



Customer Satisfaction Is Not “Rocket Science

The Customer Is Everyone’s Business

Customer satisfaction is, as never before, the center of attention for most profit-oriented organizations. The increasingly competitive and fast-paced global business environment is ruled by the needs of the customer. Spurred by new technologies, which enable even the most technologically challenged consumer to shop worldwide, most customers have instantaneous access to almost any kind of information in their quest for the best purchases and the best service.

This newfound power gives customers the ability to shop anywhere in the world and switch from one supplier to another with the click of a mouse. It sets a new threshold for customer expectations and satisfaction. Corporations need to accept that a radical departure from the old approach to customer satisfaction is, therefore, critical --- to gain new customers; to expand into new market segments; and (probably most importantly) to retain existing customers and expand the services sold to them.

Customers are much more than numbers or statistics on a spreadsheet. All company activities must be predicated on a complete understanding of the customer’s needs and wants. Ultimately clients are not only essential to every business, they ARE the business. The good news is that any knowledgeable organization using call/contact center technologies, customer relationship management (CRM) techniques, and an executable business plan can speed through on the road to success, before its competitors will even know what happened.

Change Without Pain

The contact center environment is the epicenter of a company’s interaction with its customers. It is the perfect place for capturing critical data for use in customer relationship management. Effective customer contact management, while fundamental, evades many executives simply because it is a relatively new approach to relationship building with customers. Effective, scalable Workforce Management techniques, and a 360-degree approach to managing interactions with clients to raise customer service levels, are imperative but can appear overwhelmingly complex to the uninitiated. Yet, managing customer relationships, and hopefully establishing long lasting ones, is a must in today’s global economy. Companies no longer have the choice between keeping their existing customer base and trying to acquire new customers – it is critical to do both to survive in this new millennium’s borderless economy. Could it be that the main obstacle to making CRM strategies an integral part of any business is the misconception that such a change is a paradigm shift? Do executives see it as a total rethink and radical approach to the very nature of the entire business itself?



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Extensive organizational change invokes fear; fear that change may negatively impact everyone within the organization. Top management often gets cold feet at that prospect. However, changing processes to maximize the benefits of change, without resulting in expensive disruptions and astronomically high costs, is within reach of every manager. Change can be relatively painless --- when comparing the pain of change to the much bleaker pain that will be felt if change is NOT effected!

While some companies have achieved stunning results, and dramatic increases in their ROI as a result of improved customer satisfaction, others have failed. The discrepancy in results can be traced to an unlimited list of factors, but one central theme in success or failure lies in the fact that many companies lack comprehensive contact center solutions to integrate customer interactions throughout the organization.

Intangibility of Customer Satisfaction

There is no one correct or incorrect approach to customer communication; every company must determine the needs of its own customer base. However, without the managerial recording tools to collect, integrate and organize customer information needed for research and analysis, reliable customer intelligence data gathering and CRM strategies cannot be realized. According to Frost & Sullivan, only twenty percent of contact centers use recording tools to measure their workforce management efficiency, quality of service, and thus, customer satisfaction levels.

How can one possibly manage a contact center (the nerve center of a business) without recording vital queue, customer, and agent data to raise service levels? The answer is that an organization can't! In February 2002, Customer Service World reported that only two percent of recent corporate survey respondents rated customer service standards as “high.” And only nine percent viewed them as “above average.” Isn't it imperative for management to know where the satisfaction level of the customer base is, relative to such dismal figures? Isn't it equally important to track the direction in which customer satisfaction levels are moving?

Intelligent software solutions that lay the foundation for operational efficiency, by integrating new and legacy systems, are essential to maintain a competitive edge. In times of massive layoffs, corporate memory is evaporating, resulting in increasing inefficiency and customer dissatisfaction. Software tools that record and monitor internal activities, and a company's interactions with its customers, can serve as an invaluable long-time “memory” for small and large organizations alike. Without the basic tools a



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manager can merely make a “guesstimate” as to whether business is either better or worse than acceptable customer satisfaction levels. The information environment is much too valuable an asset for a company to gamble on, when it comes to customer service and client satisfaction!

