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Effectiveness Indicators – Quality

[Turaj Seyrafiaan](#)

In the past issues, several efficiency indicators (such as AHT, ASA, Call volume and cost per calls) were discussed. At the time it was noted that most of the current contact center operational indicators are focused around efficiency measurement as traditionally cost reduction has been the number one objective! In the last 15 years, however, more and more businesses are turning their attention to the overall results, in terms of the total effectiveness of the center as it relates to the business objectives. In many centers – if not all – this new direction starts by focusing on *quality* and *quality control*, terms that had been used in manufacturing for many years but just recently incorporated into the contact center vocabulary!

Cost of (low) Quality

When discussing the AHT(Average Handle Time), we did mention examples where by mishandling calls, a center could reduce their AHT while ending up with increased call volumes and in effect negating the results of their efficiency efforts. The reason behind the increased call volumes can be traced back to lack of complete (satisfactory) resolution of the calls. If a customer does not receive full resolution to his or her satisfaction, the chances are that this customer will make a repeat call in order to gain that resolution which results in increased call volumes and the overall operating costs. This factor of repeat calls regarding the same issue or topic when defined as a percentage of all calls received is referred to as FCR or First Contact Resolution.

Is this the only impact of low quality? Unfortunately the answer is no!! There is a lot more to the lack of quality! In general those can be grouped into two major categories: *Fulfillment* and *Customer Satisfaction* (although fulfillment eventually impacts the customer satisfaction, issues related to fulfillment can be observed by the organization much more vividly and can be measured differently).

Error Rate

Think of a scenario when a customer purchases an item using the contact center. If by any chance, the agent enters the wrong address, the item cannot be delivered. It probably is returned to the warehouse which requires additional space and handling efforts. After that, the shipping department must make certain inquiry in order to find the correct address and complete the transaction while the contact center may be faced with an incoming call from the customer enquiring about the delivery of their purchase (which leads to another set of communication between the center and the shipping department)!! All of this due to a simple error completing the order form. There are many similar examples for variety of organizations and situations.

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Knowing this negative impact on the operation, many contact centers have created a set of standards and measurements dealing with this attribute. *Error Rate*, measures the ratio of the errors made over number of transaction (typically shown per 10s of thousands). Clearly the higher the error rate, the higher the cost and therefore the higher priority in fixing the problem. Improving the error rate can partially be achieved by using automated verification. For example making sure that street address matches the postal code, or all the digits for a credit card have been entered. On the other hand the contact handling process, as always, is in the hand of Representatives' who can improve the ratio by ensuring their quality of their work. This can be measured by call quality listening and scoring, and be improved by coaching and training.

Call Quality

The second impact of lower quality is directly felt by customers and reflected in their overall satisfaction (keep in mind that there are other factors affecting the overall customer satisfaction). For example, customer may feel that he or she was rushed through the call, his or her spending was not appreciated or that Representative was rude. On the other side the contact center management may feel that Representative did not follow the call handling procedure or perhaps broke certain policies and regulations or did not use the opportunity to up-sell and/or cross-sell!

In some respect *Call Quality* can be compared with product quality coming out of a manufacturing line as it is measured against certain pre-determined quality specifications. The difficulty, however, is to define and measure those specifications. While certain characteristics of a contact – such as Representative knowledge of products and services – can be defined, other (behavioral) aspects such as friendliness and empathy is hard to measure as they are defined by each individual customer! A call judged as friendly by one customer may be considered too rigid by a different customer while a third customer may consider the same call as unprofessional!!!

The solution to this dilemma revolves not only around the Representatives' experience (in recognizing and responding appropriately to each contact) but also in focusing on the final outcome and the role of the center as a link between customers and the organization. This role has progressively evolved from simply answering the calls to becoming the major factor in building customer relationship. A high quality call is not the one that blindly follows scripted actions and announcements but rather the one that enhances the relationship with the customer!

Quality Listening and Quality Score

Assuming that an organization knows what is important to its customers and how to enhance the relationship between the organization and its customers, how do we measure and report the associated call quality? The process starts with developing a *Quality Document* that clearly explains what are the desired outcomes for each contact type as well as how to achieve those outcomes. This quality document must follow the same steps that are outlined within the call handling process to ensure that customers have similar experience dealing with the center regardless of their issue or which agent they are talking to. The quality document must also provide various examples for each step in the process as well as a simple score that clearly links back the actions to building relationship with customers. For example, if a Representative activity damages the customer relationship, it must be scored as poor. If it does not damage the relationship but not enhancing it either, then it can be considered as satisfactory. Other grade of scores, such as Good and Excellent can be defined similarly for each individual action.

