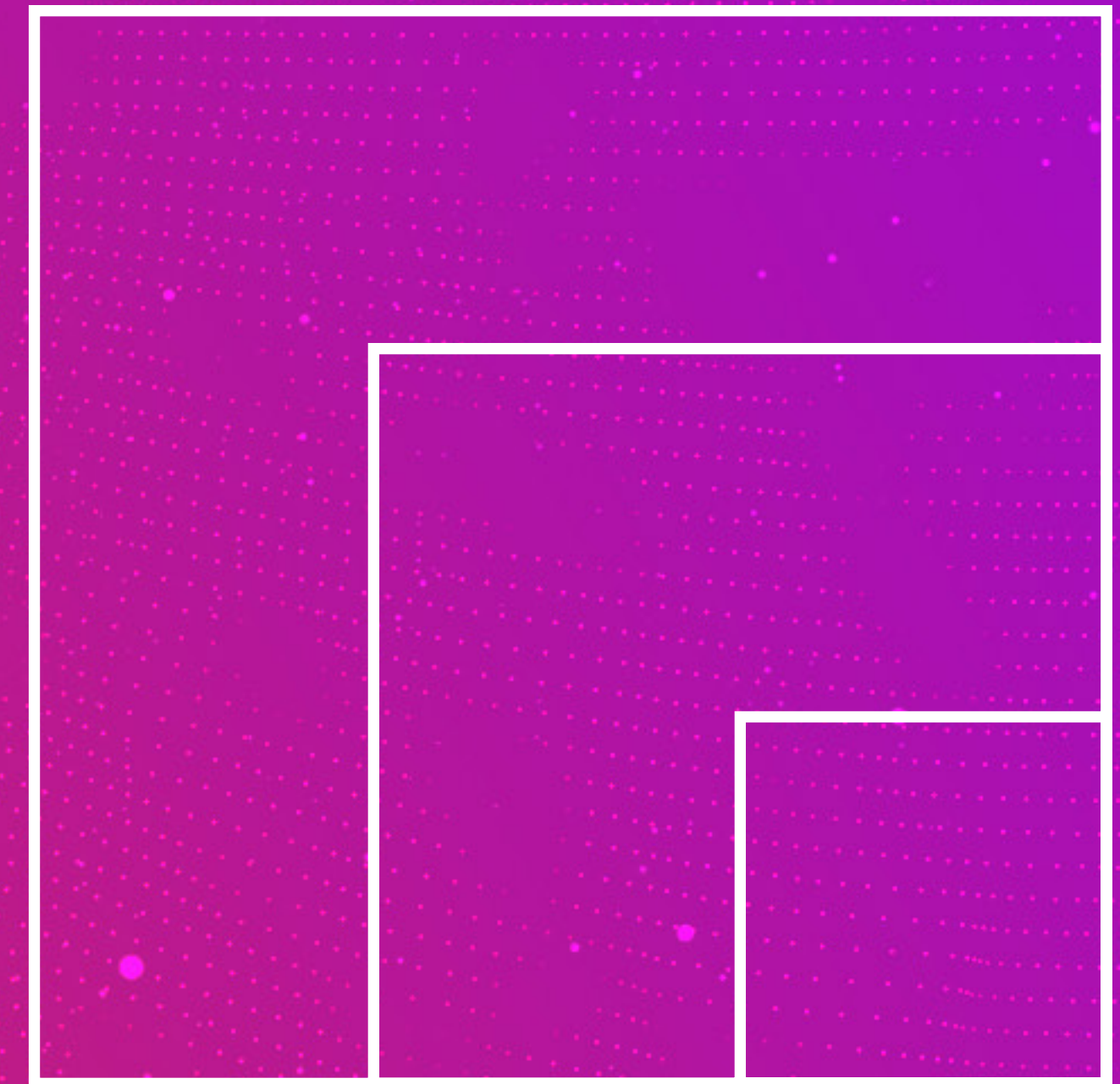
Smart Speaker
2.5 Years

[An overwhelming success story]

Market Size

There is an exclusive Amazon Alexa fund that provides up to \$100 million dollars venture capital funding to fuel voice technology innovation for developers, device-makers, and companies.

However, that is just a tiny indication for the entire market size: **The market of virtual assistants is expected to reach \$3 billion dollars in 2020.**



”

50% of all searches will be
voice searches by 2020.

