



CUSTOMER REACH

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2006

Calibration- Ensuring consistency in your Quality Assurance program

In previous articles we have examined what best practice organizations do to implement successful and effective Quality Assurance operations. We have reviewed the practice of assessing the quality of the agent voices stream, the transactional quality and value versus fix transactions, monitoring forms, call recording and logging.

In this article we examine the often overlooked, though essential activity of calibrating the quality assurance monitoring process. While the Quality Assurance program structure of best practice organizations and espoused by TRG endeavor to eliminate subjectivity as much as possible, it cannot be totally eliminated for the call monitoring process. Each individual who monitors a call will form their own opinion related the call based upon their own experience, knowledge and training.

The implementation of consistent training, coaching and management will over time reduce the variances between individual opinions as their own experience will be more consistent and better aligned. This benefit exists within mature center with a consistent and stable training, management and methodologies in place. In many centers however this level of consistency does not exist at the point when quality assurance is introduced to the center.

'Calibration' is the process of assessing the gap between individuals and/or organizations and through active and structured review and comparison, reduce the gap.

The process by which we can assess the gap, or the subjective differences in opinion is completed through independent review of monitored calls. Each of the calls is reviewed by each member of the Quality Assurance team who as responsibility for monitoring and coaching. Each member of the group scores the call employing the approved monitoring form. The scores for each call from each team member is plotted on a spreadsheet.

During the calibration meeting each call is played and reviewed by the group. In sequence each team member reviews their scoring for the call and their thinking and rationale for their scores. The group reviews and discusses the various scores until they agree on a final score for the call. Each of the monitored calls is then reviewed in sequence until all call has been reviewed. The final scores for each call is then plotted on the spreadsheet and a gap report is produced. The gap report illustrates the variance of the scores, for example if the team member scores ranged from 7.2 to 9.0 for a specific call the gap range would be 1.8 (the total variance between the two scores). Then, the summary range of each individual call averages this is the overall gap result.

By meeting and tracking the 'gap' performance and shifts over a three to six month period it is often possible to virtually eliminate any 'gap' between the individuals assessing the calls. Of course this process does need to be repeated whenever new staff joins the department with responsibility for monitoring.



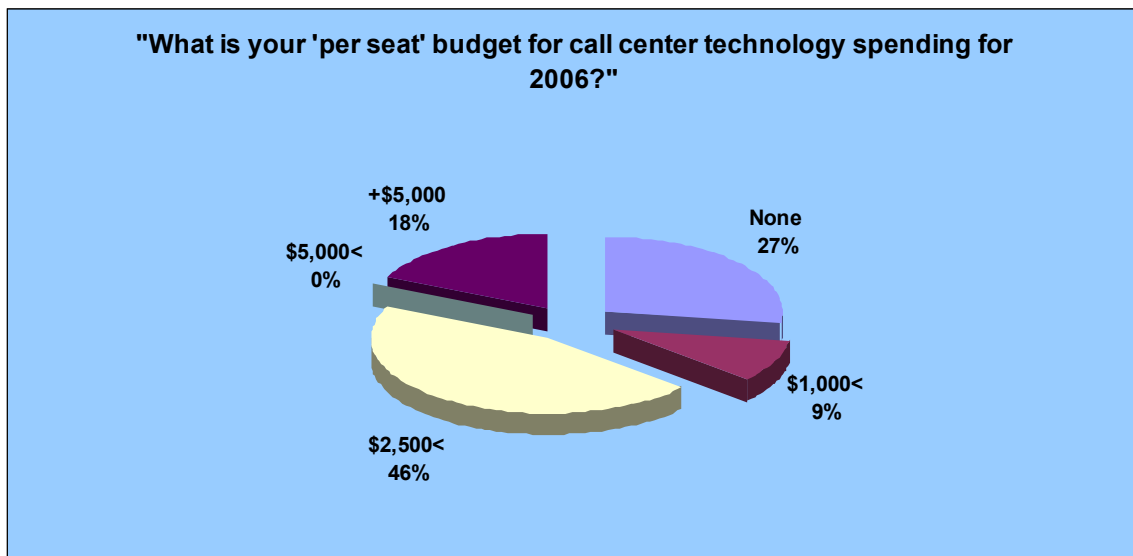
The result of the calibration process as outlined above is a fair, reasonable and consistent Quality Assurance process that is virtually free of subjectivity.

