



HARNESSING THE POWER OF AUTOMATION

Strategies for Reducing Cost in the
Contact Center

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INTRODUCTION

When the Coronavirus pandemic struck last year, businesses all over the country (and the world) found themselves scrambling to adjust to the new parameters. For businesses with call centers, this involved transitioning to a work-from-home model to continue serving their customers. And since 51% of customers in 2020 still preferred to call companies when dealing with complex issues,¹ it was crucial for companies to ensure that their WFH agents could still successfully perform their duties over the phone.

Now that companies are returning to normal, they are figuring out what “normal” means for their business model and their employees. Because the customer experience is more important than ever, companies must find cost-effective ways to deliver better customer experiences and ensure customer loyalty. This white paper demonstrates how an automated, cloud-based QA solution is essential to accomplishing that goal.

Why is Cost a Common Challenge in the Contact Center?

Studies show it costs seven times more to obtain a new customer than to retain an old one.² And 19% of customers say they would take their business elsewhere if their issue is not resolved when they call a company.³ These stats indicate that companies must train their agents to fully assist customers with whatever questions or problems they may have. And customers expect those results the first time they call.

Known as the First Call Resolution (FCR) rate, this metric impacts other aspects of the contact center, including **Average Wait Time (AWT)**, **Average Handle Time (AHT)**, and **Call Abandonment Rates (CAR)**. All of these KPIs influence **Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) scores**.

Centers *without* good FCR rates usually require 2.5 calls to effectively assist customers.⁴ Each time a customer has to call a company back for the same issue, CSAT scores drop an average of 15%.⁵

Because of budget and time constraints, many businesses cannot provide agents with the training and tools needed to effectively address their customers' needs. This results in unresolved customer issues, leading to poor FCR rates, a decrease in customer satisfaction scores, and ultimately customer churn. But the truth is that agents often lack the necessary knowledge to successfully assist customers. With new developments in automated quality monitoring solutions, businesses can uncover knowledge gaps and train agents for success.

Why Are Agents Leaving, and Why is Turnover So Expensive?

Another challenge facing contact centers is high agent attrition rates, which are averaging at an alarming 30-45%.⁶ **The approximate cost of replacing an agent is \$8,780,**⁷ so it's in the company's best interest to find out why their agents are leaving.

The number one factor driving agent churn is insufficient training. Most call centers require 4-6 months of training to get agents up to speed, and even then, many agents are unable to sufficiently help customers.⁸ Studies show newer agents typically spend 20% of their time searching for information, and most of that time is spent asking veteran agents for help.⁹ This takes veterans away from helping other customers and meeting their own sales goals. As a result, many agents feel dissatisfied with their jobs and seek employment elsewhere.

Why Are Contact Centers Still Using Manual Call Monitoring?

Despite the obvious benefits of using an automated call quality monitoring solution, many businesses continue to manually monitor calls to maintain quality assurance in the contact center. However, most centers do not have enough managers to manually listen to each call in its entirety. This means that managers listen to a very small sampling of calls, which fails to provide an accurate assessment of the customer experience or agent knowledge. The other option is to hire more managers, which defeats the purpose of lowering costs.



So why are contact centers still using manual call monitoring? For most contact centers, it may be the case that managers and other decision makers may not be aware of automated solutions. Or they may not think they have the budget for new software. Some contact centers don't employ a full-time IT team, so managers may not want to implement new technology. But none of these reasons apply to most AQM solutions. Many automated solutions are easy to deploy and use, so hiring new employees or a full-time IT staff is not required. And if you consider the costs we covered above, it's more cost-effective to leverage an automated quality monitoring solution.

While it may be clear that manual call monitoring does not belong in the modern contact center or a WFH model, let's look at why the benefits of an AQM solution far outweigh the costs.

Strategies for Reducing Costs In and Out of the Contact Center with Cloud-Based Automated Quality Monitoring Solutions

Cost Benefits of a Work from Home or Cloud-Based Model

As businesses shifted their contact centers to a WFH model during the COVID-19 lockdown, they also moved data and resources to the cloud to better handle the demands of working remotely. In fact, remote agents performed just as well, if not better, as agents working in a physical location.

As people return to the office, businesses are considering the benefits of a more permanent WFH model. Here are just a few of those benefits:

- Eliminates the costs associated with maintaining a physical office
- Eliminates the need to commute, reducing the company's carbon footprint
- Eliminates the need to install hardware by moving to cloud-based systems
- Reduces agent churn since agents can serve customers in the comfort of their homes

Strategy 1: Automated Call Transcriptions – Lower Costs by Improving KPIs

Research shows that improving FCR rates by a mere 1% reduces operating costs and improves CSAT levels.¹⁰ Implementing automated call transcriptions is the first step in improving KPIs and moving toward a more efficient operation. Additionally, automated transcripts provide managers with an accurate, consistent, and cost-effective way to evaluate agent-customer interactions based on the areas that matter most to their business, such as the customer experience.