” ” ”

ComScore, 2017, The Future of Voice from
Smartphones to Smart Speakers to Smart Homes

“

87% of regular voice assistant users agree that
when voice technology works properly,
it really simplifies my life.

” ” ”

SpeakEasy Report, 2017, J. Walter Thompson London,
Mindshare, Mindshare Futures

”

Siri gets over 1 billion requests
every week.

” ” ”

Craig Federighi, 2015, Apple’s Senior Vice President of
Software Engineering at the WWDC 2015 Keynote presentation

”

Chinese conversational AI Baidu announced
that its assistant has reached an install base of
100 million devices, up from 50 million just
six months ago.

□ □ □

Craig Federighi, 2015, Apple’s Senior Vice President of
Software Engineering at the WWDC 2015 Keynote presentation

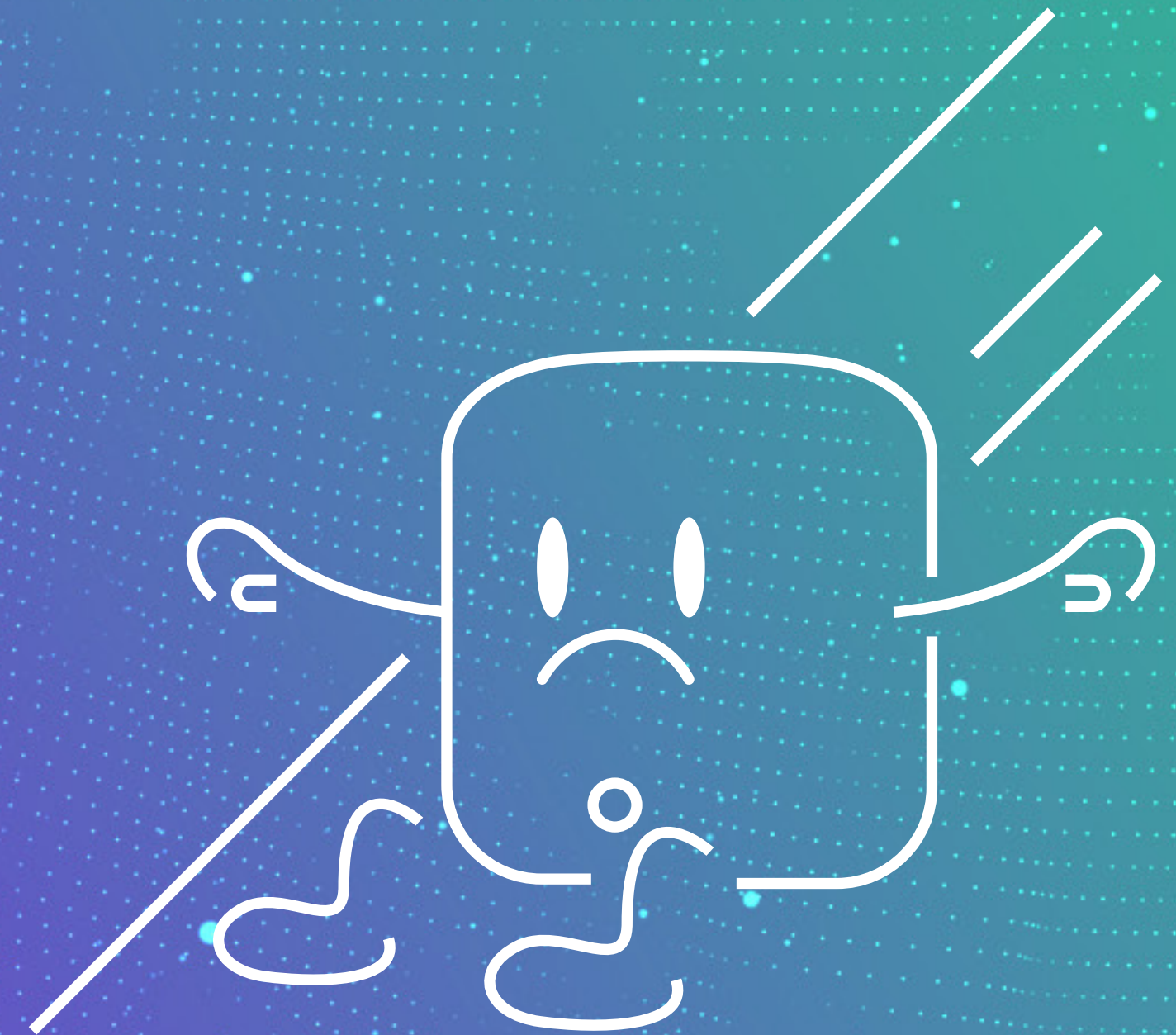
02

Putting things into perspective

[Putting things into perspective]

