



STATE OF THE CALL 2024



221.3 billion calls analyzed
1.8K+ employees surveyed
12K+ consumers surveyed
600+ IT and security leaders surveyed

hiya.com/state-of-the-call

State of the Call 2024

Even in today's era of pervasive emails and text messages, voice calls remain as important as ever. Consumers and businesses alike consistently identify voice as their preferred method of communication in a variety of circumstances due to the efficiency, reliability and human touch that only voice calls can deliver. And in an age when AI has made it easier than ever to impersonate human voices, authentic person-to-person calls are all the more valuable.

Yet, threats to the security and trustworthiness of voice calls also remains prevalent – and have only grown worse over the past year. In the last 12 months, more than 14 percent of all calls continue to be unwanted, while the average financial loss reported by consumers who fall victim to fraud calls reached \$2,257. Meanwhile, businesses continue to lose revenue and incur higher operational costs due to challenges reaching customers

who are wary of answering unidentified calls or calls flagged with spam or fraud labels – negatively impacting their brand reputation.

This year's State of the Call Report details these and other key voice call trends to highlight what all stakeholders – carriers, device manufacturers, businesses, tech providers, regulators and consumers – need to know to protect and enhance this critical communication medium.

The insights we share in the following pages – based on Hiya's analysis of more than 221 billion calls, as well as survey responses from more than 12,000 consumers, 1,800 workers who use voice calls on the job, and 600 security and IT executives at businesses that depend on voice calls – highlight five major trends that impact the voice call experience in 2024.

Top voice call trends for 2024

- 1 Consumers and businesses continue to prioritize voice calls, especially when communicating about sensitive information or important business decisions.
- 2 However, spam and fraud calls are a major problem that is only getting worse due to increases in the frequency of such calls.
- 3 The financial cost of spam and fraud calls is also increasing – with consumers reporting increased costs of phone fraud and more time spent screening spam calls.
- 4 Businesses likewise report growing concerns about the threat that spam and fraud calls pose to their operations, reputations and bottom line.
- 5 For businesses and consumers alike, solutions that improve call identity are essential for mitigating these challenges. Call protection is important, too, particularly for businesses.

Understanding unwanted calls

Before diving into the data about unwanted calls today, let's establish some context about what unwanted calls mean, and how they relate to spam and fraud.

At Hiya, we use the term “unwanted call” to refer to any voice call that originates from outside a recipient's contact list that consumers don't want to receive. Unwanted calls include illegal fraud calls initiated by criminals seeking to scam consumers out of money or steal personal information. They also include spam or nuisance calls that don't break laws, but that pester or frustrate recipients.

Unwanted calls are sometimes labeled as spam or fraud on consumers' mobile devices. However, many of the calls that consumers deem unwanted are not labeled at all. In fact, 92 percent of consumers believe unidentified calls are fraudulent. Nearly half – 46 percent – of such calls go unanswered.

In the case of the other half of unidentified calls – those that consumers do pick up – recipients typically only answer reluctantly, due to concerns that it may be a call they can't miss.

Hiya tracks unwanted call metrics by holistically analyzing calls placed by parties outside an individual's contact list. Based on a variety of data points, we assess when calls are unwanted to block or label calls accordingly. We also monitor how consumers respond to unwanted calls, and we track unwanted call data across a number of carrier networks and regions.

The insights in this report reflect our ongoing analysis of unwanted call trends, including how the latest data compares to unwanted call trends from previous years, together with survey findings and insights from consumers, enterprises, and IT and security executives.



92%

of consumers think
unidentified calls
are fraudulent

The persistent popularity of voice calls

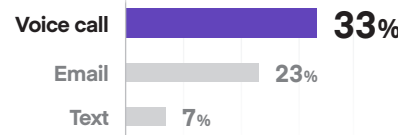
As in previous years, voice remains the preferred method of communication for businesses and consumers, especially for handling complex or sensitive conversations.

Consumer communication preferences

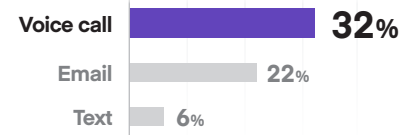
Consumers consistently prefer voice calls over other communication methods, like email, when sensitive data is at stake.