Let us know what you think of this article or any suggestions you have for future issues by email at feedback@thetaylorreachgroup.com.

Poll of the Month

Each month on the TRG website (www.thetaylorreachgroup.com) we ask you to cast your vote in our monthly poll.

"What is your 'per seat' budget for call center technology spending for 2006?"



Poll Results: Results can provide some surprises. More than a quarter (27%) of call center operators who responded to this survey did not have any dollars budgeted for call center technology spending in 2006. 18% were budgeting for significant spending at more than \$5,000 per seat for new technologies in their call center in 2006.

Do you have an idea for an upcoming poll? If so we would love to hear it.

Please email your suggestion to feedback@thetaylorreachgroup.com

Newsworthy

In this regular column we review the latest news, predictions and trends impacting on the Customer Interaction Industry.

Telemarketer Credited With Saving Prospect's Life



Stanley Bauch of Ridott, IL likely owes his life to Consumer Direct Marketing, a telemarketing firm, according to the Associated Press. On or around Dec. 30, Bauch, 85, had fallen and lain on his floor for around 17 hours when the phone rang, the AP said. On the other end of the line was Crystal Rozell, a call center representative. Rozell said she could tell something was wrong with Bauch, and contacted the police. Bauch, who according to the AP is undergoing chemotherapy, was discovered, dehydrated and on his floor, and taken to a nearby hospital. Consumer Direct Marketing subsequently provided Bauch with a lifetime subscription to a medical lifeline network so he can call 911 if he has another emergency, the AP reported.

Originally published in Direct Newswire

U.S. Indicts 50 Over Alleged Red Cross Call Center Scam

Almost 50 people have been indicted in connection with a scheme that bilked hundreds of thousands of dollars from a Red Cross program to put cash into the hands of Hurricane Katrina victims, according to wire service reports.

Seventeen of the accused worked at the Red Cross claim center in Bakersfield, CA., which handled calls from storm victims across the country and authorized cash payments to them. The others were the workers' relatives and friends, federal prosecutors said last week. The affair came to light when Red Cross officials noticed that a suspiciously high number of people were picking up Red Cross money at Western Union outlets near the Bakersfield center, even though few evacuees were in the area. Forty-nine people in the Bakersfield area have been indicted in the past three months for filing false claims with the center. More indictments are expected soon, said Stanley A. Boone, an assistant U.S. attorney in Bakersfield.

Originally published in DM News

Verizon wins court injunction against telemarketers

US-based, Verizon Wireless has struck a blow for protecting its customers from unwanted telemarketing calls, winning permanent injunctions against two firms it had sued in federal courts in Sacramento and New Jersey. Verizon sued Aug. 31, saying its customers and employees in California and New Jersey had received more than 1 million telemarketing calls on cell phones (including some on Verizon's in-store demo phones) from autodialers with recorded messages. Both firms named in the suits, Intelligent Alternatives of San Diego and Resort Marketing Trends of Coral Springs, Florida, were barred from making further calls to Verizon customers using autodialers and recorded messages. Federal laws forbid such calls to cell phones. Verizon settled with Resort Marketing Trends in September and Intelligent Alternatives in October, but did not announce its victories until last week. Intelligent Alternatives agreed to pay US\$20,000 in damages, which Verizon is donating to a domestic violence prevention hot line in San Diego. Verizon asked the courts to halt the calls and to fine the firms \$700 million in damages. Verizon didn't collect anything more than the \$20,000. But the company (which had \$28 billion in revenue last year) did send a loud message with the twin wins: Don't try this with us, because it'll cost you if you do.

Originally published in Asia Pacific Call Centre News.

Two Thirds of centers do not know what their customers expect

In a recent survey completed by TRG more than two thirds of call center managers surveyed said they did not understand their customers needs well enough to meet the customers expectations. Only 17% said they knew what was expected by their customers.

Originally published by TRG.



Ask the Experts

The following are actual questions posed to the TRG experts. You can pose your questions on our website.