The downside

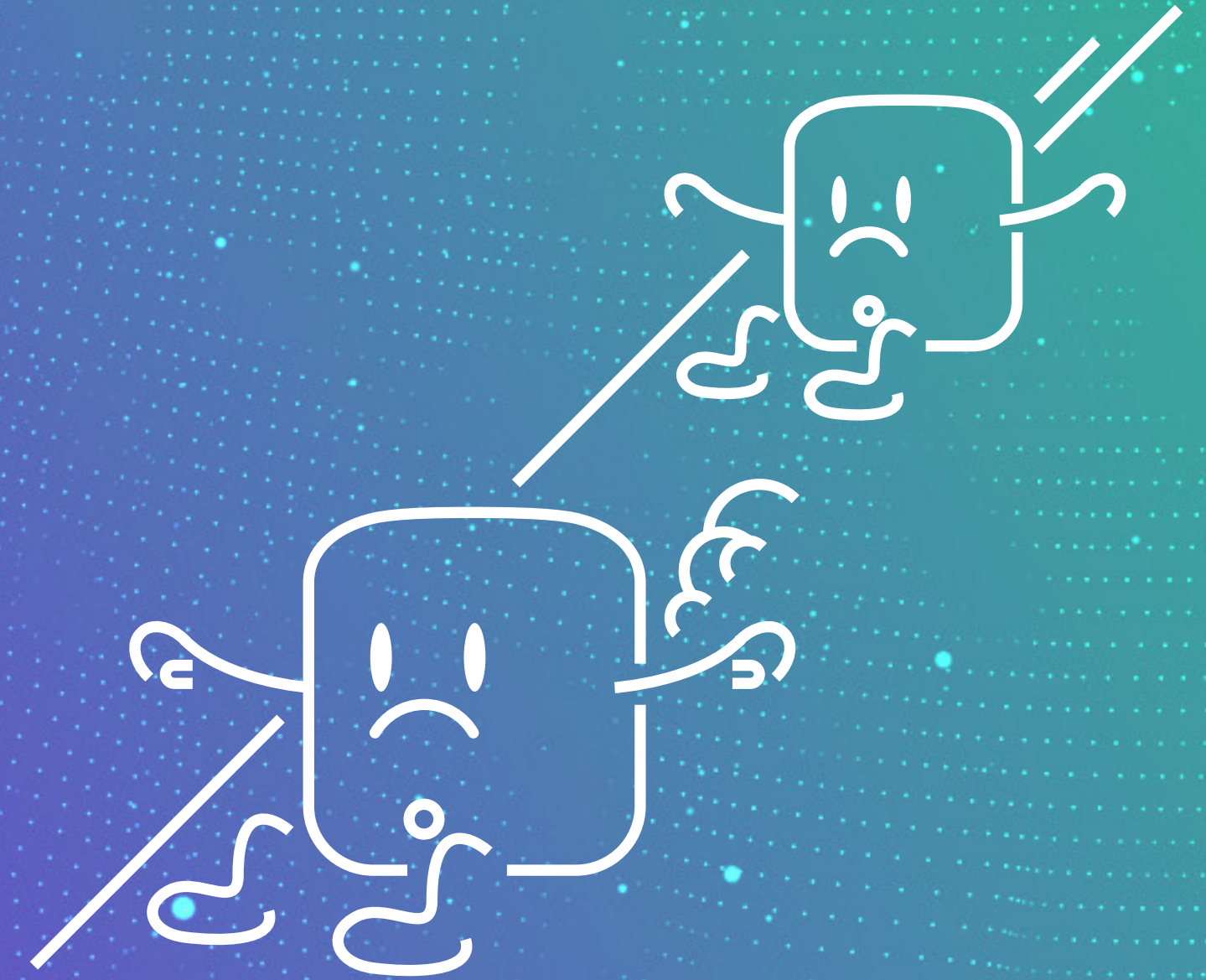
According to two people briefed on Amazon's internal figures, merely 2% of consumers who own the 50 million Alexa-enabled devices have used the voice option to make a purchase so far.