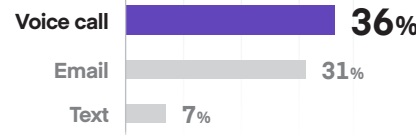
Banks and lenders



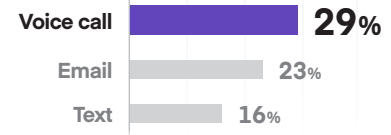
Credit card



Healthcare



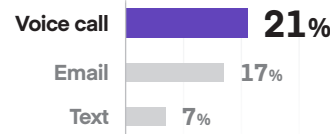
Home and delivery service



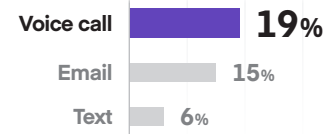
When it comes to what method of communication consumers trust most when disclosing personal information, voice is also the clear choice.



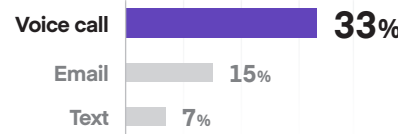
Banking and financial transactions



Credit card



Healthcare



The trend is clear: When discussing personal, financial or other sensitive information, consumers strongly prefer voice.

TREND 1

The persistent popularity of voice calls

However, worries about unanswered calls sometimes push businesses to try to reach consumers in other ways. 44 percent of companies report ongoing efforts to diversify communication channels across email, chat and social media.

These measures might help businesses connect to consumers in some cases, but they fail to meet consumers where they want to be met: voice calls.

Business communication strategies

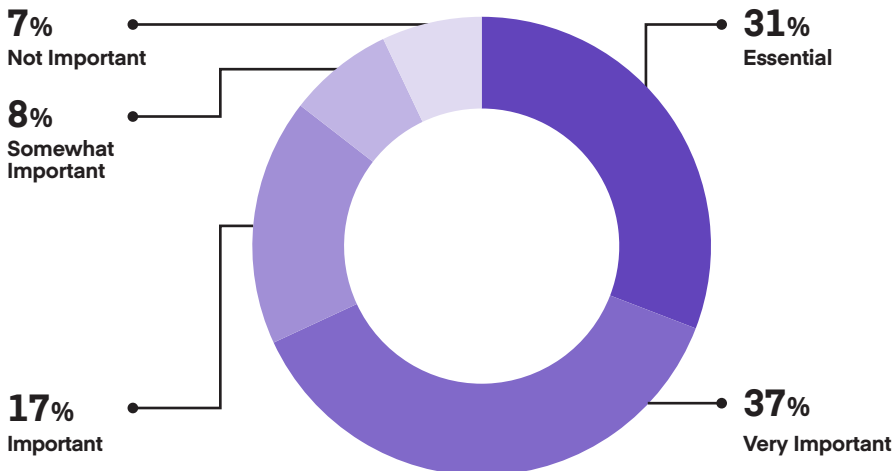
A similar trend holds true when it comes to how businesses engage with customers and prospects.

Working professionals report their preferred method of communication for business purposes

	Voice	Email	Text
Resolving customer issues	39%	31%	6%
Closing Sales	27%	25%	6%

In addition, more than two-thirds of business workers say that voice calls are “essential” or “very important” for achieving key business goals, like making sales.

How crucial is the phone channel for closing sales and/or maintaining customer satisfaction in your business?



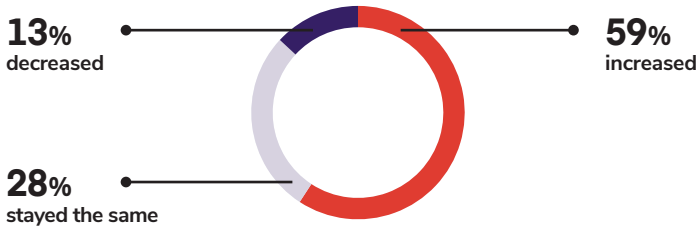
Given these findings, it’s unsurprising that 31 percent of IT and security leaders expect an increase in phone usage by their businesses over the coming year – compared with 22 percent who predict a decrease, and 46 percent who believe voice call rates will stay the same.

