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“Quality Management – Are you
Listening to Your Customers?”
It’s More Than Just Call Recording!

*An Enghouse Interactive White Paper
June 2015*

make EVERY customer interaction count



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INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, most service-based businesses have focused on collecting quantitative customer contact metrics. They have built their approach around measuring statistics related to call handling, including call volumes, call answer time, call handle time, abandonment rates and queue time. These measurements are widely accepted across the industry and typically the business will have invested significant sums in enabling their production. Once captured, organizations often report these figures religiously and they invariably become the major indicator of business performance.

However, there are clearly significant limitations with this approach to quality management. After all, it often only reflects the performance of the automated call distribution (ACD) technology deployed and the processes built round it rather than the actual quality of the service delivered. In worst case scenarios, the approach can even lead to agents ‘adapting’ their approach to call handling by rejecting calls or manipulating the ACD log on, for example, rather than handling the call to the caller’s benefit. This leads to management ‘by and for’ the numbers rather than a focus on the key business driver of delivering enhanced customer satisfaction.

Defining Terms

That’s where quality management solutions (QMS) come in, suites that combine a variety of tools to measure and monitor the delivery of customer services. QMS, which is widely used for customer interaction across all vertical sectors, provides an additional tier of information that can complement traditional ACD data by providing both real-time and historical qualitative measures of the service delivery. QMS tools can assist in measuring both efficiency and effectiveness of the organization by providing insight into the customer interaction through multiple channels.

Although most commonly found in call center arenas, these tools can be used across many business areas that need to understand the quality of the service delivered, such as help desks, desk based sales teams, and even individual operators and call attendants.

At one level, these groups may simply record interactions and use these recordings to review performance both in real-time and historically. A good QMS provides extra value by delivering tools that add meaning and consistency to these reviews. It enables definition of performance criteria and allows consistent measurement against these criteria that can then be specifically tailored to each business process.

Reasons for Call Recording

Historically, QMS has been largely synonymous with call recording, with three key drivers for its organizational use. Firstly, it has been driven by the need to comply with local and regional regulations, often governed by market-specific factors. These may include the need to record all health care interactions, or the requirement to store all financial or insurance transactions for some number of years.

The second key driver is the requirement to monitor and maintain the quality of customer interactions. Often used in contact centers, the systems record conversations between agents and customers and measure agent performance, with the results potentially used for coaching and training purposes.

Once captured and stored, the data can be mined and analyzed and turned into intelligence that can form the basis of operational reports and ultimately helps drive business strategy. Businesses can segment information and analyze particular sub-sectors as and when required, all calls which resulted in sales, for example, or every call made by a specific agent.

The third and final key driver is for dispute management. In the event of disputes, calls can be reviewed to see if any errors occurring were made by agents or by customers. Recorded interactions can be indispensable in determining the best approach to resolving the conflict or proposing a valid compromise.

This operational use of call recording also drives several key customer benefits. First, the business is able to better monitor and improve its operational

processes, which in itself leads to a better customer experience. Second, call recording can help enhance the agent training process, which in turn helps ensure that calls are better serviced and customer issues are more quickly resolved. This helps the business focus on retaining existing customers rather than being compelled to go out into the market looking for new ones. This is important, especially when you consider the maxim that it costs five times as much to create a new customer than to keep an existing one.

Finally, it is not only the business but the customer that is better protected. The recording is a literal transcription of the truth.

Interactions are Changing

Today, the nature of customer interactions is changing. In deploying QMS, most businesses are no longer focused purely on the recording of calls alone. Instead, there is a move away from voice and towards multi-channel engagement. The ability to capture not just the voice recording but the screen that the agent is viewing as he or she handles a call enables the business to review the whole engagement from input to output and to more easily identify broken processes.

If the agent is giving the customer bad advice, it may be because the information on the agent's screen is out-of-date or otherwise incorrect, rather than through any fault of the agent. The business would not be able to establish this simply by reviewing the call recording. However, by being able to simultaneously view the agent's screen, the organization is able to identify the source of the error.

