

# PERFORMANCE METRICS, GOALS AND THE BOTTOM LINE

Developing successful customer service, collections or sales and telemarketing strategies requires that managers truly understand how they measure their contact centre in the context of overall business and financial goals. » BY BOB KELLY

All too frequently, companies implement call routing solutions, outbound diallers and siloed performance optimization technologies in their contact centres with no real coordinated strategy for making the most of the wealth of information that these systems yield. Understanding and aligning the contact centre with corporate objectives is the key to driving its overall performance.

Performance metrics are used to create alignment and accountability within the contact centre. The very first step in any performance improvement plan is to understand overarching business goal(s) such as, "I want to improve my business's profitability by 20 per cent this year." These high-level business objectives should then be translated into contact centre key performance indicators (KPIs) that correspond to the desired areas of improvement.

## Developing operational metrics

So, for that organization that wants to increase profitability by 20 per cent, decrease operating costs by 10 per cent, and improve customer retention rates by eight per cent, they will need to translate these high-level objectives into operational metrics, such as revenue per call, schedule compliance, and service level or agent quality scores in order to drive strategic success across sales, collections, and customer service processes. They can then use those operational KPIs to develop long-term benchmarks and identify those that most directly impact the business results and provide accountability that they are meeting those goals. KPIs, such as talk time, average handle time, shrinkage and schedule adherence, are a few examples of metrics that can help optimize the intraday and day-to-day performance of the contact centre.

The important thing about this strategy is that the contact centre has the business metrics that enables every member of the

team to see how they are contributing to the businesses success. Keeping that in mind, it's very important these long-term benchmarks and KPIs be clearly communicated to frontline employees so they understand how their individual contributions are impacting the greater whole.

## Uniting disparate data

Performance management tools in particular can unite all of the data from the many different sources across the contact centre to provide a unified view of performance, while aligning that to strategic goals. It gives users the ability to analyze root causes and take corrective actions. For example, an advanced performance management tool can create fully customizable dashboards that show at-a-glance summaries of key KPI results versus goals with personalized content to help an agent track their performance daily and, when performance falls below expected levels, automatically trigger a coaching initiative focused on the "in need" area.

The real mark of a successful contact centre is what happens after the agent is connected to the customer, which is highly dependent on the customer's ability to reach a knowledgeable and empathetic agent who can provide fast and efficient service. Performance optimization solutions, when synchronized, make it easier for contact centres to be proactive because they know what's happened in the past and can take action immediately to ensure skilled agents are available to meet the needs of the customer. Using the right performance optimization tools can help contact centres meet the soaring expectations of consumers and senior executives and make greater contributions to the bottom line.

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