[Putting things into perspective]

The downside's downside

Of the 2% who bought something using Alexa voice shopping, some 90% declined to use it to make a second purchase, one of the sources said.



[Putting things into perspective]

Just a hype?

Does that mean that everything remains the same?

Change isn't necessary?

Brands don't need to act?

Is it possible that voice assistance marketing was just the next overrated hype?



Some context

In order to understand how commerce evolves on new technology platforms, let's look back to 1990. When the internet was publicly available, so was electronic commerce. Within the first ten years the eCommerce revenue generated by B2C retail in Germany alone reached 1.3 billion (Mrd.) Euros in 2000.

However, within its first ten years mobile commerce in Germany rose to 23,5€ billion (Mrd.) Euros (07-17). Therefore, it's safe to say, adaptation to new forms of commerce can be described as rapidly growing.



“

Why should people learn to use technology
interfaces when we can simply make the
technology more human?

” ” ”

Fernando Lucini, Managing Director, Accenture Digital
explains while talking about the preference people have for
text and voice-based interactions

[Putting things into perspective]

It gets personal

In the last 50 years humanity spent a lot of time and resources trying to break down barriers. Barriers in the interaction between computers and humans have always been critical and forced us to compromise and learn new ways of interacting.

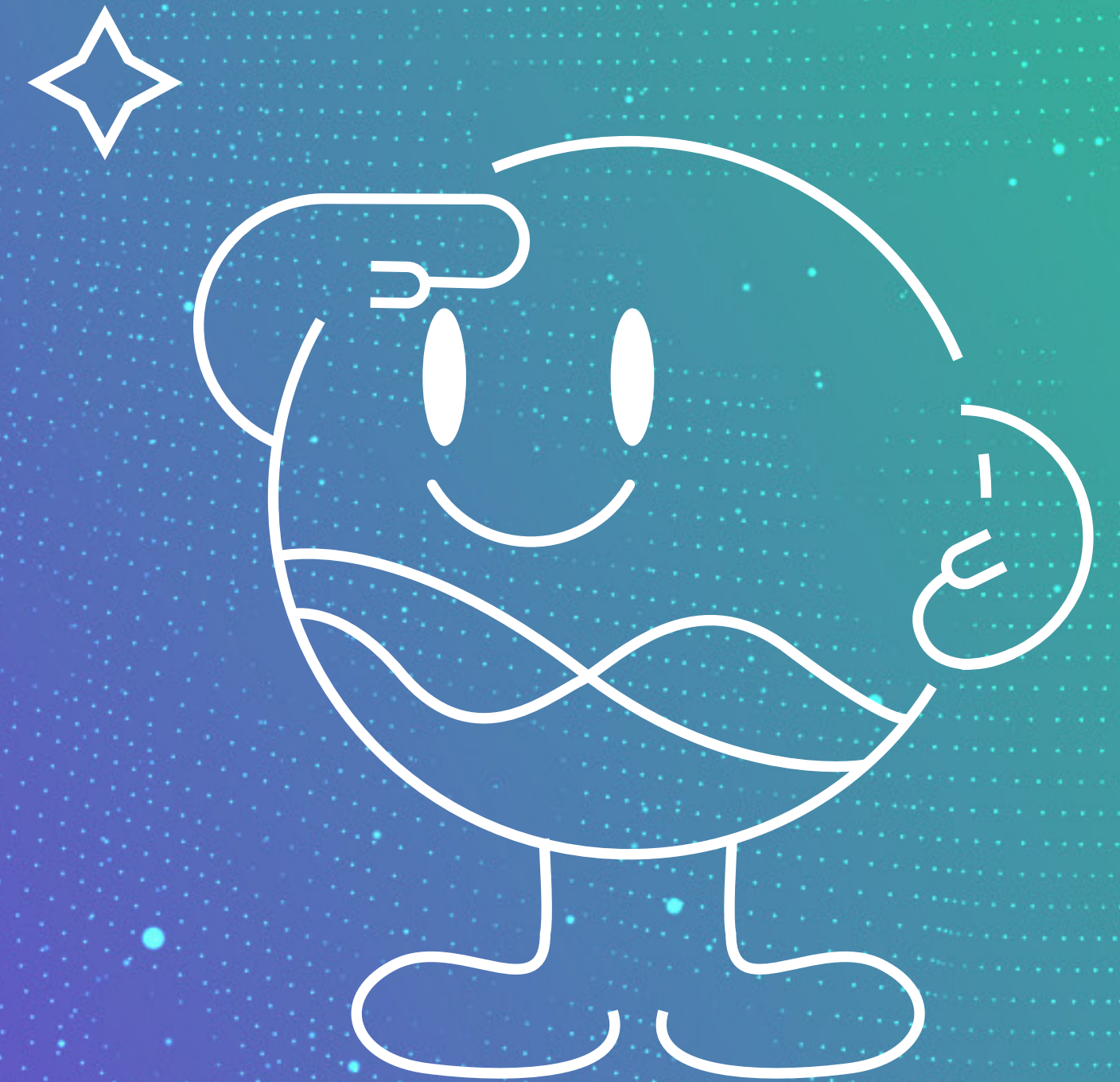
Voice technology is a new medium enabling a more direct contact as an interface, by taking away the barrier of a screen or keyboard. For human beings, voice is the most natural and personal way to interact.



