Welcome to the December 2018 issue of the NACC In Queue newsletter!

How To Determine Inbound Service Level Goals

Shannelle Krebbs, Operations Manager, Quality Contact Solutions, shannelle@qualitycontactsolutions.com

Determining inbound service level goals is one of the most important factors for anyone responsible for the inbound call center function. Determining the right inbound service level goal is not straight forward. A study conducted by AT&T 30 years ago determined that 80% of calls should be answered in 20 seconds or less. This was based off research that indicated that many callers would hang up the call after waiting for 20 seconds. Referred to as the 80/20 rule, this began the foundation for determining benchmarks for inbound service level standards. This study was conducted before the majority of inbound call centers implemented technology that is considered standard today, including Interactive Voice Response (IVR) Priority Queueing for high value customers based on the phone number they are calling from, In-Queue expected wait time announcements and In-Queue self-service options.

Identifying if the 80/20 rule is appropriate is not black and white. To balance efficiency vs providing a higher service level for your inbound calls, here are some key factors to consider before determining your inbound service level goals.

Know the Caller
Know your customer or prospect. If you have a good understanding of why the customer or prospect is calling and how long they will typically wait on hold is crucial. If the customer is willing to wait a bit longer to speak to a representative because their issue or question cannot be handled by any other means (such as self-service IVR, web, chat, or email) then you may get by with less staffing and a lower service level goal like 70% within 60 seconds.

Does your company offer any other methods for the customer or prospect to contact your organization? In the last 10 years, most companies have invested heavily in providing alternate channels like self-service IVR, web self-service, chat and email to decrease the number of inbound calls that the company receives. And most importantly, is your customer or prospect likely to use these alternate contact methods? It comes down to knowing your customer or prospect.

What is the Value of a Call?
What is the value of a call? When determining what an Inbound Call Center service level goal should be, it is also important to consider the overall reason for the call and the value to your company. Is it a sale driven call or a service driven call? If it is a sales call, the last thing a call center manager wants is a customer hanging up and calling a competitor because they could not get through to an agent (resulting in lost revenue for the company). Most companies prioritize sales calls using prompts like "Press 1 for sales" and "Press 2 for Service" to easily identify sales calls and route them as a priority to the available agents with a higher inbound service level goal for the sales calls.

A Variable Goal May Make Sense
Does a variable goal make sense? As you evaluate volume patterns by day of week, day of month, month of the year, or other seasonal volume fluctuations, would it make sense to set inbound service level goals that are variable? If the cost of adding staff to meet "peak season" staffing requirements is extraordinary, it may make sense to establish a lower service level goal for certain peak season days of the year and then measure the results to identify if occasional lower service levels hurt your customer satisfaction scores or result in an unacceptable abandon rate (% of callers that abandon after 20 seconds is typically the primary way to measure abandon rate). In my experience, most inbound call centers work to maintain a less than 5% abandon rate.

What is Your Budget?
Show me the money! The staffing budget that an Inbound Call Center company has is definitely an important factor that should go into determining service levels. The higher the service level goal, the lower the efficiency of the call center team, the higher the staffing costs. This is because lower efficiency equals a requirement to staff more agents to ensure the inbound service level goal is met.

What Matters Most?
What matters most? Companies that sell a superior customer experience as part of their brand promise will generally want to answer calls faster. Companies that are in a regulated market (like utility companies) generally do not need to deliver exceptional customer service, but they also can't afford to answer the calls so slowly that the customers

Pearls Of Wisdom

"It is not fair to ask of others what you are unwilling to do yourself."

~ Eleanor Roosevelt

Reports From NACC

NACC has been burning the midnight oil and typing until our fingers are sore to bring out reports to our members. Each is listed below. If you are interested to see what we are writing about, click on the links below and download the executive summary of each. If you like what you see, join the NACC so that you can view these reports and others that will be coming out soon on our website. These reports will ensure that you know the latest trends in the industry.

complain to the Public Utility Commission.