Web Chat Considerations

Question:

“We are presently researching purchasing a web chat application, We have several companies we are in discussion with, but my interest is on the impact it had on the call center itself and the staff within the call center. We are a small call center with about 40 full time agents, seasonal bump to about 100”

Expert Response:

When you are looking to implement web chat within your center there are a number of considerations you need to keep in mind;

- -Unless you are integrating the web chats into your ACD queue, then you will not be able to rely on the ACD reports to provide you with good data on agent occupancy and activities,
- -Like phone calls, web-chats are 'immediate' transactions and you will need to establish service standards for these inquiries and report on these daily,
- -Web chats allow the unique ability to manage multiple transactions simultaneously. It is not uncommon for a single agent to work on 5-7 web chats at the same time.
- -Of course the ability to carry one multiple transactions simultaneously is directly influenced by the completeness and robustness of your knowledgebase. The better constructed and laid out the knowledgebase is the better suited it will be for 'cut and paste' responses to customer questions.

Other related areas you have available to you and may wish to consider along these same lines would be email (once again you will need to establish service levels, share these with your customers and report on these each day) and community management. The attractiveness of community management is that it allows your own customers to answer other customer inquiries, with the appropriate controls and approvals on the responses. This latter area can, in organizations with a high loyalty level amongst customer result in dramatic saving and efficiencies in terms of total inquiries that need to be serviced by a live agent. Two companies that I am familiar with who are providing community management services are; Engage <http://www.engagecorporation.com> and Outstart <http://www.outstart.com/portal/index.jsp> .

Let us know what you think of this response. How would you have answered this question? Let us know at feedback@thetaylorreachgroup.com



Industry Web Links

The Taylor Reach Group, Inc. website <http://www.thetaylorreachgroup.com> has many useful and valuable links where you can access assistance, news, articles and whitepapers related to the call center. A list of current links is listed below.

Call Centre Voice

<http://www.callcentrevoice.com/home.asp>

CallCentreVoice is an independent call centre and customer service discussion community. Established in 2001, CallCentreVoice provides the highest standards of discussion and debate, combined with a strong sense of community between members and a friendly, helpful attitude. The site aims to educate and inform, whilst providing a strong platform for networking amongst almost 10,000 call centre professionals worldwide. Likely the best Discussion Group related to contact centers

CallCentreGurus.com

<http://www.callcentregurus.com>

CallCentreGurus is an active call centre weblog which contains insightful commentary and articles on the various goings-on within the call centre and customer service industry. A completely free resource, it aims to be informative and interesting, and accessible to all.

Asia Pacific Call Centre News

<http://www.apccn.com/>

American Teleservices Association

<http://www.ataconnect.org>

ASP Online

<http://www.asponline.com/>

Tele Plaza

<http://www.teleplaza.com>

Call Center Ops

<http://www.callcenterops.com/>

Call Center Depot

<http://www.callcenterdepot.com/>

CC News

<http://www.ccnews.com/>

CRM Xchange

http://www.crmxchange.com/tel_econ.asp

Help Desk Institute

<http://www.thinkhdi.com/>

Incoming Calls Management Institute

<http://www.incoming.com/>



Call Centre Consulting Connection

<http://www.c4connection.com/>

TMC Net

<http://www.tmcnet.com/>

Site Selection Canada

<http://www.sscda.com/>

Privacy Info.ca

<http://www.privacyinfo.ca/>

National Association of Major Mail Users, Inc.

<http://www.nammu.org/en/indexen.html>

Privacy International

<http://www.privacyinternational.org/>

UK Based Privacy Advocacy Group

Call Center Learning Center

<http://www.call-center.net>

A comprehensive directory for call center managers.