This can be key in enabling the business to identify discrepancies in order and transaction management, for example. In turn, it enables the business to improve its internal process and drive enhanced productivity as a result. It also helps with dispute resolution as the origin of any data input errors becomes much clearer to anyone reviewing the interactions.

A key capability of today's QMS systems, which is now being increasingly used, is score-carding. Typically used by managers and team leaders within the contact center, this feature allows them to score staff against a range of criteria: did the agent greet the customer, did the agent follow the required script, was there a product upsell attempt, was the customer provided with the correct information? Scorecard reports then enable high-level staff to review the information collected and review how individual users are performing.

Businesses can also set up the system to enable results to be shared across multiple users to help ensure objective consistency in evaluating agents.

So how can you as a business focus on ensuring you are implementing the right system and achieve optimum benefits from your use of QMS? Here are our top tips.

1. Understand where you can add value to your business.

Before you can measure performance, you first need to understand what metrics you are looking to measure. You need to understand your own business before you can realize the value of it. You need to answer critical questions; most importantly what are the key characteristics that indicate success for your particular organization?

For financial services organizations, for example, the added value is likely to come from the fact that quality management helps them comply with regulations and therefore avoid the financial penalties of failing to do so. For retailers, on the other hand, the value of the approach is more likely to be around their ability to maximize order completion and drive enhanced customer service.

Many businesses believe that working to improve customer satisfaction by necessity results in higher costs, as agents have to spend more time with the customer. But the best QMS systems also drive faster ROI by reducing costs. There are several different aspects of this. By using quality management to monitor employees better, identify key strengths and weaknesses earlier in the development cycle and tailor training accordingly, you can reduce labor costs while driving up productivity rates at the same time.

Quality management systems can give you a clearer picture of the interaction and engagement between business and customer. This enables organizations to identify broken processes more quickly and easily, allowing them in turn to improve their internal systems and deliver productivity benefits as a direct result.

You also need to look at the cost of the system itself. Quality management systems can be prohibitively expensive. Many SMBs and start-ups struggled to afford the cost of traditional analogue or TDM systems. The best of the latest systems, however are designed from the ground-up as IP-based products and are therefore more flexible and typically available at much lower price points. When [Yellow Cab Cooperative](#), the largest taxi cab company in San Francisco, moved from an analogue to IP telephony system, the existing call recording software was not able to record calls on an IP telephone system. Enghouse Interactive Call Recording software was selected to replace it.

According to Tomas Smith (IT and communications manager for Yellow Cab Cooperative):

“Our call recording needs were simple. I needed a system that reliably records calls, efficiently archives recordings and makes it easy to retrieve recordings when necessary. Call Recording was the ideal solution for Yellow Cab.”

The Yellow Cab contact center answers approximately 300,000 calls per month and is open 24 hours a day, every day of the year. The information collected in these calls is therefore critical to the business – from pick-up times to addresses and customer information. Indeed, call recordings are widely used both to verify information and ensure that the Yellow Cab team is delivering the best customer service possible.

Ultimately, though the ROI you achieve as a business will also depend to a large extent on how effectively you can integrate your QMS with your overall contact center or operator console solutions. There is value from deploying QMS alongside these solutions but the real ROI benefit is achieved when QMS is integrated with them. So you should look for systems that offer this kind of integration to drive value and ideally have a roadmap that drives tighter integration over time. This in turn is likely to lead to a richer flow of data between systems, allowing organizations to achieve better data mining and enabling them ultimately to develop actionable intelligence that drives their business approach.

2. Look for intuitive systems

If a business is to get full value from a quality management system, it needs to be simple to install and also intuitive to use. This drives a lower total cost of ownership.

This was certainly the case for wholesale power generation company, [NRG Energy](#), who deployed Enhouse Interactive Call Recording following a bad experience with a recording solution that required telephony cards. NRG has enjoyed a lower cost of ownership with Call Recording because of its lower cost per license and because of the complete flexibility in determining how many phones to record.

