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STATE OF THE CALL 2021



Get the top trends and insights on the voice call from our global data set of 150 billion calls processed in 2020 combined with third party market research of businesses and consumers.

hiya.com/state-of-the-call

2021 State of the Call

Letter from the CEO



Alex Algard, *Hiya CEO*

2020 was a year unlike anything we've experienced before. The COVID-19 pandemic reshaped how we work, live, and communicate. And many of these changes are here to stay: Most of us will continue to use delivery services and find ways to virtually collaborate with teammates well after the lockdowns end.

This brings me to one of the only positive side effects of social distancing: It has reminded all of us about the importance of connection. This renewed focus on connection has resulted in an increase in usage on nearly all communication channels and, better yet, will lead to more competition and innovation on these channels that will benefit all of us for years to come.

The voice call had a particularly strong year with a 184% increase in traffic in 2020. Despite the rise of Zoom and other video conferencing apps, people made clear that voice is their preferred communication channel, beating out text, email, instant messaging apps and video calls.

But drawbacks and problems remain. Hackers and spammers are taking advantage of our need to feel connected. Everyone who owns a phone knows this problem well: We each received an average of 144 spam calls last year—58% of which were fraudulent. These calls are frustrating to all of us and put legitimate businesses in the tough spot of breaking through all of this noise.

To solve this problem, we must first understand its scope. That's why we're making our global data available to you—data from more than 150 billion voice calls that we processed in 2020. We've also commissioned a survey with Censuswide to better understand how real businesses and consumers depend on the voice call.

This is our most comprehensive State of the Call report we've ever produced. I invite you to explore this report and use the data, insights, and trends in your own calling operations.



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Top 5 Trends

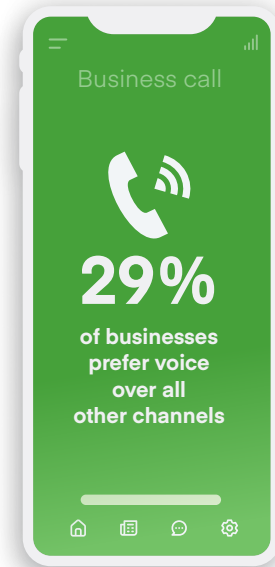
- ① Voice traffic skyrocketed in 2020 as consumers preferred voice over all other channels.
- ② Unwanted spam, fraud, and spoofing continue to degrade the performance of legitimate businesses needing to call customers.
- ③ Scammers and hackers target everyone, making voice security essential for businesses, consumers, and carriers across the globe.
- ④ Unidentified calls hamper business performance as consumer trust in unknown calls continues to erode.
- ⑤ Businesses that embraced innovation broke through the noise and reached more customers in 2020.

Trend 1:

Voice traffic skyrocketed in 2020 as consumers preferred voice over all other channels.

People are turning to the voice call more than ever before as the preferred way to connect. Over the past 12 months, voice traffic increased 184% as people made clear that they prefer to use the voice call over all other methods of communication. In order to reach customers where they want to connect, businesses reacted accordingly as three quarters of businesses surveyed increased their use of voice in 2020. Businesses also indicated that voice is their preferred channel to communicate with customers and colleagues.

Businesses prefer voice



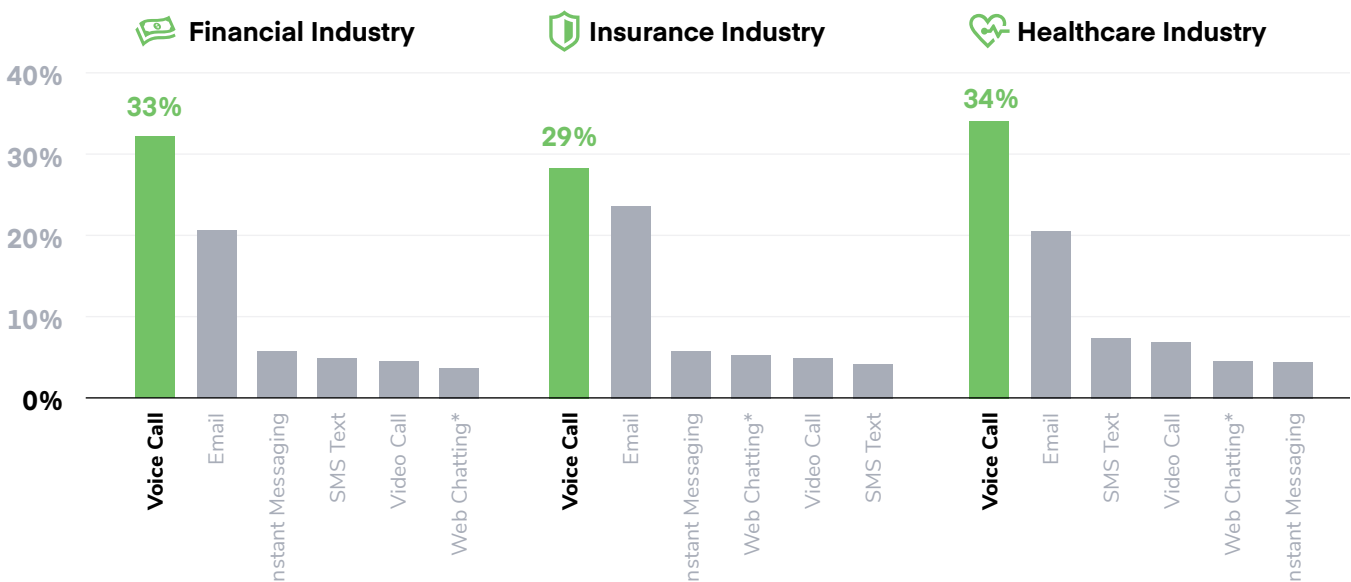
- 29% Voice call
- 19% Email
- 9% SMS Text
- 7% IM/Whatsapp
- 6% Web Chatting*
- 5.5% Video Call

