
Improving Agent Performance Through Monitoring and Training Systems

Improving agent performance represents the most critical task in any contact center, and the most competitive organizations employ a wide variety of methods to evaluate customer interactions and train their personnel in an effective manner.

Side-by-Side Coaching

Side-by-side coaching follows the most fundamental approach for training and improving agent performance. Supervisors basically hang over employees, or listen on an extension, while they're trying to do their job, and then the supervisor will determine whether it's been completed in a thorough and correct manner. The method is very labor intensive, often makes the employee nervous and fails to distinguish regarding the complexity of inbound requests.

Side-by-side coaching does provide a very hands-on and personal approach to improving agent performance and helps to develop working relationships between employees and their supervisors, often a factor in maintaining or increasing staff retention.

Silent Monitoring

Silent monitoring represents one step up from side-by-side coaching. Agents remain unaware of exactly when or what conversation is reviewed. Silent monitoring generally delivers more accurate and useful results than side-by-side coaching by enabling selective approaches to the customer interactions used for evaluation.

Quality monitoring systems can be easily configured for silent monitoring based on a variety of parameters such as channel, time, agent and incoming phone number. They can be integrated with reporting software to deliver comprehensive results for evaluation by supervisors or contact center management.

Agent and Customer Participation

One of the best methods for improving performance encourages interactions between agents and supervisors instead of creating a testing situation. Some quality monitoring systems let the agent contact the supervisor in real-time during difficult calls, without the customer's knowledge, and the supervisor can either provide advice through chat or actually take control of the agent's computer.

Other systems provide customer feedback modules as a check on supervisor evaluations or to just let the customer blow off some steam in case of poor service. Studies have shown the ability to rate an agent's performance increases customer retention rates and improves the accuracy of agent evaluation.

Speech Analytics and eLearning

Business process optimization offers a new technology encompassing communications recording, quality management, speech analytics, eLearning and workforce management. This new capability proves especially useful for large contact centers with an otherwise unmanageable volume of customer interactions.

Speech analytics selects customer interactions in an automated manner through any pre-defined keyword. eLearning analyzes agents' weaknesses and then automatically delivers customized instruction to their desktops. As agent skills in the designated area improve, new relative weaknesses manifest themselves, and the process starts all over, thus delivering a loop of continuous learning.

Conclusion

The methods for improving agent performance encompass a wide variety of approaches, and the contact center environment, industry practices and competitive situation will all determine the tools selected to do so.

About Ralf Roesel :

Ralf Roesel joined ASC as a Product Manger in February 2007. Since then, he has designed, developed and promoted ASC's Quality Management solutions through both technical and marketing innovations. Mr. Roesel has designed new products, created special integrations, engaged in strategic planning, analyzed market demands, and evaluated customer requirements.

About ASC :

ASC is a global provider of solutions to record, analyze and evaluate multimedia-based communications. ASC's solutions reveal vital information, enabling organizations to considerably improve their value creation: contact centers enhance customer service, efficiently deploy staff and increase productivity. Financial institutions fulfill documentation requirements, achieve a higher level of legal security and reduce costs. First

responders and public safety organizations enhance reactivity in emergency situations; therefore, ASC provides an important contribution to public safety.

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