The 6 key steps to design an exceptional Voice Interface

How I deliver VUIs that combine empathy, technical precision, and business value at every stage

Steps	Preview	What	How
1. Requirements Definition	A VUI is not a progression of self-service technology alone, it is a bridge between user comfort and business priorities through innovation.	Define the business motivation behind the VUI, understand how it aligns with user needs, corporate brand, and application goals.	**Reverse brainstorming** activities to simulate what could go wrong and be hidden challenges in building on current assistant technologies.
2. High-Level Design	High-level design sets the stage for seamless interaction—how can a simple VUI align with a brand's voice.	Establish the overall dialog strategy, grammar type, and persona to align user experience with brand.	**Crazy Eights** rapid idea generation and **Director, Actor, Producer** exercises to rapidly generate ideas and designs.
3. Detailed Design	Details make or break the system—addressing research-backed scenarios ensure user satisfaction.	Craft precise dialog flows, robust error handling, and tailored prompts for all scenarios while leveraging iterative user testing.	Leverage iterative user testing with real-world scenarios with tools like **Icebreaker stories** and **Dot Voting**.
4. Development	The transition from blueprint to functional reality requires precision and adaptability.	Integrate seamless coding practices with backend systems, grammars, and voice assets to bring the design to life, through corralling stakeholders under a shared vision.	Iterative prototyping building on user persona, design standards, and industry best practice as I did with each generation of Ellsi.
5. Testing	A rigorous testing process is the ultimate assurance of reliability and trust—keys to self-service and partner interfaces.	Conduct usability tests, Wizard of Oz simulations, and load evaluations to ensure the system operates as intended in real-world environments.	**Usability Testing**, **Heuristic Evaluations**, and **A/B Testing** to gather feedback and grade against best practices— for example in "science fair" events with the first Ellsi question answering prototype.
6. Tuning	Tuning transforms a good VUI into a great one, ensuring it evolves with user needs.	Continuously optimize through pilot programs and post-launch feedback to refine grammar, accuracy, and user satisfaction/prompt-success.	Develop regular **Feedback Loops** reviewing analytics to identify high-traffic patterns, and conduct regular improvement workshops to fine-tune and align across business "ebb and flow" priorities.