Some Tools for Change

Telecorp Products Inc., a veteran innovator in contact center solutions, has developed and distributes the **CentrEE Solutions suite** --- providing essential tools to help managers know exactly what is going on in their operations. With an easy to use “point-and-click” interface, easily learned features, comprehensive and rich functionality, and an interface that can be customized by the user, CentrEE Solutions covers all of a contact centers’ real-time management needs, historical and statistical reporting requirements, and quality monitoring. CentrEE Solutions’ **Rapid E-Port** makes it easy to identify long-range trends and assess customer service levels by generating detailed historical ACD reports to optimize customer satisfaction. With Rapid E-Port, managers have the ability to accrue years of detailed historical data on the telephone activity of call centers into an accessible database. This archived data can be retrieved and reprinted at any time. Furthermore, the software lets managers suggest precise changes in the telephone system configuration, based on a detailed knowledge of the activity of particular queues or groups of agents. Managers know if a group of agents is not being utilized to full potential, or is being overworked. Using Rapid E-Port is the best way for contact center managers to get their hands on the data needed to optimize the efficiency of the workforce and increase customer service levels.

Keeping The Pulse on Customer Service

Customer service staff is the bridge between the company and the customer. The staff collects highly detailed data such as customer identity and demographics, and keeps track of event data such as purchases, service and support requests, inquiries, complaints and returns --- which are all important in understanding the base of existing clients and in identifying potential new customers. Therefore, contact center agents are at the heart of any business. They play a significant role in projecting a company’s image, providing product information, solving problems, and getting to know the customer. In today’s competitive environment, the contact center has become so important that a dissatisfied and ill-trained workforce can make or break the company. Managerial staffing, scheduling, and training tools are essential to maintain an informed, experienced, and happy workforce. Its workforce is a company’s most precious asset. And managers need effective and reliable, yet simple to use, workforce management tools that do not take a rocket scientist to implement.



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With automated workforce management solutions, a company can treat this precious resource (its staff) in an appropriate, caring fashion. Workforce management software can prevent agent burnout; assist managers in treating staff more equitably; and promote better supervision techniques. Good employees, managed well, deliver superior service. And superior service levels dramatically differentiate a company's products from competing brands.

To help a contact center (or any organization with complex staffing needs) meet the challenge of accurately forecasting and scheduling its workforce --- while considering constraints of customer service levels, inbound/outbound volumes, staff skills, and business rules --- Telecorp Products Inc. offers **CentrEE Calabrio**. With more ability to design, monitor, and evaluate scheduling solutions than a company manager can imagine, CentrEE Calabrio creates a clear and powerful flow of workforce management information. It becomes simple to schedule the appropriate resources at the right time in sufficient number, at the best possible cost, while ensuring that customer service levels are met. This highly complex task (which, done manually, costs management endless time and resources) is done with the click of a mouse. The solution pays for itself in a matter of months.

Not only is time saved in scheduling, CentrEE Calabrio's forecasting feature ensures that the exact and correct number of staff personnel are scheduled at any given time so overstaffed floors, or lost business due to long wait times for answered calls, are a thing of the past. With its multi-site, multi-channel, multi-skills and multilingual functionality, CentrEE Calabrio has proven to be an effective workforce management solution for hundreds of worldwide call centers --- some with as few as 20 agents to those with as many as 10,000 agents.

Leveraging Your Data To Optimize WFM & CRM Systems

The whole concept of customer relationship management will sputter and cough without reliable data. The solution to achieving consistent data collection is to marry the data from the various information repositories a company has in place. Integrating customer histories from all sources makes for a more complete and realistic view of customers. CRM drives marketing and sales. However, without accurate recording tools to harness information; measure the effectiveness of contact center operation; and manage operations with utmost efficiency, revenue and opportunities will be lost. It is not the amount of data that a contact center collects that matters but whether that data is relevant for the intended applications.

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Another key to customer relationship management is good customer information gathered at the most important (and instantaneous) point of customer contact. And, although contact points include the Internet and fax, the phone is still the most prevalent means of communication. Historical data helps strengthen relationships with customers and contributes to long-term profitability. The core data identifies and defines the customer base, thus providing opportunities for managing marketing campaigns more effectively, and increasing brand retention and loyalty. The significance of accurate raw data must never be underestimated. It is priceless, because a company that relies on second-hand information simply can never obtain true picture of its customer base. Getting real information from dissatisfied clients is also invaluable, because most customers don't complain; they simply switch products or services

Instant E-Play, a component of the CentrEE Solutions suite from Telecorp Products Inc., gives contact center managers the ability to monitor, record and evaluate the level of service each customer service agent provides to clients and prospects. Using Instant E-Play, managers can initiate monitoring of individual agents whenever they desire and archive the conversation for use as a training tool. It also gives the manager the ability to automatically schedule random monitoring according to customizable parameters. Managers can select the frequency of the recording; define the agents involved; determine the start and stop times for the recording; and limit recording to certain types of calls. Managers then decide what gets archived and when. The ability to monitor and evaluate an agent's performance within a contact center is imperative to optimizing customer service levels and is also a great asset for training and performance review.