According to Sally Phillips, Telecom Manager at NRG:

“With our previous system, we had a technician on site for three days trying to get their system up and running. The ability to set up and use the [Call Recording] software within an hour was astonishing. It was a wonderful shock to see how easy it was.”

In addition, solutions that are easy to use ensure the agent is able to explore, to try out new features and functions and realize the full value of the system without having to rely on the skills of technical experts in order to tap into that value. Remember that the easier the system is to use, the faster and more effective your agents will be in leveraging it, and the better their customer service is likely to be as a direct result.

Enghouse Interactive Call Recording has proven to be easy to use at NRG Energy. As McPhillips explains:

“Our power marketing employees like [Call Recording] because it is easy to search for phone calls. For example, a trader who wants to review the details of a transaction can search by outbound number, inbound number or they can search by time of the call, for example, looking at calls they handled between 9.30 and 10.30 a.m.”

At the same time, because the latest call recording and quality management software is intuitive to use and learn, users of these kinds of solutions across all types of businesses no longer need to worry about one or two technically able employees leaving the company and taking their skills and expertise out of the business.

3. Use the system to pinpoint good service and address bad service

The best QMS solutions enable you to pinpoint examples of good and bad customer service from within your internal team. You can use both audio and screen capture to monitor staff that are performing well and use the recordings as part of your training program as examples of best practice.

4. Consider rolling systems across the whole business

With the latest IP-based QMS solutions, you can be much more flexible with how you deploy the QMS solution and what you use it for. Traditionally most businesses have just used QMS with front office operations and often just within one department with a specific urgent need. Now they can extend their call recording and screen capture capability from the front to the back office, effectively helping to drive a more connected business. While with the latest IP or networking capability, you can extend QMS across the whole business and drive enhanced ROI as a result.

5. Maintain agent satisfaction

It is widely accepted in the customer service arena that the happier customer service agents are, the better the quality of service the business delivers and ultimately the more satisfied the organizations' customers are over time. Please see ContactBabel's *The US Contact Center Decision-Makers Guide 2014*, available for download at: <http://info.enghouseinteractive.com/ContactBabel-Download.html>

Bottom line – a happy agent equals a happy customer. Agents are typically more motivated if they feel that their work and level of performance is being reviewed and also that any issues that they have are being addressed as a result of the monitoring process.

6. Focus on improving first call resolution

First call resolution should be a key target of any customer focused organization. So you need to make sure that you choose a QMS solution that offers you an opportunity to achieve this. The best solutions do this by enabling agents to see a complete picture of their call and application handling technique, together with the chance to improve it through tailored training programs.

By getting better at handling customer interactions by focusing on what they do well and rectifying poor performance in other areas, agents can drive up first call resolution rates while helping to ensure that the business retains a greater proportion of its customers.

IN CONCLUSION

Today, the latest breeds of sophisticated quality monitoring systems are finally heralding an end to the era of impersonal quantitative customer contact metrics. Today's solutions are far more than just call recording systems. With the addition of screen capture and score carding functionality, quality management systems are no longer a distant relation of the customer interaction suite, but are now regarded as a key part of the portfolio, helping to drive enhanced productivity, customer satisfaction and even competitive edge for businesses across all sectors of the economy.

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About Enghouse Interactive

Enghouse Interactive is a global leader in providing solutions that deliver differentiated customer experience and maximize the value of every customer interaction. Enghouse Interactive's comprehensive portfolio of interaction management solutions span multi-channel call centers, Computer Telephony Integration (CTI), self-service Interactive Voice Response (IVR), knowledge management, operator consoles, call recording and quality monitoring, media voice services, and outbound dialers. These solutions support any telephony environment and flexible deployment options, on premise or in the Cloud. With Enghouse Interactive solutions, your customers can reach you anytime, anywhere, and anyhow.

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June 2015

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