The bottom line: While there are situations where email or texting are the preferred method of communication, it’s clear that the voice call is not going anywhere. Voice calls are poised to become even more central to business operations and the consumer experience in coming years.

Consumer anxieties about unwanted calls continue to grow

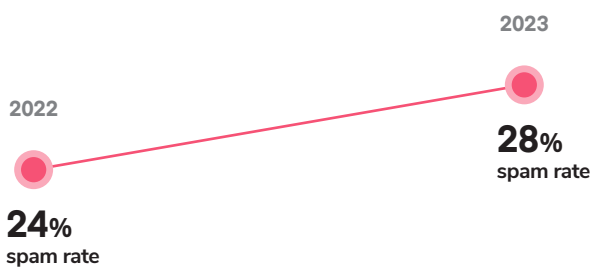
Although consumers place high value on voice calls, they're increasingly worried about the scourge of unwanted calls.

How has phone spam changed for you in the last 12 months, vs the previous?



On average, consumers report receiving 5 unwanted calls each week – although that number varies significantly between regions, with U.S. consumers reporting the highest rate of unwanted calls, at 8 each week.

64 percent of consumers receive unwanted calls weekly, while 84 percent receive such calls at least once a month. The problem is not just in consumers' heads. Hiya data confirms that spam and fraud calls are getting worse:



Based on Hiya's analysis of 26 billion unknown calls in 2022 and 46.75 billion unknown calls in 2023

In response to these trends, some consumers have downloaded apps designed to enhance call labeling. However, few are putting these apps to work.

1/3

of consumers have downloaded apps to enhance call protection

59%

of consumers say they would be unwilling to pay extra for protection

less than **\$3**

is the average amount among consumers who would be willing to pay for call protection

The prevalence of spam and fraud is also impacting consumer trust across nearly all communication channels. Nearly 19 percent of consumers report that there is no method of communication that they trust for sharing personal information. This erosion of trust in communication channels is not just a minor inconvenience; it's a significant barrier to effective and secure interactions between businesses and their customers. As a result, enterprises face an uphill battle in rebuilding this trust, requiring them to go above and beyond in demonstrating their commitment to security and privacy in every interaction.

The cost of phone spam is increasing

The impact of spam and fraud calls on consumers amounts to much more than mere annoyance. They're also losing money – and the financial cost grew significantly in 2023 compared to 2022.

16%

of consumers say they lost money to a phone scam in the past year

\$2,257

is the average sum lost to those who were scammed in 2023 - compared to \$360 in 2022