Finance, Insurance and Healthcare

According to a survey conducted by Censuswide on the behalf of Hiya, the majority of consumers prefer to be contacted by voice by businesses in the financial, insurance, and healthcare industries. Voice beat out all other communication channels, including email, text, instant messaging, web chat and video call.

How do customers want to be contacted by businesses?

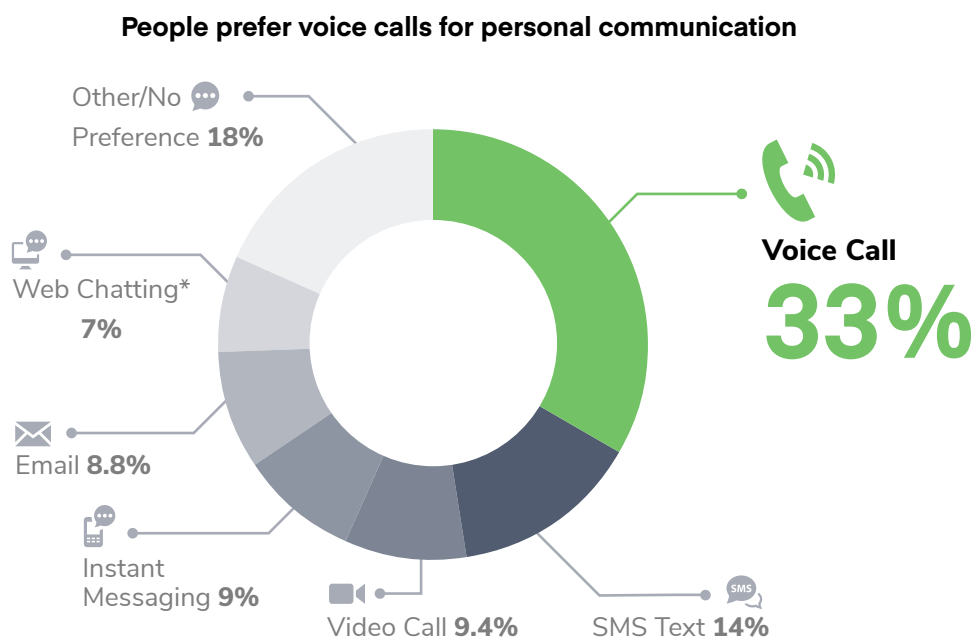
*Web Chatting: Skype, Slack, Teams and chat bots



Trend 1: Voice traffic skyrocketed in 2020 as consumers preferred voice over all other channels.

People prefer voice for personal communication

In addition to professional communication, people also prefer the voice call when connecting with friends and family. More than a third of survey respondents indicated that the voice call is their first option for personal communication, beating out texting by nearly 20 percentage points. Newer communication channels—like Zoom, Slack, and Whatsapp—were each preferred by less than 10% of respondents.



*Web Chatting: Skype, Slack, Teams and chat bots

Voice is now more important than ever

While new communication channels have gained popularity in recent years, voice remains dominant. Over the past year, businesses made clear that voice is critical to their success. Nearly 80% of businesses surveyed agreed with the statement: “The voice call has become more important than ever.” Every industry overwhelmingly agreed with this statement, from finance to healthcare, and retail to travel.