Based on such document and definitions a quality Scoring form can easily be developed. Quality scoring form



is then used within the quality listening process to measure and score individual calls and CSRs. Although the numbers and procedure for listening and scoring calls are varied from organization to organization, the single success factor is on-going consistency. Quality listening cannot be a one time activity.

While individual quality reports for each agent can be included in their performance measurements and be used for coaching and training, at the center level the results must be combined, analyzed and acted upon in order to increase the call quality (as a result increasing customer satisfaction and enhancing the relationship while reducing the overall operating costs).

Including quality score as one of the KPI can signal the commitment of the management to increasing quality of calls.

Let us know what you think of this article, please visit www.thetaylorreachgroup.com or send us an email at info@thetaylorreachgroup.com. 

10 Relatively Serious Predictions for 2011

[John Cockerill](#)

1. There will be a future however bleak or rosy, it will still be. Take off the rose colored glasses and stop forecasting historical plus 5%. That is what a demand forecast is for. Get one now.
2. Politicians will still get elected; and we all will complain regardless of who is elected and their policies. Now is a great time to examine your own policies, are they complete, are they up to date are they relevant to the way your center operates today?
3. Calls will still likely be the large percentage of contact traffic types in your centers. People like to talk with people. It is organizations that generally push for self-service and non voice channel (chat and email) and all of these can add value to you center. But don't forget to pay attention to voice it is likely to be you largest channel for the near future.
4. Mondays will continue to be the busiest day of the week for most centers, so don't schedule the same number of staff on Monday as on Friday or even on Tuesday for that matter.
5. Finding and keeping good staff will remain the secret to contact center success. Oops, didn't mean to let that one out.
6. Friday and Monday will account for 40% of all absences and illness on in centers working standard business hours and days. For most centers this does far more damage to your service levels on Mondays, so try asking your staff to be ill and absent on Friday...or at least to start their weekend one day earlier, so they are recovered by Monday.
7. Agent training in contact center will for the next year in many centers to remain thought of as a 'nice to do' not a 'must do'. Here's a thought...what if we hire good people and ensure that they have the training and knowledge to assist our customer over the phone. Would that improve our CSAT and perhaps our ESAT as well?
8. Fault calls will remain the largest segment of calls for most centers. Who's fault? It's your fault...well maybe not you personally, but your organization. What are you doing in your center to reduce fault calls?



9. Marketing may talk to the center regularly and let them know what campaigns, and programs will be run and associated volume expected and likely to impact the center. I don't believe that is all that likely; but it could happen. I have faith that it should have one of these years. Let me know when it does.
10. Predictions for the future like demand forecasts are prone to have a margin of error (50%) regardless of the authority and foresight. Pick a point and go for the future with belief that you can and will figure it out and it will be rosy. If you can conceive it, believe it, you can achieve it.

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Inside TRG

TRG Sponsoring ContactBabel the US Contact Center Decision-Maker's Guide

The US Contact Center Decision-Maker's Guide, the major, primary research-driven report about the US's contact center industry is to be published this fall. TRG is pleased to once again be a sponsor of this high quality report, "This is likely the highest quality report available to most call and contact center operators on the US contact center market", said Taylor Reach CEO Colin Taylor.



Drawing upon years of primary research and analysis, ContactBabel has identified contact centers' seven greatest business concerns:

- Improving Quality and Performance
- Maximizing Efficiency and Agent Optimization
- New Media and the Customer of the Future
- Increasing Profitability
- Choosing a Location
- HR Management and Improvement
- Choosing a Strategic Direction

This 250 page report will be available in Q1, 2011. If you are interested in receiving a copy please register [here](#).

Freebies and Giveaways

Taylor Reach recently published a 20+ page eBook on Agent Retention in Call and Contact Centers and we already have more than 300 downloads, and lots of compliments. Download a copy [here](#).

Free Agent Retention eBook Available

Labor represents two thirds of the operating costs in most call centers. Managing Attrition, staff retention, turnover is an essential to all centers.

Created by; The Taylor Reach Group, Inc. the new eBook "How to Improve Staff Retention in Your Call Center" is the result of thirty plus years of hands on Operational management experience by its author Colin Taylor. Similar content has been delivered at countless workshops Colin has completed around the globe. The average price for



these workshops is over \$1,000 per attendee. You can gain the same insights today for zero cost. In the eBook you will discover:

- The reasons why turnover and attrition are never-ending issues,
- The significant impact turnover can have on your agent productivity,
- How to calculate the ‘real’ cost of attrition in your center,
- The impact of turnover on Wages, Morale, Quality, and the Customer Experience,
- How to assess your centers’ agent career process,
- Leadership strategies that lead to reduced attrition,
- How to employ Rewards and Recognition to gain the best result,
- How to motivate Gen X versus Gen Y,
- How to Align your hiring and training process to deliver the desired results,

To receive your complimentary copy of “How to Improve Staff Retention in Your Call Center” please register [here](#).