\$6,000+

lost by some victims to phone fraud in 2023



United States

13 spam calls per user each month – with some receiving up to 18

17% of consumers lost money to a phone scam

\$865
lost

on average by those who were scammed in 2023 vs \$431 in 2022



United Kingdom

4 spam calls per user each month – with some receiving up to 5

16% of consumers lost money to a phone scam

\$798
lost

on average by those who were scammed in 2023 vs \$324 in 2022



Canada

3 spam calls per user each month

11% of consumers lost money to a phone scam

\$1,342
lost

on average by those who were scammed in 2023 vs \$473 in 2022



France

10 spam calls per user each month

18% of consumers lost money to a phone scam

\$3,596
lost

on average by those who were scammed in 2023 vs \$361 in 2022



Germany

2 spam calls per user each month

19% of consumers lost money to a phone scam

\$4,649
lost

on average by those who were scammed in 2023 vs \$326 in 2022



Spain

10 spam calls per user each month – with some receiving up to 12

16% of consumers lost money to a phone scam

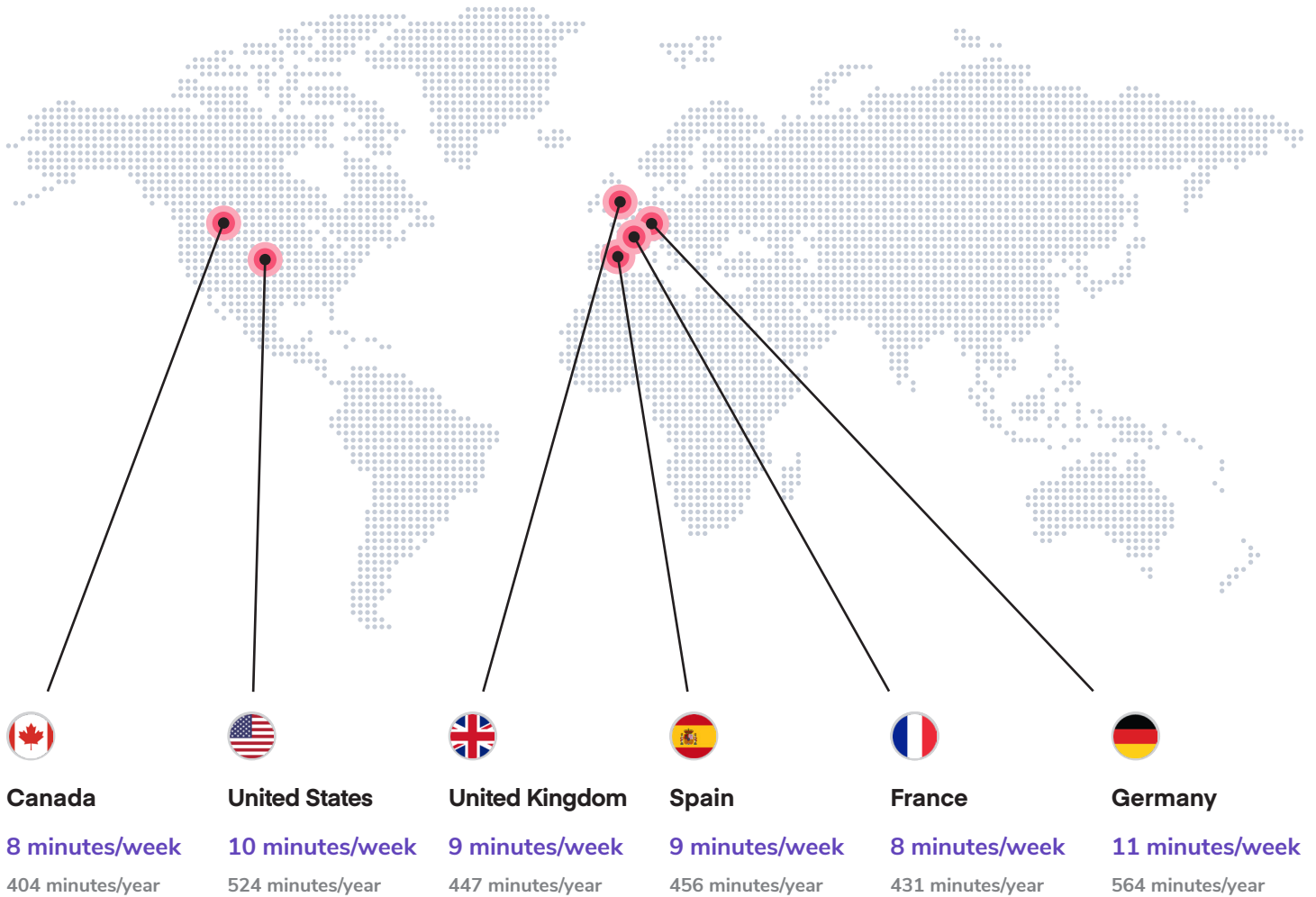
\$1,531
lost

on average by those who were scammed in 2023 vs \$282 in 2022

The cost of phone spam is increasing

But dollars aren't the only costs ...

Unwanted calls also waste consumers' time. On average, consumers report spending 9 minutes each week – or more than 7.6 hours per year – screening unwanted calls.



Faced with the persistent scourge of unwanted calls, nearly 11 percent of consumers say they have switched carriers in a bid to improve their call experience. Another 27 percent are considering switching.

SPOTLIGHT

Micro messaging scams

In partnership with KONTXT, part of RealNetworks

For decades, messaging platforms at all levels have played a cat and mouse game with fraudsters attempting to impersonate someone else. As these messaging platforms and their spam protection systems become more sophisticated in detecting and blocking large scale scams, fraudsters have adapted to the new ecosystem and are using new targeting techniques to focus on specific individuals in smaller volumes. The attacks can take the form of spear phishing, where individuals are targeted for the positions and roles within an organization to gain access to corporate information, or for highly targeted campaigns against a small number of individuals.