Trend 2:

Unwanted spam, fraud, and spoofing degrade the performance of legitimate businesses needing to call customers.

While consumers prefer the voice call and voice traffic has skyrocketed, unwanted spam, fraud, and spoofing continue to create a critical gap for businesses trying to reach their customers by phone. Spam and fraud have increased significantly worldwide in recent years and people are faced with the daunting task of deciding when to pick up and who to trust.



85%

of respondents indicated they think unidentified calls might be fraud

Should I answer?

All across the world, people must grapple with this question every time an unidentified caller rings. Billions of spam and fraud calls are made every year, making people increasingly wary of unidentified calls. According to a recent Censuswide survey, nearly 85% of respondents indicated they think unidentified calls might be fraud, creating a massive obstacle for legitimate callers that are unidentified.

Quick Facts:

Spam Calls

- **157B:** In 2020, Hiya estimated a total of 157.4 billion spam and fraud calls in North America and Europe.*
- **144:** On average, mobile users received 144 spam calls in 2020, with 58% of these calls determined to be fraudulent.
- **43M:** Hiya received more than 43 million reports from users flagging calls as spam or fraud in 2020.

*U.S., Canada, Mexico, UK, Germany, Spain, France, Italy

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tip

Avoid being a victim of phone scams by [downloading the Hiya app](#). AT&T customers are protected by AT&T Call Protect. Samsung users are protected by Samsung Smart Call. And Telenor Norway subscribers can use the Se Hvem app. All of these solutions are powered by Hiya.



Trend 2: Unwanted spam, fraud, and spoofing continue to degrade the performance of legitimate businesses trying to contact customers via voice call.

Scam Spotlight:

COVID-19

COVID-19 disrupted all aspects of life and created mass confusion and fear throughout the past year. And scammers exploited the crisis by preying on this confusion and fear to victimize the public. COVID-19-related scams spiked in March 2020, increasing 583% in just a single month. The scams have remained fairly consistent throughout the year, but have been on the rise recently, increasing an average of 18% month-over-month from October 2020 to January 2021.

Top COVID scams


While scammers try a variety of tactics, here are the top COVID-19-related scams.



Selling
fake vaccines



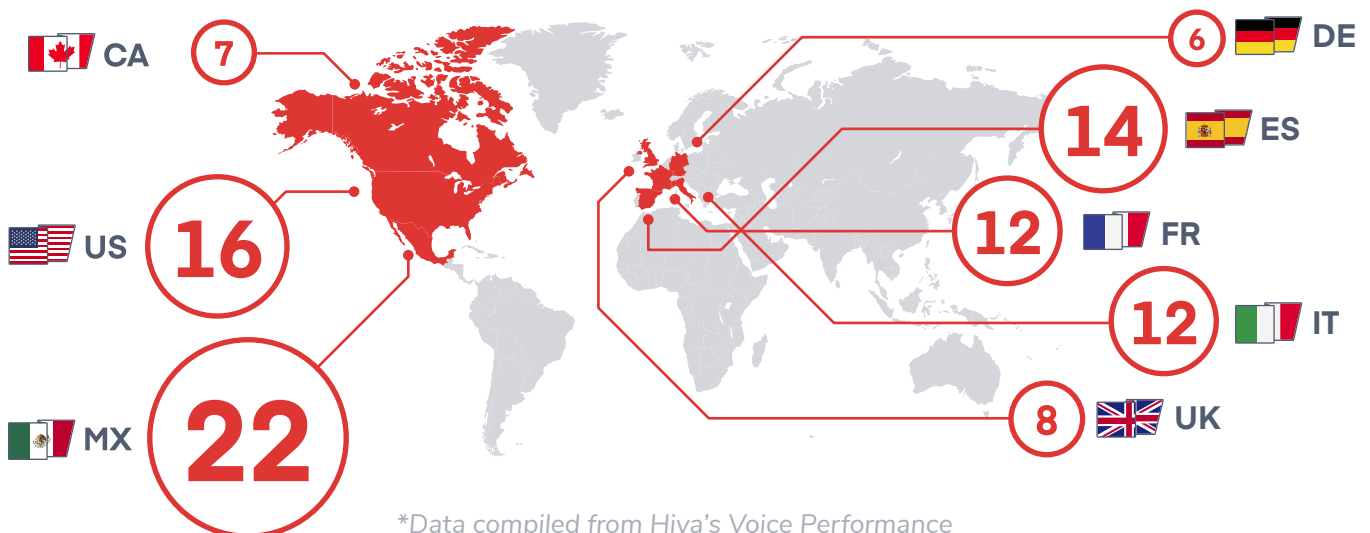
Vaccine
disinformation



Stimulus
package scams

Spam Calls per User per Month in 2020

58% of all spam calls were determined to be fraudulent while 42% were nuisance



*Data compiled from Hiya's Voice Performance Platform, which processes 13 billions calls per month.

