Whitepaper
Optimizing Call Center Key Performance Indicators to Optimize Customer Experience
Improving Customer Experience in the Call Center

Call centers play a huge role in determining a company’s quality of customer experience because the call center interacts with the organization’s most precious asset: its customers. Therefore, the primary goals of a call center are to achieve the company’s sales objectives by effectively meeting and anticipating customer requirements, as well as to improve customer satisfaction and retention in order to ensure business success.

The operational performance of a call center must be effective in order to enable these business goals to be achieved. Performance is commonly assessed using industry-wide Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which address both agents and technology. Each KPI measures one call center aspect that directly contributes to the quality of a customer’s experience.

In order to diagnose problems that negatively impact call center technology KPIs, and hence customer experience, organizations must invest in an effective network testing solution. This paper highlights just a few of the ways in which such solutions have enabled global brands to enhance their quality of customer experience by materially improving their call center KPIs.

Top Call Center Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) That Directly Impact Customer Experience

A satisfied and happy customer is one whose service requests are addressed with maximum efficiency and effectiveness. Meeting KPIs enable organizations to achieve that goal.

Ten top KPIs used by many call centers to measure operational performance and monitor the quality of customer experience are:

1) Call Abandon Rate
High abandonment rates indicate the customer service center is not managing resources appropriately.

2) % Repeat Calls
Used to assess the ability of call center operators to successfully deal with customer service request during first contact.

3) % Call Transfers
Fine tunes the routing and call handling strategies of a call center. Used as an indicator of operational effectiveness and service quality, it also can help identify gaps in staff call handling performance.

4) % Call Completion Rate
An important KPI for monitoring the quality of call center operations to ensure the optimal use of existing infrastructure, keep customer satisfaction at optimal levels, and maximize revenues.

5) Monetary Cost Per Call
A vital aspect due to the increasing difficulty of defining call costs clearly in the context of online transactions.

6) % First Call Resolution
Used to track the quality of the services provided, as customers whose service requests are dealt with in a quick and effective manner are more satisfied.

7) % Blockage
A measure of accessibility used by most call centers today because failing to measure blockage rate can allow a call center to meet its speed of answer targets by blocking the excess calls, which has a negative impact on customer satisfaction.

8) % Calls Answered Within Service Level Time
The speed of answer is among the most critical aspects that need to be permanently monitored and optimized for enabling good performance levels.

9) Time to Screen Pop
Optimizing agent utilization is key to call center profitability and the amount of time it takes to bring up the customer’s information on the agent’s screen directly impacts how quickly an agent can satisfy a customer.

10) Queue Time
Tracking the maximum time a customer had to wait before a service request was answered by an operator and comparing it with the average speed of answer can provide call center managers with a better understanding of the call center responsiveness performance.
Three Real-Life Examples of Using Automated Testing to Identify Technology Issues to Enable Material Improvement in Call Center KPIs and Customer Experience

Failures and poor configurations at various technology layers impact the ability to meet KPIs and deliver a uniformly positive customer experience. The three examples below describe actual, real-life situations where automated testing was used to discover the root cause of an organization’s issues and enabled the company to fix the issues, materially improve KPIs, and enhance their customers’ quality of experience.

Customer Example #1: A Leading Financial Services Trading Company

A large financial services trading company had a problem with bad voice quality, which required a vast number of customers to hang up and call back a second time.

The company handled 200,000 calls daily. Approximately 50% of the calls were contained within the IVR and the rest were handled by agents. Of the 100,000 or so customers who spoke with agents, one-third of those, or about 33,000, needed to be transferred to a second agent. When the second transfer occurred, call voice quality deteriorated so much that the customer had to call back.

Furthermore, the 33,000 callbacks needed to go through the call center sequence again from the beginning, starting with the IVR and then the first agent because they needed to talk with a second, particular type of agent.

This problem impacted six of this call center’s top ten KPIs:

- Call abandon rate
- % repeat calls
- % call transfers
- Monetary cost per call
- % first call resolution
- Queue time

After using an automated system to test its contact center, the company was able to determine that this problem was caused by a single switch that was only used for call transfers. This switch was not trans-coding calls properly and had incorrect Quality of Service settings (prioritize voice packets relative to data packets).

Customer Example #2: A Major Service Provider

A major service provider handled four million calls per month in its call center. Its problem was twofold:

1) 19% of the call center calls, or 760,000 calls per month, were not utilizing the service provider’s IP backbone and instead were going back out to the PSTN upon transfer, where toll charges were incurred; and

2) Voice quality for these calls was noticeably worse.

In addition, two additional critical measures, % agent utilization and % call completion rate, were negatively impacted.

By using an automated testing system, the service provider determined that the wrong routing rules were being used. This incorrectly configured vector was causing 760,000 voice calls per month to be:

1) converted to Voice over IP (VoIP) for the internal IP backbone,

2) sent back out to the PSTN where toll charges were incurred, and then

3) transferred back into the IP backbone via a second VoIP conversion.

Customer Example #3: A Global Retailer

A global retailer deployed a corporate CRM system and integrated this system into the agent desktop in order to provide the agent with call control and screen pop all within the CRM interface.
This retailer was experiencing issues with the agent’s CRM and CTI toolbar integration. During testing, screen pop response time was measured at less than two seconds with 250 concurrent calls.

However, when the load was increased to 310 concurrent calls, the response time for the screen pop increased to an astounding 38 seconds. In addition, while the agent waited for the screen pop, the entire custom CRM application froze, which made it impossible for the agent to assist the customer at all.

This problem impacted six of the call center’s top ten KPIs:

- Call abandon rate
- % call completion rate
- Monetary cost per call
- % blockage
- Time to screen pop
- Queue time

The organization used an automated testing solution to determine that the cause of this problem was a poorly written set of database queries that were responsible for logging the call and producing the screen pop.

Automated Testing Solutions Enable Call Centers to Optimize KPIs and Customer Experience
Automated testing solutions provide the tremendous value of being able to quickly and accurately diagnose technology problems and issues. Consistent testing customer experience across all technology layers ensures that technology issues do not negatively impact Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). In addition, continuous monitoring of contact center technology promptly eliminates many of the issues that limit the ability to achieve KPI goals.

Not all KPI-impacting issues have a technology origin. However, there is no point in attempting to fine tune possible non-technical causes without first verifying that the system is working as expected. By comprehensively testing and monitoring contact center systems, organizations can quickly and easily make adjustments that can alleviate a large percentage of issues experienced while saving money and reducing the need for additional resource investment.