Top 4 micro scam text messaging opening lines for a scammer to become friends with your device...

1

Long time no talk,
how was your day going?

2

Tomorrow you free?
Wanna meet up for a drink?

3

Sorry to bother you, are you still
looking for part-time or full-time job?

4

Ugh, I broke my phone mom
and had to get a new number.

These targeted campaigns against a limited number of individuals are meticulously designed to evade detection – often leveraging third-party messaging apps known for their robust anonymity features and tend to take on a more conversational appearance and appeal to emotions. During Q4 of 2023 KONTXT observed a 175 percent jump in the number of unique phone numbers sending a spam message.

Ongoing business harm

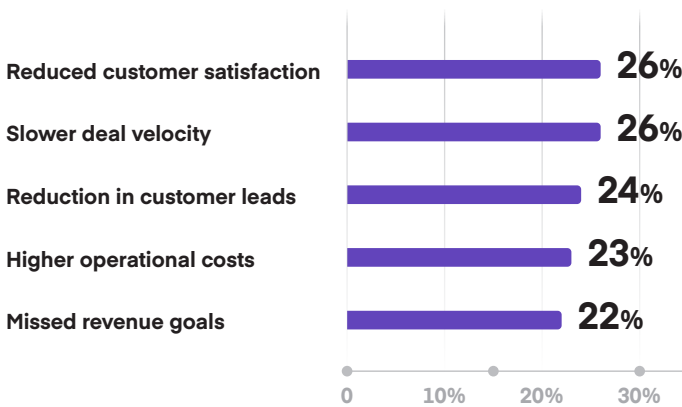
Previous State of the Call reports found that businesses struggled to reach consumers and prospects because their calls were either labeled as spam or fraud, or were not labeled at all.

The latest data shows that this issue remains a serious challenge for organizations:

46% of unidentified calls go unanswered – even when legitimate businesses are calling.

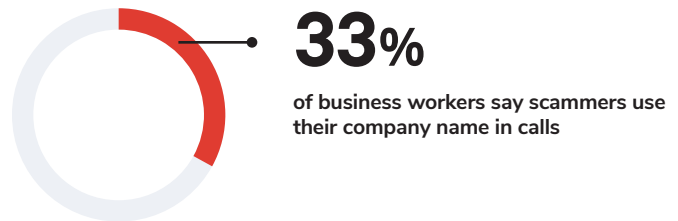
How has your business been impacted by not being able to reach prospects/customers efficiently by phone?

(Those whose business has been financially impacted by an inability to reach prospects/customers efficiently via phone)



The reputational impact of fraud calls

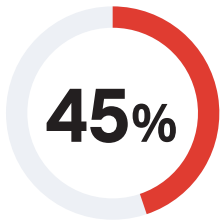
Beyond the challenge of being unable to reach consumers using voice, businesses are also suffering reputational harm caused by scammers who impersonate their companies when trying to defraud consumers.








It's certainly an issue that has caught the attention of IT and security leaders, **91 percent** of whom say they are concerned about bad actors impersonating or posing as their business to scam consumers.

Ongoing business harm

Abuse of business identities and phone numbers by attackers has profound consequences for brands:



of consumers have received a call from someone impersonating a legitimate business. Top industries impersonated include:

-  Financial services
-  Utilities
-  Government
-  Retail
-  Insurance (non-health)

20%

of consumers say it has eroded their trust in the security procedures of impacted businesses

33%

of consumers say impersonation has made them suspicious of any calls coming from that business

In addition, 34 percent of IT and security leaders say their business has fallen victim to a phone scam. 70 percent report that their business experiences one or more inbound call attacks each year – meaning attacks where scammers use voice to trick employees into handing over sensitive information or access credentials for IT systems.

Only 15 percent of businesses have never experienced an inbound call attack.

How many, if any, inbound call attacks does your business experience each year?

