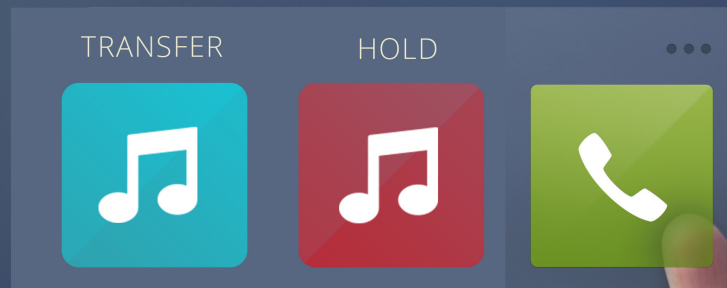


Music Integration in the Contemporary Contact Center



An Easy On Hold White Paper focusing on the benefits of continuous streaming music source in Avaya 7+ with Avaya Aura®.

SUMMARY

Caller transfer and hold times continue to be a weak link in call handling scenarios. Audio files have been deployed to let callers know they're still connected to the queue, however there are sound quality and other issues. New technologies allow live streaming audio to be integrated, providing simplification of content management, in addition to branding opportunities.

In particular, Avaya 7+ with Avaya Aura provides the ideal integration for content streams in hold queues. Easy On Hold is the leader in providing streaming on hold audio and is an ideal technology partner for turnkey outsourced MOH streaming service.

Music Integration in the Contemporary Contact Center

Where did you get that music?

Music has been the default audio for callers on hold for over 50 years (ever since a stray telephone wire got crossed with a radio signal). Hold music must be licensed, which has led to an industry of amateur music tracks that claim to be “royalty free”. Whether from a lack of musicality, poor sound reproduction or wearisome repetition, hold music has become a genre of its own, with few fans.

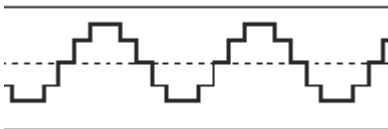
Longer hold times are associated with callers seeking support, reinforcing the image that any time spent on hold represents poor customer service. The effects can be damaging to a brand, especially if callers take their complaints public on social media. Often, however, “on-hold time” is seen as an opportunity to communicate with active customers, or at least a chance to influence a captive audience.



“My punishment for getting on this conference bridge before all others: really bad music on hold. Guess it pays to be late sometimes.”

Status Quo: Audio Files

Avaya and other systems have the option of pointing transfer and hold queues to audio files for hold music purposes. Before audio can be used by the phone system, it must be converted to numbers that represent a continuous analog sound wave (digitizing). The extent to which the reproduced sound matches the original sound depends on the number of samples being taken. For Avaya and most other phone systems, the audio files must be compressed to 8-bit audio, assuring a diminished sound quality.



Representation of 8-bit audio wave form.

Without additional programming, audio files likely play from the beginning of the file each time a call is placed on hold. Callers placed on hold more than once hear the first part of the audio file repeatedly. As a workaround, administrators have called for multiple, short files to be uploaded and changed from time to time. These efforts eventually are viewed as an inconvenient burden and are abandoned.

Streaming Solves Audio Issues

In many cases today, streaming audio is delivering better-sounding hold audio while simplifying programming for administrators.

- Streams do not take up storage
- Content is managed in cloud, not on phone system
- Authorized login option for modifying content
- Local tech team no longer managing/loading audio files
- Continuous stream of changing music provides variety

The deployment of a streaming audio source can be as simple as entering an http URL into a text field on the phone interface. We will look at how Avaya had added this feature in 7+ with Aura.

Avaya Aura® Media Server Streaming MoH from an External Source [7.0.1]

Communication Manager can utilize the IP address information of a Music on Hold (MoH) streaming server to play music when a call is placed on hold.

HTTP(s) MP3 stream is supported. The streaming protocol accepts the standard HTTP/MP3 streaming provided by Easy On Hold.