We are also offering our acclaimed Multi-Channel Contact Center primer, *Toward a Multi-Channel Contact Center – Email and Chat: Emerging Contact Center Technologies*. You can download your copy [here](#).

Call Center Channel on YouTube

Taylor Reach has established a call center channel on YouTube on the channel you can view interviews with: Thomas Dalton, Milan Katz, Stephen Gaskin, Rosetta Carrington Lue, and Amas Tenumah. You can also find case studies and more. Visit the channel [here](#).

Interim Management Services available from Taylor Reach

Running a call or contact center can be a challenge at the best of times. But this task can become significantly more difficult when there is a vacancy at the top of the call or contact center operation. Regardless of the cause of the vacancy: leave of absence, restructuring, center consolidation, or other organizational changes. The operational effectiveness and efficiency can begin to suffer within days without an effective leader. Morale and culture soon follows.

What is an organization to do in this situation? Promote a junior member of the call center team? Unless they have been groomed and trained for this role, the experience can overwhelm them and contribute to further erosion of service and frustration for all involved.

Recruit a replacement is likely the best option, but it could take months to find the right candidate. How do you keep the center running effectively meanwhile?

The answer for many firms is interim management; people with the experience to hit the ground running fast to keep your organization, call and contact center operating smooth while you look for a permanent solution. Taylor Reach provides experienced Call and Contact Center experts who possess 15, 20, 25 or more years of experience building and running call centers, contact centers and customer service operations.

To stop the bleeding and to get your center back on track contact Taylor Reach today



Guaranteed ROI

THERE CAN BE A LOT OF QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR CONTACT CENTER

Are our service levels competitive? Why is our turnover so high? How can we increase revenue generation? What new technology will improve our effectiveness? What do our customers think of our service? How do we measure up against our competitors? How do we make customer service a strategic asset? Should we consolidate our contact centers? How can we improve the accuracy of our forecasts? Can we improve performance and reduce costs? How can we increase first contact resolution? Should we be looking at outsourcing? How do we select a new location for our contact center? Would 'home agents' improve our performance? How happy are our channel partners with our service? Have we optimized our contact center processes? Are we measuring the right things? How can we deal with rapid growth in contact volumes? How do we improve efficiency? Will our disaster recovery plan work? How can we support the new sales/marketing initiatives? Are we fulfilling our Mission Statement through our contact center? Are we doing the right activities in the contact center? Can we automate the contact center and keep the human touch? Will our customers accept speech recognition instead of a live agent? Are our wait times reasonable? How can we improve agent productivity? Is occupancy the best measure for agent performance? How satisfied are our agents? Are we staffing the center appropriately? How can we improve the customer experience? How much wrap up time do our agents need? How can we cost justify the new technology we need? How do we reduce costs?

Call the Taylor Reach Group, Inc (TRG) today and see what leading companies from the around the globe already know...TRG has the answers to your contact center questions
416-979-8692 info@thetaylorreachgroup.com www.thetaylorreachgroup.com

FOR HUNDREDS OF
ORGANIZATIONS THE ANSWER
HAS BEEN TRG

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60 Minute
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Contact Numbers for Taylor Reach



Case Study

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

Assisted a Major Financial Institution Implement an Outsourced Quality Program

The Challenge:

Our client a large financial institution was faced with inconsistent quality monitoring activities. The bank had previously implemented a number of ineffective quality monitoring improvement initiatives. When they contacted The Taylor Reach Group (Taylor Reach) the client wanted to implement an effective and consistent quality monitoring process that would standardize the quality measurement across 24 call centers.

The Process:

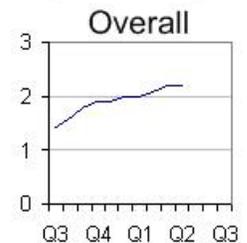
Taylor Reach and the client reviewed and revised the Quality guidelines, scoring matrix and reporting requirements. In addition technical challenges had to be overcome including how to access call recordings, storage, retention requirements and policies. Finally Taylor Reach had to pass a rigorous security assessment for both physical and logical security.

The Solution:

With guidelines revised and approved, new reporting was developed to assess not only the agent performance, but also the team, center, and Line of Business. The reporting would roll up from an individual agent up to the Senior Vice President. With the technology access, security approval and protocols in place, Taylor Reach conducted an in depth calibration process with the client to ensure that the quality of the assessments and their consistency was constant.

