

Call Center Week Report Part 2

Presented By: CRMXchange



Contact center professionals who registered for the Call Center Week Expo Hall (June 17-18) were able to take advantage of a number of value-added educational opportunities.

It kicked off with a drum signing by members of Drum Café, which presented a fun and focused team building experience where attendees participated in a drum circle in which everyone plays the same rhythm and listens to each other.

There were also complimentary presentations featuring ideas from end users such as Kohls, Nationwide Insurance, and Western Union as well as briefings by solution providers. Other highlights included Pecha Kucha Sessions, which offer a unique presentation format where skilled leaders display 20 Slides for 20 seconds each, plus book signings and more.

CRMXchange's second report is focused on companies in the WFM/performance management space. We found that these innovative suppliers were largely in agreement that the road to customer centricity should be paved by the people on the front lines and that organizations need to pay closer attention to the agent experience.

While many organizations say they understand the importance of being customer-centric, only a select few have committed to making it an ongoing business standard. What are the three most critical measures that need to be taken to integrate a customer-focused approach into a company's day-to-day activities?



Aimee Stinson, Director, Strategic Alliances, AMC Technology

Be cognizant of your customer's time. Keep queue times short and use a call attendant or IVR to gather information before routing the call to reduce the likelihood of transferring a frustrated customer, agents should always confirm the accuracy of the screenpop and quickly look at the customer history and call attached data to make some quick deductions on why the customer is calling.

Reporting must be actionable. It's important to have reports on what your agents are doing in the contact center but you should also be able to draw conclusions from those reports that help make operating decisions. A lot of data that is disjointed or not accurate doesn't provide a lot of value to operations.

Don't forget about the agent experience. Agents who enjoy their jobs help make your customers happy. Agents who are burdened by their tools pass on that frustration to people they are talking to – your customers!

Malysa O'Connor, Director, Services Practice Group, Kronos



In many ways, it starts and ends with your people – there is truth to the saying that happy employees equal happy customers. It is your people who are delivering the service that makes an experience exceptional, mediocre, or poor. They are your frontline in delivering exceptional service. An organization can

have the best technology in the world but without customer facing excellence, it is impossible to deliver a truly customer focused approach.

Employees need to be in the right place at the right time, have the right skill set, and be empowered in order to deliver differentiated service. The factors that enable them to deliver this kind of customer experience are your technology and systems, processes, and a culture of empowerment (giving employees the green light to deliver top notch service).



Chuck Ciarlo, CEO, Monet Software

Adopt a customer-centric culture, and one of the best ways to support this culture is to make sure you are always staffed in accordance with your customer needs.

- Constantly monitor quality and set high and consistent standards that exceed your customer's expectations. Rely on tools such as speech analytics to streamline process.

- Adopt an omni-channel approach to customer service and quality management. What is true on one channel must be consistent and true on all of them.

We strongly believe the most important word in Software-as-a-Service is "Service," and take pride in not only onboarding our new clients rapidly and efficiently, but also continually guaranteeing effective and state-of-the-art support to our customers.



Tony DeGaetano, CEO OpsTel Services

It all boils down to consistency! Every employee should be aware of the company's standards for being committed to customer-centricity. These standards need to be motivating and communicated to the workforce on a

regular basis through tangible / measurable results. These standards should also be applauded / rewarded when practiced and purposefully pointed out by a customer who was delighted by the attention/service they received. And lastly, treating customers with respect and delivering on expected results is always a winning combination.



Greg Salvato, CEO, TouchPoint One (Acuity)

Understanding and even committing in principle to customer centricity is easy, but developing the required capabilities to deliver it consistently and at meaningful levels is challenging. In order to get there, organizations must first be committed to it ideologically, strategically and tactically from the executive level to the front lines. Follow-through is vital to success and success can't be achieved without sustained and thoughtful executive involvement and leadership. Second, customer centricity is dependent on employee centricity. It's not realistic to expect high levels of customer satisfaction if the employees aren't confident about their employer's commitment to their own well-being and ability to reach their maximum potential, so a performance management program to educate, engage and inspire employees at all levels is essential. Technology is the third leg of the stool. Integration of systems and data from every customer touch point (online and off) should be an ongoing imperative so that your knowledge about them is complete and accurate and your ability to serve is effective and consistent.

Delivering a superior customer experience often involves knowing more about the priorities and needs of individual consumers. What do you see as the key factor in enabling companies to make their customer interactions more personal?

