

## **Six Sigma in your Company – now in your Contact Center**

*By Dr. Jodie Monger – President Customer Relationship Metrics, L.C.*

The contact center is one of your company's most valuable assets. Ninety percent of your customers base their image of the company on the experience with the call center. The contact center is (or should be) the center of the corporate universe. Why, then, is so much time spent by managers justifying its existence? Too often high-level executives do not understand the value of the contact center to the company's brand image or the contribution to shareholder wealth. The education within your company is your responsibility. How do you gain the positive attention to move the contact center into the center of the universe?

Many companies have been or are beginning to use the Six Sigma methodology to improve quality throughout the organization. The beginning, middle and end of this cycle of the Six Sigma process is the voice of the customer. A logical place to look for such information is in the contact center. Where else can the green and black belts find the pulse of the customer?

Six Sigma provides a framework to identify your customer critical-to-quality metrics that lead to customer satisfaction and quantify to cost of poor quality. When routine customer interactions are not handled in the customer-correct standardized way, it is a defect and customers will be dissatisfied. As you identify and correct defects, cost is saved and the savings must be reinvested back into your processes to continue to increase satisfaction and income and then more change and higher satisfaction, and so on. The cycle is quite powerful and is a competitive advantage.

Herein lies your opportunity to leverage the contact center. Make a connection with your company's master black belt to let him or her know that the contact center is a Six Sigma resource and that you have opportunities for Six Sigma projects as well. Next to a manufacturing line, there are no other functions in an organization where the operational data is more readily available than a contact center. The ability to measure aspects of the function is critical to the Six Sigma effort – Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, and Control.

A Six Sigma project team requires the Voice of the Customer to determine a need for a project and to then determine the success of a project. In our effort to provide the mechanism to measure the quality of the service delivery, the CATs real-time customer feedback projects have provided the needed measurement for many Six Sigma projects.

The automated surveys for CATs programs also provide the channel for additional projects focused on other organizational aspects by also implementing additional CAT surveys in parallel. This ability affords the contact center the right to claim its status as the focal point of the organization. The contact center can implement a Six Sigma project related to call resolution while also fielding surveys to measure satisfaction with the billing process and the product quality/repair process. Essentially, you should become the go-to group for customer opinion measurement.

Be prepared for a change. The ability to measure customer opinion with a sound, inexpensive option has catapulted the status of contact center teams within the organizational hierarchy finally giving credit where credit is long overdue.



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