Conclusion

Leaning back and waiting for voice enabled technology to disappear is not a valid strategy. Voice User Interfaces are here to stay. They will change the way we interact with computers sustainably.

Voice assistances will change daily routines and create new ones. They will influence how we coordinate, plan, exchange, consume information, use services and choose to spend our money. Which adds up to a lot of business potential for organizations.



03

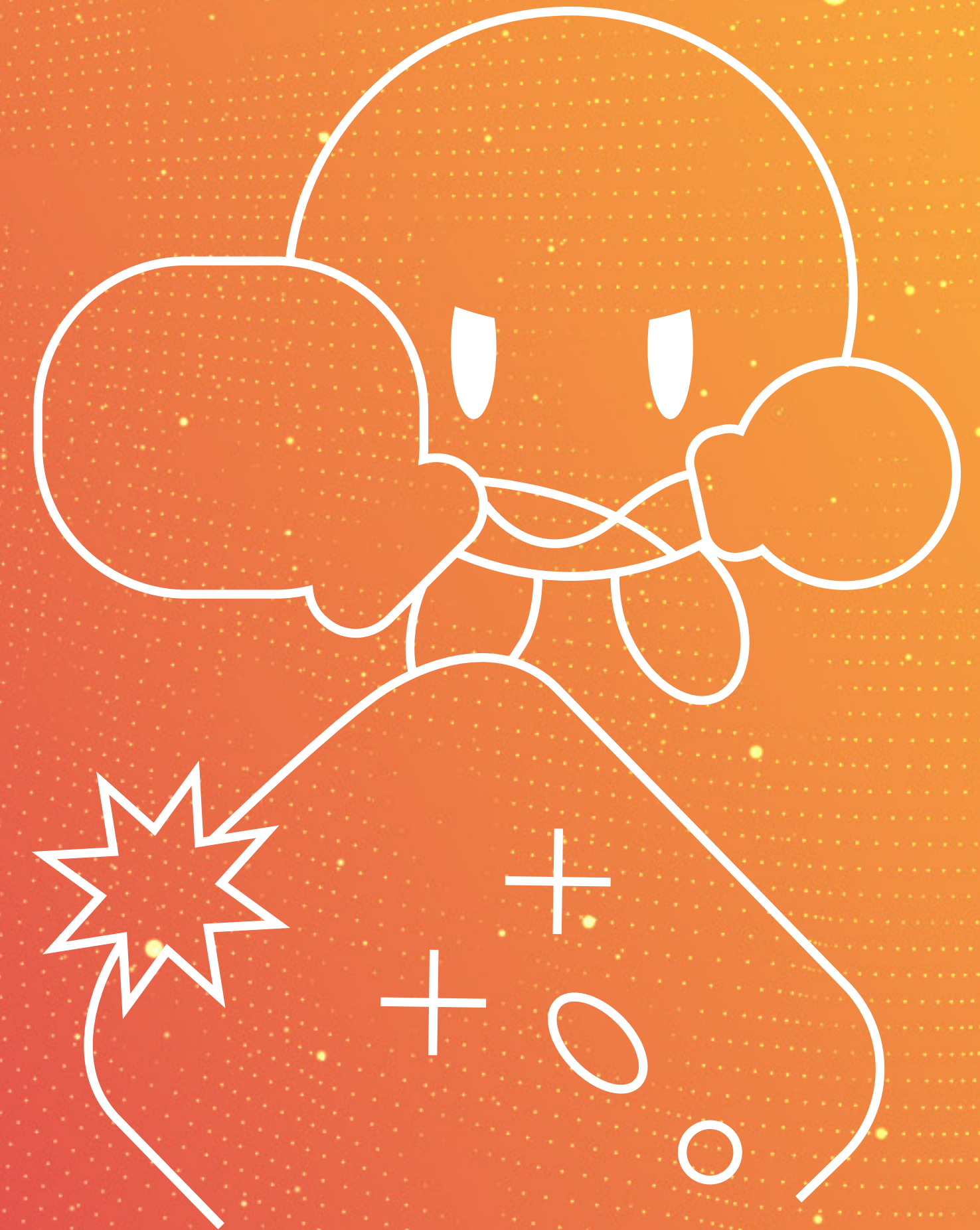
Tasks & chances for brands

To be kept in mind

Voice assistances go beyond Alexa and smart speakers. In November 2017, 56% of Germans have used a digital voice assistant. However, this usage allotted to various, mainly mobile devices, and by no means exclusively to Alexa. The automotive industry i.e. already has a history of voice controls. Because of their convenience compared to other forms of interaction, we will see a steep growth of VUIs in any environment in which the motor- and visual sense are occupied otherwise.

So, when you talk about voice assistant marketing:

Keep in mind that it's versatile.



“

I don't think the day is on the horizon where a consumer is standing in their living room saying, 'I want to order a 42-inch TV', I think it'll be driven around different products or services where convenience is a factor.

”

Michelle Evans, Head of Digital Consumer Research at Euromonitor

Commerce

There are basically two important aspects to voice assistant activities for brands.

The first is Commerce. Which is closely connected to voice search requests. As a brand you want to be named whenever the consumer wants to buy within your product category. Cooperations between Google and Walmart or Amazon and P&G highlight the importance of enabling voice commerce. However, voice as a technology can also enable commerce on your very own existing platforms (apps, websites). In total, 12% of the German population feels that online purchase via voice is an interesting scope of application.



