



Optimize for a voice experience.

Pick the right use cases

Not all experiences transfer well from a graphical UI to a voice interaction. Focus on actions that enable speed, simplicity, and convenience.

- Things people can answer off the top of their heads.
- Ways to avoid pulling out a phone or finding a piece of paper.
- Help for someone with hands full or eyes occupied.

Create a persona

Choosing a persona makes it easier to use the right words, syntax, and structure when you design your interactions. Also, consider that users will perceive a persona whether you plan for one or not, so it's worth taking time to frame the experience YOU want to get across instead of leaving it up to chance.



Pick your voice

Think about how you want your conversations to feel and sound. Will you use a whimsical tone? Or a more deliberate, serious tone? Actions on Google has different voices to choose from to help you match your persona.

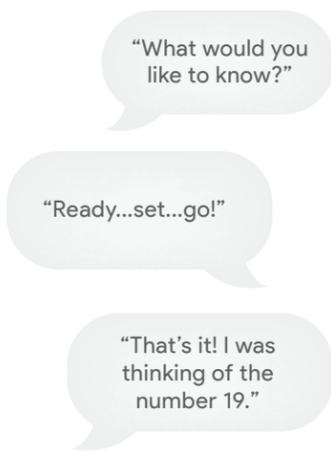


Write sample dialogs

Once you've picked out your use cases and decided on a persona, you're almost ready to build, but not quite!

Start writing out some sample conversations with your users. Go beyond the "happy path" and explore different levels of familiarity, unexpected responses, and early exits.

To keep it sounding natural and avoid written language style, say everything out loud as you go.



Principles to design by

- Keep it short. Respect users' time. Get to the point and get out of the way.
- Give users credit. People know how to talk. Don't put words in their mouth.
- Be relevant and sensitive to context.
- Delight the ear without distracting the mind.
- Engage beginners and attract experts.
- Take turns. Just asked a question? Stop talking.
- Don't read minds. Give them the facts and let them decide.

g.co/dev/ActionsPrinciples

Greetings and Goodbyes

Tell users who you are

The Google Assistant hands off the user experience to your action, so be sure to let users know they are entering your experience.

- Does your persona tell the user who they're talking to?
- Is there a clear transition from the Google Assistant into the action, and do users know where they are now?

Give the right amount of information

Your greeting should cater to users with varying degrees of familiarity with your actions:

- Will a brand-new user understand what your action is all about? Is the initial greeting informative without overwhelming them?
- Does your greeting sound repetitive for an experienced user? Is there a shorter, more familiar greeting for return users?

End conversations appropriately

When users are done with the core intents fulfilled by your action, give them a chance to do something else or let them move on with their day.

- Is there an unobstructed path to the exit?
- Are simple back out requests like "nevermind" and "no, thanks" honored in the contexts where they make sense for the user?

g.co/dev/ActionsChecklist

Design Checklist

Conversational Dialogs

Sound natural

For every dialog you write, read it aloud and make sure it:

- Is something your desired persona would say
- Has been written with voice in mind rather than just a copy of some other medium (such as a converted mobile app or website).

Be cooperative

Does your VUI accommodate the innate rules of human conversation? To be effective, you should be as truthful, informative, relevant, and clear as the situation calls for. Read more at g.co/dev/ActionsDesign.

Take turns

A good conversation partner knows how to give the right cues.

- DO give users enough context to respond each time you yield a turn.
- DON'T just make an ambiguous statement and then open the mic.
- DO give users a question or prompt that turns over the conversation to them.
- DON'T keep speaking after asking a question.

Conversation Repair

Prevent errors by expecting variations

Your actions should understand input that's phrased in many alternate ways, such as "yes", but also: "yeah", "sure", "it does", "it sure does", "of course", or "definitely".

Provide helpful reprompts or pivot to another question

Reframe questions for users when they say things your action doesn't understand or when they don't say anything at all (two very different contexts!).

Be prepared to help at any time

Users might ask for help at any point in the conversation ("What can I do?"), so be prepared and either reprompt them or offer an explicit help dialog. TIP: Prevent confusion with intuitive commands.

Let users replay information

Recognize and appropriately respond to user input like "what?", "repeat", "say that again", and other similar phrases.

Fail gracefully

If users don't provide a response or one that you can't recognize after two or three tries, exit with an appropriate message.

Persona

Reflect your unique brand and identity

If you don't already have a persona defined for your brand, create one! Find out how in our Design Tips video youtu.be/MSUPVbbhIGA.

Keep users coming back

Think of your persona as a real person and someone that you and your users would want to interact with - even (or perhaps especially) after many encounters.

Stay consistent

Maintain the persona throughout the entire conversation, so users don't experience jarring or confusing dialogs that feel like they're talking to multiple personalities.

Is your action ready for users?
g.co/dev/ActionsDistribute