Technology Alone is No Silver Bullet

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Technology is the great contact center enabler IF the organization provides roles and responsibilities dedicated to understanding, working with and promoting the use of that technology.

We often hear call center managers say that their technology is not delivering the features and functions they need. However, we find in most cases it is not the technology that is lacking, but rather the users not fully understanding technology capabilities. Often organizations are willing to invest in the technology, but stop short of training users and establishing roles focused on applying the technology to business needs. Implementing technology is great, but without resources to operate and optimize it, you will not reap its rewards, or worse, you'll discourage future technology purchases.

Understand Technology Possibilities

To be successful, today's contact center leaders need to not only define business strategies and drivers, but also understand how systems and tools enable them to achieve their goals. Leaders and users alike need to become familiar with the wide range of available technologies, and play a role in planning, deployment, and optimization.

Define Contact Center Roles in Technology Application

To respond to business and customer needs, the contact center needs to step up its responsibility for managing its technology. Too much time is lost waiting for IT or other resources to change basic configurations and perform simple functions. To manage this transition successfully, the contact center must define those tasks to be managed and identify the roles and talent to fulfill them. Examples of technology applications that should be managed by the contact center include:

- ACD – Automatic Call Distributor – Make basic and routine routing or skill changes, add new agents and provide general database maintenance
- IVR – Interactive Voice Response – Execute minor prompt changes, adjust message timing, add new messages
- WFM – Workforce Management – Manage contact and resource forecasting, staff scheduling, real-time resource management; monitor schedule adherence, and shrinkage to validate and adjust forecasts
- QA – Quality Assurance – Monitor and score contact interactions for quality and procedural adherence and define business rules for recordings
- KM – Knowledge Management - Author, develop and post content that is timely, easily accessible and pertinent to assist agents and customers
- Reporting – Schedule reports, develop custom reports, and provide analysis using reporting and analytics tools effectively; assess and optimize performance through the use of additional tools that could include speech analytics, desktop analytics, text analytics, etc.

A strong desire and ability to understand what's possible and how technology can help solve business issues is critical –whether strategic or tactical. No one is an expert on all of these applications, but as a leader, a good working knowledge of what these technologies can do will greatly increase your ability to lead the center to achieve its goals. Make the case for establishing (or adding to) roles to execute these

tasks. Hire the right people to fill them – whether promoting from within and creating career path opportunities, or bringing some new experience and expertise into your center. With the right roles and trained talent in place, you can rely on your "experts" in each area to help run your center effectively.

Where to Go For Help

You don't have to go it alone. There are plenty of resources to help you get more involved in your technology as well as develop and coach your "expert" bench. Work closely with your IT department to increase your understanding of the tools and their functions. Consult your technology vendor(s) for product-specific training and information on user groups. Get connected to industry forums. There are an abundance of groups, seminars, and conferences that are excellent sources of information and industry best practices. Or, better yet, utilize all three as you work towards unlocking the full potential of your technology investment.