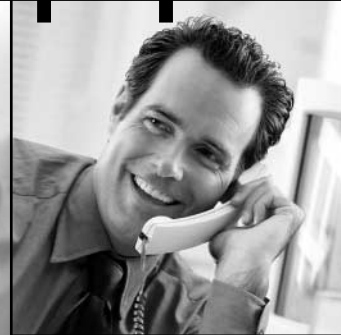


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Rapid Results



Simply Powerful™



Strategies for Implementing a World-Class Customer Contact Center

Strategies for Success



This first step in becoming a world-class customer contact center is to determine your service and support strategy. Outline a clear and concise road map that will allow you to see where you want to go. These questions can help you get started:

- > Your current employee base and projected annual growth?
- > Your current customer base and projected annual growth?
- > Growth affect on staff and budget?
- > Your process for problem resolution?
- > Do you offer self-help tools?
- > Your budget?
- > Your customers?
 - Internal
 - External
 - Business-to-Business
 - Businesses-to-Consumer
 - Government
- > Your expectations?
 - First-call resolution, time-to-resolution
 - Product/service availability
 - Hours of operation
- > Who determines budget?

Solving 90% of all problems immediately will not produce as great a return as preventing 10% of problems.

— Help Desk 2000

Establish Metrics to Determine Success

“Quantitative” metrics for measuring progress determine if that course of action is working or if a change is necessary. One hurdle for managers is selling upper management on developing support services; hiring additional personnel and purchasing the necessary tools — while changing the belief that service and support is strictly a cost center. It is necessary to convey this message in upper management terms — savings of time and money.

Four quantifiable markers to look for:

1. Is the customer contact center adding value?
2. Is the program improving customer relations?
3. Is there increased productivity?
4. Is revenue increasing?

Be Proactive, Not Reactive

Since most customer contact centers evolved from an unplanned infrastructure support need, it is seldom regarded as a strategic corporate contributor. Efficiency and effectiveness are the defining characteristics of a proactive customer contact center solution. Scalability is factored in early, workflow is efficient, knowledge is leveraged, turnover is reduced, motivation and



productivity are up, and problem elimination strategies keep call volumes in check. With application of best practices tools, strategies and techniques, impact on the resources to support new customers, new demands, new systems and new services can be minimized and the associated costs controlled.

3 success factors to become proactive:

1. Be informed & accessible
2. Minimize peer-to-peer support
3. Reduce call escalation

The result: increased productivity and increased revenue.

Understand capabilities:

- > Specific needs of this organization?
- > Specific services provided now? Future?
- > Possible technology risks associated with this program?
- > Personnel requirements?

An extension of this is “knowing your limitations.” Understand what you are not capable of at a particular phase. Failure to outline these parameters from the start can place you in a situation where you are losing confidence of upper management and your customers while handicapping your chances for success.

Implementation

Careful execution of implementation will enhance your ultimate objective — customer satisfaction. The goal is for service offerings to be more responsive to customers and employees. Look closely at the following processes in your organization and correlate the value to be found in each:

1. **Human Resources Program:** This should account for approximately 70% of your service and support budget. You will want to ensure you have proper processes in place to recruit, hire, train and retain the services of top-flight technicians. This is your customer’s first line of defense against customer service and support problems — you must be confident they’re in good hands.

Statistics show an average burnout rate for technicians of 15–18 months. Technicians need tools that enable success, incentives to excel and processes for mapping a career plan for their future. Nearly 43% of all companies do not have formal career planning in place for their technicians — compounding the defection rate. Employee retention is knowledge retention.

A word of warning: Heavy reliance on any one service and support professional that has developed a homegrown system leaves you extremely vulnerable. Plan and invest in a system, which allows for a smooth continuum of operations in the event of personnel departure.



2. **Process Management Program:** Quick and accurate resolution of customer issues using automated processes is essential to gaining favorable call escalation rates. Clearly, calls answered by first-level technicians are far less expensive than those answered by level 2 and 3 technicians. Support staff that is armed with tools that enable them to be proactive and effective, perform at higher levels with less need to escalate calls.
3. **Software Solution:** You need more than a call tracking solution. Look to an “out-of-the-box” solution that is robust, powerful and complete to manage your growing customer service and support organization.
 - a. *Responsiveness in Customer Service and Support* — Customers must sense the organization knows who they are from first contact. Representatives need to see all customer account data, past and pending service and support contacts, and potential sales opportunities. This allows total visibility of customer’s history. This 360 capability turns service calls into revenue opportunities.
 - b. *Best Practices* — Excellent support also means that the agent can resolve the customer’s issue on the first call. For consistency, the solution must provide a comprehensive knowledgebase that enables first line support agents to resolve a wide variety of common requests quickly and effectively. For calls that go beyond first line support, customer management solution must handle incident assignment, escalation, tracking and reporting, warranties or contracts, and service level management.
 - i. *Additional Return with Self-Service* — Will generally produce a 5–10% deflection rate of calls.
 - ii. *Additional Return with Asset Tracking* — Can save an organization nearly 30% of its total IT budget.
4. **Performance Measurement Program:** Managers should continuously monitor customer contact center performance with Manager’s Reports that include base lining, benchmarking and best practices. Take inventory of where you are now. Ask yourself these questions to get a good measure of how you are performing:
 - a. What is your current IT budget?
 - b. What is your average cost per call?
 - c. What is the average wait time per call?
 - d. What is you first call resolution rate?
 - e. What is your average speed to answer?
 - f. What is your average abandonment rate?
 - g. Are you available 24/7 availability = 365 days?
 - h. Non-24/7 availability = 252 days
5. **Stakeholder Communication Program:** Communicate customer satisfaction and management support of the customer contact center with your key stakeholders. Bring visibility to the improvements in the performance metrics mapped out in your strategy can mean the difference of receiving the necessary budget from year to year. Simply communicating the status/progress of an issue can provide enormous customer satisfaction benefits. Ignoring this type of communication will result in increased call volume and customer frustration.



6. Marketing Your Customer Contact Center: Success in marketing your service center will stem largely from your ability to get the right information in the right person's hands. There are four definitive audiences that you will want to communicate with. Each has unique concerns: End Users, Customer Contact Center Staff, IT employees, and Management.

Ask questions about customer needs and provide them the ability to access the support they need. Make them realize that, while usually very reliable, it is not a fail-proof mechanism. Give quantifiable statistics regarding your success rate. You set the expectations. Finally, report to management frequently. You will want to demonstrate where standardization has improved the bottom line.

Call (800) 683-0239 to speak to your Anton Systems representative or visit www.antonsystems.com



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