Services

The second one can be summarized as **Services**. Skills, respectively apps for smart speakers that generate value can be produced and published by anyone – brands as well. Amazon's Echo for example has app-based skills that provide users with support. In September 2017 there were 20,000 already. With 40% of them added from June to August. Many companies have migrated to Chatbot platforms to deal with customer support. In addition, to existing services voice technology can definitely contribute to adding value to the customer experience.

To sum it up, the more relevance a brand generates on a platform by creating value, the more likely it will be actively named and asked for in the purchase process.



Fix the basics first

No matter which area of voice assistance marketing your brand decides to play a role in, there are important things to consider before starting.

Voice is a very human and personal way of interaction, therefore a personality is required. Talking to someone who has no personality can be uncanny, and talking to someone who has multiple personalities is even worse. That's why it's necessary for a brand to take a step back and review its brand strategy. Does it enable a holistic brand experience?



Talk to my (our) brand

Voice's demand for human interaction forces companies to finally answer the hard and uncomfortable questions: Who is my brand? What would it look like if it were human? How would it behave or talk? And what would it sound like? The development of a personality is a complex, exhausting and time consuming but crucial process. Ask parents.

For brands entering the world of voice technology, the best personalities arise from solid and attitude provoking brand positioning and a consistent brand behavior across different touch-points with different target groups.



04

Call to action

“

There's no chance that the iPhone is
going to get any significant market share.
No chance.