Aimee Stinson There is nothing more frustrating than calling an organization and being asked for the same information over and over again as you get bounced from agent to agent. An optimal contact center experience should be similar to walking into your favorite specialty retailer where you're greeted by name and they pull items from the racks in your size, preference, and style based on previous purchases or visits. Imagine how thrilled you are to find out that an item you've been eyeing is now on sale and the sales staff remembered. That's the feeling organizations should be going for when their customers call in.

Malysa O'Connor In today's competitive environment, success depends on the quality of service customers receive and how well the service is delivered so they receive the experience they not only expect — but demand. It's the new norm where customers set the bar on customer service expectations driving the need for more personalized service than ever before. And the workforce is the lifeline of any organization when it comes to delivering exceptional service. So organizations need to not only recruit, select, and retain best-fit employees but also ensure compliance with changing, complex labor laws and ensure employee coverage to meet demand at all times. So there are many moving pieces that make up the puzzle of workforce management. To manage all aspects manually can lead to error, lower employee engagement, and less than satisfactory customer service.

Leveraging solutions that help effectively manage the workforce to improve workforce productivity and enhance employee engagement can actually drive growth, increase market share, and improve customer loyalty.

Chuck Ciarlo

- Making sure your CRM is always up-to-date

- Keeping track of the customer experience on all channels, adopt an omni-channel approach to your customer experience

-Internally implement quality management tools to guarantee customers interactions are consistent and in compliance with corporate policies.

Tony DeGaetano Assuming you have a history with your customer, it is imperative to know that history to insure that the next time you have to interact with that customer, you are sensitive to whatever interaction may have happen in the past. There's nothing worse than having to reiterate past history when you have been a customer for a long period of time.

Everyone wants special treatment and targeting / identifying your most loyal customers is the key to retaining that loyalty. Companies that painstakingly strive to identify this demographic of their customer base will be the most successful at personalizing their customer's experience.

Greg Salvato, Integrating technology that ties together and synthesizes the various ways customers communicate and interact with an organization's products, services, messaging and people (employees, third parties or fellow customers) over time and presents that information to customer service agents and other support personnel is critical to engaging them on an informed and personal level. This is a huge challenge that has become more dynamic and complex than ever due to the speed of technical advances and multi-channel development now occurring as well as the coordination of inter-departmental strategies, processes, systems and leadership needed to develop and maintain an effective customer experience framework.

The key factor to achieving success is to be cognizant of the expanded dimension and preferences of customer interaction as well as the customer expectation that all of these channels should be integrated. And then aggressively invest in experienced leadership, evaluate and implement best-in-class systems and fully commit to the development of a people-centric culture that maximizes the experience for both employees and customers.

What do you consider the two most important strategies that businesses can leverage to make the most significant impact and lasting progress on improving employee engagement?

Aimee Stinson Accurate reporting is critical. If your data is not correct or not captured, it makes it difficult to identify what changes need to be made in the contact center to optimize efficiency and improve customer satisfaction. Agents are human and humans are prone to error. Automation goes a long way to assist activity logging and tracking not ready/logout reasons.

Also, provide tools that help agents be more efficient. Requiring agents to bounce between applications or use a combination of the hard phone and softphone reduces productivity and makes customer interactions cumbersome. Agents who are transferred to or conferenced in

should always have access to the latest information on the customer. Asking the customer for information that has already been provided frustrates everyone.

Malysa O'Connor It's all about fairness and consistency. Making sure rules--for example, those associated with attendance policies-- are implemented consistently, accurately, and in a centralized way. This eliminates perceived favoritism that can be toxic to an organization. Also, with consistency and centralized policy administration you ensure you have full auditability should corrective action be needed. But, it doesn't stop there. It's also about rewarding employees based on measurable performance – being able to have the data you need to recognize things like perfect attendance or other performance-related metrics.

Chuck Ciarlo “Happy agents = happy customers” is a formula espoused by many in the contact center profession -- and not just agents looking for a raise. Studies in this area by the SQM Group found that every 1% increase in employment satisfaction resulted in a 2% increase in customer satisfaction. Processes, rules and agent scripts should all be prepared with that end result in mind. However, customer service should not be limited to the following of company policy. For happy agents and happy customers you should:

Listen to your agents- Agents will feel more motivated if their ideas are taken seriously, and they feel like part of a team. This practice benefits management as well, since agents are on the front line of call center customer service.

