

A Business Case for Training and Coaching Your Support Staff

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Service Centers are the life blood of any organization, but, as you well know, Call Centers today are very different than even a decade ago. Today, the competition is steeper, the products more complex and the customer expectations higher. To become a world class call center, there are a few things you should know. There are also some questions you should be answering. If the answers to these questions are not to your liking, perhaps training and coaching can be a part of the solution.

Did you know a **Gallup Poll** showed that:

- 88% of today's workers want to "work hard and do their best on the job."
- 55% said they had an "inner need to do their very best regardless of compensation."

But

- 50% said they "worked just hard enough to avoid getting fired."

And

- 75% said "they could be significantly more effective on the job?"

If you are a rep, are you consistently delivering your best? What is your organization doing on an on-going basis to help you become more effective? Are you coached? How often do you get personal development time with a manager or supervisor? Beyond product training, what kind of training do you receive? What is the impetus for people in your organization to improve?

Training Magazine reports that the annual agent turnover rate in call centers averages more than 30% and often more than 60%. Aside from the fact, that this investment is costly, it strongly suggests that something is wrong and needs to be ad-

ressed. Do these statistics apply to your center? What is your agent turnover rate? The way reps are treated affects the way customers are treated. How do you feel about the way you are treated on the job? Are you adequately compensated? Are their unreasonable time constraints or pressures that make doing your job very difficult? Are there skills you are lacking to perform at your peak?

Call Center Magazine reports that world class centers aim for a 2-3% abandonment rate and 85% resolution on the first contact. Where does your organization fall? How long are people waiting in cue? How many callers hang up or abandon the call? How many of your calls require re-routing?

Michael Hoffman, a principal with OmniTech Consulting Groups says the job of a call center agent is inherently stressful. Some would argue they have the eighth most stressful job according to the US Department of Statistics. Reps take call after call, without any breaks between calls. They often trouble shoot a large product line and have to maneuver complex CRM Systems. Additionally, because there is anonymity, callers are often hostile or rude.

What is your level of stress and how are you handling it? How is performance measured on your job? Is it by volume of calls? How does the company assist you in making you feel more confident and comfortable handling the volume and severity of calls?

TARP, the **Technical Assistance Research Project** of Washington, DC, reports that the way to generate the greatest profit for your organization is to eliminate number of calls as way to measure the productivity of an agent. Reps who took more time on each call tended to generate happier, more satisfied and loyal customer bases. They also found the extra minute or two spent with the caller vastly reduced the number of repeat callers.

Continued on page 2

To fuel growth and profitability in your organization, it is important for you to provide the tools people need to make exceeding customer expectations possible. Product knowledge and soft skills training matched by regular coaching from managers and supervisors, certainly affect customer satisfaction. As customer satisfaction goes up, the stress level of your reps goes down.

Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their face-to-face and over the phone communication skills. When you have to have impact, phone (847) 438-4480 or visit our web site, www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com.