Trend 2: Unwanted spam, fraud, and spoofing continue to degrade the performance of legitimate businesses trying to contact customers via voice call.

Are spoofers hijacking my business?

A common tactic deployed by hackers and fraudsters is spoofing - when impersonators hijack a legitimate business' phone number to exploit their customers. Spoofing is difficult for businesses to monitor and stop on their own, and most businesses are unaware that they have ever been spoofed. Meanwhile, the majority of consumers are well aware of this tactic, specifically noting that businesses in the financial and healthcare industries are most often spoofed.

[Read this eBook to learn more about the effect of spoofing on your business.](#)



48%

of consumers are suspicious of calls coming from businesses that have been spoofed

Long-term impacts of spoofing

Businesses that are spoofed experience long-term negative impacts. Nearly half of consumers surveyed are suspicious of calls from a business that has been spoofed, while nearly a quarter of respondents said it has eroded their trust in the company and/or has negatively affected their perception of customer care.



The most effective way for businesses to avoid being spoofed is to add Hiya Connect Secure Call to authenticate caller identity and terminate unverified outbound calls. The long-term negative impacts make it critical that businesses understand the threat of spoofing and use new tools to stay protected.

Another blind spot

In addition to spoofing, another blind spot for businesses is how they appear on their customers' phones when they call. With a variety of anti-spam and caller ID technologies available—each operating with varying degrees of accuracy—businesses risk their calls being inaccurately marked as spam or blocked as fraud.

Businesses don't know if their calls are marked as spam or fraud



56%

of businesses don't know



84%

of healthcare organizations don't know



71%

of retail companies don't know

Trend 3:

Scammers and hackers target everyone, making voice security essential for businesses, consumers, and carriers across the globe.

When it comes to phone scams, everyone is a target. Scammers look to exploit anyone with a phone, no matter their age, location, income, or other demographic information. People in North America and Europe* received an average of 144 spam calls in 2020 - 58% of which were suspected fraud calls.

*Countries include: U.S. Canada, Mexico, UK, Germany, Spain, France, Italy.

Top Targets

- **Age:** Millennials aged 25-34 were the most targeted age group.
- **Location:** Texas was the most targeted state in 2020, with Dallas, Houston, Austin, San Antonio, and Fort Worth all ranking in the top 10 most targeted area codes in the U.S.
- **Going International:** France was the most targeted European country, with an average of 9 fraud calls per user per month - 3X the fraud rate in the U.S.

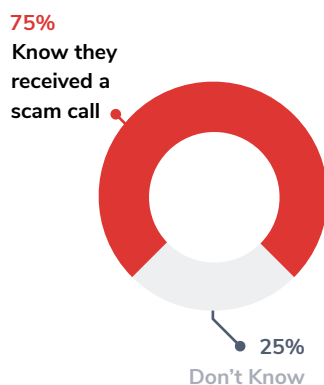
Financial ramifications

Beyond the inconvenience of being targeted by scammers, there are also significant financial ramifications. Nearly 40% of consumers surveyed reported losing an average of \$182 to phone scams in 2020 and more than 7% of these victims lost more than \$500.

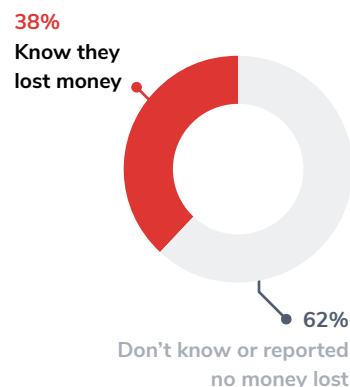
How much did victims lose to scam calls on average in 2020?



Did you receive a scam call in 2020?



Did you lose money to a phone scam in 2020?



Trend #3: Scammers and hackers target everyone, making voice security essential for businesses, consumers, and carriers across the globe.

Spotlight:

The Hiya effect

Hiya protected its 150 million users by preventing an estimated \$2.3 billion from being lost to fraud calls in 2020.

\$2.3B

Carriers to the rescue

As spam and fraud calls continue to increase and impact people worldwide, both businesses and consumers are turning to carriers to fix the problem. Most businesses think carriers should fix the problem of call spoofing while consumers expect the government and carriers to step in to fix the spam problem.

Who should fix the problem of spam and fraud calls?