Train and coach- Make sure training sessions are not just about errors, but also provide encouragement and support. Some agents may view training as a necessary evil, but if these sessions are used to teach new skills, it provides motivation for the agent by adding variety to their daily obligations.

Tony DeGaetano Establishing trust with employees and always meeting / exceeding expected results!

Greg Salvato Trust is the cornerstone of employee engagement, loyalty and performance development. As with customers, employers can cultivate strong employee bonds through a closed-loop and systematized performance management process comprised of the following components: 1) Equip - with intelligence, incentive, purpose and authority to maximize the customer experience along with their own earnings and career potential, 2) Align - all levels of personnel and partners to a common view of the key performance indicators and how we/one is performing to defined expectations, 3) Engage – all levels of personnel and partners leveraging fixed and dynamic methods of communication, pay/non-pay incentives and recognition, game mechanics, and other creative themes, causes or approaches. 4) Analyze – the complete and authoritative performance record and the underlying business process logic, 5) Modify – strategy, process, resources based on step 4.

So, establish trust – through a culture of transparency and support and then demonstrate your commitment to people by institutionalizing the processes that ensure their success – employees, partners and customers. Employee engagement will improve along with every other critical business metric.

What differentiates your service or solution from others available?

Aimee Stinson Because we have 20 years of experience in our space with customers around the globe in a variety of industries, we have been able to provide a product that is robust and anticipates business needs.

Contact Canvas as a platform is truly unique in that drivers and adapters are interchangeable. It's perfect for heterogeneous organizations that use multiple communication platforms and CRM applications or companies that are between solutions.

Contact Canvas agent is an especially powerful interface with a lot of configuration options including a screenpop hierarchy so that you can define the order; initial, secondary and tertiary searches for customer data when a match is not found; bookmarks that allow you to update and add call attached data so the next agents see corrected or new customer data and Agent Palette to fulfill unique customer requirements. When you take a closer look at the features, Contact Canvas provides perhaps the most relevant functionality to a customer service or sales organization available in the marketplace.

Malysa O'Connor Today's customers are interacting with organizations through multiple channels, sometimes simultaneously. Meeting the service expectations of this new, hyper-connected customer profile often demands an omni-channel strategy that incorporates and optimizes the people element of service delivery. The challenge is two-fold: organizations must deliver a quality customer experience and often at the same time, optimize their resources across these multiple channels. This is no small feat, considering that currently, operations and people-management is often siloed across these channels. They may not be speaking the same service language, leading to an inconsistent, frustrating or even negative customer experience. In a consistently competitive business environment, having instant visibility into who is working, not working, available to work, performing, under-performing, etc. will be critical to maximizing resource utilization and optimizing service excellence. The Kronos solution optimizes people both through ensuring they are aligned to volume and service levels but also by empowering and engaging them. Kronos solutions help an organization ensure that the right person, in the right place, for the right cost, with the right skills at the right time to deliver exceptional service.

Chuck Ciarlo During the very early stages of cloud computing, Monet Software was among the first to bring a WFM solution to the cloud. At the time, most solutions were hardware and premise-based, i.e. difficult to maintain, expensive to implement, complex to install and time-consuming for agents to get used to and be perfectly trained.

We took this step to offer all the benefits of the cloud to call centers looking to implement workforce management. Unlike many other vendors, we've had over 5 years to improve and perfect solutions in the field, make them more robust, more flexible and more cost-effective. Our infrastructure is fully-redundant and natively integrates high availability.

What else makes us different?

- Ease-of-deployment. The average deployment time for a traditional workforce management solution is 6 to 12 months. Our deployment takes from 4 to 12 weeks.

- Superior flexibility and scalability. Our onboarding process helps get more agents on board, more easily, to quickly and efficiently adjust staffing to needs. SaaS apps tend to have high adoption rates, with a shorter learning curve. The GUI is clear, easy-to-use and user-centric.

- Cost-effectiveness. Our software is subscription-based. No license fees mean lower initial costs, compared to WFM hardware solutions. No maintenance costs (hardware, updates, upgrades...).

- Lower TCO and cost per Agent

Tony De Gaetano Give us a chance and we'll prove why ours is better.