Less than 1 a year	15%
1	7%
2-5	31%
6-10	21%
11-20	10%
More than 20	1%
N/A – we have never experienced any inbound call attacks	15%

Overall, 73 percent of IT and security leaders report that they are concerned about their customers, employees, business and systems being targeted by scammers via inbound calls. The problem is especially acute in the United States, where 80 percent of leaders report significant levels of concern.

In September 2023, MGM Resorts was a victim of a notable inbound call attacks. The hackers reportedly found an employee’s information on LinkedIn, then impersonated them in a call to MGM Resorts’ IT help desk to obtain credentials that they used to access and infect IT systems, according to [Vox](#).

Growing need for call identity and protection solutions

The key to solving the challenges described in this report to implement better call identity and protection, making it easier for consumers to trust and answer calls, and for businesses to reach consumers.

Improving the consumer experience by enhancing call identity

Given that 92 percent of consumers believe unidentified calls are fraudulent, they are less and less likely to answer the phone. In fact, 43 percent of consumers will never answer unidentified calls. And while up to 56 percent of consumers may answer unidentified calls, 60 percent will never call back.

Do you answer unidentified calls or call back if missed?

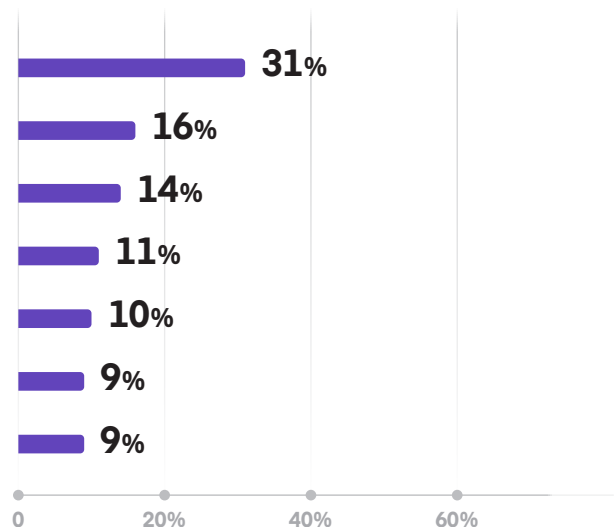
		Answer		
		Never	Sometimes	Always
Call back	Never	33%	17%	10%
	Sometimes	8%	11%	7%
	Always	2%	6%	5%

How call identity benefits workers

Faith in branded caller ID is especially high in the U.S. and Spain, where more than 90 percent of workers reported viewing it as a step toward increased answer rates. Additionally, workers report it as the most effective way to increase answer rates.

What's the most effective way to increase call answer rates at your workplace, if any?

- Add identity to the call so customers know who's calling
- Ensure calls don't have a spam label
- Increase agent coaching
- Don't know
- Review and adjust call scripts
- Review and adjust IVRs
- No most effective way(s) in particular

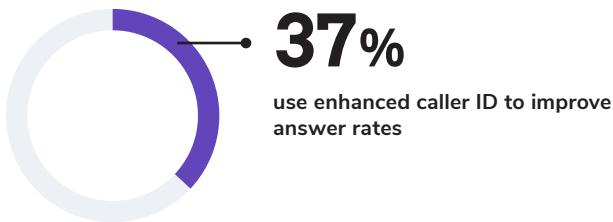
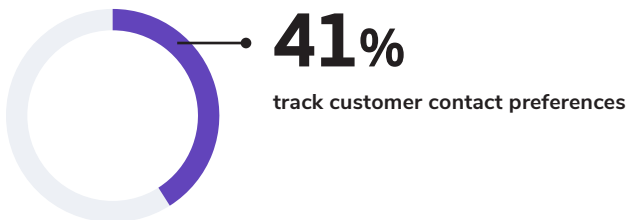
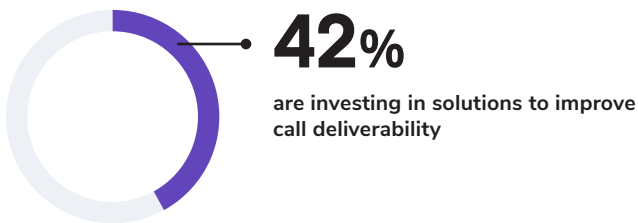


Growing need for call identity and protection solutions

Business investments in call protection and identity

77 percent of consumers say they'd be likely to answer a call if they knew who was calling. The good news is that businesses have a broad range of call identity and protection solutions available to address this challenge, and many are putting them to use.