The Result:

Within weeks changes were noticed, first by the front line staff and supervisors, then within a few months by senior management. By increasing the transparency and consistency of reporting, managers knew within 20 days how their supervisors and teams were performing and which supervisors were actively coaching and mentoring their agents. The scores and results were clear to everyone in the management hierarchy. The result of this attention showed everyone that quality was important to the institution.



For more than five years the program continues to support the quality and improvement of the agent performance in all of the call centers. The program has been an unqualified success and has been recognized by senior officers of the organization as a key to ensuring customer satisfaction.



Testimonials

“Colin's years of Call Center experience have resulted in him becoming one of the premier experts in this field. He has helped countless companies improve their Call Center and Customer Service processes, and his monthly Newsletter provides valuable information and advice for all of those who are lucky enough to subscribe. In one place, you can find industry happenings, statistics, advice on problems/questions, case study information and much more. It's invaluable, and an easy on-line read, which makes it even more valuable in my view. I would recommend contacting Colin if you find that you are having problems providing the service you want in your call center. Although his business is recommending and providing call center solutions, he will not hesitate to be honest with you and tell you that with a few changes, you can manage everything on your own. This is an honesty that I value highly.”

Senior Customer Service Executive, Readers Digest Asia

“Colin is one of the leaders in the Contact Center industry. He really understands the key drivers of this business. He always showed me a better way to understand each side of this very complex business. He really helped me to



develop my knowledge and view of Contact Centers.” EDS

“Colin's vision, direction and management style was motivational and inspiring as he grew the business. Working along with him on many new and exciting ventures I admired his ability to build strong relationships with customers and suppliers, his strategic and visionary thinking, business savvy, and his supportive nature for his employees.”

Customer Care Manager, BMO

“John was retained by Advantex to lead a prototyping effort to outsource the sales cycle of a new business concept. John and his team worked diligently on this Proof of Concept, proving that business could be sold over the phone; this was an important step forward for Advantex, in terms of validating the opportunity to decrease the cost of sales, as well as confirming that it was a viable alternative to feet on the street. John took a complex offering, which worked in person, and broke it down to a workable over-the-phone pitch. John was a pleasure to work with every step of the way on this POC.”

VP Advantex

“Colin's depth of knowledge greatly enhanced the results. His recommendations made good business sense, and created a good outcome for the company and the employees. I trusted the research and the deliverable he and his company provided in a timely manner.”

Customer Service Executive, Rodale

“Colin understands the complex service requirements needed to support large multi-channel companies and he is able to articulate those needs to a range of audiences. Once the needs are defined, Colin has the ability to create a roadmap and structure for a given project, communicate the plan effectively, and deliver the desired results within the defined timelines. Colin is a creative thinker and has deep industry knowledge that would make him an asset to any company that engages in his services.”

Senior Contact Center Executive, Best Buy

“John is a true pleasure to work with. A leader, in every sense of the word. John has the ability to motivate, guide, and instill confidence - All within a 3-4 minute phone call. You can always depend on John to give a swift and direct cure to any dilemma you may get stuck in.”

Outsource Service Provider



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Subscription requests can be directed to info@thetaylorreachgroup.com or to:

Customer Reach
55 Nugget Ave,
Suite 217,
Toronto ON
M1S 3L1
Phone - 416-979-8692
Fax - 416-412-1171

The Taylor Reach Group, Inc. provides Strategic and Operational customer interaction consulting services that deliver Operational Innovation breakthroughs in Contact Center operations. Download our corporate brochure at http://thetaylorreachgroup.com/pdf/taylor_reach_group_corporate_brochure.pdf

Award winning service and more than 200 years of industry experience serving 'Fortune 1000' companies. Extensive North American and International experience with both captive (in-house), remote agent and outsource centers. More than 14,000 agent desktops worldwide employ TRG designed operational business models.

Delivering Operational Innovation to your Contact Center

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- Contact Center Technologies,
- KPI and Best Practices,
- Contact Center Performance Assessments,
- Commissioned Research,
- Technology Selection & Purchase Management
- Quality Monitoring & Assurance,
- Outsourcing/Off-shoring Assessments,
- Total Cost of Ownership Assessments,
- Service to Sales Migrations,
- RFP and RFI Development and Management
- Site Location Selection, Analysis and Research
- Interim Management Services

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Phone or email John Cockerill, President today at 877-979-8692 ext. 201

By email at jcockerill@thetaylorreachgroup.com

Phone or email Colin Taylor, Founder & CEO today at 877-979-8692 ext. 200

By email at ctaylor@thetaylorreachgroup.com

Offices in Toronto, New York, Atlanta & Australia

TRG are proud members of:



The Taylor Reach Group, Inc.

E-mail: info@thetaylorreachgroup.com

www.thetaylorreachgroup.com 