Considering the above factors when determining what your magic inbound service level goal should be is critical for a successful call center operation. While the 80/20 rule is widely used, you should carefully consider setting your inbound call center service level goals based on all relevant factors.

Shannelle Krebbs is an Operations Manager for Quality Contact Solutions, a leading outsourced telemarketing organization. Shannelle is a problem solver with over a decade of experience in the contact center world, specifically in contact center operations, training and quality assurance. She prides herself on using her array of skills to think outside the box for solutions to difficult problems and for providing genuine, team-focused leadership. Shannelle is ambitious, goal driven and a dot-connector. Shannelle can be reached at shannelle@qualitycontactsolutions.com or 516-656-4198.

Employee Engagement 2019 - It's Still A Thing

Paul Stockford, Research Director, NACC & Chief Analyst, Saddletree Research,
paul.stockford@nationalcallcenters.org

We first noticed the emergence of employee engagement as a top-of-mind industry trend at the end of 2016. Employee engagement became a focus of our research in 2017 and continued to be an important area of industry exploration in 2018.

Employee engagement goes beyond employee relations. Employee engagement implies a connection between the employee and the company; almost a partnership wherein the employee is not only enthusiastic about his or her work, they are motivated to further the organization's interests along with their own interests. Beyond job satisfaction, employee engagement leads to job and career fulfillment. When we conducted our third quarter 2018 research that looks forward to important industry trends and issues for 2019, we asked about the importance of employee engagement in the contact center's overall strategy for operational success in 2019. The results are illustrated in the graph below.
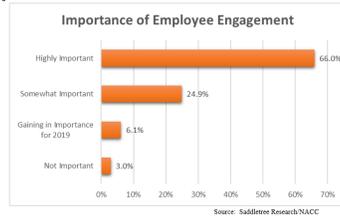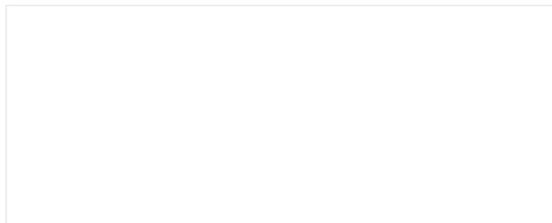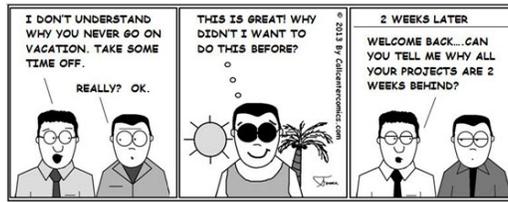

The graph above indicates that 97 percent of the industry finds some degree of importance in employee engagement going into the year ahead. We believe these and other results of our 2019 research are indicative of a potential turning point in the global contact center industry.
We recently participated in a webinar with NICE that is dedicated to the topic of employee engagement. In the webinar, we talk about the important drivers behind the interest in employee engagement and which solutions are proving to be most effective in supporting an employee engagement strategy.

The webinar is available here, and I encourage you to give it a listen and make sure you are up to speed on employee engagement as an important strategic factor for success in the year ahead.

Call Center Comics

If you like this comic and would like to see more, write Ozzie at callcentercomics@yahoo.com. The NACC appreciates Ozzie letting us use some of his comics in our newsletter.

Did You Know That NACC ...

Offers several types of membership opportunities? **Click here to find out more...**	Offers the ability to **advertise with NACC. Click here to view the NACC Advertising Guide** where you can view our channels and prices.

To advertise with the NACC, please contact the NACC at:
Tel: 480.922.5949 | Email: Click Here
To view past issues of In Queue, please click here.
If you would like to contribute to In Queue,
please reply to this email with "Contribute" in the subject line.
© 2018 National Association of Call Centers

[Twitter Share] [Facebook Share] [LinkedIn Share]