” ” ”

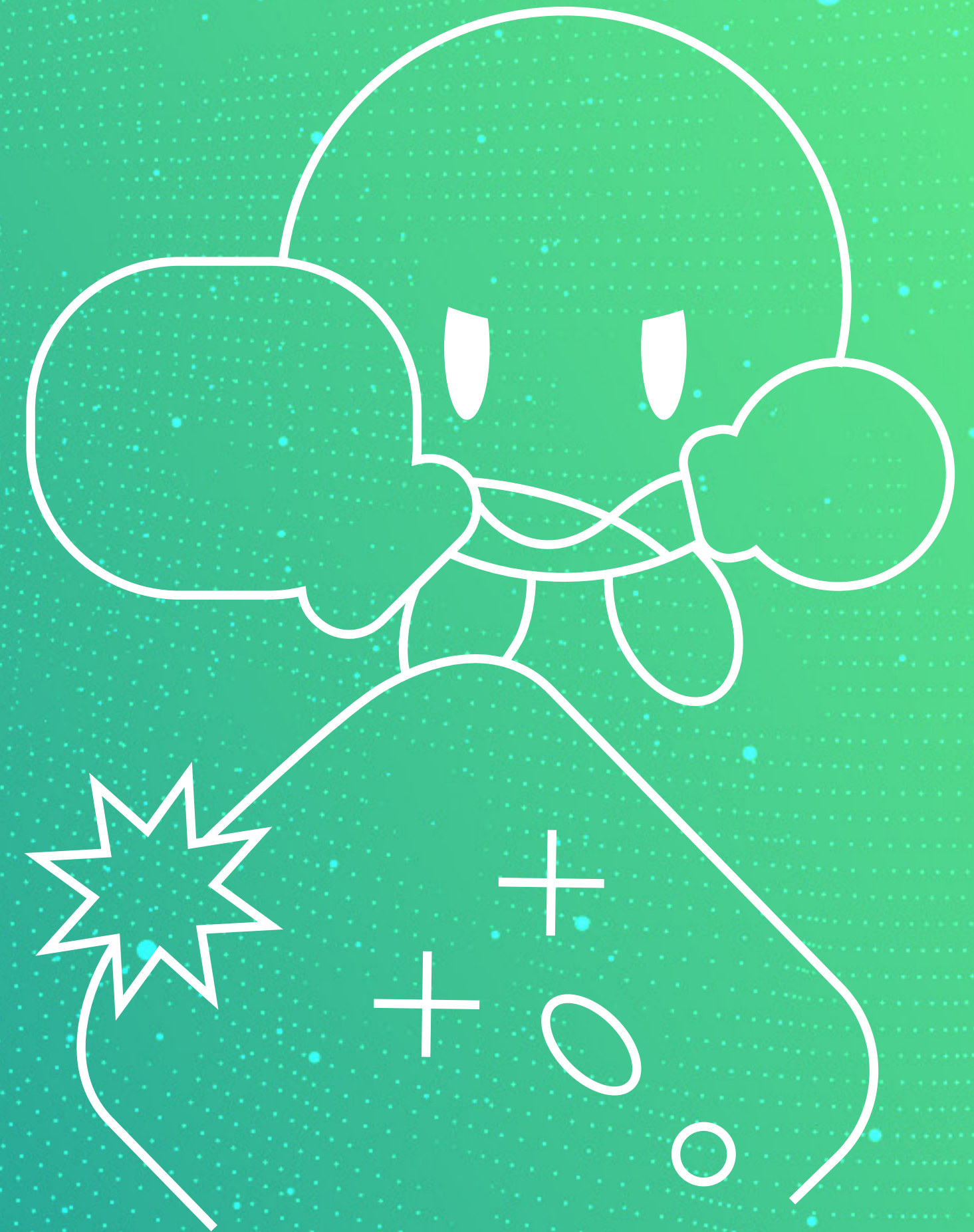
Steven Ballmer, 2007, former Microsoft CEO and
owner of the basketball team LA Clippers

[Call to action]

Don't repeat mistakes

A lot of people underestimated the change technology can cause. Like Ken Olsen, founder of Digital Equipment Corporation in 1977: „**There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home.**“ Others overestimated it: „**Two years from now, spam will be solved.**“ Bill Gates, 2004.

It's nearly impossible to predict the future. But analyzing existing developments and taking the necessary actionable steps on time, is something completely different.



[Call to action]

Voice is the start of a conversation

In order to enable a consistent brand experience using voice technology, it's crucial for different departments of organizations to get together. This can be a great chance for exchange and sustainable interdisciplinary collaboration.

Colleagues from customer services, brand management including CI and CD and the sales department should be involved in voice technology projects.



[Call to action]

Define a strategy

As described, voice assistant marketing is versatile. Don't start without identifying the potential and understanding exactly which role your brand will play. After all, voice is a new tool with strengths and weaknesses. Still, it needs to be assigned with a specific task which it can fulfill, thus generate value to its audience.