Businesses said:	Consumers said:
1. Carriers	1. Government
2. Government	2. Carriers
3. Businesses	3. Businesses
4. Apps	4. Device manufacturers
5. Device Manufacturers	5. Apps



The Hiya Voice Performance Platform can be integrated into the network or with existing apps to allow for a seamless call security offering to subscribers.

Trend 4:

Unidentified calls hamper business performance as consumer trust in unknown calls continues to erode.

Consumers all receive a lot of noise on their phones. They are bombarded with calls, texts, emails, notifications, alerts, and much more. Their phones are constantly buzzing, and with all of that noise it can be challenging for businesses to break through.

 **94%** of unknown calls go unanswered

People receive an average of 55 incoming calls per user per month. Many of those calls are from known contacts and the recipient often answers these known calls. However, 11 of these calls are unidentified—including calls from legitimate businesses—and a staggering 94% of these unknown calls go unanswered.

Businesses must break through a lot of noise to reach their customers



Unidentified calls are going unanswered. Customers are missing important calls. And business results are declining.

Business voice performance

Unidentified and unanswered calls

Trend 4: Unidentified calls hamper business performance as consumer trust in unknown calls continues to erode.

The uncertainty of the unknown

Most often, businesses struggle to reach customers by phone because they don't identify themselves when calling. Not only do the majority of people never answer unidentified calls, but nearly 85% of survey respondents indicated that they think unidentified calls might be fraud.

As a result, two thirds of consumers surveyed know they have missed an important call because it was unidentified. And this trend is continuing a downward spiral that threatens business performance; the majority of consumers surveyed trust unidentified calls less today than they did three years ago.

Businesses bear the brunt

While the negative impacts of unidentified calls are felt by consumers, businesses suffer the most. Over the past 12 months, 63% of businesses reported negative impacts by not being able to reach customers by phone. The top 5 areas that are most affected by not being able to reach customers by phone are sales, productivity, customer satisfaction, efficiency, and cash flow.

Top 5 areas negatively impacted by not being able to reach customers by phone

1. Sales
2. Productivity
3. Customer satisfaction
4. Efficiency
5. Cash flow

Top areas per industry

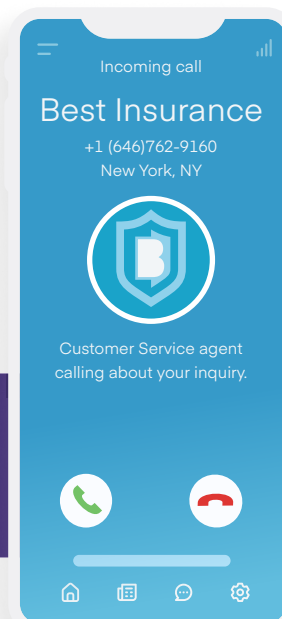
- 85% of retail companies reported negative impact on **sales**
- Professionals in finance, healthcare, and sales/marketing reported **productivity** as most negatively impacted
- IT & telecoms rank **customer satisfaction** as most negatively impacted

Trend 5:

Businesses that embraced innovation broke through the noise and reached more customers in 2020.

Since 94% of unknown calls go unanswered, businesses that adopted new technology in their calling operations succeeded in 2020. Businesses across all industries that added identity—including company name and logo—to their outbound calls saw answer rates increase 47% on average. It makes sense: When people know who's calling, they answer the phone.

47% increase in answer rate when call is identified



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Add identity to your outbound calls with Hiya Connect Branded Call and show your customers your name, logo, and reason for your call.

Industry Spotlight:

Insurance providers

Insurance providers make a high volume of wanted calls. Consumers typically fill out a form, indicating that they are interested in being contacted to discuss insurance options. Yet insurance companies still struggle to reach people on the phone.

Insurance companies that have adopted Hiya Connect have seen strong results. Businesses that added identity to their outbound calls have seen an average increase of 26% in call engagement - a key metric that goes beyond the answer rate and looks at the percentage of calls lasting more than than 60 seconds.

26% increase in call engagement

Methodology

Market Research

Censuswide conducted a market research survey on behalf of Hiya during the period of December 23-29, 2020. In total, 309 U.S. business professionals who use a phone frequently as part of their role were surveyed online. In addition, 2,030 U.S. consumers were also surveyed online. 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: U.S., Canada, Mexico, UK, Spain, Italy, France, and Germany. Hiya's data is sourced from Hiya's integrations with wireless carriers and device manufacturers, partnerships with business entities, and the Hiya app. All proprietary data has been aggregated and anonymized..



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Learn more at hiya.com/state-of-the-call

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 Performance 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 150 million users, power services like AT&T Call Protect and Samsung Smart Call, and deliver voice performance insights to businesses across the globe.