Call Center Monitoring Study III

Description:
In December 2004, we conducted a comprehensive study on call center monitoring and quality assurance. The purpose of this study was to provide call center professionals with valuable data and insight on these critical issues. In all, 826 call center professionals—representing a broad range of industries, sizes and geographical regions—responded to the survey.

This study report provides detailed information on various key aspects of quality monitoring—including how, and how frequently, call centers monitor the various contact channels prevalent in today's customer care organizations; who conducts such quality evaluations—and what's being done to ensure that they do so effectively; and, importantly, what exactly is being done with the results to enhance agent and centerwide performance, as well as the organization's overall knowledge of the customer.

In an age when so much parity and homogeneity exists among competitors in terms of products/services and prices offered, it is the quality of customer service and support provided that often determines which companies become market leaders and which ones become also-rans, or worse, extinct. While in the past, a formal quality assurance program was considered a nice thing for a call center to have in place, today it is positively essential. Regularly and consistently observing how agents interact with customers, and evaluating each customer's overall experience, enables centers to uncover key coaching and training areas needed to enhance customer satisfaction/loyalty and to improve revenue. Effective monitoring also helps to identify examples of service excellence that can be used as models in the aforementioned coaching and training efforts.

Key Findings:
- The vast majority (91.6%) of respondents indicated that their call center currently monitors agents' interactions with customers.
- The number of calls monitored per agent ranged from one a month to 10 or more a month, with the largest percentage (33.8%) of centers monitoring between four and five calls per month per agent.
- Over three-quarters of responding centers handle customer email transactions, but only 61% of those centers actively monitor email transactions for quality assurance. The majority (55.9%) monitor between two and five transactions per agent per month, though another 24.6% monitor 10 or more emails per agent each month.
- Only 8.7% of responding call centers currently handle Web chat sessions. Assuring chat quality does not appear to be a top priority, as just over half (54.5%) of chat-handling centers monitor those transactions. Among those that do monitor chat, most (64.8%) monitor between two and five transactions per agent per month.
- The top five objectives of quality monitoring indicated by respondents include:
  1. Ensure that quality standards for each call is met
  2. Measure agent performance
  3. Evaluate level of customer satisfaction
  4. Identify customer needs/expectations
  5. Identify additional training needs for individual agents
- Quality monitoring is carried out by more than one position type in many centers, with supervisors (56.6%) being the most likely to conduct monitoring, followed by internal quality assurance specialists (49.8%), team leaders (42.1%) and managers (38.2%).
- More than half (58%) of respondents have automated monitoring technology in place, with 61.4% of those respondents using their automated systems to monitor not only the voice portion but also the data portion of customer calls.
- More than three-quarters (76.8%) of call centers provide formal evaluation of and coaching to those who conduct the monitoring. And to ensure consistency in how agents/transactions are evaluated and rated, 74.2% of centers hold regular calibration sessions with monitors.
- Of some concern is the fact that only 58.2% of respondents feel that those conducting the monitoring have enough time to provide effective monitoring and feedback.
- Of even more concern is that only 54.1% of respondents said their centers share valuable monitoring data and customer feedback with other departments within their organization.
Contents:
- Respondents' Backgrounds
- Frequency and Types of Customer Contacts Monitored:
  - Voice Calls
  - Email
  - Web Chat
  - Other Contact Types
- Monitoring Objectives and Evaluation Criteria
- Who Is Monitored?
- Who Conducts the Monitoring?
- Monitoring Methods
- Feedback and Coaching
- Sharing Monitoring Data Enterprise-wide
- Planned Improvements

FIGURES/CHARTS

Figure 1: How many full-time agents are employed in your call center?
Figure 2: How many voice calls do you monitor per agent per month, on average?
Figure 3: How many email transactions do you monitor per agent per month, on average?
Figure 4: How many chat sessions do you monitor per agent per month, on average?
Figure 5: When monitoring agents, how important is each of the following?
Figure 6: What criteria do you use to assess voice call quality?
Figure 7: What criteria do you use to assess email quality?
Figure 8: How much more frequently (than experienced agents) are newly hired agents monitored?
Figure 9: How do the majority of your agents perceive your monitoring program?
Figure 10: Who conducts the monitoring sessions?
Figure 11: Do you feel that those conducting the monitoring in your center have enough time to provide effective monitoring/feedback?
Figure 12: How many hours per week do those conducting the monitoring spend on monitoring and related coaching/feedback, on average?
Figure 13: What method(s) of call monitoring do you employ?
Figure 14: Do you use automated monitoring technology?
Figure 15: How quickly do agents receive feedback (from those conducting the monitoring) following a monitoring session, on average?
Figure 16: How do you ensure consistency and objectivity in the scores/feedback agents receive?
Figure 17: Do you share monitoring data/customer feedback with other departments in your company?
Figure 18: What changes/improvements do you have planned for your monitoring program within the next 12 months?

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