Once real-time and historical data is available, the crux of the matter lies in the interpretation of that data. Data interpretation is company-specific, since contact center managers (in close collaboration with other departments) must filter the relevant data that best fits their customer base and business model. Only then can a company hope to establish customer behavioral trends through which a profitable relationship can be created. Well-trained customer service agents are pivotal to raising customer service levels and to obtaining in-depth customer information without alienating potential customers. By injecting a little fun and “human-ness” into their communication with clients, agents can avoid the impression that the essential information gathering is blatantly intrusive. Conversely, just imagine how many avoidable mistakes an untrained and inexperienced agent can make while obtaining demographic, psychographic, specific product, or customer preference information from a client?

CentrEE Solutions' **Total E-Call** gives managers knowledge about what is happening in a contact center as it happens --- not hours later. Using Total E-Call, it becomes easy to spot and defuse developing situations (such as increasing call waiting time) before the situation becomes an issue to the customer.



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The software can also deliver real-time statistics to a window on the personal computer desktop of any manager. Every manager now knows how many customers are waiting for an available agent, and how long those customers have been waiting. Managers know what type of telephone activity each agent is engaged in and how long the agent has been active on that call. Knowing exactly what every customer service staff member is doing at any given time is an extremely valuable tool for a manager to possess. The ability to locate and solve problems as they occur is key to improving statistics, workforce efficiency and customer service levels.

Telephones – The Essential Bridge To Clients

Using a CRM solution, any company can manage its business much more effectively. It can leverage its own precious information to gain and sustain a competitive edge. With the help of intelligent software, centralizing and refining databases so the entire organization can access them should optimize communications with customers. To raise customer satisfaction levels, a company, (whether small or large) needs the entire staff, both front line and back office employees, to serve its customers effectively.

The **CentrEE Connect** software suite from Telecorp Products Inc. puts management in control of its full telephone operation, with an integrated solution that simplifies the management of complex call handling systems. It ensures that communications always enhance business performance.

Streamlining processes, automating tasks and synchronizing information across a company's telephone network, CentrEE Connect provides a single point of administration. CentrEE Connect immediately informs an answering staff member of the extension of the person that the caller is trying to reach. In addition, it supplies pertinent information such as whether or not that person is in their office and if they are unavailable, when they will be “reachable”. Since each employee is responsible for keeping his/her information current, office and extension changes are updated immediately. Also, if the caller does not know a name, the Topic and Operator Modules lets a staff member speedily search through an infinite number of categories to find the most appropriate person with whom the caller can speak. Other benefits include improved customer service by furnishing the tools to answer and transfer all calls quickly and efficiently. This reduces workforce stress and costs. Implementing CentrEE Connect puts all of the valuable information that a workforce needs right at the staffs' fingertips. It dramatically lowers return on investment, too, as both clients and staff profit greatly from the simplified switch administration and leading edge call handling ability.

Excellence In Customer Service



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Corporate managers can succeed in creating a personal relationship with their client base if they make a strong commitment to superior service as a way of differentiating their companies from the competition. The key to excellent customer service is primarily customer recognition ---- a customer never forgotten in queue or hanging on the end of a phone, waiting in vain to reach a human being. When good customer information is gathered at all points of customer contact, relationship building becomes a breeze for even the novice in CRM. Creating relationships that are beneficial to both sides, without being intrusive to either party, is critical. A detailed historical data archive enables a company to anticipate customer trends and take a proactive approach to servicing the customer through special product offerings or use the information to forecast future trends in demand.

“Just treat the customer as you yourself would like to be treated” is an attitude, although commendable, which is too simplistic in today’s proliferation of contact channels, customer segments, and product offerings. Each customer often wants to be treated differently; and each should be treated as unique in his/her own right or the customer will most likely take his/her business elsewhere.

Managing customer contact is not difficult with the right tools and mindset. All it takes is total organizational commitment to each and every customer. With the appropriate tools, marketing to one or marketing to many as if they were one can be easy. And it is an absolute necessity for survival in today’s economy.

For further information about some of the solutions mentioned in this White Paper, please visit the **Telecorp Products Inc.** website at www.telecorpproducts.com or contact knschock@telecorpproducts.com **(248) 960-1000**.