Greg Salvato TouchPoint One is the one of the only performance management software vendors dedicated solely to contact centers. Our hosted software platform, Acuity, combines a central data store, intuitive business logic designer and specialized analytics engine to deliver real-time performance intelligence through customized scorecards, role-based dashboards and systematized workflows. Communication, gamification, quality monitoring, pay-for-performance and other features are tightly integrated and accessible anywhere via web-enabled work stations, pcs, tablets and smart devices.

Our approach to analytics is unique, applying performance management principles, typically associated only with agents, to any asset responsible for contact center success. Thus, Acuity can deliver unique and financially quantifiable value to nearly every organizational department as well as outside vendors and other stakeholders across the gamut of verticals we serve. The simple design enables front-line managers and other leadership to configure or modify KPI settings or other program attributes as business conditions evolve – without burdening IT, business analysts or other resources.

How does Contact Canvas provide agents with real-time access to customer information that can also be integrated with major CRMs?

Aimee Stinson Through Contact Canvas, contact center agents using major CRMs like Salesforce, Desk.com, SAP, Oracle Cloud Service, Oracle Siebel, Oracle PeopleSoft and Microsoft Dynamics have access to call-attached data that can be used for routing, display and other decision making during the customer experience. In addition to traditional call center functionality, Contact Canvas can provide a true omni-channel experience --reducing agent training, minimizing downtime and maximizing resources.

How does Kronos for Contact Center help companies close gaps in optimizing their workforce?

Malysa O'Connor We are instrumental in effecting change in several ways:

-Managing compliance by applying pay rules centrally and tracking leave and attendance policies

-Hiring and retaining staff helping to identify, screen, and onboard agents quickly – agents who will deliver quality service to customers

-Monitoring and understanding true costs of overtime, nonproductive time, absenteeism

-Consistently implementing, managing and enforcing workforce management policies on a global scale

Even if you already use contact center solutions for tasks such as forecasting, real-time schedule adherence, performance management, and training, Kronosfor Contact Centers delivers workforce management solutions that close critical gaps in your effort to optimize your workforce. Closing these gaps can mean identifying and hiring quality workers and keeping attrition rates low so you can deliver consistently high levels of service to customers. And then drive employee engagement and manage absences to control costs as well as manage all time worked to help minimize compliance risk

What are the three most significant ways Monet Live can help small and medium sized contact centers improve service levels and reduce operating costs?

Chuck Ciarlo: We give contact centers cloud-based solutions to their biggest business issues: meeting service levels, delivering high-quality service and controlling payroll costs. Small to medium contact centers can easily forecast workloads, have the ability to create optimal schedules that improve service levels, and benefit from integrated services allowing them to track agents scheduled adherence which can dramatically reduce overall costs.

Users can get started and see results within weeks, while avoiding large upfront investments, and time-consuming, expensive hard- and software implementation projects. The solution offers:

- Easy access to cross-functional data to help align teams to work more effectively on common objectives, avoiding “siloed” thinking and actions.
- Better call center insights, metrics and alerts enable more informed and faster decisions,
- Fully integrated WFO framework to eliminate costly integration projects

Can you outline the three-step process OpsTel Services takes with clients in assessing customer service delivery needs and developing innovative customized contact center solutions?

Tony De Gaetano The first step is to understand the goals and objectives of the organization’s executive staff along with capturing their perception as to why they believe a custom solution is required. The second step is to evaluate the operational results against their performance objectives. This step will require a mixture of data analytics and real-time on the ground observations at all levels of the operation in question. Third step is to provide recommendations for a solution that fills the gaps in their operation that will meet the desired results laid out in step one.

How do Acuity's solutions provide actionable intelligence on contact center performance management designed to align and support the needs of people on every level from company executives to front-line agents?

Greg Salvato: Acuity's capacity to provide not just actionable intelligence to every level of a company, but also offer a variety of methods to actually take action, is exceptional. First, our approach to analytics, business intelligence and reporting itself is comprehensive. Acuity applies multi-dimensional analysis to any contact center asset (i.e. technology, supervisor, service provider, finance, trainer, etc.) and therefore generates vital intelligence to a broader range of departments and personnel. Second, Acuity equips users with an extensive and integrated portfolio of productivity, workflow, performance and incentive, notification, survey, QA and communication modules as well as seamless integration with other technology solutions (i.e. LMS, payroll, etc.) that enable immediate and fluid action the moment a weakness or strength is identified. A critical differentiator for best-in-class contact center performance management software is the degree to which it elevates the user's capacity, efficiency and performance.