IT and security leaders share:



The need for better protection and identity

The measures that consumers and businesses have taken to mitigate the problem of unwanted calls is a start. However, responsibility for addressing this widespread and growing issue can't fall to consumers and companies alone.

Despite the fact that most carriers have by now implemented protections like the STIR/SHAKEN protocols, the fact that many calls remain misidentified shows that these measures aren't enough. Carriers must also invest in technology that allows them to assess calls holistically, based on a variety of data points beyond those used by traditional spam and fraud detection methods.

In short, carriers, regulatory bodies and STIR/SHAKEN all play a role in addressing this problem – but enterprises still need to take action on their part to secure their calls.

Recommendations

In today’s digital landscape, calls significantly impact customer trust and business reputation. This makes the ability to secure call identity, guard against scam calls and prevent number spoofing an imperative for enterprises. Recognizing and addressing these needs is vital for protecting a business’s reputation and operations while also improving and safeguarding the consumer experience.

Securing caller identity

Ensuring that your calls are recognized by carriers and customers alike is crucial for maintaining trust and a positive relationship. Free phone number registration provides the first step for businesses, enabling them to identify themselves proactively as legitimate callers on the networks where they’re placing calls. In addition, displaying a secure and identifiable caller identity on their calls prevents communications from being dismissed by consumers as likely spam, reinforcing customer confidence.



77% of consumers say they’d be more likely to answer if they knew who was calling

Guarding against scam calls

The rise in scam calls targeting enterprises necessitates robust defenses to protect both employees and customers. Early detection and blocking of these calls are imperative to preserve a secure interaction environment.

Preventing number spoofing

Number spoofing threatens both security and trust. Enterprises must implement strong measures to stop scammers from using their numbers, thereby protecting customers and maintaining brand integrity and reputation.

Strategic defense

A comprehensive strategy that integrates advanced solutions for identity verification, scam call blocking and spoofing prevention is essential. Beyond technology adoption, embedding these solutions into the enterprise’s communication strategy is key to ensuring a secure, seamless experience for all stakeholders.

While regulatory bodies are gradually creating and updating policies to better protect consumers, the pace and scope of action is not keeping up with the volume and sophistication of scams and scammers. Enterprises can’t wait for the industry to solve the problem of spam and fraud calls. They must work proactively to secure their calls and protect their reputation. Voice security and identity are both ways that enterprises can take action and fight back against fraudsters, helping to address the risks posed by scammers while regulations catch up.

Methodology

Market research

Censuswide conducted a market research survey on behalf of Hiya during the period of December 20, 2023 and January 1, 2024. In total, 1,855 business professionals who use a phone frequently as part of their role, 12,127 consumers, and 60 VP or executive-level IT and security leaders were surveyed online. The survey was conducted in the US, Canada, UK, Germany, France, and Spain. Censuswide abides by and employs members of the Market Research Society, which is based on the ESOMAR principles.

Hiya data

Hiya's proprietary data for this report focused on the following countries: US, Canada, UK, Germany, France, and Spain. Hiya's data includes more than 221 billion calls that passed over its network in 2023. The Hiya Voice Security Network includes more than 450 million users worldwide through Hiya's integrations with wireless carriers and device manufacturers, and the Hiya app. All proprietary data has been aggregated and anonymized.



12K+

consumers surveyed



1.8K+

employees surveyed



600+

IT and Security
leaders surveyed



221.3B

calls analyzed



hiya

Learn more at hiya.com

Hiya is trusted by global businesses, carriers, and consumers to provide secure, engaging connections and stop unwanted calls. Built on the world's leading Voice Security Platform, Hiya connects businesses with their customers, helps carriers secure their networks, and protects people from spam and fraud calls. Hiya's SaaS applications, Hiya Connect and Hiya Protect, serve more than 450 million users on the Hiya Network, powering call protection and identity for EE, Samsung, Ericsson and more.