Call Center Guide

<http://www.callcenterguide.com>

Call Center Headquarters

<http://www.CallCenter-HQ.com/>

Your Complete Online Call Center Guide

Call Center On-Line

<http://www.call-center-online.info/>

Telecomweb

<http://www.telecomweb.com/index.html>

Knowledgestorm- Call Center

<http://callcenter.knowledgestorm.com/kscallcenter/MainServlet?ksAction=Home>

CommWeb

<http://www.commweb.com/news/:jsessionid=IZVFSPOBG2S0CQSNDBCCKH0CJUMKJVN>

Alberta Government telemarketing

<http://www3.gov.ab.ca/gs/services/business/pdfs/Char%20Fund%20Bus%20Lic.pdf>

Alberta government site related to rules and regulations on telemarketing



Paul English IVR Cheat Sheet

<http://www.paulenglish.com/ivr/>

Cheat codes for bypassing many companies IVR systems

Call Center Resource

<http://www.callcentrix.com>

Call center, Outsourcing and Telemarketing Web Portal

Inside TRG

Your Input is Requested

Customer Reach is read by more than 750 senior call center executives and practitioners around the globe. To keep this newsletter relevant and meaningful we would like your input comments and suggestions. So please don't be shy, let us know how we can make the Customer Reach more relevant, helpful, applicable and beneficial to you by emailing us at feedback@thetaylorreachgroup.com.

TRG introduces 300% guarantee

TRG backs Consulting Services with a Guarantee of Results

Toronto- Colin Taylor, The Chairman and CEO of The Taylor Reach Group, Inc. today announced that the company is backing its consulting services with a guarantee, "We guarantee that when our customers ask us to implement recommendations we have made, they will realize a 300% Return on Investment in 4 months", said Taylor. In supporting this guarantee Taylor stated "We can make this guarantee because our track record has secured results in excess of this level on each and every engagement we have completed".

Career Opportunity

While TRG is not a recruiting company we do frequently get asked by our clients to assist them in securing the best possible person for internal positions. One of our clients is presently looking to fill a new position...Customer Service Manager- This is a new roles based in the corporate office located in the south east. This position will have overall responsibility for customer service within the organization. As a new position the successful candidate will help shape to company's view of Customer Service. This position will require extensive travel and requires excellent Project Management and call center/customer service management skills. If you are interested in finding out more about this position please contact Colin Taylor at ctaylor@thetaylorreachgroup.com

Case Study

In this regular column we review the successes that TRG is part of.

TRG Model Drives Service Level Improvement

TRG helped an established services organization dramatically improve their



service through an integrated approach to service delivery.

The Challenge:

This very successful services organization faced a number of challenges; high turnover, low agent productivity, incomplete and inadequate training materials. All of these deficiencies lead to continued poor service performance. The company's service level was very unsatisfactory with very few calls being answered in 20 seconds, and more than 35% of all calls abandoning. They sought out the guidance of TRG to improve the service performance of their call center.

The Process:

TRG conducted a complete end to end assessment of the call center, its processes and those processes that impacted on the call center. TRG developed a call center operational model and worked with the center management and staff to implement a model that incorporated new approaches for;

- Hiring,
- Training,
- Monitoring,
- Coaching,
- Staffing,
- Forecasting,
- Quality assurance,
- Call routing,
- Staff Budgeting,

The Solution:

New hiring practices were implemented to recruit for the desired skill sets. The process mapping resulted in revision to many of the processes to align them better with the objectives of the business. A number of these processes involved groups outside of the call center operation. The result of including these non call center processes was a significantly better alignment between the company objectives and those of the call center. Workforce management was introduced to support more accurate forecasting and scheduling.

The Result:

By implementing the TRG Model, the company improved the service level more than 1200%, reduced abandoned calls by more than 75%, Improved First Call Resolution by more than 50%, Reduced Average Handle Time by 25%, increased customer Satisfaction and Loyalty by more than 10%. All of this was achieved in less than 4 months!



The Taylor Reach Group, Inc. provides Strategic and Operational customer interaction consulting services that deliver Operational Innovation breakthroughs in Contact Center operations.

Award winning service and more than 100 years of industry experience serving 'Fortune 500' and Global 1,000 companies. Extensive North American and International experience with both captive and outsource centers.

Delivering Operational Innovation to your Contact Center

Contact Center Consulting, Customer Satisfaction, Contact Center Technology, Tele-Sales, Privacy, Supply Chain and General Management consulting services provided.

Award winning service, guaranteed ROI...Reach Beyond!

Phone or email TRG today at 905-426-5055

By email at info@thetaylorreachgroup.com .

Offices in North America & Australia

The Taylor Reach Group, Inc.

31 Barr Road

Ajax ON

L1S 3Y1

Phone: 905-426-5055

Fax: 905-426-6793

E-mail: info@thetaylorreachgroup.com

www.thetaylorreachgroup.com