

Insight into Contact Centres

Improving performance



"Our economy is dominated by the service sector, which has undergone considerable change over the past decade. Technology has enabled a revolution in the way service providers interact with their customers".

Sir David Varney 2008

The expectations of the consumer are constantly being raised, the phenomenal rise in the access to information coupled with the changes seen in the UK economy, have dramatically changed the way we all conduct our personal business. Telephone banking, online auctions etc have become the norm. Utilities implore us everyday in the media to pick up the telephone or to visit their website. Insurance companies have now almost totally migrated to telephone and internet sales and service. The UK is now one of the leading service industry driven economies in Europe. With this background its little wonder that the pressure is on to provide more efficient and effective contact centres, with a wider range of services mindful of the P&L and linked to the financial plan.

The consequences of failure to deliver

People can and often do vote with their feet

If a call centre fails, it loses a chance to win a new customer or loses an existing customer. Consequently best practice in a contact centre is of paramount importance yet we don't have to look far to see average performance from many contact centres. It is very common to experience excellent service at the point of sale which then

tails off as our contact with the organisation moves on to service delivery and service assurance.

How to achieve a quality customer experience

Senior management must take ownership or regain ownership of the contact centres process at an early stage. And should not delegate "process engineering" to the contact centre management team alone, include sales and marketing. Giving clear guidance on the callers and the organisations expectations?

The team need to be motivated and fulfilled to maintain a high quality of service all key performance indicators should encourage "*first contact resolution*". Customer satisfaction must dominate incentive schemes, as hitting targets for answering calls quickly does not alone satisfy the caller's needs. Call ownership and first contact resolution is king.

All inbound customer messages should be prioritised equally, from telephone, email or website input.

Do not allow automated telecommunications systems to put conditional requests to the caller or to pass the caller around from one location to another

To provide first contact resolution the contact centre operative will need access to information and authority to act on behalf of the caller



Getting it right:

- Senior Management must take ownership of the business process
- Be very clear to all about the need to meet the caller's needs and uphold the organisations values involve both sales and marketing
- Focus on customer care first and hitting targets second
- Use motivating performance measurements to drive a culture that encourages call ownership and first contact resolution
- The processes must serve the caller and uphold the organisations values
- Ensure that all automated telephony serves and respects the needs of the caller
- The operative needs access to the appropriate information.
- Organisations constantly struggle with systems integration, focus on customer driven priorities

Insight into Private Sector Contact Centres

So what does the ideal contact centre look like?

From the caller's point of view:-

- The phone is answered within 15 seconds by a human being. Falling back to a machine only at peak times, the machine then offers alternatives without pre conditions.
- Their question or request for action is dealt with by the first person they speak to and that person has sufficient knowledge, authority to act and access to information to answer their questions.
- The caller is given choice and kept informed of the next steps
- The caller feels good about themselves and the organisation after the call.

From the organisations point of view

- The process flow upholds the callers needs and the organisations values
- Contact centre operatives have access to the information they need and authority to act
- Contact centre operatives are motivated to resolve requests at the time of first contact or retain ownership of the call and manage the caller's journey through the organisation.
- Records are kept and used to identify trends, reduce the number of calls and provide positive motivation to the team.
- The contact centre is an effective operational unit delivering benefit to the organisations bottom line, a profit centre not a cost centre.

An example



A private sector call centre faced an overwhelming number of calls per day; the operatives were targeted on answering all calls within 3 rings. Some 30% of those calls overflowed to voice mail. The management team thought it needed to increase headcount by 20% to meet demand. They had an unacceptable number of complaints and a high turnover of staff.

Andante conducted an audit obtained the "sign off" for the deployment of an improvement plan which was delivered with the assistance of the Andante consultant

The result

The numbers of inbound calls were reduced by two thirds, 98% of calls were answered within 10 seconds, lost calls and overflow calls to voice mail became almost none existent. Staff levels remained constant, staff retention improved and customer complaints were reduced significantly.

"The Andante consultant provided a clear and methodical approach to investigations and process recommendations. This was important to the team and the business as this, in turn, increased the performance and quality of service seen by the customer".
Dean Baldwin OPAL Solutions

Our professional advisors are committed to enhancing your customer's journey through, your people, your processes and your systems. This is achieved by providing you with best practice, managing change and delivering practical and effective assistance. We have reduced costs, motivated teams and assisted many companies like yours to acquire incremental business, retain customers and lock out the competition.

"Independent, Objective, Effective"

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