In this phase, it's important to receive input, exchange and talk to experts and potential partners.



[Call to action]

Give your brand a voice

Your brand needs a voice.

Not just metaphorically. But literally.

The entire concept of holistic communication was meant to create synergies and help consumers to recognize your brand faster. This approach perfectly fits to voice as a medium. Define carefully what your brand should sound like so that you can use it at different touch points. Only then, consumers will recognize your brand as soon as it speaks.



[Call to action]

Work with the Experts



We're a full service agency, from strategy and conception to implementation. From brand strategists to voice user interface designers.

Our international team of over 200 people is spread across Cologne, Berlin, Hamburg and Munich. Our work is rolled out in Europe, China, Japan and the US. For over two years we have been building our expertise working with conversational interfaces and the smart assistant market.

joinus@givebrandsavoice.com



We are the world leading sound branding agency. Our benchmark: recognize your brand with closed eyes at every audio consumer touchpoint in less than 2 seconds.

With offices in Germany, Switzerland, Italy, USA and China, we work across cultures to inspire bravery and create immersive audible experiences, where voice and functional sounds are grounded in authenticity.

[Call to action]

Let conversation create value

Identify how your organization can utilize voice technology to participate in this significantly growing market. Make sure there is value being created in conversations

- between you and your customers
- between you and supporting experts
- between the different departments within your organization



[Call to action]

Context is everything

The strengths or weaknesses of Voice User Interfaces are mostly related to the aptitude of the system to comprehend contextual questions. Requiring the NLU and NLP to be sharp enough to understand the user and adequately retrieve the information necessary to attend the personalized customer's needs.



05

Best Practices

Craft

Once users confide more sensitive information to Smart Assistants, these have to be sensible enough to not feed back this information when third parties are present. This sensibility depends on voice recognition technology fine tuning its voice ID capabilities.



Utterances

Generally conversational outputs have to be short and digestible. Unlike reading from a screen, when using a voice device, the person has no control on the pace the information is being consumed. Snippets of information should not exceed three items at a time.



Re-prompt

A regular conversation with another person is usually a series of utterances, a person prompts a question and the other responds and conventionally re-prompts the first one with another question. These are the basis for a pleasant conversation.

In a conversation with a voice assistant the re-prompt has not as much a social role but a user experience function. Due to the lack of a graphic user interface and its wide range of possibilities for the user to navigate through it, a good conversational interface has to offer adequate re-prompts. A well balanced mix between voice and functional sounds guides users to achieve their goals within the experience.



Barge-in

Barging-in lets users interrupt the assistant if the information being delivered is not relevant to them. It helps users navigate and orient themselves within the VUI.

The most important information should be prioritized first, letting users ask for more details in the specific subject they wish to know more about.



Recovery

It is unlikely that all user demands will be satisfied in the first iteration of a VUI. Therefore, it is crucial to make sure that a great recovery plan is in place. The ability to reroute an unsatisfying experience to a happy path is critical for getting users past the first date. A strong recovery from an unsolved query can positively boost the perception of a VUI and strengthen brand personality.



Personality

Just as brands have an identity that reflects their values, so should their auditory experience, especially voice first products. Through mannerisms, characteristics, sound design and vocabulary, products such as voice assistants communicate what level of trust and helpfulness will be delivered. The personality of voice assistants as part of a brand's sonic identity has to reflect the brand's values to build a consistent brand's sonic ecosystem.



Be consistent

Trust = Consistency + Time

A well defined sound DNA enables brands to be flexible allowing for a consistent use of sound and voice across all audio consumer touchpoint. This builds strong emotional relationships and trust between brands and consumers. Trust supports brand loyalty and brand loyalty is protection from sales loss.



Empathy

Whenever designing for VUI, empathy is one of the building blocks to support a sensible experience.

Tonality is part of the challenge of building such products, since humanity should prevail as much as possible, without slipping into sarcasm if trying to be playful. The goals are to convey trust and security. A distinctive and recognisable brand voice is essential to connect with consumers creating empathy through recognition.



Transparency

Companies behind voice tools need to be proactive in letting consumers know in simple language how these devices collect and store information, and how the consumer can access and delete this data. This will be key in driving further uptake.



Thank you!