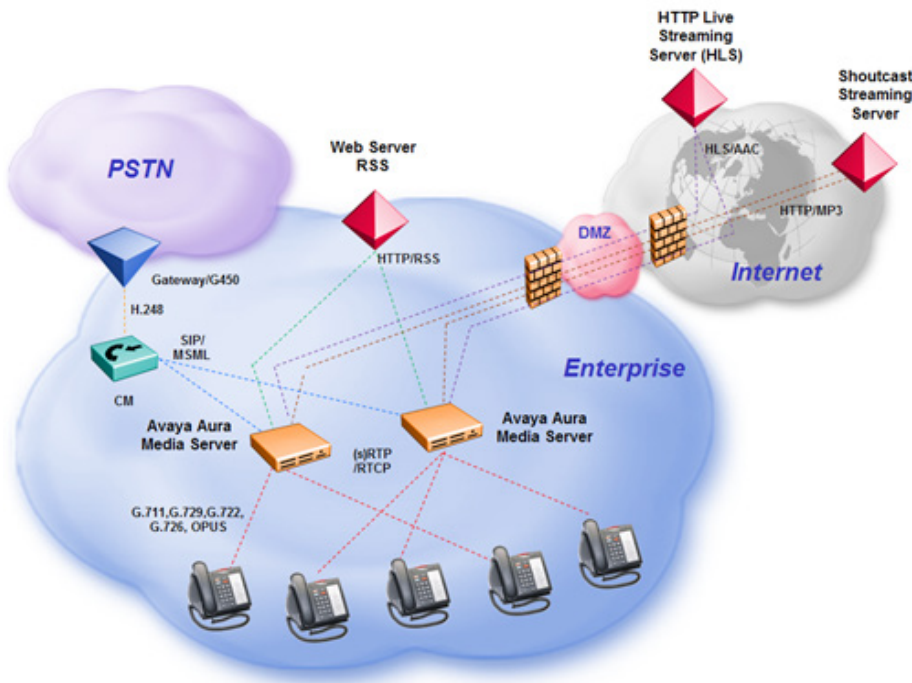
Music streams managed by this feature play continuously in the background, similar to a CD on repeat or a radio broadcast. Each stream can be replicated efficiently to **thousands of endpoints**.

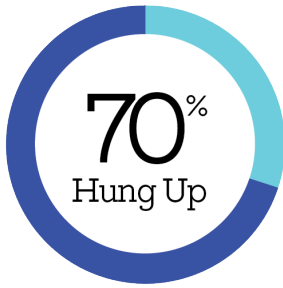
Management and Scale

Streams are configured on AAMS using the AAMS EM. Enhanced monitoring screens have also been added. A stream key (configured on AAMS) is used to reference each stream. CM requires the same configuration to reference the stream. Maximum configurable streams is 64.

Status of each stream is clearly visible.

The stream is buffered to provide a 15-minute failover backup audio file.





Heard just music, hung up
in less than 2 minutes.



Strategic Approaches to Leveraging Streaming MoH

By using a stream hosted by Easy On Hold, your application will have limitless creative content choices. Music, voice or a mix of both elements are edited into 30-second segments. Each audio segment is programmed with instructions on when to play, and how often.

In doing so, Easy On Hold has created a simplified platform that customizes the on-hold experience for callers, based on the week, day and time of day they called.

Variety Retains Calls

Even in cases whereby no spoken content is desired, changing musical content alleviates caller fatigue caused by repetition, reducing call abandonment rates. Since callers hear the stream "in progress", there will be fresh content for each call or instance of being placed on hold.

Conclusion

A streaming on hold queue is preferred in contact center and call center applications, as this deployment provides desired capabilities:

- Simplification of programming (automated by Easy On Hold)
- Reduced team involvement (changing audio files)
- Higher quality audio source
- Reduced repetition, leading to higher customer satisfaction
- Reliable and supported by Avaya
- Easily deployed to specific endpoints
- Multiple streams can be utilized for specific user groups

Avaya 7+ with Avaya Aura provides the ideal integration for content streams in hold queues. Easy On Hold is the leader in providing streaming on hold audio and is an ideal technology partner for turnkey outsourced MOH streaming service.

About Easy On Hold

Easy On Hold® is an established creative marketing firm with a successful 20-year history of making great impressions. Fueled by a passion for innovation and excellence. Easy On Hold has developed the first and most widely-integrated streaming music and messages on hold platform in the industry. Clients include Fortune 100 companies such as Birkshire Hathaway, technology giants such as Open Table and Expedia and well-known brands such as T-Mobile, Norwegian Cruiseline, Progressive Insurance and Frontier Communications.



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