For instance, managers can quickly scan recorded conversations for key words and phrases to identify trends and patterns that gives them insights into the customer experience. In addition, features such as sentiment analysis and silence & overtalk detection reveal common customer pain points in conversations and help perform root cause analysis.

For example, words such as “frustrated,” “confused,” or “unfortunately” signify a negative customer experience. Managers can then use this data to determine the best way to resolve issues and prevent them from happening in the future. Not only does this improve CSAT scores, but it also reduces customer churn, thereby eliminating the high cost of acquiring new customers.

Contact center managers can use automated transcriptions to improve other areas of the contact center as well. If the transcripts reveal that agents are not prepared or don't have the resources to quickly solve customer issues, this data can be used to implement operational changes that eliminate organizational inefficiencies. When agents are better equipped to handle customer questions and complaints, FCR rates improve, increasing both customer loyalty and retention. And studies also show resolved issues lead to a 20% increase in cross-selling acceptance rates from customers.¹¹



Strategy 2: Automated Scorecards – Reduce Agent Churn with Consistent Scoring Methods

"Consistency" is a keyword in the contact center, as it should be. By providing consistent feedback using a consistent scoring method, managers can offer their agents better training, and a better employee experience.

Automated scorecards give managers an unbiased evaluation of all agents based on specific metrics that matter to the business. Scorecards grade every single call so that managers get an accurate evaluation of their agents' strengths and weaknesses. From there, managers can create training programs based on their agents' specific needs. This is a far more efficient way to evaluate and coach agents to improve their customer service skills while keeping agents engaged. The benefits of using automated scorecards in the contact center are well documented. In one case study, **the Director of Contact Center Operations reduced Average Handle Time by 10 to 14% with improved coaching efforts via scorecards.**¹²

And in another study, scorecards helped contact center agents improve close times by 6%.¹³ One company discovered through automated transcriptions and scorecards that when agents used a specific empathetic phrase during their conversations, they saw a 50% increase in set rates, which has led to improved training initiatives.¹⁴

Utilizing scorecards means agents have the tools and knowledge they need to succeed, which can have a tremendously positive impact on morale. When agents take pride in their performance, it ultimately results in reduced attrition rates, and a better customer experience.

Strategy 3: Implement a Full Automated Quality Monitoring Solution – Eliminate All Unnecessary Costs by Monitoring 100% of Interactions

Imagine having the ability to go from monitoring 10 or 15% of your customer calls to 100%. That's exactly what an automated quality monitoring solution provides. In fact, a cloud-based AQM solution is the only way to efficiently monitor 100% of agent-customer interactions.

Not only that, but automation gives managers more time to perform other duties in the contact center, such as coaching agents. It also eliminates onboarding costs for new hires, as well as the cost of acquiring new customers. And for businesses that are regulated, an automated quality monitoring solution can help managers guarantee their agents are fully script compliant, reducing the risk of expensive fines and fees.

When you implement an AQM solution that provides automated transcriptions, scorecards, and all the tools that make it easier to see the full picture of every phone conversation, you will ultimately reduce costs through all the examples we've presented here.

Summary

The contact center is always evolving, but that doesn't have to come with a high price tag. As businesses look for ways to reduce costs while giving customers the best experience, they are turning to new forms of technology. Implementing automated call monitoring technology is a highly cost-effective and efficient way to ensure that your entire organization is operating at peak performance, no matter where your agents are located. And if AQM technology can also offer a consistent way to improve agent performance and boost morale, it seems that automated quality monitoring solutions are the future of business success.

About CallFinder

CallFinder® is a leading provider of cloud-based SaaS speech analytics, automated call scoring, and speech-to-text transcription technology with sentiment analysis. Our easy-to-use solution is designed to help businesses and contact centers automate quality monitoring to improve agent performance and provide a superior customer experience.

For more information, visit us on the web at www.mycallfinder.com

Proof of Concept Demo With CallFinder

Find out what your customers are experiencing when they call your company. Our proof of concept demo is much more than a product demonstration; it's an analysis of the voice of your customers. Simply provide 100 hours of your call recordings. We will process the audio files through the CallFinder speech analytics engine, and provide you with a report and consultation of our findings. The entire assessment process takes just a few days to deliver results. Start discovering how you can improve your customers' experience today!

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